



TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH



Newsletter

Issue 65– April 2021

NEW SUB BRANCH MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new Sub-Branch Members:

VALE

Ron Robinson
Rex Ceeney

Lest We Forget



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Sub Branch General Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month,
Starting from 7 March 2021.**

**At 10.30am in function room at The Ary, with the exception of January.
All Members are invited to attend.**

Monday 15 March 2021 – 10.30am	Committee meeting
Sunday 4 April 2021 – 10.30am	General Meeting
Sunday 18 April 2021 – 9.00am	Anzac Day Service Wallarah Bay
Sunday 25 April 2021 – 5.20am	Anzac Day
Sunday 25 July 2021 – 11.00 am	First Wellness & Welfare Activity
Thursday 11 November 2021 – 10.40am	Remembrance Day
Sunday 19 December 2021 – 11.00 am	Second Wellness & Welfare Activity

. Keeping your Sub Branch Details Up to Date

If you have recently moved, or your details have changed, please let the Sub Branch Office know so that we can update your address and contact details.

This information is required so that we can send any correspondence and membership renewals to the correct address.

Also, if you know of a member who has moved, either to another area or to an Aged Care Facility, please notify the Sub Branch Office.

Reminder from Editor/Membership Officer :

Another reminder that 2021 fees are now due.

As at 5 March we have 164 fully paid members, 9 partially paid and 27 that have made no payment at all.

In the diary dates above some will have noticed that we have two "Wellness & Wellfare" functions scheduled this year. These two events replace our normal Xmas party events as RSL NSW have advised us to change the name of the events.

A Doctors report from Gallipoli.

Name : Vivian Benjafield

Date : 1915-1918

Unit : Australian Army Medical Corps

Location: Gallipoli, Middle East and England

Major Vivien Benjafield of the Australian Army Medical Corps became something of a legend in his own lifetime. He served throughout World War I as a surgeon and administrator in Gallipoli, on hospital ships, in Alexandria and later in England before being invalided back to Australia.

He was frequently under fire in Gallipoli and was mentioned in despatches.

He volunteered for active service in September 1914, and after some time examining recruits, he was posted to No 2 Australian General Hospital and served in Egypt.

In April 1915, he sailed as Medical Officer on HMT *Armadale*, which had been converted into a temporary hospital ship, and found himself at Gallipoli.

Many people involved in planning the landing at Gallipoli seemed to think it would be accomplished without too much fuss.

Captain Benjafield (as he was then) was a prolific letter writer and echoed these sentiments in his letters home. These were copied for him and widely distributed among his friends.

"Apparently there is every prospect of this being a walkover for our troops, but we do not know. There may be a surprise in store for us for all we know, but it seems hardly likely that resistance will be very great," he wrote two days before the landing. "The actual landing is in charge of a special naval party sent out from England for the purpose. They have among them a number of men who took part in a similar manoeuvres on the English coast last year."

He then described how his ship had sailed at 5.30 in the morning of 24 April finally dropping anchor in the harbour on the north side of Lemnos Island.

"We are to leave this anchorage soon after 11 tonight and proceed to Gallipoli to disembark in the early morning," he wrote. His next entry was almost a week later.

"To say that since writing last we have been through a literal hell is putting things very mildly, Captain Benjafield wrote. "We left our anchorage at the appointed time and steamed round to our appointed position off Big Anrfarfe Bay in the early morning.

"We were supposed to have five hours to prepare the ship for the reception of wounded but as a matter of fact they were landed on us before the first troops had left the ship. Our men were landed in torpedo boats and the first one to come alongside had about a dozen men on board and one dead. There was nothing for it but to take them and do the best we could for them. Fortunately the hospital had been cleared, giving us accommodation for the seriously wounded; the remainder were stowed just wherever we could find room.

"Gradually as the troops were taken off more wounded men arrived and in the meantime as best we could we ripped out all the mess tables in the troop decks, laid down tarpaulins, hammocks, blankets and everything we could find, so as to keep the men as clean as possible. By lunch time I had 150 wounded aboard and more or less attended to.

