



Official Magazine of
**WODEN VALLEY
SUB-BRANCH R.S.L.**



The SERVICEMAN

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CHRISTMAS EDITION

NOVEMBER 2022



*'The Poppy' a painting by Canberra artist Margaret Hatfield
a fitting tribute for Remembrance Day. (See Note Page 2)*

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*** Note: The gallery, studio, lesson space and art supply store of artist Margaret Hatfield, (located at 88 Woollongong St, Fyshwick) who has been working as a professional artist for over 30 years in the Canberra/Queanbeyan region. The Poppy, copied with the kind permission of the artist.**

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The SERVICEMAN

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RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

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OFFICE BEARERS 2022-23

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New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia

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The Sub-Branch meets on the last Tuesday of each month except April and December at the Canberra Southern Cross Club, Corinna St, Phillip at 7.00PM. Subscription is due on 1st Jan annually and should be posted to GCCC, 14/27 Mulley St, Holder ACT 2611, by Phone or direct to BSB 062908 Acct 10841897.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Bob Cremer



The end of an era with the passing of Queen Elizabeth II after a reign of over 70 years. An amazing achievement by an amazing lady, and something that will not happen again, well certainly not during our lifetime.

Almost to the end of another year and with COVID restrictions/complications, or one of the many variants that persist, although it is still around so everyone should take care. We can only hope that 2023 will be an improvement although I did say that at the end of 2021.

You will also notice there are a few articles from me in this issue, a result of a general shortage of stories from our members, so please give me some articles/stories that can be published for the interest of our membership. It has been extremely helpful with long time amazing author Les Cook, and other articles from Terry Colhoun but we need more from the general membership, so please get busy.

Very interesting articles in this issue with the AATTV 60th Anniversary and Part 2 of Peter Phillips recollections, a very comprehensive history of his military career.

Enjoy the Christmas break with family and friends and have a Happy and Healthy start to the new year. Take care and be kind to each other.

FALL IN

*A warm welcome is extended to the following
new members.*



William Byrne, Michael Smith, David Holdom,
Peter Phillips, Daniel Felstead, Sarah Felstead,
Peter Murray

President's Message
Jim Gilchrist



Welcome to the Christmas Edition of *The Serviceman*. Like many of you, I find it hard to believe that Christmas will soon be upon us and that 2022 will have been and gone. I hope most of you have enjoyed some warmer weather, albeit that it was chilly and wet in Canberra for much of Spring. I also hope that many of you will have enjoyed the newfound freedom that came with the reduced COVID-19 restrictions. Having recently returned from a three week holiday, it was good to come back refreshed and see what had happened within our Sub-Branch in my absence. This break also gave me time to ponder some key issues on which we need to focus and how we can best secure our future as a member-based Sub-Branch that also supports the broader Veteran Community in the ACT and region.

Considering the latter tasks first, I advise that the Compensation (formerly Entitlements and Advocacy) and Welfare Teams that are the essence of our Veterans' Support Centre (VSC) continue to attract significant requests for advice and support from members and their families, from other veterans and from other sources, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), and ACT Branch, ACT hospitals and veterans who are looking for someone to help one of their mates. While I believe that these requests and the work that flows from them is a major part of our role, it continues to place pressure on our resources, especially our volunteers and staff. To that end, I thank all our members and staff who help us meet our responsibilities in any way.

In relation to the Compensation Team, a small group of experienced advocates is working with a growing group of trainees to support a steady flow of new clients. While we are still struggling with the formal training and accreditation system, we are developing a self-help program to induct new advocates and develop their knowledge and skills as efficiently and effectively as possible. To that end, we are liaising with the Victorian Branch to share some of their training material and processes, while we will build on the characteristics and experience our volunteers bring. We continue to work closely with the Repatriation Commission (DVA) and the Veterans' Review Board, to achieve some excellent results for our clients. We also continue to be frustrated by aspects of the decision making processes including what we believe are inconsistencies in the way policies and procedures are applied. That said, and in the context of the high workload within DVA, I believe we win many more cases than we lose.

The Welfare Team has also continued to receive many requests for advice and assistance during the past several months. While this keeps a small group of volunteers and staff on their toes, we are gradually consolidating some capabilities, particularly those that will support our ageing members. Concurrently, we are still trying to manage some complex cases that primarily affect younger veterans.

While we liaise closely with DVA and their service providers, it is clear that, without hands on support, many veterans and their families would struggle to resolve their issues. This highlights the vital role that sub-branches and similar Ex-Service Organisations have in the overall system. In fact, this role is a key object of the League as a whole and is fundamental to our very being.

Having unsuccessfully tried to conduct the face-to-face mental health program I have referred to in other communications and for which we received a substantial grant several years ago, we did host two one-day sessions of another program that were well supported mainly by serving members. In this regard, we worked closely with the Military and Emergency Services Mental Health Australia (MESH) group that is based in Adelaide. As most of the participants fitted the key criteria for the grant, we were pleased to provide this other course as an interim step in attracting Defence members and those who had recently discharged from Defence to this sort of program. We look forward to hosting the original program in due course.

From a social perspective, in the past few months the Sub-Branch held three lunches during Veterans Health Week; held two bus trips, with another planned for late November; and also held an informal afternoon tea in lieu of the OGM Dinner we had scheduled for October. We also continue to attract a lively group to our Friday morning Coffee Catchups and are looking forward to our Christmas lunch in December.

As many of you will know, the Eddison Day Club has struggled to meet during the past few years, primarily because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were necessary to help manage this issue. Concurrently, however, some of the stalwarts of this Club have faced some of their own health issues. While a small group continued to gather at the Irish Club for lunch on Fridays, the Day Club Committee and the Board have been considering how best we can continue this important part of our Sub-Branch. While both the Committee and the Board are hopeful we can continue to support this Club that has been so important to many members over nearly 20 years, neither believes that we will be able to revert to what we had before. However, we will do our best to rebuild this club into something that will continue the spirit and goals of the Day Club as outlined in our By-Laws.

As many of you will already know, the Flowers of Peace team from the Australian War Memorial (AWM), performed a *POW Requiem* at Llewellyn Hall on 29 October. Sadly, this was a one-off performance that, in my opinion, warranted a much broader audience. It was a magnificent musical tribute that moved all who had the privilege of attending it. A recording will soon be available through the Flowers of Peace website. From a Sub-Branch perspective, I note that some of our members and friends worked with the Director of the Requiem and Artist in Residence at the AWM, Mr Chris Latham, in some aspects of the program's development. The *POW Requiem* is the third Requiems that Chris has directed to recall aspects of our military history, to commemorate those who suffered through those events and to reconcile some of the events that occurred during these conflicts.

In again thanking our staff and volunteers who provide these services, including the day-to-day operations required to manage a large sub-branch, I iterate the dependence we have on our volunteers, without whom we could do nothing.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record at times and in some forums, I press this point to all who care to listen. I do so on behalf of our members, past and present, in the hope that, at some stage, we will receive the external support I believe we deserve and that we will need if we are to sustain our present capabilities and capacities. Sadly, however, I am realistic enough to believe this will be a long negotiation with a few frustrations to be expected along the way. In the meantime, I hope that all who are doing the work now will continue for as long as they can, at whatever pace they can manage and that we will continue to attract new helpers who will continue the good work for which the Woden Valley Sub-Branch is renowned.

From a financial perspective, I again note that we are holding our own despite some external challenges that are affecting the broader economy. At least partly because we have fewer staff than we have had in the past, we are in a sound financial position that will provide time for the Board to attract sustainable support from external sources. To that end, I thank our Treasurer, Jan Properjohn, specifically, and our Board in general for their support.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Christmas party on Wednesday 7 December. I wish all of our members, their families and our friends good health and good cheer during Christmas and the New Year, and I remind any of you who are struggling with your health or wellbeing, that you call us for advice, assistance or just for a chat.

“How the heck can we run a war in this fashion?”

“I’m in the Ordnance Corps and my job is estimating and placing orders for the Army’s requirements of war material, generally for a year ahead, and sometimes longer. The Allied countries are short of everything for waging war. There isn’t a damned thing used in the Army which is easy to get. Most of it is extremely difficult - especially if it comes from overseas.

Well, we estimate our requirements, line up our sources of supply and take delivery of say, towels or shirts, or it might be tools or tyres. Then things begin to happen to upset calculations. Leakages occur in transit and in stores through pilfering - and so on. But our main worry is the usage rate; it is much higher than it should be at a time like this. The little extra that units or individuals get doesn’t seem like much to them, but multiply it by several thousand - the number of units - or by half a million - the number of individuals, and see what it means to us!

“The estimates we prepare are adequate if everyone will play fair, but they are only just adequate. The civilian population is going short to enable our orders to be filled, and it makes me mad to think that my wife - and your wife - can’t buy a towel because the Army is using considerably more than it would if individuals had to buy their own. Civilians today, are obliged to get the last ounce of wear out of everything they use. This Army of ours has to realise it must do the same, or we shall find ourselves in a hole through lack of vital supplies.

“So if the QM appears to be tough when you try and squeeze him for a new shirt or towel, when there’s still a few weeks wear in the old one, don’t blame HIM! He’s merely doing his job”.

