



TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH

Newsletter



NEW SUB BRANCH MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new Sub-Branch Members:

Auxiliary

Christine Sellers

Kay Ungaro

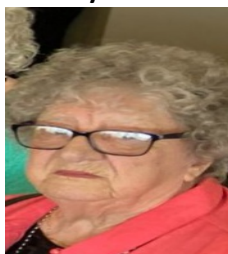
Sub-Else

Graham Leach

VALE

William Chapman

Shirley Watling



Edward Taylor

Lest We Forget



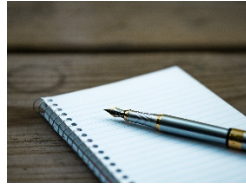
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Sub Branch General Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month,
At 10.30am, upstairs in Club Toukley RSL, with the exception of January.
All Members are invited to attend.**

Next General Meeting	Monday 3 July 10.30 am
Wellness & Wellbeing Xmas in July party	Sunday 16 July 11.00 am

Toukley RSL Sub Branch President's Report:



May was meant to be an easier month for the executive and the rest of the committee following all the work put in to ensure the success of the Anzac Day commemorations. Unfortunately this has not proven to be the case.

Several factors have transpired that have presented new problems that were not foreseen. Still as somebody famous once said “Life was not meant to be easy”.

George Meier resigned from his position as Trustee on 8 May. George has held this position since 2014 as well as being on the Committee and a Vice President so his knowledge and straight forward approach will be sorely missed. George also provided invaluable IT support to the sub-Branch over the years and has continued to do this even after stepping down from the Committee.

Then on 9 May the word came through that John Barnes – the sub-Branch accountant/bookkeeper had passed away. John did an inordinate amount of work ensuring the accounts of the sub-Branch were kept in a professional manner and the monthly reports were produced for the Committee and members each month. He also did the statutory reports that are required by RSL NSW and the ACNC. And that is only the stuff that I know about. I can't report yet what the situation looks like going forward but hopefully by next month we will have something in place.

On 15 May I was invited to address Toukley Probus club at their monthly meeting. I took the opportunity to address this group and spoke to an audience of about 60. I explained our role in organising Commemoration services for Anzac Day and Remembrance Day and the amount of planning and support required to ensure these days are a success. I explained that the sub-Branch and The Ary are two different entities. I also talked on our visits to schools and Aged Care facilities for Anzac Day commemoration services. At the end of my talk I fielded about 10 questions which indicated to me that the audience were

interested in the topic matter. At the end of the talk we also picked up a veteran who wants to be a sub-else member and two auxiliary members. Sadly in the last month we have also lost three members – William Chapman, Shirley Watling and Edward Taylor.

Tickets go on sale today for our Wellness & Wellbeing Function (Christmas in July), which will be held on Sunday 16 July 2023 from 11.00am through until 4.00pm. Cost is \$20.00 each per member and partner and will include a 3-course luncheon with refreshments and entertainment. This is excellent value and a popular function. As usual, there will be a monster raffle with fantastic prizes. **If you wish to reserve a table of 8, then money (8 x \$20) with names must be given at the time of booking.**

Ian Collier
President



. 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 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.



WANTED NEW MEMBERS

National Servicemen's Association Central Coast Sub-branch Toukley

Benefits- monthly meetings held 3rd Sunday every month except APRIL, DECEMBER and JANUARY, regular social luncheons for members, family and friends, BBQ's, Bus trips to places of interest.

Membership forms available from our Membership Officer Bobby Byrnes on 0400 352 811 or email robertbyrnes7@bigpond.com

Volunteers required for Vietnam Veterans Park at Gorokan.

The Vietnam Veterans Park which is on the left hand side of Wallarah Road just as you drive over the Toukley Bridge towards Gorokan is maintained by the Vietnam Vets group. The group would appreciate some assistance if anyone has a few hours to spare. They meet on a Wednesday at 9.30 every five weeks in winter and about every 2-3 weeks in growing season. If anyone has some spare time please contact John Fraher on 0408 092 230 or email at jffcashman@hotmail.com.au.





