



Pittwater RSL

Sub-Branch Newsletter

October 2017



Lest We Forget

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The last two months have been relatively quiet for me as I had surgery for a Rotator Cuff repair and Bi-cep Tendon repair. I would like to thank everyone who has ferried me around whilst I have not been driving, and for the beautiful flowers I received from the Sub-Branch and the Pittwater RSL Club Ltd.

At our July meeting we celebrated Bill Mackay's Legion of Honour Award. Bill's family attended, and we had some excellent food and a celebratory cake which Tommy Knox and Bill both cut. Tommy had received his Legion of Honour award previously.

I attended the last of the Vietnam Veterans' Day (Northern) Parade and lunch at Palm Beach RSL on Sunday 13 August, and next year there will be a commemoration service only at the club with drinks to follow.

Michael Carrodus represented the Sub-Branch at the Long Tang Day service on 18 August at the Manly Cenotaph. John Ward attended the Day Club's 34th birthday party on 24 August.

The funeral for WW2 Veteran and Living Treasure, Mal Stapleton RAN was held on 24 August.

Affiliate member Drew Johnson passed away on 26 August. Drew was a previous employee

of Pittwater Club Ltd as Functions Manager, and always took very good care of the Sub-Branch.

The Sub-Branch has employed Natalie Manning as Office Manager. Please read Natalie's profile on page 4 of this Newsletter. Natalie will be working on Mondays and, already, Natalie has transformed my office into a workable and efficient area!

RSL State President, James Brown, has put a freeze on fund raising at all NSW Sub-Branches. Currently, a comprehensive survey is being carried out on all aspects of revenue and fund raising at Sub-Branches across NSW. This order currently affects our ability to sell poppies on Remembrance Day, so all those attending our Remembrance Day Service will be given a poppy to wear.

Sunday 12 November will be the inaugural "Northern Beaches Veterans and Community Day" and will be held at Dunbar Park Avalon commencing at 10am. This community day replaces the Avalon Tattoo, and hopes to engage the youth more with Veterans' both contemporary and older! More info on page 6.

Thanks to Sandra May for our informative and professional Newsletter.

And finally, congratulations to Tommy Knox who has had one of the bowling greens named after him.

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Regards, Lest We Forget

Deborah Carter

Deborah Carter,
President



Allan Neil Croft Honorary Secretary Service Number 8270494.

Born 26 February 1948, and spent the first five years living in Queen Street, Woollahra.

My Father, John McKenzie Croft, owned a successful panel beating business after being an airframe rigger with the RAAF. He was with 1 Squadron at Kota Bahru in northern Malaya. The squadron's Hudson light bombers were the first Australians to sight the Japanese invasion fleet heading down the South China Sea. Two aircraft threw some rocks at the invaders and had a lot of rocks thrown back. Everybody was evacuated to Singapore and further south.

I grew up in Sans Souci when the only access further south was a vehicular ferry to Taren Point. Finishing the Leaving Certificate, I began work as a cadet reporter and graduated through country newspapers and television to The Daily Telegraph when Sir Frank Packer was the owner. Various circumstances took me to Perth

where I began a long period of being a producer of television news.

Temporarily without a wife in 1980, I volunteered for the Army Reserve where they promptly made me a combat engineer. I learnt explosives, bridge building and digging a lot of holes. Ultimately Defence Public Relations became aware of my professional skills and they dragged me out of my holes and made me an officer in the Australian Army Public Relations Service (AAPRS).

Returning to Sydney to be with my parents in their last years, I worked as Chief of Staff in the newsrooms of Ten and Seven and as Public Affairs Officer to a variety of Generals, Admirals and Air Commodores, including the present Governor, General David Hurley, in three different postings.

I had two rotations to Iraq in 2005/2006 with the Al Muthanna Task Group providing security overwatch to a Japanese engineer group.

I retired as a Major at the mandatory age limit of 65, and now work as Operations Officer in the state headquarters of the RSL.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY Compiled by Darren Crabb

October

31, 1917 Palestine, the 4th Light Horse Brigade's bold charge against Turkish positions at Beersheba, seized a critical wells that enabled British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza and advance into Palestine.