(Extract from SALT Vol 7 No 2 dated 27 September 1943)

Vietnam Veteran's Day - 18 August 2022

Following a fly-past of an aircraft from the Vietnam war era, His Excellency Governor General David Hurley AC DSC FTSE delivered the annual Call to Remembrance at the Vietnam Memorial on ANZAC Parade to honour Australian and New Zealand Vietnam Veterans.

Several hundred people gathered around Navy, Army and Air Force service personnel who served in Vietnam during 1962 to 1975. The ceremony was attended by politicians, diplomatic staff and NZ and US service representatives, and included reading an Honour Roll, Laying of Tributes, and a reading from Scripture.

Army Chaplain Martin Johnson joined Woden Valley RSL Chaplain Mick O'Donnell in prayers for invocation and for Peace whilst a contingent of Army musicians played the national anthems and provided a Catafalque party.

Some 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War, 521 of whom died; almost 2,400 were wounded.

Today we remember all our Vietnam veterans of the Army, Air Force and Navy. We give thanks and pay our respects to the servicemen and servicewomen commemorated on the Roll of Honour, and to the survivors who came home.



*His Excellency Governor General David Hurley AC DSC FTSE
and Chaplain Mick O'Donnell at the ceremony.*

Poster purchased in 1984 from ‘Te Māori’ New York Art Exhibition
Dame Annette King - NZ High Commissioner

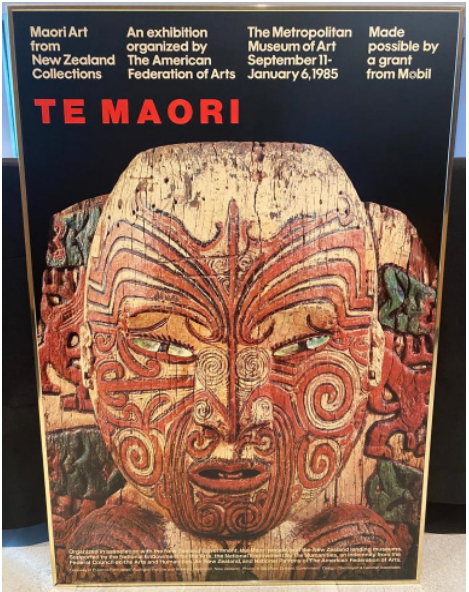
At the ANZAC Eve dinner on 24 April 2022, Sub-Branch member Terry Colhoun AM told me of a poster his wife had bought when they were living in New York. The Te Māori was a watershed exhibition of Māori art in 1984. It was the first occasion Māori art had been exhibited and the first time where it was shown internationally as art. The poster was used in advertising.

Terry Colhoun worked as a successful broadcaster for the ABC and at one stage was based in New York in the 80s. Mr Colhoun’s late wife Jean picked up the poster, some 40 years ago while attending the Te Māori exhibition. She loved the Te moko design so much she brought it back to Australia, had it framed and cared for it all these years where it has hung on the wall of their home in Canberra.

Now aged 97 years of age, Mr Colhoun has decided to honour his late wife’s love for this art piece by gifting it to us.

This poster is now proudly displayed at our High Commission office in Canberra.

Ngā mihi ki a korua Mr & late Mrs Colhoun.



Dame Annette King with Mr Terry Colhoun AM at the presentation ceremony.

Report on Welfare

Peter Sutton - Vice-President Welfare

During the past month, due to grants received we have been able to hold several functions to enable people to get out of the house and to gather. On 5, 11 and 13 October we had luncheon functions for Veterans' Health Week. The theme this year, "***Eat Well***".

These functions were sponsored through a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), with 14, 17 and 17 attend each lunch, respectively. We arranged for Daniel and Sarah, both veterans and members of the Sub-Branch, to supply the food for us, which Daniel delivered in individually packaged meals. Daniel also spoke at each event of his time in the Army where he kept his weight under control. However, following his discharge he noticed he was not eating healthy meals and not exercising as much and thereby gaining weight. They started their own business, "***Lazy Grazer***", which over time has grown to encompass corporate as well as private functions, sourcing all their produce locally where possible and they are always exploring new avenues to expand their business.

We also received a grant from the ACT Government, the aim to allow seniors to socialise and to overcome isolation. This grant has financed three bus tours during October and November. With buses from Deane's Coaches, and arranged through Alyson Deane and driven by Reece Campbell, the first tour was to the Southern Highlands with a morning tea stop in the park in Goulburn. Then to the Moss Vale Services Club for a delicious lunch, then back to Bowral for a look at the local shops. Some passengers went shopping while others went for coffee. To break our journey back to Canberra, we had a comfort stop at the Wheatley VC rest-stop by the side of the very full Lake George. After stretching our legs and taking a photo or two we were driven back to Holder and home. A great day's outing.

The next two bus tours will be to Braidwood, Bungendore with lunch at the "Loaded Dog" hotel in Tarago, scheduled for 27 October. The last tour is on 22 November for a trip to Cooma and a stop on the way home at the Christmas Shop in Bredbo.

Eddison Day Club Report

Peter Sutton - Day Club Co-ordinator

The Eddison Day Club is in a 'holding pattern' at present due to the small numbers attending the casual lunches each Friday. We will decide at the Board meeting early in 2023 whether we can continue meeting and return to a resemblance of what has been happening for the last 18 years where we had guest speakers and entertainers attend, but they are reluctant to do so while we have such small numbers attending. COVID-19 has devastated so many clubs and organisations such as ours.

It would be a shame for the club not to return to what we used to have in the past.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year. Here's hoping that 2023 will be better than the past two years.

Terry Meets Her Majesty

Terry Colhoun

Since the recent death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, we have been regularly reminded of the many times she visited Australia. The first visit was in 1954 and it was given radio coverage that was so extensive, the Federation of Australian Commercial Stations and the ABC needed to pool all resources, including commentators. There was no television coverage because that did not start until two years later.

I was a commentator during the visit and it was an interesting experience. But I never met the Queen or Prince Phillip. That would come later in 1970, when another visit brought them to Canberra. While here the Queen was to make a National Address to the Nation, and it was to be recorded at Government House.

The ABC was invited to make recordings for television and radio, and as the ABC's Canberra Manager, I was given responsibility for this important task.

At that time, we did not have a mobile television unit, so one had to be brought from Sydney and attached to my office. It was a large van equipped with a small control desk, large, heavy black and white cameras, and staff to operate them. Radio was easier: we had the equipment and staff here for that recording.



Consultation began between Mr (later Sir) Murray Tyrrell, the Governor General's official secretary, and myself over where we could do the recordings in Government House. A room that was suitable for television was cleared for its use, while the Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck, kindly offered his official office for the radio recording. No problems there.

We knew the Queen would use a teleprompter, a machine that television newsreaders and others routinely used, and that's where we ran into our first problem.

I should explain that a teleprompter is a machine that electronically rotates a pre-typed script at a speed that is comfortable for the reader, and projects it on to a glass screen that is seen only by the reader. They can see their words while looking directly at the camera. The ABC had a lot of teleprompters and jumbo typewriters that produced larger than normal letters that they required, and we prepared to use one of them when we received the Queen's script.

But then came our first problem; we learned that the script was to be typed on our jumbo typewriter *in upper and lower case*. So why was that a problem? None of the ABC's jumbo typewriters did upper and lower case, only upper. A search went out to find one that did but no one else had one that met the Queen's requirements, and there was insufficient time to borrow one from the BBC. Remember I am talking about something happening in 1970 - more than 50 years ago. >>>>

Mr Tyrell and I decided to ask the Commonwealth Government Printer if he could help us. He said they could print it for us but, he didn't have the special paper that fitted the teleprompter. After some thought he came back to say that he had similar paper and would do his best with it. A day or so later we received the result of the Government Printer's work and it looked good ... but! The but was that their paper was heavier than the paper normally used by the teleprompter and when it was moving forward the machinery started to groan. By this time it was too late to find lighter paper and print it again so we had to go with what we had.

And now another problem emerged. John Laker, my very competent supervising technician, having been given technical responsibility for recording the radio version, told me our head office engineers had decided that instead of asking the Queen to make two recordings, one each for television and radio, the television sound track would be used for the radio broadcast. John advised me that this wouldn't work because of the ambient noise in a television studio caused by people and cameras moving around, and, of course the teleprompter was going to add extra noise. Normally, these noises are ignored by a television viewer because the brain registers vision more strongly than sound if receiving both together. However, a radio listener hears all of the sound, including unwanted noises.

On the day of recording, I found Mr Bill Heseltine (later, Sir William), the Australian-born press secretary to the Queen and told him of the problem, and warned that, even though the Queen was having a very busy day, I may have to ask her to re-record the address just for radio. We agreed that I should audit the television sound track and decide if it was good enough for radio. I did that and immediately decided it was too noisy for radio use. When I told Bill, his answer was quick and clear: you can tell the Queen.