"We were one of the closest to the beach and just before 10 o'clock we were surprised to see shells dropping around us. They were apparently Howitzer shells fired from a hill some three miles inland. The sound of a large shell flying overhead is not a pleasant one, particularly when dropped into the water only a few yards in front of our bows. The

inclination to "duck" is quite irresistible and we went down to it every time. As soon as possible we were moved to a position further out, and in the meantime the warships plugged into the hill on which the gun was mounted and apparently silenced it. The noise of the firing was terrific, literally hundreds of shots were fired from the big guns at this hill, and also with shrapnel at the hordes of Turkish soldiers on the other hill, while the Turks, of course, replied to the best of their ability.

"The landing of the troops was an exceedingly difficult task as the Turks had been preparing for weeks. Of course practically none of the men had been under fire before and the test of being packed into boats helpless, with shrapnel, machine gun fire and rifle fire pouring over them was an extreme one. Out of one boatload only 11 got ashore unscathed, but the men were quite undaunted and maintained and maintained the reputation of the British Race. Some of the Naval officers to whom I spoke afterwards, said they did not think that such soldiers existed; probably some of the men were even a little too enthusiastic and rather outran themselves.

"About noon, the big gun on the hill having been silenced, we returned to our original anchorage and the unloading of ammunition and water proceeded. A few more wounded were brought aboard but were fairly easily dealt with. It was simply surprising the way everybody worked. Officers left aboard to supervise the landing of stores had their men spending every available moment clearing the troop decks for me. The ship's officers helped me with the taking in of the wounded in slings or up the gangways. One Medical Detail attended as best they could to the comfort of the wounded, dressing where possible their wounds and giving them water etc. Then we had a little spell, about 2pm and got the first chance of a bite of food we had had since starting work at about 5am.

"At a little after 3 we got one big rush of wounded and between that time and 8pm we took them in at the rate of over 140 per hour, till at the last we had a total of over 850 on board. We could do nothing more than sort them out as best we could, and send them to what appeared to be the most suitable position of the ship. The very worst cases, unconscious and dying, were simply placed on a hatch and covered with a blanket; the next worst were put in the Hospital, and the next upon some mattresses and stretchers I had found and placed in A troop deck. The remainder were packed into the troop decks like sardines. Of course most of them had on their first field dressings, and these had to suffice except for the very bad ones, until such time as we could attend them. One boat load of very severe cases I simply had to refuse, and I insisted on their being taken to another ship.

"Then began the work of attending to them, and we were hard at it till 3.30am. Anything like surgical treatment was past all hope, all we could do being to re-dress the worst of the wounds, and stop haemorrhage. Even fractures were left to the next day, merely being placed in a position which gave the greatest degree of comfort, or the least degree of pain.

"Fortunately I had plenty of opium and morphia on board and this was liberally given to all who were in pain. Some of the wounds were terrible; one man had a large portion of the

head blown away at the back, but lived two days. A good many were shot through the abdomen, but some of these are doing well and should soon recover. Huge wounds of the fleshy portions of the body, in many cases caused comparatively little pain. One young Naval Officer shot clean through the head caused us a lot of anxiety during the first few days, but is now conscious and should recover. Lung wounds are quite common, and where caused by bullets give rise to comparatively little trouble. On the other hand when caused by shrapnel - the bullets of which are spherical and about 3/8th inch diameter - the injury is much more severe.

"Almost every conceivable portion of the body has been hit - arms, legs, one in the tongue, a New Zealand officer right through upper jaw and nose, the bullet passing clean through, one man in the eye, another with a spent bullet in his ear, two through the windpipe, a couple through the spine and so on. Most had only one wound, some more, one man holding the record with eight separate wounds. And the escapes were wonderful. I know of at least three whose identity discs saved them from lung wounds; one man found a bullet in a testament he carried in his left breast pocket- quite the orthodox thing. Another man had two jack knives in his trousers pocket and these were both perforated by a bullet which then just buried itself in his side, right over the femoral artery. In all, 15 of our patients have died, and some 20 are still in danger. All the remainder should recover.

Captain Benjafield had been agitating to have permission for his ship to take the wounded to hospital in Alexandria but without luck,

"At last about 3pm Tuesday, General Carruthers came aboard and gave us permission to sail and off we went without delay, on our return to Alexandria."

Captain Benjafield returned to Gallipoli and served in a field hospital before being promoted to Major and appointed Medical Officer in charge of the military hospital at Ras-el-Tin.

Subsequently he was posted to England as MO to the Australian Military Hospital. Despite his pleas to be sent to France or be given a surgical appointment, he was told his work as an administrator and organiser was too valuable.