01, 1918 The Australian Light Horse advances into Damascus, the Syrian capital, at the end of the long and victorious advance that ended the First World War in the Middle East.

18, 1967 HMAS Perth is struck by return fire near Cape Lai, Vietnam, while on the United States 7th Fleet 'gunline'. This was the only occasion on which an Australian warship suffered casualties from enemy fire during the Vietnam War.

November

09, 1914 HMAS Sydney destroys the German cruiser Emden, off the Cocos-Keeling Islands. The Emden had delayed the first convoy carrying Australian troops to Egypt, but was driven ashore by Sydney in a brief but bloody action.

11, 1941 The Australian War Memorial, commemorating the First World War, opens with Australia already involved in the Second World War for over two years.



19, 1941 HMAS Sydney was lost with its entire crew of 645 men in a sudden and disastrous encounter with the German raider, Kormoran, off the Western Australian coast.

December

07, 1915 The evacuation of ANZAC forces from Gallipoli begins. Though the Gallipoli campaign had failed British Empire forces at least planned and executed the evacuation without loss which lasted until 20 Dec.

01, 1951 Air battle over Sunchon, North Korea is the largest air-to-air battle fought by the RAAF during the Korean Conflict. Twelve 77 Squadron Meteors met up to 50 Chinese Mig-15s. The fight precipitated a change from an air interception to a ground attack role for No. 77 Squadron.



04, 1990 The Royal Australian Navy involvement in the Persian Gulf was approved by the Australian Government. Ultimately eight Australian ships served in the Gulf.



Jeff Brown
Service Number: 0252660

I was born at Manly Hospital, the youngest of four children, and grew up in Harbord. My father was a Police Sergeant, and his father had also been a Police Sergeant. Apart from my father being briefly in the Army Cadets during World War 2, there hadn't been family members in the Army, although my oldest brother had spent a short time in the Navy at Nirimba, WA.

At the age of seventeen, while working as an apprentice fitter/machinist, I joined my local Army Reserve unit, 28 Field Battery, at Dee Why, and became a Gunner, for no other reason than it was the closest unit to my home. After doing recruit course at Bardia Barracks in December 1986, I was posted to the gun line. I was promoted to Lance Bombardier in 1990, and Bombardier in late 1991.

I also qualified as a driver, signaller, mortar operator and marksmanship instructor.

I served in four domestic operations; Gold, Deluge, Testament and Vic Fires Assist. These operations were generally doing security searches, and were a new challenge after years of Artillery, having to work with soldiers of all corps as well as civilian agencies. I found Operation Vic Fires Assist probably the highlight of my military service, as we were helping the community in a time of need, a change from just firing bombs downrange at Singleton. The work was unpleasant, searching for human remains in collapsed buildings, dressed in plastic suits and wearing masks to protect us from asbestos. It was also very challenging as an NCO having to control soldiers doing what at times was very emotional work.

With the disbanding of 7 Field Regiment, 28 Battery was put under command of 2/17 RNSWR, and so I elected to discharge in 2014, having served for 26 years.



ROBERT (BOB) WOOD
Service No. 2783039

I was born on 10 December 1945 at the San (now Adventist Hospital) at Wahroonga in Sydney. When I was five, my family moved from Lane Cove to Chatswood where I grew up. I attended primary school at Chatswood public school and high school at North Sydney Technical High School, which included the building that now houses the Greenwood Hotel.

After school I worked in the Commonwealth Bank and attended Sydney University as a part-time student. In 1965 I “won the lottery” and was called up for national service. Electing not to defer my service, I joined the Army at Marrickville on 2nd February 1966 and headed for Kapooka for basic training. After about two weeks at Kapooka I was told that my application for officer training had been successful and, along with 26 others, flew to RAAF Richmond to join the Officer Training Unit (OTU)

at Scheyville.

Like most of the men who completed the six month “pressure cooker” course at Scheyville, I still remember it as one of the toughest things that I have ever done. You didn’t “graduate” from Scheyville, you “survived it”.