When we reached the temporary television studio, the Queen was sitting on the chair she had used for the recording, and was watching a replay of the video-tape. When it ended, Bill Heseltine introduced me and said I had something to tell her. I explained the noise problem and said I did not think the sound quality was suitable for her radio broadcast; the movement of the auto cue being particularly audible. Turning to the crew with a laugh she said, "It did sound a bit like a London bus, didn't it?" With apologies for intruding further into what was a very busy day for her, I asked if she would consider doing a separate radio recording. She agreed without any hesitation and told me to, "arrange a time with Bill".

As there was a State dinner that night for the Queen, there wasn't much time available but we managed to find a slot at 5:30. John Laker and a recording technician set up radio equipment in the Governor General's office with the microphone on his desk. I was also there, as protocol required. Sir Paul was in the room when Mr Heseltine ushered Her Majesty in, precisely on time. After more introductions and handshakes, the Queen sat down to record. Sir Paul apparently hoped to stay but as the Queen didn't invite him, he had to retire. However, before doing so he informed everyone that he had switched off a small chiming clock that sat on a shelf behind his desk. The Queen ran through a few lines for us to check the microphone level and we were just about to start recording when there was a tap on the door and in came Sir Paul to tell us that he had personally switched off the chiming grandfather clock in the hall just outside his office.

>>>

The Queen graciously thanked him and as he withdrew once again, with a broad smile she turned to her press secretary and said, “My goodness, Bill, they don’t look after us like this at home”. The door closed quietly behind the retreating Governor General.

We made the recording without any trouble, there was no need to do it twice, the Queen was totally professional. There was no complaint about this unexpected intrusion into what was to have been a rest period for her, and the courtesy she showed me and my colleagues is a lasting memory.

Afterwards, my boss sent me a photo copy of a letter he had received from Buckingham Palace. Part of it read:

“The Queen has asked me to write to tell you how much she appreciated the efforts of those who recorded and produced her television and radio message. In particular, Her Majesty would like to thank Terry Colquhoun (sic), who, I think quite rightly, made the point politely but firmly that a separate recording for sound radio should be taken.

The Queen would be grateful if you would pass on her thanks to him.

Bill Heseltine”.





LEST WE FORGET

“The price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance”

*“They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them”.*



SANDY CREEK

Written for the 2/4 of the RAE, who were “Rats of Tobruk”

They took us out of Adelaide so we couldn't give 'em cheek,
And dumped us in a hollow, in a spot named Sandy Creek;
One day they took us rowing, it was a proper treat,
And when they brought us back again they marched us off our feet;
They jammed us there, ten men in a tent, we never got faloose,
But we had a bit of fun one night, when the 'butcher' plucked the 'goose'.

'Faloose' is Egyptian for money. 'Butcher' and 'Goose' were two of the boys who had a fight one night in Sandy Creek, after coming back from the Middle East (Tobruk). 'Goose' was a swarthy, stockily built chap, whom the 'Tommy' had put in an 'Itie' prison compound once, by mistake, thinking he was an Italian. Another time a Tommy officer interrogated him on a mine-field and demanded to see his meat ticket. The 'Goose' is now a Sergeant.

*By Sapper Bert Beros
The Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels... and other verses.*



Barry Seedsman, Neville Jones, Helen Tidd,
David Smith, Lloyd Streeting, Helen Kennett,
Denis Whitty

AATTV 60th Anniversary

Ian Gollings

Members of the Sub-Branch will be interested to know that the few remaining members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in Canberra were assisted by Woden RSL to commemorate their 60th Anniversary recently: we helped by designing and printing the program for their commemorative luncheon held at the Commonwealth Club on 4 August 2022. On the previous day they had attended the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial when the life and service of Warrant Officer Kevin Conway of AATTV who was the first Australian killed in action in Vietnam on 6 July 1964 when serving with the army of South Vietnam.

The AATTV was a specialist unit of military advisers of the Australian Army that operated during the Vietnam war. Raised in 1962, this unit was formed solely for service as part of Australia's contribution to the war, providing training and assistance to South Vietnamese forces. Initially numbering only 30 men, the size of the unit grew several times over the following years as the Australian commitment to South Vietnam gradually grew, with the unit's strength peaking at 227 in November 1970. Members of the Team worked individually or in small groups, operating throughout the country from the far south to the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) in the north. Later they were concentrated in Phuoc Thuy Province as Australian forces prepared to withdraw from Vietnam. It was the most decorated Australian unit to serve in Vietnam, its members receiving over 100 decorations, including four Victoria Crosses, during its existence. The unit was withdrawn from Vietnam on 18 December 1972 and was disbanded in Australia on 16 February 1973. A total of 1,009 men served with the unit over a period of ten years, consisting of 998 Australians and 11 New Zealanders.

On initial arrival in Vietnam, the group was part of the existing US advisory effort controlled by Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) which later morphed into United States Military Assist Command Vietnam (MACV). Most of the Australians were officers, warrant officers and senior NCOs, with the majority from the infantry, SAS, or Commandos, with several signallers, engineers and other specialist corps represented. They were hand-picked for the task and were considered experts in counter-revolutionary warfare and jungle operations, with many having served in the Malaysian Emergency. Due to the nature of service as a combat adviser, personnel serving with the AATTV were all mature and experienced soldiers with an average age of 35.

At first, the unit joined a large group of US advisers and were dispersed across South Vietnam in small groups. Three groups were despatched to South Vietnam's northern provinces training members of the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) at the National Training Centre at Dong Da near Phu Bai Combat Base and South Vietnamese Regional Forces (RF) at Hiep Khanh northwest of Hue while a fourth was based at the Ranger Training Centre at Duc My Camp near Nha Trang in the south. A headquarters was established in Saigon. The groups began training the Vietnamese in barracks, providing instruction in jungle warfare techniques and technical areas such as signalling and engineering. The jungle warfare practised by the AATTV emphasised patrolling and contact drills which taught soldiers to react automatically in battle with the aim of providing them with an advantage over an enemy which was reliant on command. >>>

Initially, the Team was prevented from actively taking part in combat operations, and while this restriction was later lifted, until this occurred the advisers deployed on operations as observers.

Gradually the role of the AATTV changed, and in addition to training, individual members began to command or advise ARVN units in combat situations, with the restriction on taking part in combat operations being officially lifted in mid-1964. With the war escalating, the AATTV increased in numbers, and its peak of 227 in November 1970 included several corporals. By this time, the Team had suffered 33 dead and 122 wounded. Apart from working with ARVN and RF units, members also worked with US Army Special Forces and in programmes sponsored by the US Central Intelligence Agency. The Team left Vietnam on 18 December 1972, the last Australians to do so and the first to be committed there 10 years and four months before. (*Words contributed by Bill Deane*).

At the lunch the commemorative address was given by Major General Jason Blain DSC AM CSC, Head Armoured Vehicle Division (Defence) representing the Chief of the Army:

Major General Clunies Ross, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, and the families and friends of those present and those who no longer march in the ranks of the Team, including the family of WO2 Kevin Conway. What a poignant Last Post ceremony yesterday at the Australian War Memorial and it was a real privilege to be part of it. I also note that we are fortunate to be here today with two members of the Team that were present on day one of the Team arriving in South Vietnam 60 years ago; MAJGEN Clunies-Ross (Retd) and LTCOL Ian Gollings (Retd).

It is with a feeling of great honour that I stand here today addressing you on this the 60th anniversary of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. But I must admit, I am also standing here feeling some apprehension. When asked by the Chief of Army to represent him in his absence and to speak, I immediately felt humbled to do so, and then straight after thought, what can I possibly tell these veterans? I know I am addressing a generation of servicemen that through their actions and deeds set the standard of what it means to be an Australian soldier and are rightly respected as belonging to the longest-serving and most highly decorated Australian unit of the Vietnam War.

Recipient of over 100 decorations, including the four Victoria Crosses awarded during the Vietnam War, the US Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm - Unit Citation, and for a small number the Presidential Unit Citation. I also note the other Imperial Awards of;

- 2 Companion of the Distinguished Service Order*
- 3 Officer of the Order of the British Empire*
- 6 Member of the Order of the British Empire*
- 6 Military Cross (1xBar to MC)*
- 20 Distinguished Conduct Medal (1xBar to DCM)*
- 15 Military Medal*
- 4 British Empire Medal*
- 4 Queens Commendation for Brave Conduct*
- 49 Mentioned in Dispatches*

Those awards reflect a remarkable, extraordinary, decade of soldiering. >>>

As a young man, when contemplating career options, I read Tiger Men by Barry Petersen. At that time, I did not have a strong insight into our nation's experiences in the Vietnam War, but I recall that book had a striking influence on me. It spoke to me about courage and overcoming adversity, the role our Army has in supporting the security of others, and even though Barry Petersen's experience was not all good, it spoke to me about, adventure, and the opportunities being a soldier and leader brings. Indeed, it confirmed for me a strong desire to be an infantry officer if given the opportunity.

I mention this because it is just one minor element of the power of legacy established by the 1,009 men who served in the Team. The 998 Australians and the 11 New Zealanders, who over a 10-year period, through individual and small team efforts across Vietnam lived, worked, ate, slept, trained and fought alongside Vietnamese soldiers, tribesmen, and others in the defence of their freedom created a chapter of our military history that we can all be proud of. Your actions influenced many others that followed.