Toukley RSL sub Branch Auxiliary

Toukley RSL Auxiliary was formed in 1949. To help it continue we need new members, which for many organisations today is hard to find. It's harder for an RSL Auxiliary as many people don't understand what it is and how they could help. So:

What is an RSL AUXILIARY?

The word Auxiliary means "providing supplementary or additional help and support:" RSL Auxiliaries enable people who have not served in the defence services to do just that.

Similar to our sub-Branches, the RSL Auxiliary is a non-political non-sectarian organisation. It raises funds for the well-being of current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families.

The members of the auxiliary can also visit veterans in hospital, in aged care and those convalescing at home, assist with the sub-Branch in many ways including commemoration activities.

The RSL Auxiliary members raises funds to support the charitable objects of the sub-Branch by holding raffles, selling tokens during the ANZAC and Poppy Appeals, as well as other fundraising activities that arise throughout the year in the local community.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining the Auxiliary, please have them call Sue Allen on 0409608901 for more information.

Member Profile: Alan Thiele



Alan was born on the 26th October 1950 at Ryde Hospital N.S.W.

Alan's family lived at Gladesville N.S.W. and Alan attended Primary School at Gladesville Public School and Alan's Secondary schooling was at Drummoyne Boys High.

Alan left school in 1965 and started work at Franklins Supermarket at Gladesville and then started work at the Gladesville G.P.O. as a Telegram Boy, delivering telegrams all over the Gladesville area on a pushbike.

In 1967 Alan started an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic with Trottman & Reid at Ryde.

Alan in 1969 started work at Flemings Supermarket at Putney as a Shop Assistant and in 1972 started work for the Ryde Council as a Plant Operator.

Alan got married in 1971 and lived in Putney N.S.W. and the family moved to Narara on the Central Coast in 1975.

Alan started a cleaning business in 1980 which involved working long hours and had contracts cleaning Wyoming, Forresters Beach and Bateau Bay bowling alleys, as well as numerous clubs, home units and also mowed lawns..

In 1984 until 2004 Alan was the Manager of the Erina BBC Store.

Alan joined the Army Reserve at Erina in 1982 and joined the N.S.W.R.S.L on the 29th April 1999.

Alan was a Sub Branch member of the Gosford RSL Sub Branch for 20 years and joined the Toukley RSL Sub Branch in 2020.

In 2021, Alan became the President of the N.S.W. National Servicemen's Association on the Central Coast and is also on the Kincumber Nautical Village Committee. Alan is also on the committee of the Toukley RSL Sub Branch.

Alan has 2 children, Kylie and Justin and has 1 grandchild, Jay and a great grandchild, Addyson.

Alan enjoys camping and prospecting in his spare time and follows the West Tigers and after their big win over the North Queensland Cowboys looks forward to them winning the 2023 Grand Final.



Dambusters commemorated 80 years after daring raid



Australian airmen were among those who took part in the Dambusters Raid on May 16 and 17, 1943.

It's been 80 years since one of the most daring escapades of WWII, when Britain's Royal Air Force unleashed a secret weapon - the "bouncing bomb" on German dams.

Thirteen Australian airmen were part of Bomber Command's 617 squadron, involved in the Dambusters Raid on the nights of May 16 and 17, 1943, dropping the new bombs on dams in Germany's industrial heartland.

The new weapons were depth charges that could bounce along the water's surface before sinking and exploding.

Of the 19 Lancasters that joined the dangerous low-flying mission, eight were lost with 53 aircrew killed.

The squadron soon became famous as the Dambusters, with the ingenuity and courage involved in the operation documented in a 1955 film.

Veterans Affairs Minister Matt Keogh paid tribute to their bravery, saying Australian pilots Harold 'Mick' Martin and Jack Leggo were knighted for their part in the raid.

