



# TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH

## ***Newsletter***



## **NEW SUB BRANCH MEMBERS**

Welcome to the following new Sub-Branch Members:

### **Service**

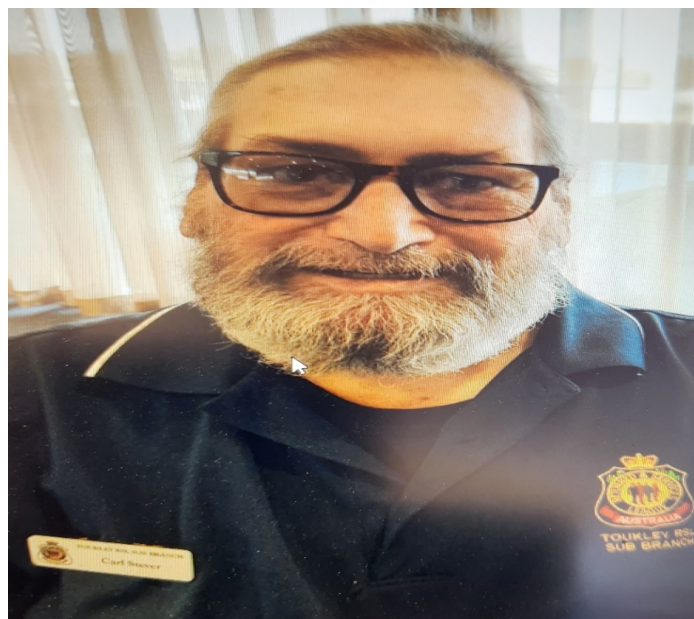
Darryl Phillips

### **VALE**

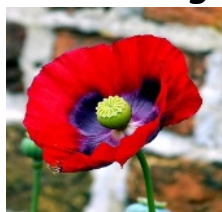
Ronald Elphick

Kevin Saloway

Carl Stever



### ***Lest We Forget***



**Cover photo:** One of the most famous images of the Vietnam War was captured by Michael Coleridge on 26 August 1967. The image which has been etched on the rear wall of the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra, shows members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 7RAR waiting to be airlifted by US Army helicopters from an area just north of Phuoc Hai.

### **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 7 August 10.30 am
CCDC Meeting – hosted by Toukley	Monday 14 August 2.00 pm
Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration Service	Friday 18 August 11.00 am
Next Committee Meeting	Monday 21 August 10.30 am
September General Meeting	Monday 4 September 10.30 am
75 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner	Sunday 5 November 11.00 am
Remembrance Day	Saturday 11 November 11.00 am
Wellness & Wellbeing Xmas Party	Sunday 17 December 11.00 am

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### ***Toukley RSL Sub Branch President's Report:***



July has been a busy month for the Committee with multiple meetings to be attended.

Mike Humphries, Tiffany Kelly and I attended Breakers Club at Wamberal for a meeting convened by RSL NSW and RSL Lifecare. The meeting was to discuss the possibility of establishing a Central Coast Veterans Hub to be administered by RSL Lifecare. DVA currently have grants available from \$150,000 up to \$5 million

to establish a Veterans Hub. It was pointed out that it is not a fait accompli that one will be established on the Coast but there is an opportunity to apply for a grant. The grant application closes on 9 August so time is of the essence. There were about 40 interested participants in the room covering sub-Branches from the Coast, Legacy and other ESO groups. In all about six locations were proposed including Diggers at Toukley. Gosford and Wyong seemed to be the most likely options to be considered because of their rail and bus links. At this stage no location has been announced. RSL NSW CEO Jon Black was at pain to explain that the Hub would need to be funded in the future to ensure it continued to exist. None of the grant money can be used for this purpose.

The next meeting I attended was with the new Auxiliary members. In accordance with the SOP from RSL NSW we were obliged to elect a Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator. Jenny Leach was elected to the Co-ordinator role and Wendy Blandon to the Assistant Co-ordinator role. I congratulate them on their election and the Committee and I look forward to working with them in the future.