Indeed, as CO 6 RAR I was privileged to deploy the Battalion to Afghanistan in 2010 as Mentoring Task Force One. Our mission was to mentor and train the Afghan National Army, spread across Uruzgan Province in Afghan Pl and Coy size Patrol Bases and Forward Operating Bases. Young Lieutenants and Captains with their WO2s, SGTs and JNCOs responsible for developing the capabilities of the ANA to fight against the Taliban. Like the AATTV, the mentoring teams lived, worked, trained, ate, slept, fought, and some died, alongside Afghan National Army soldiers and junior commanders. And like the AATTV, did so in challenging, austere and highly dangerous environments.

But this was not a difficult task for our current day junior leaders and soldiers. Because as an Army, training and mentoring others is in our DNA. In my view, the bar was set by you, the members of the AATTV, and we built on the foundations you laid over those 10 hard years in Vietnam. It continued in subsequent operations and especially in Iraq with the Australian Army Training Team Iraq and in Afghanistan.

One of the benefits of postings to Brisbane as CO 6 RAR and Commander 7 Brigade was the opportunity to spend plenty of time in Canungra. I know many in this room also 'enjoyed' their time in Canungra. One of the good things about Canungra is being able to visit the AATTV memorial. It is a beautiful place to reflect on service and sacrifice. 60 years seems like a long time. For some of you it may only seem like yesterday. But think of the changes that have occurred in our society, changes in technology, changes in science and medicine in that time. Think of the changes to the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force. We have changed from the 7.62mm SLR with iron sights to the 5.56mm F90 Steyr that together with its ancillaries costs about \$25,000. From bush hat and jungle greens to ballistic and laser ocular protection, body armour and ballistic protected helmets, battlespace management systems, multi-cam pattern uniforms, shot detection devices, personal radios and enhanced night vision goggles. Not to mention for the Armoured Corps brethren here today the modernisation of our Armoured Fighting Vehicles including the recent introduction into service of the Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicle. Indeed, we have come a long way.

>>>

But in those 60 years, some things have not changed. The courage, teamwork, initiative, compassion, and respect that was resident in the soldiers who wore our nation's uniform from 1962 to 1972 in Vietnam, still resides in the young men and women serving today. Take away all the technology and the thousands of dollars of equipment, and at the heart of it all lies an Australian soldier with the same values and commitment of those who served 60 years ago. And the reason? Because they are the custodians of the legacy you gave us. They are the ones who serve to uphold the reputation you have forged and when tested, they want to make the next generation proud. Indeed, I can't think of a more fitting motto for our soldiers when involved in combat as the one that is carried by the Australian Army training team - Perseverance. What makes me also look at you in awe, is not just your actions in war, but also your actions in peace. You have formed and maintained a close-knit group.

You still look out for each other, and you have honourably upheld the legacy of the 33 men who died serving in the Team and those who have passed since. We, the current serving generation, can learn a great deal from what you do. We will need to, if we are to look after our mates like you have done and continue to do.

The actions of the Team have created a legacy for those of us who follow in your footsteps. A legacy of service before self, sacrifice, and mateship, which, at its very heart, epitomises what it means to be an Australian soldier. War is the most futile of human endeavours. From war comes the rawest elements of human nature; courage, terror, fear and hate, but war also brings out in those who serve other elements; of courage, compassion, forgiveness, caring, and a deep love for your fellow soldier, who you have shared experiences that are beyond words. It is these elements that drive us as soldiers to look after our mates and to never forget their sacrifice. It is these that bring us here today, to remember the 33 men killed and 122 wounded in action serving our nation as members of the Australian Army Training Team - Vietnam, and those men who have passed during the decades since the Team left the battlefield in 1972.

To the AATTV veterans here today, on behalf of all of us who currently serve, we thank you for your service, we thank you for the legacy you have given us, and we thank you for showing us the way, both as soldiers and as veterans.

On behalf of the Chief of Army, and all members of the Australian Army, I congratulate the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam on their 60th anniversary and commit to you that we will never forget your service and sacrifice.



Veterans' Health Week

Lazy Grazer

Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch received a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to conduct functions during '*Veterans' Health Week*'. The theme for the 2022 event is "*EAT WELL*".

Three separate functions were held in the Corey Room at the Sub-Branch offices and a local catering company, the "*LAZY GRAZER*" provided a healthy lunch for those attending. This company, run by an ex-service couple, Daniel and Sarah provided lunch boxes with a variety of food on each of the three days. Daniel also discussed various options that are available from their company for whatever the occasion.

The Lazy Grazer is committed to bringing the highest quality products to our customers sourcing Canberra's best local products.



The website at '*Lazy Grazer*' provides a detailed list of services of catering facilities and menu options available for anyone interested for any upcoming events.

Bus Trips in October and November 2022

Due to a allocation of a grant, the Sub-Branch has arranged to conduct bus trips to local areas to help and get our members and friends active once again after the restrictions of Covid.

Under the guidance of organiser, Peter Sutton, three separate bus trips have been arranged to a variety of locations on the following dates:

Wednesday 19 October - Southern Highlands to Bowral and Moss Vale for lunch at the local Services Club.

Thursday 27 October - Bungendore, Braidwood and Tarago with lunch at the local hotel The Loaded Dog.

Tuesday 22 November - Michelago, Nimmitabel and Cooma for lunch at the Cooma Ex-Services Club.

Jan and I were able to attend the Southern Highlands trip along with 35 others, and it was an enjoyable day with good company, fine weather and lunch in the Moss Vale Services Club.



Morning tea in the park in Goulburn and then lunch in Moss Vale.



More lunch and then a comfort stop at Lake George on the return journey and a check of the water level of the lake from the carpark sign.



Also table signs at lunch for:
WOODEN VALLY



Remember Growing old is mandatory; Growing up is optional

The Welcome Wall

Bob Cremer

The Welcome Wall at The Australian National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour in Sydney commemorates those who have migrated from countries around the world to live in Australia. The 100-metre long, 2.8 metres tall structure has space for some 30,000 names. The project was first announced in November 1997 with the first names inscribed in January 1999.

Anyone wishing to have their family name on the wall is invited to contribute a brief (50-word) story about the family or friend being honoured, where they came from, when they arrived, why they came and how they settled.

Only the family name appears in bronze on the wall; the brief biographical note is available for all to read on a monitor at the Maritime Museum or on the internet at: www.anmm.gov.au/ww
Twice a year, new panels of names are added and unveiled with a ceremony.

THE WELCOME WALL AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM UNVEILED ON 14 JANUARY 1999

*By His Excellency The Honourable Sir William Deane AC KBE
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia*

The Welcome Wall

More than Six Million People
Have Cross The Seas
To Settle In Australia
They Have Come From
Most Countries On Earth
To The Lands Of The Cadigal
The Burraburragal
And Beyond.

The Welcome Wall

At The National Maritime Museum Stands
As a Symbol of Our Great Diversity
and Our Unity.

(Following from Museum's website)

Adding a Name: As an acknowledgement of your tax-deductible gift of \$500, your name, or the name of a family member, relative, friend, or co-worker will be etched in bronze onto the Museum's 'Monument of Migration' in recognition of their journey across the seas to make Australia their new home.



An uncle of mine, Sydney Cremer (left) arranged for his father's details (my Grandfather) to be included on the Welcome Wall.

The inscription reads:

Crémer - Auguste and Family

Of Love and War in Broken Hill

Faye Powell

I am not often surprised when doing a routine task but something out of the ordinary really set me off to do further research while holidaying in Broken Hill.

Commonwealth War Graves are easily identified by their unique shape in pure white marble, just a plain grave but with a distinctive headstone clearly visible from almost anywhere in a cemetery. While staying in Broken Hill I happened to look over the corrugated fence at the rear of the caravan park to find we were next to a cemetery - and standing head and shoulders above all was one white marble headstone - almost saying "look at me", which I duly did. Has anyone ever seen a War Grave like this before? - even the inscription is interesting: "Beneath this emblem rests a Husband, Father, Soldier and Man" - mostly the inscriptions are unemotional like "His Duty Nobly Done", while this speaks of love, respect and tragic loss.

So who was SX35506 G.V. LEHMAN, and why such special burial treatment?

His service records reveal that his name was Gordon Victor LEHMAN, born 28 June 1914 in Broken Hill, and living in Whyman Street, Broken Hill when he enlisted in February 1943. More interesting however are three consecutive entries:

- 24-3-1944 Son Born
- 25-3-1944 Married; next of kin wife Joyce Laurel Lehman of Iodide St, Broken Hill
- 11-5-1944 Accidentally killed (train collision)

Well, given my transport background, that was just too much of a research challenge to let pass by. My search found that the accident occurred at a place called Copley (formerly Leigh Creek) a small town on the old Ghan rail route that wound its way across flood prone land up through Hawker, Lyndhurst, Oodnadatta, and eventually to Alice Springs, where the line terminated in those days.

According to the Australian Emergency Management Knowledge Hub and Wikipedia:

"On 11 May 1944, a military train was hit from behind by a goods train in Copley, 604km north of Adelaide. Four servicemen were killed and 27 others injured; two seriously. The 16 carriage train had several hundred servicemen onboard and had departed Terowie in South Australia's Mid North for an undisclosed northern destination. The locomotive struggled to haul the carriages and laden trucks.