Puzzle Corner



Trivia

1. Which continent are the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers?
2. What colour is feta cheese?
3. Who or what was/is a zeppelin?
4. What is the answer to this equation? $54 \div 6$
5. Catherine Zeta-Jones married which Hollywood star?
6. Which Scottish doctor wrote the Sherlock Holmes series of books?
7. Which O is the art of paper folding?
8. Who became the 42nd President of the USA in 1993?
9. In ancient times, which country was known as Gaul?
10. Which country was hit by Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013?
11. In which decade were criminals Bonnie and Clyde captured?
12. Lynn Anderson begged your pardon, but she never promised you which type of garden?
13. Cockles and winkles are which type of food?
14. How many sides does a nonagon have?
15. TV host Jay Leno has fronted a show about which subject since 2014?
16. What killed the radio star, according to the song by Buggles?
17. Who sang this song : "Take Me Home, Country Roads" in 1972?
18. Who sang this song : "Suspicious Minds" in 1970?
19. Who sang this song : "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" in 1977?
20. Who sang this song : "Killing Me Softly With His Song" in 1974?

Vietnam Veterans Day

Editors Note : In 2023 we commemorate 50 years since the withdrawal of Australian servicemen and women in Vietnam. In the next three newsletters I will be re-printing some transcripts from servicemen about their experiences in Vietnam. The first one is from a National Serviceman Neil Weekes.

As a national serviceman, Neil Weekes commanded a platoon in Vietnam during the battles for the two fire support bases, Coral and Balmoral. After returning to civilian life in Australia, he chose to re-enter the Army.

Neil Weekes was a young schoolteacher when his country called him up for national service.

"I wasn't of the view that 'one in all in'. And my marble had come out, that was the luck of the draw and I thought, 'Well, I'll do my bit'."□

He was trained as an officer and sent to Vietnam. It was a bit of a shock.

"The ox carts and the little Lambrettas all getting around with fifteen or sixteen people hanging off at all angles, the smells. Never knowing who was the enemy because everyone wore a conical hat and everyone dressed in black and we were taught that anyone in black and wearing this hat was a possible enemy and yeah. It was mind-boggling, to say the least."□

As a platoon commander, Neil led his men on numerous patrols. Then came Australia's largest series of battles in Vietnam "" Coral and Balmoral.

"The Battle of Coral/Balmoral during the 12th of May to the 6th of June, 1968, was by far Australia's largest, longest, bloodiest battle involving more soldiers of both forces, Australian and enemy, and suffering more casualties than any other battle of the Vietnam War."□

Coral and Balmoral were fire support bases "" isolated artillery emplacements protected by a perimeter of infantry. Neil's platoon was part of the battalion sent to establish Coral, but the operation went awry from the start.

"When the first infantry arrived, they were met by Americans who said, 'Hey, listen, you won't have to go looking for the enemy, they'll come looking for you.' There were burnt out hulks of APCs in the area. The Americans had just been in big, heavy contact. But no one changed the plans. The plans were made and the plans were stuck to, regardless of the changing tactical situation in the field."□

Arriving too late, the Australian soldiers had no time to prepare a proper defence. That night, the North Vietnamese Army attacked.

"This is not just a little attack. This is mortars, this is rocket fire this is heavy, heavy machine gun fire; a lot of small arms fire, two Huey helicopters and a Cobra helicopter going in and firing rockets, there was a 'Spooky' which is a DC3 with Gatling gun firing; there was a great deal of firing and we knew that the fire support base was in dire trouble."□

Though overrun, the Australian force prevailed, losing 9 men and 28 wounded. Over 50 NVA were killed. Two days later it would happen again, but the defences would still not be in place.

Having survived one enemy attack on Fire Support Base Coral, Neil Weekes was hoping for more defensive support.

"No defence wire comes in, no defence stores come in, no sandbags come in, no extra shovels or picks to dig the holes that we want to get right down so you're looking out of a fire pit. Nothing like that comes in, so we're now at last light. One roll of concertina wire. It goes for about 15 metres. That is the only defensive store I had in front of my platoon. Besides my Claymore mines.