The third meeting was with Graham Treddinick to discuss Welfare matters. Roy Norman as our Welfare Co-ordinator, Jenny Leach representing the Auxiliary, Mike Humphries and I met with Graham to discuss general Welfare issues and resolve boundaries so that there was no doubling up of visits at Aged Care Facilities.

The fourth meeting was with the CEO of the Ary Trevor Haynes, Ken Baker a Director of the Ary, Debbie Dixon, our Executive and representatives from LEP Digital Marketing. This was the initial meeting to allow staff from LEP Digital understand what we are looking for in regards to attracting new younger members to join the sub-Branch to ensure its survival. I was able to provide them with some literature from the RSL NSW Marketing team and spelt out we were not only after numbers but also members who may be Office Bearers into the future.

In between these meetings I have also had several discussions with a local accounting firm Horizon Accounting. Liam Potter from Bishop Collins recommended this firm. After these discussions on our requirements I received a quote that was accepted by the Executive team. Horizon are now working on putting seven months of transactions into the new software system they will be using to provide our accounting support and monthly and yearly reports.

The Sub Branch's annual Wellness and Wellbeing Function (Christmas in July) was held on Sunday 16 July 2023 with 75 members, partners and invited guests in attendance. It was pleasing to see two tables of our new Auxiliary members and their partners enjoying the day. From the reports I have received everyone enjoyed the day, and it was a good opportunity for, particularly the members, to get together and enjoy the camaraderie, good food, great entertainment and the opportunity to win a prize or two in the monster raffle. Thanks should go to a couple of the auxiliary ladies who provided hand-made goodies to be included as raffle prizes and also to Jenny Leach for sourcing a couple of donations that were also used as raffle prizes.

Planning is well under way for our commemoration service on Friday 18 August for Vietnam Veterans Day. This will be a special service as it is for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the withdrawal of the Australian troops from Vietnam after 13 years service. We are happy that several of our Vietnam Vets will be involved in the service.

Sadly we have lost another three members this month. Ronald Elphick, Carl Stever and Keith Saloway. Four Committeemen attended a graveside burial for Ronald Elphick and performed an RSL tribute service. Carl Stever's funeral is on Tuesday 8 August and his widow has requested an RSL tribute service. Keith Saloway has already been buried and we were not aware of his passing.

*Ian Collier*  
President

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Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, 'Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of my life and give up me Irish Whiskey!'

Miraculously, a parking place appeared.

Paddy looked up again and said, 'Never mind, I found one.'

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## **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto:jffcashman@hotmail.com.au).

## Members Central Coast Bus Trip Friday 28 July

On Friday 28 July 15 members and partners and bus driver Ron Whitby set off at 8.00 am for a full day enjoying the delights of the Central Coast. First stop was the Historical museum display at Diggers at Long Jetty. This was very interesting and the volunteer caretaker was very eager to pass on his knowledge of the contents of the Museum.

Then we proceeded to Niagara Park where the bus host pointed out the factory shop for Sara Lee and Chickadee Chicken which is now in the shopping centre at Niagara Park. There was no time to alight there as all on the bus were too keen to get to our next stop – the Chocolate and Nougat factory at West Gosford.

After a lovely morning tea a tour of the factory followed. It was interesting to see how the nougat and some of the chocolates were made although not quite as interesting as how some of our members looked in the compulsory head covers that had to be worn – see photo below.





After sampling some of the delights during the factory tour then topping up with more purchases from the gift shop it was off to Woy Woy for a fish and chips lunch at Woy Woy wharf. Very enjoyable and well priced.



Denise Humphries trying to befriend Pete the Pelican at Woy Woy.

After lunch it was back into the bus to go to our final destination – Firescreek Botanical Winery at Holgate where a wine tasting had been organized. Nadia the vintner gave a very informative discussion on the wines that she is currently making and marketing from Passionfruit to Coffee Chocolate and Blackcurrent to Rose Petal and Apple and two others. The tasting was interesting and I was surprised that some of the fruit wines were at 14% alcohol. Luckily only small amounts were served so all were able to get back on the bus without incident.