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It made several attempts to get over Quarry Hill and eventually made it, however, it had to stop shortly after due to injector trouble. The loco was low on water, and uncoupled from the train to 'run light' to the nearest watering spot and refill. While it was away, the goods train entered the same section of track and struck the rear of the troop train. The guard saw the headlights of the rear approaching train and attempted to halt the train but to no avail. Despite the driver of the goods train applying the brakes the crash occurred impacting most severely on carriages 15 and 16. Only the fact that many troops were lying down saved them from serious injury and decapitation, as the tops of several carriages were shorn off in the impact”.

Chilling reading and no doubt a tragic shock for his family and new wife, Joyce, who had grown up in Kogarah and was now a widow in hot dusty Broken Hill. Had Gordon Victor's family in Broken Hill comforted and cared for Joyce after the accident? Did his son grow up and stay in Broken Hill? - questions not answered in the records - these will remain a mystery and speculated on by casual observers. One clue remains at least about the son's name - a grave vase simply marked "From Joyce and Paul" - is this the son born weeks before Gordon Victor departed for an undisclosed northern destination?



***From a newspaper photo taken in California during the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918. The sign she is wearing says:
WEAR A MASK OR GO TO JAIL***

The North Australian Railway in World War Two

Terry Colhoun AM

During the Second World War, thousands of servicemen and women travelled to and from the *Top End* on a railway that no longer exists; it was called the North Australian Railway. Despite being bombed by the Japanese air force, this railway and its brave staff, immediately moved wounded and sick personnel from Darwin to safe hospitals, as well as civilians who were being evacuated to safety. Today, few people remember it although at the time it was one of our most valuable defence assets.

Originally called the Northern Territory Railway, the North Australian Railway began when the South Australian Government, which had administrative responsibility for the Northern Territory, passed the *Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway Bill* in 1883. At that time Darwin was called Palmerston.

Two brothers, C & E Millar of Melbourne were contracted to build the railway line for £959,000, (A1.629m) with a condition that it could employ “Coolie” labour. It was to be built as a narrow gauge line of 3 feet 6 inches to match it with the original “Ghan” that was being built between Adelaide and Alice Springs.

Starting in Palmerston and working south, the Millar brothers employed thousands of South-East Asian labourers to do the initial clearing and earthwork and thousands of Chinese labourers to lay the track. Working in extreme weather conditions at times, they reached Pine Creek well ahead of schedule, allowing the line to be officially opened on 30 September 1889, although it was not yet finished. It still had a long way to go.

After Federation the Commonwealth Government assumed control of the line placing it under the control of the Administrator of the Northern Territory. Management of the railway changed again in 1918 when it was transferred to the Commonwealth Railway Commission. By then it had reached Katherine and was still moving southwards. It finally stopped in 1929 at Birdum, 316 miles (about 500 kms) south of Darwin.

From 1930, this little line provided a regular service between Darwin and Birdum but when the Second World War began, it was hugely expanded to meet Defence Force needs in defending Northern Australia.

On 19 February 1942 Darwin suffered its first bombing by Japanese aircraft, and their leader was obviously well briefed on what were the best targets. Apart from the airport and shipping in the harbour the wharves were hit, resulting in the loss of a locomotive, 18 trucks and nearby railway storage facilities. The main line was broken near the airport. The railway assumed strategic importance that was so important that it was placed under Australian Army control.

The Army decided to divide the railway administration, and relocated one half in Katherine, with increased servicing facilities. It became an important centre, particularly when extra carriages, livestock and goods vans, oil tankers and railway ambulances arrived from State railway systems to meet the rapidly growing needs of the Defence Force.

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Wartime train mileage increased by more than 2,000% over pre-war mileage, and in 1943-44 the train carried almost 200,000 service personnel and essential civilian workers.

The rapid increase in military personnel moving between Southern Australia and the Northern Territory made it necessary to build a new terminus at Birdum. Because the proposed railway line between the South and the North had not been completed, there was a stream of Army trucks moving every day along the newly completed Stuart Highway between Birdum and Alice Springs. But, because the Birdum rail terminus was about 9 miles (15kms) from the highway, there was continuous shuffling between trains and Army trucks. The answer was to extend the line to the highway and build a new station, which was named Larrimah.

My personal memory of Larrimah and travelling on this historic railway goes back to 1944 when, as an RAAF Leading Aircraftsman, I was on my way from Melbourne via Alice Springs to Batchelor. I still remember the pleasure I got from sitting on the floor of a roughly swept cattle truck on what was a very hot and stinky trip.

With the construction of the new line between Darwin and Adelaide for *The Ghan*, the old railway ceased to exist. Its steel rails and wooden sleepers were removed and sold, but if you search through the shrubs and weeds that now cover the old tracks it is still possible to find nuts and bolts that are silently rusting into nothingness. I collected some when I was up there a few years ago.

Thanks to local historians, more visible remains can be seen near Darwin and along the track, particularly in Katherine, where the railway bridge has been preserved as a footbridge across the Katherine River, and a restored engine stands near the old railway station. We should not forget this old railway that has a World War II history it can be proud of.



Steam Locomotive NF5 was built for the South Australian Railways then sold to C & E Millar for construction of the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway, where it remains.

The former station at Adelaide River on the Stuart Highway, now a museum housing locomotives, rolling stock and memorabilia.



Article author Terry Colhoun on the remains of the old railway bridge over the Katherine River, now a pedestrian bridge, and some of the old railway tracks.

Currandooley and Willeroo

Bob Cremer

Detours sometimes direct you places that you didn't know existed, so it was a surprise that on one of our trips to Vincentia on the south coast, Jan and I detoured along the Taylor's Creek Road, past Bungendore and before you arrive in the small town of Tarago NSW. That particular area is south of Lake George and the scenery is spectacular. The main purpose was to see what was out there, and to our surprise there is a settlement in the area dedicated to the returned servicemen who settled in the area after World War II.

Whilst there isn't a great deal of housing in the area; they are listed as localities of Currandooley and Willeroo, it is an interesting area to visit. The plaque is on a large roadside rock.



Hate this time of year.

Busy night at Stonehenge as all the workers move the stones backward one hour...



Sub-Branch Notices

Christmas Party	Wed 7 th Dec 12:00 for 12:30PM	CSCC Orion Room
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Closing date for the 2023 ANZAC Edition of 'The Serviceman' - Fri 24th Feb.

*Closure of Sub-Branch Office over the
Christmas/New Year Period*

The Sub-Branch Office will close at Midday on Friday 16th December 2022,
reopening at 0900 on Tuesday 3rd January, 2023.



Christmas Party

*Wednesday 7th December 2022
Canberra Southern Cross Club
Venue — "Orion Room"*

12.00 for 12.30PM - Dress Casual

*For Members & Partners Take special note of the time
OOWII 'Gongs' should be worn.*

Make a note in your diary for this year's Christmas event.



Kangaroo Feathers

An interesting point about the Digger's slouch hat is the emu plume worn by the Light Horse and other mounted units. The details of the origin of the emu plume came from General Sir Harry Chauvel, himself a great cavalry leader.

During the great shearers' strike in Queensland in 1891, the Queensland Mounted Infantry and some other troops of the Queensland Defence Force were called out to maintain order. They were employed not as special constabulary, but as soldiers, and they were in the outback for about five months.

In those days emus were plentiful on the western plains of Queensland, and the Mounted Infantry, patrolling an area roughly from Hughenden to the New South Wales border, could not resist the temptation occasionally to ride down the emus they encountered.

It was the Gympie Squadron which first conceived the idea of wearing emu feathers in their hats. Before their five months' patrol ended, the entire regiment was wearing them. And, as a token of recognition for the services of the regiment, the Queensland Government allowed it to adopt the emu plume as part of its uniform. The emu plume was well known in the South African War, where it was worn by the contingents of the Queensland Mounted Infantry. Again in the last war it was worn by Queensland Light Horse Regiment, but in March 1915, the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, in which there was no Queensland units, arrived in Egypt with emu plumes in every hat.

The Queensland Regiments were exceedingly jealous of their distinctive plumes, and protested vigorously - so vigorously that Sir William Birdwood summoned a conference of Brigadiers. They failed to agree on the matter, so Sir William referred it to Sir George Pearce, then Australian Minister for Defence, who ruled that all Australian Light Horse Regiments might wear the plumes. They have been worn by them, and attached units except artillery, ever since.

The Digger of the last war, who pulled many British legs with his tall stories of kangaroo farms, walking-stick farms, bunyip farms and treacle mines, had a strong competitor in the Light Horseman, with his plausible story that the plume in his hat was a kangaroo feather.

People who swallowed that story were fair game for the ensuing embellishments.

An extract from the Authorised Australian Army Education Journal "SALT" Vol.3 No.3, dated 20 April 1942 issued free and weekly to all Australian units.



Bringing a Blitz back to life

*Karyn Markwell Flight Lieutenant
History and Heritage - Air Force*

A restored World War II-era Blitz truck was recently handed over to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.