I was commissioned into the Ordnance Corps (RAAOC) and spent the rest of my two years as a platoon commander at 2RTB at Puckapunyal and at 1 Base Ordnance Depot in Brisbane. After my discharge in February 1968 I transferred to the CMF and served at 1 Base Ammunition Depot, HQ Communication Zone, HQ 5 Task Force and 7th Field Regiment before transferring to the Reserve of Officers.

In the years after National Service I finished my degree, qualified as an accountant and worked in various industries before switching to teaching accountancy in TAFE for about 10 years. In 1992 my wife and I moved to Robertson in the Southern Highlands and started an accounting practice. We moved back closer to Sydney in 2010 and now live at Bayview.

SUB-BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCH - Sunday 10 December

Numbered tickets must be purchased; \$30 for Members, and \$40 for Non-Members.

I will be at the front desk at our next two meetings, Sunday 8 October and Sunday 12 November. Payment must be paid in cash on the day in order to have your ticket issued. Exact money is appreciated.

They must be paid for and issued before Sunday 10 December, and you must have these tickets with you on 10 December when you attend the luncheon. Thanks, Sandra



Mission

Providing for the well-being, care, compensation and commemoration of all Service personnel, especially those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

We engage with the general community promoting the patriotic spirit of ANZAC, providing information on our activities, and encouraging membership of, and interaction with, the Sub-Branch and their families.

Newsletter Submissions

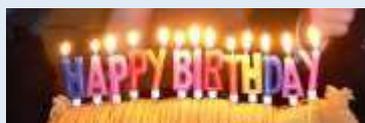
We encourage our Members to submit any interesting stories about themselves, their experiences, etc.

Please feel free to email Deborah Carter your submission, which will be considered for publication in a future Newsletter.

Celebrating Birthdays in October, November, December

John Roxburgh 01 Oct
 Wal Williams 10 Oct
 Peter Williams 15 Oct
 James Roche 19 Oct
 Ed Koeppen 26 Oct
 Zamri Burns 27 Oct
 Joe Crumlin 29 Oct

Aldo Sirotic 17 Nov
 Jonathon Conrad 20 Nov
 Keith Stevens 27 Nov



Paul Batson 01 Nov
 Peter Carrodus 05 Nov
 Carolyn Noble 08 Nov
 Bert Brownlie 11 Nov

Phil Lewis 01 Dec
 Joseph Chase-Berry 01 Dec
 Bill Underwood 03 Dec
 Sandra Langfield 04 Dec

John Faul 05 Dec
 Robert Wood 10 Dec
 Cecil Sly 12 Dec
 Jim Botham 14 Dec
 Brian Sargeson 15 Dec
 Dennis De Silva 15 Dec
 James Leigh 16 Dec
 Chris Christensen 17 Dec
 Jack Mullins 20 Dec
 Guy Bryant 21 Dec
 Alfred Siddons 28 Dec
 Ted Blackwood 30 Dec

Pittwater RSL Day Club



Congratulations on their 34th Birthday on 24 August. Celebrations were very successful, and attended by many.

Sally Bromley represented our Day Club at the State Congress at Rydges Hotel 20-22 September.

Vietnam Veteran's Day, Palm Beach

Deborah Carter, John Roxburgh and Bill Mackay attended this very moving service on Sunday 13 August.



A quote from a Living Treasure, Bill Mackay



For those that don't know, Bill is a Life Member of Wairoonga FC, and always attends Presentation Day. On Sunday 10 September, he handed out trophies to about 1,000 young soccer participants!

Bill has been Patron of the Wairoonga Tigers Club for about 12 years. *His definition of Patron is "One foot in the grave, and one foot on a banana skin!"*

Since 1985, Bill has also been a Life Member of the Northern Suburbs Football Association.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

Our march and Service will be held on Saturday 11 November. For those intending to march, please form up in the lower ramp car park at 10:15hrs.

Lunch will follow our Service, commencing at 12 noon.

Natalie Manning a Sydney local, spent 8 years in Port Macquarie where she began her Property Management experience.