The winery itself is set on 2.5 acres and well worth a visit. Nadia said she encourages people to go for a walk around the property if they would like to.

The normal lucky door prize of a Coles voucher was replaced by a bottle of Passionfruit Wine and the fortunate recipient was Ian Collier.

Finally back to The Ary about 3.30 pm where all thanked the driver Ron Whitby for our tour of the Central Coast. Well done again to Bob Swift for organizing another enjoyable day.



## **Member Profile: Neil Kerrison**

Neil was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1940 at Singleton Hospital N.S.W. and lived in Singleton until the age of 16 years.

His primary schooling was at Singleton Public and his secondary Schooling was at Singleton High.

Neil left school and Singleton in 1956 and moved to Geelong in Victoria and worked in a carnival at High-Lite Park located near Eastern Beach.

In 1958 Neil moved back to N.S.W. and lived in Gladesville and worked for McCaffery's Sugar driving trucks.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1965 Neil married his lovely wife Sandra and they setup house in Gladesville.

Neil joined the C.M.F. in 1961 until 1964 and then joined the Australian Army in 1964.

After doing training at Canungra Military Area and Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area in Queensland in July 1967, Neil was put on a plane and served in Vietnam with the R.A.E, 1 Field Squadron, 21 Engineers Support Group at Nui Dat.

In July 1968 after Neil's service in Vietnam he was posted to R.A.E. 24th Construction Sqn at Holsworthy.

Sandra and Neil moved into the married quarters at Warwick Farm until 1969 when they purchased a home in Canley Heights.

Neil was discharged from the Army in 1970 and started a tip trucking business around Sydney.

In the mid 80's Neil worked with Pioneer Asphalt delivering hot mix to building sites.

Neil and Sandra moved to Wyoming on the Central Coast but moved back to Fairfield around 1988 to find work in a trucking business.

Neil retired in 1995 due to health problems from his military service including the effects from Agent Orange.

Neil was President of the Canley Heights RSL Sub Branch and Sporting Club from 1996 until 2000.

In 2000 after two hip and knee replacements Neil and Sandra moved to Gorokan.

Sandra and Neil have two daughters, Leanne and Nicole and 3 granddaughters and 2 grandsons.

Neil enjoys spending time with his family and also with the Vietnam Veterans Working Group.

Neil follows the West Tigers in the N.R.L. and looks forward to them winning the 2024 Grand Final..



# Puzzle Corner



## Trivia

1. Which former French president led the Free French Forces during World War II?
- 2 In what year did Charles Lindbergh Fly the Atlantic Solo
- 3 In what year did the United States enter World War II?
4. In June 1940, Benito Mussolini recklessly declared war on Britain and what other country?
5. How much are the rooms to rent in Roger Miller's song "King of the Road"?
6. What city was Fats Domino walking to in the 1960s song?
7. "You know that it would be untrue" is the first line of which song?
8. What comes after "How do you do what you do to me" in the Gerry and the Pacemakers song?
9. What group were feeling glad all over in the charts in 1964?
10. If you were at Geneva Airport, in which country would you be?
11. East Timor, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea border which country?
12. What is the largest city in Turkey?
13. Hieroglyphs were a writing system used by which civilization?



## Vietnam Veterans Day

**Editors Note :** In 2023 we commemorate 50 years since the withdrawal of Australian servicemen and women in Vietnam. This is the last newsletter before Vietnam Veterans Day and this month the story is about the four Australian nurses who were the first Australian female army nurses sent to the Vietnam War.



The four Australian Army nurses just after arrival in Vung Tau

It was a grim welcome offered by a Red Cross medic when fresh-faced Colleen Mealy arrived at her dusty military posting south of Saigon in 1967 to be told to go home.

But the 23-year-old lieutenant couldn't have obeyed, even if she had wanted to. As one of the so-called 'Fab Four' first Australian female army nurses sent to the Vietnam War, she was there to do a challenging job, starting immediately.