The truck, with the serial number 19012, was restored by the History and Heritage - Air Force Restoration Support Section (RSS).

Australia and its allies used Blitz trucks extensively during World War II in various roles including transporting troops and cargo.

An estimated 800,000 Blitz trucks were manufactured in Canada by Ford, General Motors and Dodge, and shipped around the world to assist with the war effort. Following WWII, Australia continued to use Blitz trucks in its Defence, forestry, agriculture, transportation and engineering industries.

Wing Commander Keven Kovic, officer in charge of RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre, said the vehicle was versatile. “The Blitz truck saw service in all theatres and was used by all branches of the Australian military and allied Commonwealth forces, and this particular truck was in RAAF service and used as a recovery vehicle,” Wing Commander Kovic said.

The RSS team, led by Corporal Steve Falzon and volunteer Mr Ken Savage, Mr Bill Layten, Mr Max Farrell, Mr Doug Eadie and Mr Charlie Miles, painstakingly rebuilt Blitz truck 19012 from the ground up over many years - including a period of intensive activity from 2020-22.

The restoration included overhauling the truck’s engine, rebuilding its clutch and brake systems, re-wiring its electrical system and manufacturing and fitting the half-doors and modified tray bed.



While Blitz truck 19012 was originally fitted with a crane, the restoration team manufactured and fitted a replica cargo tray.

“We at the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre are extremely pleased with the great attention to detail in its refurbishment, as performed by our restoration volunteers and reservists,” Wing Commander Kovic said.

Bare Island Fort

Bob Cremer

Captain Cook first spotted the area now known as Bare Island in 1770, and referred to it in his journal as 'a small bare island'. At the time of European contact Bare Island was the meeting place of Gweagal and Kameygal Aboriginal groups. The fort was built in the early 1880s to protect Sydney's back door and was in operation until 1908, after which time it became Australia's first war veterans' home.

Located at the entrance to Botany Bay, close to the bay's northern headland it is currently a historic site added to the New South Wales Heritage Register on 2 April 1999. It was designed by Sir Peter Scratchley, Gustave Morell and James Barnet and built from 1881-1889 on behalf of the NSW Government.

Bare Island structure provides a picturesque backdrop for any event with spectacular scenic views over La Perouse.

Connected by a footbridge to the mainland, the heritage listed military fort and tunnels can only be visited by guided tour. In the early 1900s the fort was decommissioned and became the first war veterans' home in Australia and operated between 1912 and 1963.



The army took over the fort in 1942 when Japan entered WWII and veterans made way for 24 servicemen known as the 'Bare Section'. The guns on the island were sold for scrap but the larger two were left on the island as they were considered too heavy to be brought back across the bridge.

Bare Island is considered significant as an almost completely intact example of late 19th century coastal defence technology, and reflects the development of coastal fortification design by the British Army from locations around the world with a symmetrical crescent, with the heaviest gun in the centre, which faced the likely line of attack.

A photo from the Randwick and District Historical Society.

'The Veterans' Home, Bare Island, 1929.'



The island was notified as a Reserve for Public Recreation on 12 March 1965. Between 1963 and 1967 Randwick Historical Society controlled the island and involved other groups such as the Fort Artillery Society who wore period costumes and conducted live firings of the 9 inch gun. These were very popular and became established as a regular attraction.

Bare Island Historic Site was gazetted on 1 October 1967 under the care of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).



Opening of the Veterans' Home on 2 July 1912 with Veterans greeting the Governor-General Lord Denman.

Poster below right reads:

'Ten good men and true' ...
were needed to operate this muzzle loading gun.

- 1 - to swab it with water (This put out sparks left from the previous round)
- 2 - to supply and load the powder.
(Each round used 50lb of powder contained in 2 silk bags)
- 1 - to ram home the charge
- 1 - to load the wadding that separated the powder from the projectile
- 2 - to supply and load the 250lb projectile
- 2 - to sight the gun
- 1 - to order the other 9 around.



Responsibility of Command

Les Cook

I left school after completing year 10 at the end of 1938 when I was fifteen and started work with the Victorian Railways. I had failed to pass my Intermediate Certificate, and Mum, who was very conscious of the need for some academic learning above primary school level, only agreed to my leaving on the condition that I would attend night-school and sit for the exam again at the end of 1939. I did this and passed.

There were three reasons why I wanted to leave school. Firstly I was sick of it, secondly I wanted to start work so that I could be independent, and thirdly I had suffered from what now would be called a clash of personality with the teacher who taught English, who was a sarcastic, overbearing, rude person by any standards. It seemed to me that he had made it his major goal in life to belittle me and my parents in public. I am not a violent person, but whenever I recall him now, even after more than sixty years have passed, I feel the urge to grab him by the front of the shirt and punch him in the face. Nobody else in my life has affected me this way, so either it was a very impressionable time of life for me or he really was as bad as I remember him.

At the time I joined the Railways, the Department had its own telephone and telegraph system completely independent of the PMG system. To provide a pool of skilled telegraphists the Department offered an incentive of sixpence [5 cents] per week additional to normal wages to encourage people to acquire a knowledge of telegraphy.

This reward might not sound much by today's standards, but needs to be related to the weekly wage for a new starter at that time of about fourteen shillings [\$1:40] for a six-day week. Even then, it wasn't very much extra payment for the effort involved in learning the skill, but at least the Victorian Railway's Institute provided the tuition free. I completed the course which, needless to say, included learning the Morse Code.

The war started on 3 September 1939 and recruiting for the AIF opened soon after. The minimum age for enlistment was 21 years or 20 years with parental consent. I was only 16 and tried to enlist then, but was rejected because I did not look old enough. It was not necessary to produce any documentary evidence of one's age or even name, so it was left to the recruiting officer's judgement whether one was too old or too young. When things started to go wrong in Europe early in 1940, and more men were needed, the recruiting officers became less selective and I enlisted in May of that year.

Despite what is often said about the armed forces, questions were asked of the recruit as to any special skills he might possess with a view to placing him in a unit where those skills, already learnt, would be of immediate use. Because of my knowledge of telegraphy I was posted to a Signals unit.

While fully recognizing now the immense importance of communications, this was not what I had envisaged would be my role when I enlisted, and I tried many times to extricate myself. It wasn't just a question of danger because I often felt as if I was in as great danger as a signaller as when I later became a Bren-gunner in a rifle company, although statistics disprove this belief. >>>

Perhaps it was a mental carry-over from earlier wars where the majority of soldiers were fighting men and the rest were looked on as hangers-on. I volunteered for the Ski Battalion, the Tanks, the Commandos, the Paratroops, and I can't remember what else, all to no avail.

As it happened anyway, I didn't make use of my telegraphy skills, but spent most of my time as a signaller in the early days of the war dragging telephone wire across country and repairing breaks in the wire caused by enemy action or accident. I recognize now that in performing these tasks I was probably making a more valuable contribution to the war effort than if I had been just another rifle in the firing line, but it was not what I had set out to do.

My failure to obtain a transfer appeared to be the result of another personality clash, this time between me and my Company Commander. He steadfastly refused to agree to me transferring elsewhere, using as his reason that I was a specialist and was needed where I was. Specialists were paid an extra two shillings [20 cents] a day more than ordinary private soldiers.

As a way of breaking myself out of this block, I volunteered to relinquish my specialist pay at my own request and to revert to the status of an ordinary private soldier. It was then that I saw the vindictiveness of my Company Commander. He agreed that I had the right to relinquish my specialist pay, but he made it clear that this would not achieve my goal as he would see that I remained where I was doing menial tasks such as kitchen duties for the rest of the war. He had the power to do this unless I could put my case to a higher authority who could, of course, over-rule him.

My break came when a new Commanding Officer was appointed to the unit. I asked to be paraded before him as was my right. He listened sympathetically to my story, approved the transfer, and I was gone in a week. From a financial point of view also I was lucky because I had already applied in writing to relinquish my specialist pay. Apparently this request was not processed as I continued to receive specialist pay until I was later promoted to the rank of Corporal in a rifle company. When this happened, my specialist pay was subsumed in the increase due to a corporal. From my memories of the CO, I think it most likely that he tore up my request after he had approved the transfer.

Looking back on it, perhaps it was me who was at fault both at school and in the Signals unit. Certainly, I was the only common factor. In my defence however, I didn't clash with any other teachers at school, or with any other officers, or NCOs in almost seven years with the AIF.

Both men with whom I did clash were sarcastic in a way which was deliberately intended to hurt; and, in my opinion, both were small-minded and were unfit to command. Perhaps I made my views of them too obvious, which I suppose would have made them even more determined to defeat me.

I made up my mind that if ever I was in a position of responsibility over others I would do my best to avoid making anyone who was subordinate to me feel as I had been made to feel while serving under those two men. Also, that I would not do anything to retain under my command any person who did not want to be there. I hope that I was successful on both counts.