Happily married to Jason, with two adult daughters, Emily and Laura, her keen focus has always been on her family. Natalie comes to us with a wealth of experience in Office Management and Customer Service. Her roles varied from Receptionist, Office Manager, and Personal Assistant to a Leasing Consultant, culminating in a position as Property Manager at McGrath Real Estate Port Macquarie.

Natalie is committed to providing a first class level of professionalism and attention to every detail. Her core values are in her ability to work in a cohesive environment and provide excellent customer service with personal empathy and compassion. She has proven to be successful, people-focused, passionate and high performing. She prides herself on using humility to connect with people to create and develop a culture that exudes excellence. With a friendly, effervescent

personality she enjoys time with her family, cooking, crosswords and walks along the beach.

Since Natalie has been appointed office manager, her computers skills have been particularly helpful whilst Deborah has been recovering from rotator cuff surgery. Natalie is in the process of setting up systems and procedures to prepare the Sub-Branch office for Auditing from RSL Headquarters.

Natalie can be contacted in the Sub-Branch office every Monday on 8401 0785.



BOOK REVIEW – written by Bob Wood

“A BASTARD OF A PLACE”

The Australians in Papua
Kokoda, Milne Bay, Gona, Buna, Sanananda

Peter Brune
Allen & Unwin, 2004

This book must rank right up with the best pieces of non-fiction that I have read. To quote Les Carlyon (the author of *Gallipoli* and *The Great War*) “Here is the marriage of good writing to good scholarship that one seldom comes upon”. Scholar, teacher, researcher and writer, Peter Brune is a master of all of these. Not only does this work represent “... the culmination of fourteen years work, five previous books, the material from a PhD thesis, and much previously unused research...” (as Mr Brune tells us in his acknowledgments), it also contains a tremendous number of detailed recollections by men who participated in the events described. The result is a story which has a “first hand” quality throughout. The timely collection of these interviews is an important piece of our historical heritage as most of the contributors are now deceased.

Although there is a certain amount of chronological overlap in some of the events, the book is structured in three parts, Kokoda, Milne Bay and Gona/Buna/Sanananda. Interwoven through the chapters are the author’s descriptions of locations as he saw them on his own visit, albeit, of course, many years after the war. These descriptions serve to help the reader feel as though he or she is almost there as well.

Anyone who has served in the armed forces will have heard the adage **proper planning and preparation prevents piss poor performance (the 7Ps)**. What we see, as this story unfolds, is a recurring theme of the absence of the first three **Ps** leading to the brink of disaster which was only avoided at length by the courage, tenacity and self-sacrifice of the Australian soldiers. As we read on we become aware that there are many times when this situation is created by the enemy or else unforeseen or unexpected events. In this situation there is nothing anyone can do except “bite the bullet” and try to deal with it. What comes through the story, however, is the tragedy of the absence of those **3Ps** being often brought about by ignorant, incompetent or self-serving leadership. So many lives lost which could have been avoided.

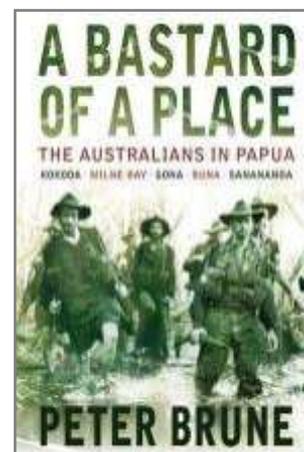
Brune does not hold back in his comments about leaders and leadership. He gives credit wherever it is due but has no hesitation in criticising weak or misguided performances by both military and political leaders. While there were some poor leaders at lower levels, he is adamant that the greatest weaknesses started at the top. MacArthur, Blamey and Herring all come in for heavy and frequent criticism. After describing events at Buna he says “If Blamey and MacArthur had trusted in their local commanders.....if they had allowed them time for reconnaissance and studied planning, and if they had supported and encouraged them, the desired results would have come far quicker and with fewer casualties.” This was one of his gentler remarks.

An interesting sidelight in the book is some discussion and appreciation of the work of Damien Parer and George Silk. These two magnificent photographers did a wonderful job of reporting, in images, the Papuan campaign. Both suffered under bureaucratic and military suppression of much of their work. However, thanks to them, we have their record to show us what it was really like.

