

# RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

4 March 22

## Meeting with Nowra Veteran Wellbeing Centre team



The RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch President Jim Gilchrist attended a meeting recently at Poppies to discuss networking opportunities between Nowra Veteran Wellbeing Centre and Soldier On, Open Arms, Defence Health, Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation, Invictus Australia and the Defence Member and Family Support team.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ANZAC APPEAL WEEK

19 - 24 April

Please contact us on 62851931

if you can help staff a

booth for the ANZAC Appeal.

# MEETING NEWS

## OGM

An OGM will be held at 1400 hours on Tuesday 29 March 2022 in the Sub-Branch Office. Light refreshments will be provided following the OGM.

## ANZAC and Peace Ceremony

The Sub-Branch Board has also decided not to hold the annual ANZAC and Peace Ceremony in 2022. That decision is based on the current and likely COVID-19 health advice and restrictions, and the ACT Education Directorate's position. However, we will be conducting the ANZAC Essay Competition this year.

## ANZAC Eve Dinner

We look forward to catching up with members at the ANZAC Eve Dinner on 24 April 2022.



From DVA Facebook page



## **Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs**

If you're keen to lend a hand to communities impacted by flooding, Disaster Relief Australia is deploying a veteran-led volunteer workforce.

Since 2016 they have been on the front line of helping communities recover from natural disasters, providing hands on help getting people back into their homes.

Around 80% of Disaster Relief Australia's workforce are veterans, but you don't have to be a veteran to join.

Find out more about how you can help flood affected communities here <https://www.dva.gov.au/.../disaster-relief-australia...>

Disaster payments are available for people impacted by flooding. Check if you are eligible at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/active-natural-disaster-events>





## **The Hon Andrew Gee MP**

Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
Minister for Defence Personnel  
Federal Member for Calare

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

27 February 2022

## **REMEMBERING HMAS *PERTH* 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF SUNDA STRAIT**

Tomorrow, on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of HMAS *Perth*, we honour the extraordinary service and sacrifice of the hundreds of men killed in the Battle of Sunda Strait, while defending Netherlands East Indies (modern day Indonesia) during the Second World War.

HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston* were far outnumbered by the Japanese fleet they encountered on 28 February 1942, while attempting to pass through the narrow and treacherous Sunda Strait, heading to present day Sri Lanka.

Both ships were sunk after sustaining numerous torpedo hits and shell impact after midnight on 1 March 1942.

More than 350 Navy personnel, Royal Australian Air Force personnel and canteen staff were killed when HMAS *Perth* went down. Those who survived were taken as prisoners and a third of them had died in Japanese captivity by the time the war was over.

Fewer than 400 of the 1,000 American sailors and marines on USS *Houston* escaped their sinking ship, and only around 290 survived the Japanese prisoner of war camps in the years after.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee said the Australian and American crews should be remembered for their bravery and determination in the face of impossible odds.

"Our sailors were heavily outnumbered, running low on ammunition and changing course constantly to avoid attacks from every direction," Minister Gee said.

"They fought gallantly against the superior numbers and firepower of the Japanese flotilla, and managed to inflict considerable damage to a number of enemy ships.

"For those who survived and were taken prisoner, their nightmare would continue as they suffered horrendous conditions in the now infamous Japanese POW camps.

"While the Battle of Sunda Strait was a heavy blow to our nations, the story of HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston* speaks to the longstanding alliance between Australia and the US, and our shared commitment to defending freedom.

"Following the sinking of HMAS *Sydney* in November 1941, the loss of HMAS *Perth* and those on board had a significant impact as the threat of Japanese invasion loomed.

"Eighty years on, we remember the courage of all those who served on HMAS *Perth* and the USS *Houston*.

"We honour those men who gave their lives and acknowledge the suffering of those taken prisoner.

"And we again reflect on the service and sacrifice of all those who rose to the defence of Australia and our neighbours during the Second World War.

"It is our nation's duty to never, ever forget them."

To learn more about HMAS *Perth* and the Battle of Sunda Strait, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs' [Anzac Portal](#).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**  
**Minister Gee office: 0459 966 944**  
**DVA Media: 02 6289 6466**

**Poem 'Memory' by Bandsman George Vanselow, RAN**  
**Survivor of HMAS Perth**

*In Sunda Straits she fought her fight,  
Gainst hopeless odds that fatal night,  
Brave men gave all, so great their worth,  
and glorified the 'Fighting Perth'.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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*HMAS Perth's ship's company in Fremantle, 6 August 1941.*



*Survivor of HMAS Perth, Bandsman George Vanselow who recalled the night Perth and Houston were sunk in his poem entitled 'Memory'*





*HMAS Perth in Culbra Cut Panama Canal 29 November 1939.*

*Images from <https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-perth-i>*

**Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling** provides 24/7 free confidential crisis support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families on 1800 011 046 or [openarms.gov.au](http://openarms.gov.au). **Safe Zone Support** provides anonymous counselling on 1800 142 072. **Defence All-Hours Support Line** provides support for ADF personnel on 1800 628 036 or [defence.gov.au/health/healthportal](http://defence.gov.au/health/healthportal). **Defence Member and Family Helpline** provides support for Defence families on 1800 624 608.



**COFFEE CATCH UP  
ACTIVE AGAIN FROM FRIDAY  
25 FEBRUARY 2022!!!**

**Our Coffee Catch Up is open again from 10-12 every Friday in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.**

**Please note that the Eddison Day Club is currently meeting on only a very casual basis for lunch at midday Fridays.**



### **Contact Us**

Give us a call for more information or access to our services

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.rslwoden.org.au](http://www.rslwoden.org.au)

Office hours are  
9am-3pm Mon-Fri

### **PS.**

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