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Victoria Barracks, Brisbane, 1980-84 Recollections by Peter Phillips (Part 2)

During my term, Sir Ninian Stephen was appointed Governor General. He was extremely popular and respected but he did not have a happy start in Queensland. On his first visit, he was to officially open the Brisbane Exhibition, the “Ekka”. As I advised Government House in Canberra, it had been customary that the Exhibition was opened to the public on a weekend but the official opening was held mid-week as a prelude to the Grand Parade. Sir Ninian said that he was happy to speak at the opening but did not believe he should declare open an event that had been going for several days. This minor issue was leaked to the press and the *Courier Mail* unfairly made a story of it under the headline “Sir Ninkompoop”.

Governor of Queensland. It was also my duty, along with my Air Force and Navy counterparts to attend on the Governor, Commodore Sir James Ramsey. He and his wife were charming hosts and had us to Government House for numerous events. At the Opening of Parliament, we Heads of Services would stand dutifully behind the Governor demonstrating the loyalty of the Armed Forces to the Crown. The Official Secretary to the Governor was a former RMC Classmate of mine, retired Lieutenant Colonel Ray Kennedy who was a delight to cooperate with. We often met together with other good Brisbane folk over lunch at the Tattersall’s Club in Brisbane to solve the problems of Queensland ... and the world!

1st Military District Band. The Governor was a particular fan of the 1st Military District Band which played at most State occasions. This 50-strong band of professional musicians was widely acclaimed. Indeed it was at the forefront in selling the Army to the public. His Excellency kindly consented to being photographed with me and the Band in the Mayne Hall at the University of Queensland and I still treasure a copy of the photograph.

The Band performed on military and State occasions as well as performing concerts. Under the direction of Major Colin Harper, the Band was hugely popular with the public and its concerts were mostly sold out and much money was raised for charities. The Musical Director managed to secure performances by many local and interstate artists who usually donated their services with the Band. One particular successful public concert was held at night in the Botanic Gardens. We were happy to also assist the Brisbane City Council and Lord Mayor Roy Harvey. I also came to know Councillor Sallyanne Atkinson who succeeded him in the position of Lord Mayor.

The Band enjoyed using the German Club as a “watering hole” where they were honorary members. I recall joining them on one occasion to accept the donation from a Club member to the Band of a *cor anglais*, or English horn, a large bassoon-like addition to their armoury of instruments. Later, I was happy to agree to the Band running a concert at City Hall to mark the Centenary of the founding of the German Club. It proved to be spectacularly successful, helped by the presence of former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his wife.

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The Son et Lumiere - Marking the Centenary of the naming of Victoria Barracks. In 1983, our Public Relations Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Roylance, and I were searching for ways to mark the centenary of the naming of the barracks as Victoria Barracks. Then a local theatre group made a request that they be permitted to conduct a *son et lumiere* theatrical performance to mark the occasion. It was to be set in the original soldiers' barrack block and dramatise the Russian naval threat to Brisbane in the 1880s. The offer was accepted and, with volunteer cast members from our staff, support from the Band, and serchlights from our Ordinance depot, we were able to present a creditable performance. The large invited audience included most of Brisbane's leading citizens as well as our own staff and families.

The Queensland Premier and Cabinet. Soon after arrival in Brisbane, I called formally on the Premier, Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen, better known to all as "Joh". He had just returned from a visit to the USA where he had called on President Ronald Reagan so I was treated to a lengthy discourse on "Reagan-omics". It sounded logical enough but then Joh switched topics to talk about the hydrogen car which all became very fanciful and I doubted his understanding of the underlying physics!

Later, we saw much of the Premier and his wife who were always friendly and courteous in their down-to-earth fashion. I have since admired him for his efforts for his State. Memorably, we ran a counter terrorist exercise prior to the 1982 Commonwealth Games which involved a final assault by the SAS on an "enemy" in a derelict pub near the South Bank in Brisbane at around 3:00am. We were watching the exercise unfold from the State Executive building when who should walk in but the Premier. He seemed to thrive on little sleep.

One odd dealing that I had with Premier concerned Shoalwater Bay. A retired businessman and pre-War flying boat captain from Sydney had called on me in Brisbane to outline his plans for shipping coal from Port Clinton in massive 350,000 tonne colliers which would be able to land coal in Europe at competitive prices. He had managed to convince Lang Hancock that he could rail his coal direct to Port Clinton and had even sweetened the proposal by declaring that a new city, to be named Bjelke-Petersen City would be built at Port Clinton. The problem was that it would be necessary to run the railway through the Army's Shoalwater Bay Training Area and effectively slice off about a third of it. I duly reported all this to Canberra, noting my naval counterpart's advice that dredging the shallow harbour at Port Clinton to admit such large vessels was highly problematic because of silting that would ensue from the prevailing tidal flows.

One day, Joh called me directly on this subject and asked if I would see him to discuss the matter of a possible land swap. I said that I was not empowered to enter any such negotiations but that I was happy to hear what was suggested and pass it to the Department of Defence. I met Joh and some officials in his office next day and he immediately put his pitch on the table. "You give us Port Clinton and we'll give you Rattlesnake Island", he said, as if it was a foregone conclusion. I knew little about the island other than that it was a tiny speck in the Coral Sea near Townsville and that the Air Force had been using it as an aerial bombing range since World War II days. I was pleased to be able to extricate myself from the meeting but it gave me a clear example of Joh's forthright style.

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Joh's Cabinet Ministers were a mixed bag. I particularly liked the Treasurer, Sir Lew Edwards, and he and I worked closely on the security arrangements for the Commonwealth Games. Others with whom I had some minor dealings, such as Russ Hinze, "Minister for Everything", were clearly corrupt. Two Ministers, one of whom I worked with in support of the Boy Scouts, were subsequently convicted and jailed.

The Queensland Police. In Rockhampton in 1970, in the wake of Cyclone Althea, I had worked with the Queensland Police and other State agencies in a regional emergency committee in Central Queensland. I was appalled at how difficult it was to achieve anything given the inability of State agencies to delegate and make timely decisions; and the poor communications set-up. Ten years later, I was determined to try and improve this situation and, in the event of a real Defence emergency, to be able to harness the State's capabilities in support of any Lines-of-Communication arrangement. One of the first outcomes was a joint communications exercise with the Queensland Police which worked well.

A result was that I had a firm ally in the Commissioner of Police, Sir Terry Lewis. I was pleased to have him as a guest at the Barracks and he, in turn, invited me to the Police Academy (then led by an old Army friend, retired Colonel, Jock Jenvey). My dealings with the Police Commissioner were harmonious. Though I was well aware of the allegations of corruption in the Police Force, I had no reason to suspect the Commissioner. Late in my term, however, the Military Police had become aware of one of an Army sergeant in PNG who had stolen weapon parts and was mailing them to a Queensland policeman in Brisbane. I thought it best to alert the Commissioner personally to this and tell him what action we were taking against the Army sergeant. He thanked me for the call and asked that I leave the police side of it to him. I did this but am unaware of any action that was ever taken.

The 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games. The Army played a major part in supporting the Games. Indeed, I doubt that they could have been satisfactorily conducted without the stores, transport and manpower which the Army provided. Lieutenant Colonel Ron Shambrook was seconded from HQ IMD to the games organisation and was a driving force in the success of the Games.

Much effort went into assisting the Queensland government in security for the Games and counter terrorism measures. I was a member of the State's operations centre along with a duty Minister, police and other officials. I mentioned earlier the involvement of the SAS and we also had an infantry battalion training at Canungra for use in the event of a major incident. One concern was the possibility of a disruption by aboriginal activists. In the event, a large protest rally did occur but was well managed by the police.

Behind the scenes, we were at pains to ensure that no explosive devices could be set off in the stadium. On the morning of the opening day some of our explosive ordnance disposal dogs and their handlers were doing a sweep of the stadium when they were alerted to the possible presence of explosives. A panic ensued as a further thorough search was made without trace. Fortunately someone recalled that "cracker dust" had been laid on some soft patches in the surrounds. >>>

These had only just been laid after delivery from a local quarry and enquiries revealed that it was from freshly blasted gravel in which it was highly likely that there would be some residue of explosives.

The Visit by HM Queen Elizabeth to Victoria Barracks. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was opening the Games and we had the good fortune to meet her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip and attend a function they hosted on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. I had become aware that the Games organising committee had difficulty securing a suitable, secure venue where it could hold an evening cocktail reception for the Games officials to meet Her Majesty. I volunteered Victoria Barracks and its Officers' Mess and the offer was readily accepted. Artificial turf was laid in the circular courtyard in front of the Mess which provided a wonderful setting for the large crowd.

We had arranged for a Quarter Guard to be formed up outside the Guard House, dressed in the uniforms and pill-box hats of the Queensland Permanent Artillery of the 1880s. These had been manufactured from expired dress blue uniform stocks held by the Ordnance depot. When her Majesty arrived she inspected the guard before joining the guests for a highly successful but little publicised event.

The Officers' Mess. The Mess was based on the original officer's house provided in the 1860s for Lieutenant Seymour, commander of the detachment of the 12th (East Suffolk) Regiment of Foot. With various extensions, it had been made a comfortable facility with a fine kitchen, dining room and bar and a few bachelor quarters. Colonel Ken Anderson, commander of our Ordnance services, did a grand job as president of the Mess Committee. The mess was highly popular with members, retired officers and others who were honorary members. It was also popular for lunch with VIPs, public servants and business executives with whom we had dealings. There were numerous high ranking visitors, especially I remember the Minister for Defence, Sir James Killen, with whom I often shared the head table at local events and we played golf together. The Mess served us very well indeed.