He was eventually invalided back to Australia with first class testimonials from General Howse. On arriving in Sydney in November 1917, instead of being demobilised he was employed in the medical service and took charge of the Liverpool Camp while the MO was on leave.

After an expected appointment as Superintendent of Randwick Military Hospital fell through, Dr Benjafield returned to private practice.

After the war, he became an outspoken and colourful figure and a well-known Macquarie Street doctor who continued to visit his repat patients on a regular basis even after he had retired.

The caption to a newspaper cartoon published on his retirement pointed out that 50,000 Diggers had passed through his hands since the outbreak of war. He was 94 when he died.

Puzzle Corner



Trivia

1. The movement of pollen from the anthers to the stigma of a flower is known as what?
2. Kuwait City is located in which of these areas of the world?
3. What color are holly berries?
4. What is the Italian word used in English to describe grilled bread with tomato and garlic?
5. You can find the Wailing Wall at which location?
6. What is the medical name for your shoulder blade?
7. What country is Tuscany a region of?
8. What was the cause of Theodore Roosevelt's death?
9. The Gibson desert is found in which country?
10. On what river is the capital city of Canada?

A leading horse trainer was given an eye-test and presented with a pair of glasses. The optician said they would cost \$300.

“Too much” cried the trainer.

X

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Regional Seniors Travel Card

With the latest COVID-19 health advice, we strongly advise you to apply online or by calling [13 77 88](tel:137788), rather than visiting a service centre.

Once you receive your card, you need to activate it within 45 days. You have at least 12 months to use your card from the date of activation.

If you have an existing online account for your 2020 card, you'll need to create a new online account with a new username for your 2021 card. Please note the card services website is for the management of the regional seniors travel card. It is not associated with your MyServiceNSW Account.

Applications for 2021 will close on 30 November 2021.

The regional seniors travel card provides eligible seniors living in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW with a \$250 prepaid card to help ease the cost of travel. You can use the card at certain retailers to pay for pre-booked NSW Trainlink Regional trains and coaches, fuel and taxis.

You'll need to activate your card before you can use it

The travel card is valid for 14 months from the date the card is issued. The expiry date is available on the front of the card.

Applications for 2021 (Year 2) opened on 18 January 2021 and will close on 30 November 2021.

2020 card holders

If you managed your 2020 card on the card services website and would like to do the same for your 2021 card, you will need to create a new login with a new username for your 2021 card (you cannot add your 2021 card to your 2020 card login on the card services website).

For more information on using both your 2021 card read the Get started with your regional seniors travel card guide.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the trial, you must:

- have reached the Age Pension age
- live in a designated regional area of NSW outside of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong
- be receiving support from either Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs as follows:

Services Australia

You must be:

- receiving the Age Pension; or
- a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holder.

Department of Veterans' Affairs

You must be receiving one of the following:

- Age Pension
- Service Pension
- Disability Pension under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*
- War Widow(er) Pension

Or hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

- You must also have received your pension or have held your card for at least one month.

Note: Services Australia was formerly the Department of Human Services.

COMMEMORATION OF ANZAC

**March and Service 9.00 am
WBRC Sunday 18 April 2021**



Puzzle Corner Answers



Trivia Answers

1. Pollination
2. Middle East
3. Red
4. Bruschetta
5. Jerusalem
6. Scapula
7. Italy
8. Coronary embolism
9. Australia
10. Montreal

Insults :

1. "Can I have this dance?" asked the young man at the local dance. "Sure, if you can find someone to dance with" replied the young lady.
2. "I would like to buy my girlfriend a ring but I don't know what she'd like" the young man said to the jeweller. "Does she like you" the jeweller asked. "Of course" he replied. "Then she would like anything" the jeweller finished with.
3. An Englishman boarded a train with a large shaggy dog and sat opposite an Irish man. Paddy looked at the dog awhile and then said "What type of dog is that?". The surly Englishman replied "it's a cross between an ape and an Irishman". Paddy was quick to reply "You mean it's related to both of us?".
4. He : "I'm nobody's fool"
She : "Perhaps you can get someone to adopt you"
He : "My mother thinks I'm a great wit"
She : "She's half right"
He : "I manage to keep my head above water"
She : "That's because wood floats"

TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH

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