And by the way we had no protection. Like the soldiers have nowadays. They go out into battle and they wear bulletproof vests. The only bulletproof vest we had was a green khaki shirt. We had no helmets; we had little, floppy hats and shirts.

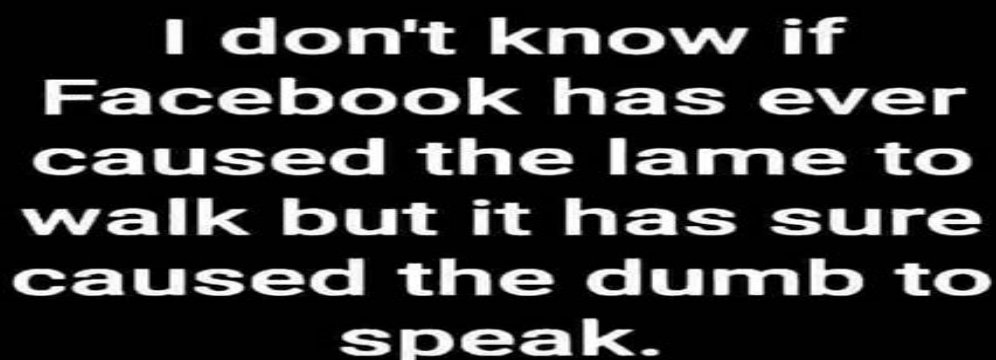
At roundabout two thirty, all hell broke loose. And we were suddenly under very heavy attack. You can't imagine the sound of battle. You've got big explosions which are enemy mortars, you've got the artillery now just behind us, they're starting to fire. The mortars are firing; we've got artillery coming in from Tan Uyen, the big American guns. It is horrendous. You can't yell, you can't scream.

You've either got to get right up beside a guy and give him the word of command and even then you're screaming your lungs out. I try to plug the hole with artillery fire, calling it in very close, 'danger close' as they call it, 25 metres out, and I move it left to right, forward and back. At this stage there was a danger that the whole battalion could be overrun. Had the enemy come through that gap and had we not blocked them through that gap, had they been able to regroup and come through that gap, they'd have taken out the whole battalion. We'd have lost 700 men.

I had to counter-attack and take that position back. By the way the enemy are very close at this stage. We're shooting enemy from here to you away. It wasn't until roundabout 10 o'clock that morning that we secured the fire support base. By that time, we'd had a Sioux helicopter up in the air saying the enemy are out here in their hundreds, pulling their dead and wounded away. I had seen quite a few enemy dead by then.

And you, again, how to say this without seeming to be some horrible beast. You couldn't really look at them as fellow human beings. It would have turned you mad. This guy was going to kill me; he's dead, get on with the war. But seeing your own dead, the guys that you knew, you'd trained with them. And then we have a company service. Padre, prayers. We have a battalion service after that. The whole battalion gets together. And we go through playing of The Last Post, a minute's silence, The Ode... and then the war goes on."□

Neil was awarded the Military Cross for that night. Back home, school teaching no longer worked for him so he re-joined the army.