“We didn’t realise what we were heading into – or what we would be coming back to,” she recalls, referencing the public hostility faced by returning Vietnam veterans amid protests against Australia’s commitment to the war.

Given just ten days’ notice, the ‘Fab Four’ (the nickname bestowed by the media and borrowed from the Beatles at the height of Beatlemania) were flown first-class to Saigon – “I’d never seen so many planes, all military,” remarks Mrs Thurgar – then transferred to Vung Tau and that gallows-humour greeting. Amid primitive families, they set up their quarters and were straight into it.

“When we first started, we didn’t have shifts as such, we just worked. We would stand-to at dusk and dawn because that’s when most of the casualties occurred. If the casualties occurred overnight, they would helicopter them in at first light. So we would work through until everything was done. Then we could have a break.”

The constant pressure kept the medics too busy to dwell on the horrors they witnessed, says Mrs Thurgar, recalling in particular the carnage wrought by “Jumping Jack” mines and small-arms fire. Others presented with illness and accidental injuries.



The four Australian Army nurses on a break from their duties

The stoicism and humour of her Digger patients – a hallmark of the Anzac legend since WW1 – stood out, especially in comparison to their allies.

“When I visited the American hospitals there was a lot of noise, a lot of crying out. When our boys came in, there was no screaming or anything. They were just pleased to be here at the hospital.

“If they came in with a limb off or their leg strapped to their rifle, they’d always say ‘Sister, I hope the family jewels are okay’. And even if their leg was hanging off, they’d just say ‘Oh no, I won’t be dancing again’.”

Sometimes her patients included enemy prisoners, which Mrs Thurgar could find confronting, but “then again, I’m a nurse and that’s what you do – you look after patients”.

Among them were Viet Cong guerrilla women fighters. “They were as good as the men at fighting,” she says; but as captives they were “very frightened”, because once they had been patched up, Australia’s allies in the South Vietnamese army “would come in and take them away and we’d never see or hear of them again”.



A Viet Cong guerrilla women fighter captured by Australian Diggers.



The reality is, very few involved in that brutal conflict felt good. Total casualties are almost impossible to estimate, ranging from one million deaths upwards – the majority Vietnamese – with many more wounded, displaced and impoverished and the bloodshed spilling over into surrounding countries. Sixty thousand Australians served and more than 3000 were wounded; many of those returning suffered post-combat trauma; then had to contend with contempt and worse from a public that had welcomed their World War predecessors as heroes.

Mrs Thurgar, originally from SA and now based in Canberra, recalls seeing red paint tipped over one soldier; even the female nurses were flown home at night and told to wear civilian clothing, not uniform, to avoid negative attention.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's 11-year involvement in Vietnam, with a national commemorative service in Canberra on Vietnam Veterans' Day, August 18; and a medallion and certificate of recognition for all veterans, all of whom are ageing – many of whom are no longer alive.



Nurse Colleen Mealy showing her camera to a group of South Vietnamese children

## Welfare Report July 2023



### TOUKLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH

#### WELLBEING/VISITATION OFFICERS' MONTHLY REPORT FOR THE SUB-BRANCH GENERAL JULY 2023

OFFICER	NUMBER OF VETERANS/FAMILY VISITS	HOURS	KILOMETRES TRAVELLED	PHONE CALLS	TRAINING HOURS	FUNERALS Interments
Michael Humphries	6	18	42	4	0	0
Roy Norman	5	40	250	31	0	1
Tiffany Kelly	2	35	60	8	6	0
Chris Doyle	5	20	50	0	0	0
TOTALS	18	113	402	43	6	1

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

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Gallagher opened the morning newspaper and was dumbfounded to read in the obituary column that he had died. He quickly phoned his best friend, Finney. 'Did you see the paper?' asked Gallagher. 'They say I died!!'

'Yes, I saw it!' replied Finney. 'Where are ye callin' from?'