The Tennis Court. The Mess boasted an excellent lawn tennis court which was popular with me and some of the officers. I never did find out its origin but it was reputed to be the oldest grass court in Queensland. The Queensland Tennis Association asked to use it during the Queensland tennis championships as a practice venue for ladies, including some overseas stars. We readily agreed and it was a highlight of the summer to have these attractive athletes sparring next to our anteroom.

13th Australian Scouts Jamboree. I was invited, *ex officio*, to join the State Council of the Boy Scouts and felt it a worthy endeavour deserving of support by the Australian Defence Force. I attended several meetings in their offices in Fortitude Valley, mostly concerned with the annual "Gang Show" and the 13th Australian Jamboree to be held near Darra. The Army again provided most of the tentage, camping ware, and some transport needed for the Jamboree. In the event, we were unable to meet some small last minute requests for transport but the Air Force was able to step in. The Jamboree was a great success, I was somewhat galled when the Air Force was showered with thanks for its minor part yet Army was not even mentioned.

>>>

Farewell. My three years at Victoria Barracks in Brisbane were thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable. They took me to every corner of Queensland and of Brisbane. The city was small enough then to get to know all of the leading figures in the community. We watched the enormous growth and sophistication of Brisbane. As well, we met many, such as future Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson and future Premier, Peter Beatty, who went on to high office in later years. My family enjoyed our holidays in the State and had a memorable stay on the Barrier Reef at the time that Australia won the America's Cup.

I departed Brisbane in January 1984 following a sumptuous dining-out from the Officers' Mess. In my farewell remarks, I talked about the great heritage the Army had in Victoria Barracks and presented a mounted photograph of Blackall, the second governor of Queensland, after whom the road through the Barracks had been named. I speculated that Governor Blackall may well have called on Lieutenant Seymour in his quarters (now our Mess) to discuss their shared military experiences ... just as Mess members do today.

YE THAT HAVE FAITH

*Ye that have faith to look with fearless eyes
Beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
And know that out of death and night shall rise
The dawn of ampler life.*

*Rejoice, whatever anguish rend the heart,
That God has given you a priceless dower,
To live in these great times and have your part
In Freedom's crowning hour.*

*That ye may tell your sons who see the light
High in the heavens - their heritage to take,
"I saw the powers of Darkness put to flight.
I saw the morning break".*

*Lines found pencilled on a sheet of paper
in the pocket of a young Australian,
who died in the trenches at Gallipoli -
written evidently by him before
he met his death.*

*From The All-Australian Memorial
History and Heroes.*

Historic Air Force boat to be restored

*Karyn Markwell Flight Lieutenant
History & Heritage - Air Force*

Air Force has been gifted the only remaining World War II RAAF Rescue Launch for the Air Force Heritage Collection.

The boat was transported in February by road from Lakes Entrance, Victoria, to the History and Heritage Facility at Spotswood, Victoria. Senior Air Force Curator, History & Heritage - Air Force, David Gardner, accepted the donation from its owner, Howard “Harry” Bowman, on behalf of Air Force.

The restoration of boat 02-06 will be supported by royalties totalling more than \$136,000 from Air Force Centenary licenced merchandise sales.

02-06 is one of 15 02-Class vessels constructed for the RAAF in 1941 at Fishermans Bend in Melbourne by Thornycroft/Halversen, and was in service as a search and rescue (SAR) boat during WWII in the Gippsland Lakes, East Sale and Point Cook.



Former Air Force search and rescue boat 02-06 pulled from the water at Lakes Entrance for transport to Spotswood, Victoria

Air Force operated boats from 1921 to 1993, and the fleet of various classes of boats peaked at 1300 during WWII; 600 powered craft and 700 unpowered.

After the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific region, the RAAF commenced disposing of its unwanted boats. A revision of the RAAF Small Marine Craft Program led to the retention of only 107 boats to provide support in the areas of supply, torpedo recovery, air-sea rescue and flying boat service at eight RAAF bases. These bases gradually diminished in number until only three marine sections remained at Townsville, Williamtown and Point Cook for SAR duties. These three sections remained operational until January 31, 1993.

02-06 was declared for disposal in 1954 and operated on the Maribyrnong River, changing hands twice prior to Mr Bowman purchasing it in Melbourne in 1986. When Mr Bowman realised he had acquired a piece of RAAF wartime history, he motored the boat across Port Phillip Bay to Mordialloc Creek, loaded it on a boat trailer and transported it to Sale.

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During the past 36 years, it has been a regular sight on the waterways between Sale and Lakes Entrance, and has generated a great deal of interest from locals and holidaymakers. Mr Bowman maintained the boat as originally as possible, marginally converting it internally into a comfortable family cruiser without detracting from its unique military past. He had always wished, when he decided to take life easier, to donate the boat to an appropriate organisation that would restore it to its former glory and display it for future generations.

History and Heritage Branch will restore the boat to its WWII livery before putting it on permanent display at the RAAF Museum at Point Cook.



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To The People of Australia
The FUZZY WUZZY Angels and other verses ...
Sapper H 'Bert' Beros
NX6925 RAE, AIF
(From the Forward of his Book of Verses)

In these verses I have tried to show life as I see it in the AIF - the heartaches, humour, laughter and pluck of these sons of Australia, with whom I have spent some of my life under conditions where the real manhood comes out.

I hail from a sister Dominion, Canada, where people are of similar stock to Australians, but I am now Australian in ways and outlook. I have worked in WA, SA, Qld and NSW. I was a miner, employed by the State Coal Mine in Lithgow NSW, at the time of my enlistment.

Some things, mostly small things, live forever in the mind. I remember one time we were putting a bridge over a fast stream to get the wounded out. We were under Japanese fire. When the job was finished, two sappers tied a piece of thin bark across, near the middle. Another, astride a stick and with bayonet held aloft, rode along to cut the 'ribbon' - de Groot fashion. Even a high officer who was there had to enter into the joke.

Another time, an Arab was praying on the side of a road as we were marching by. One chap said, "I suppose he is asking Allah to send us home". His mate answered, "I hope he soon takes notice then".

A very deaf digger, lying with others when the Japs were only a few yards away, handed the sergeant a grenade and in a very loud voice said, "Give the b..... this for luck".

Padre Burt was left behind to look after and later bury three wounded men. Two died during the night and were buried. The third sat up and demanded breakfast next morning. That man lived.

In Queensland, after we came back from the Middle East, the 2/16th Battalion opened new latrines with fine speeches and the band in attendance.

One chap, who was shot through the cheeks, told the sisters they would be jealous of his dimples.

Dedicated to my two sons
Private Laurie Beros
(a Prisoner of War in Italy)
and
AC1 Cecil Beros
(RAAF)

SUB-BRANCH SERVICES

Sub-Branch Office Hours. The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The services of the Sub-Branch are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

Office Manager. Alex Solecka administers the Sub-Branch office and is responsible to the Executive for the efficient day-to-day routine of the office. Joyce will supervise all Sub-Branch matters including membership, correspondence, functions and access to Sub-Branch services.

Veterans' Support Centre (VSC). The office is open from 9:00AM until 3:00PM Monday to Friday, except public holidays, and at other times by appointment. The services of the VSC are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

Entitlement and Advocacy (E&A). A team of trained advocates and entitlements/pension officers, both male and female, is available to provide assistance with claims under the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA), the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA), and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA). We also provide support and advice to war widows and widowers regarding pensions. Andrew Properjohn, the E&A Administrator, will assist you with your enquiries.

Community Support. The provision of welfare to Sub-Branch members and their families can be arranged through Community Support. Advice is available on a case by case basis to access services through DVA, My Aged Care, Centrelink and the ACT Government. For details contact the Sub-Branch office on 6285 1931.

Hospital Visiting: We no longer visit the three Southside hospitals automatically but, working with the Veteran Liaison Officers (VLOs) in these hospitals, volunteers visit hospital patients on a case-by-case basis.

Hospice Visiting: Visits can be arranged for Sub-Branch members in Clare Holland House.

Christmas Visits: In December each year, all Sub-Branch members 80 years of age and over, and all Sub-Branch widows and widowers receive a home visit and a gift.

Health and Fitness Program. Arrangements between the Southern Cross Health Club (SCHC) and Sub-Branch members relating to gym use have changed. For details call the office on 6285 1931.

Sub-Branch Publication. The Sub-Branch Publication, *'The Serviceman'* is published three times each year and distributed free to all Sub-Branch members, widows and widowers. A special edition is also published for schoolchildren attending the annual ANZAC and Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park.

Eddison Day Club. Sponsored by the Sub-Branch, the Day Club caters for members, their spouses, widows, widowers and the general community. It meets every Friday from 10:00AM to 2:00PM (except Good Friday) from mid-January to mid-December at the Irish Club, Parkinson Street, Weston.

If you know of any member who would benefit from any of these services, but is reluctant to apply, please let our office know.