**I don't know if
Facebook has ever
caused the lame to
walk but it has sure
caused the dumb to
speak.**

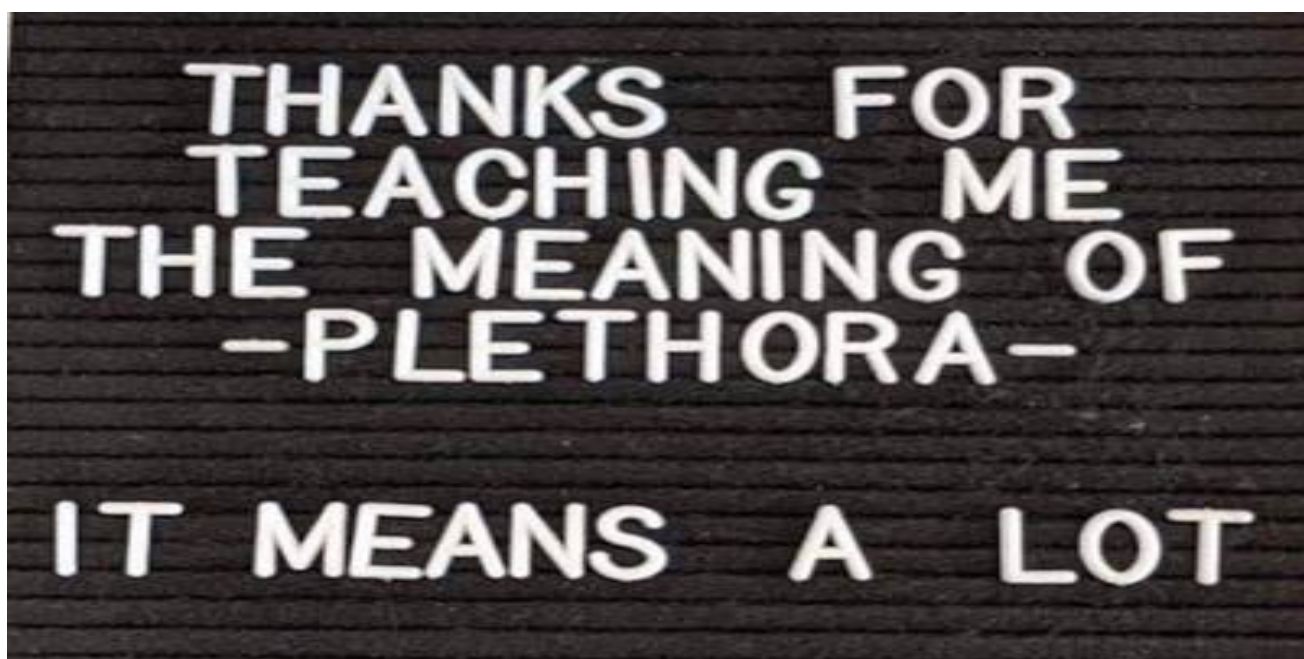
Welfare Report

WELLBEING/VISITATION OFFICERS' MONTHLY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2023

OFFICER	NUMBER OF VETERANS/FAMILY VISITS	HOURS	KILOMETRES TRAVELLED	PHONE CALLS	TRAINING HOURS	FUNERALS Interments
Michael Humphries	5	18	40	0	0	1
Roy Norman	4	26	85	12	0	1
Tiffany Kelly	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ian Collier						1
Judith Walker						1
TOTALS	9	44	125	12	0	4

From the Editor : Thank you to Roy Norman, Mike Humphries, Sue Allen and Judith Walker for contributions to the newsletter.

Emergencies	000
Open Arms	1800 011 046
Lifeline	13 11 44
Kids Helpline	1300 224 636



Puzzle Corner Answers



1. Africa
2. White
3. Airship
4. 9
5. Michael Douglas
6. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
7. Origami
8. Bill Clinton
9. France
10. Philippines
11. 1930's
12. Rose
13. Shellfish
14. 9
15. Cars
16. Video
17. John Denver
18. Elvis Presley
19. Elton John & Kiki Dee
20. Roberta Flack

TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH

Patron:	Karen McNamara
President:	Ian Collier
Vice President:	Mike Humphries
Secretary:	Judith Walker
Treasurer:	Terry Murray
Committee:	Chris Doyle Alan Thiele Tommy Hobbs Roy Norman Allan Love Bob Swift
Telephone:	4396.4855
FAX:	4396.9310 4396.8807
Pensions& Welfare: (Located at Diggers' Inn)	Roy Norman 0409 845 856
Trustees:	Milton Porter, Steve Edmunds
Newsletter Co-ordinator:	Ian Collier
Phone:	0412 265 623
Email:	ianpamcoll@aapt.net.au president@toukleyrslsb.org.au