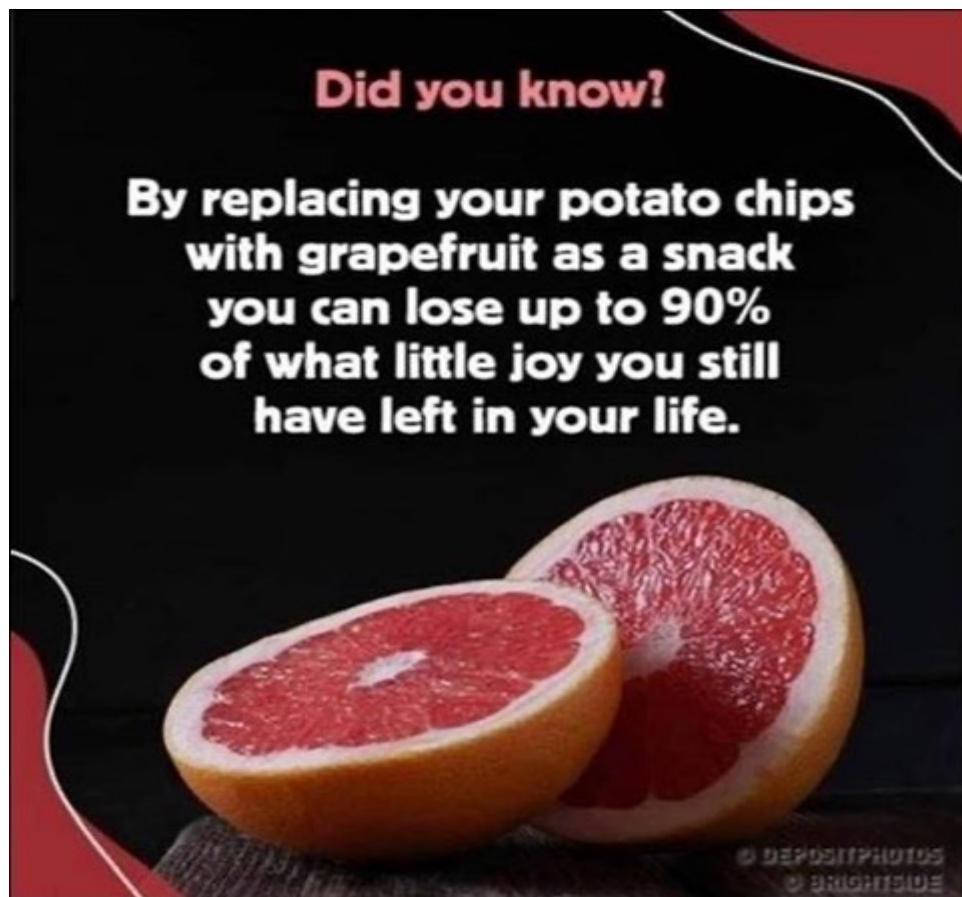
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An Irish priest is driving down to New York and gets stopped for speeding in Connecticut. The state trooper smells alcohol on the priest's breath and then sees an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car. He says, 'Sir, have you been drinking?'

'Just water,' says the priest. The trooper says, 'Then why do I smell wine?'

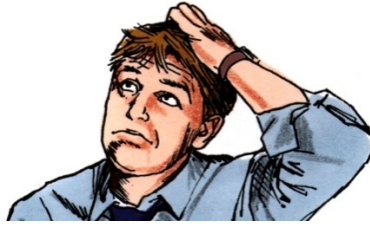
The priest looks at the bottle and says, 'Good Lord! He's done it again!'

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## Puzzle Corner Answers



1. Charles De Gaulle
2. 1927
3. 1941
4. France
5. 50 cents
6. New Orleans
7. Light My Fire
8. I wish I knew
9. Dave Clark Five
10. Switzerland
11. Indonesia
12. Istanbul
13. Egyptians

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**I told my wife I saw a  
deer on the way to  
work.  
She said how do you  
know he was headed  
to work?**



## TOUKLEY RSL SUB BRANCH

Patron:	Karen McNamara
President:	Ian Collier
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