The book, with its wonderfully detailed information and enjoyable style, is essentially a tribute to the Australian soldiers who fought this campaign. Peter Brune’s thoughts about them read like this: ***“Last, I would like to thank the Australian soldier who fought in Papua during 1942-43. I hope this book will be seen as some fair and accurate assessment of his greatness.”***

Mr Brune, I believe that any reader would have to agree that it is. You have “nailed” it.

We have two copies of “A Bastard of a Place” in our library.



We need your Profile

Instead of having that extra glass of beer or wine, how about writing 250 - 300 words about your career, and share your story with other Sub-Branch members.

Your mates might know what you’ve been up to for the past 100 years, but many others do not!

Please email your copy to Sandra at smay44@bigpond.net.au

Thank you!



NORTHERN BEACHES VETERANS AND COMMUNITY DAY

Sunday 12 November 2017 - Dunbar Park, Avalon Beach 10am - 4pm.

This inaugural event evolved due to the success of the Avalon Military Tattoo over the last 10 years, the enhanced relationship between local RSL Club Sub-Branches and the community, and to carry on the legacy of past Avalon RSL Club Sub-Branch President, CDRE Graham Sloper AM RAN (Rtd).

Awareness of veteran's issues is increasing within the community, and the ANZAC spirit is flourishing on the Northern Beaches. Crowds at ceremonies have been increasing steadily in recent years. This will be an opportunity for the younger generations to learn more about past and current conflicts and to meet veterans and serving members of the Australian Defence Force. Everyone is welcome.

For further information, please contact Lynn Murphy on 9883 9815 and Tamara Sloper Harding on 9883 9814, or email subbranch@avalonrsl.com.au



VALE - LEST WE FORGET

With great sadness, we report the passing of two Sub-Branch Members:

Malcolm Irvine Stapleton, WW2
RAN Service Number S6821
26 Dec 1925 - 16 Aug 2017

Drew Johnson, Affiliate Member
19 Aug 1968 - 26 Aug 2017

Congratulations to Living Treasure, Tommy Knox

Recently, the Pittwater RSL Bowling Club renamed one of their bowling greens to the "Tommy Knox Bowling Green". There was a formal presentation to Tommy on Saturday 2 September, with many family members in attendance. A well deserved tribute.

The Bowling Club has previously renamed greens in honour of Matt Slavich and Ted Lindsay.

WELFARE

Our Welfare and Membership Officer can assist you with enquiries regarding war pensions, obtaining service records, membership eligibility and any other queries you may have.

Please contact Deborah Carter on 9997 3833, or send an email to: pittwaterrslsubbranch@gmail.com

WELCOME TO OUR RECENTLY JOINED SUB-BRANCH MEMBERS

Shane Jones (transferred from Dee Why)
Brian Heal (transferred from Hunters Hill)

We look forward to your participation and support.

50 YEAR CERTIFICATE

If you have been a Sub-Branch Member, continuously of any Branch, for longer than 50 years, could you please contact Deborah as soon as possible.

Thank you.



ON THE HORIZON...

Sun 08 Oct	10:30am	Meeting
Sat 11 Nov	10:15am	Remembrance Day Service - Form Up
Sat 11 Nov	12 noon	Remembrance Day Lunch
Sun 12 Nov	10:30am	Meeting
Sun 12 Nov	10am-4pm	Northern Beaches Veterans and Community Day (see above article)
Sun 10 Dec	10:30am	Meeting
Sun 10 Dec	12 noon	Christmas Lunch

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - CONTACT NUMBERS

Deborah Carter	President	0414 470 913
Allan Croft	Secretary	0418 162 786
John Ward	Treasurer	0408 236 628
Michael Carrodus	Snr Vice President	0414 669 190
Darren Crabb	Vice President	0407 042 547



PITTWATER RSL SUB-BRANCH

82 Mona Vale Road, Mona Vale NSW 2103

RSL Club: 02 9997 3833

Sub-Branch: 02 8401 0785

Website: pittwaterrsl.com.au/sub-branch.html

Newsletter No. 11 - October 2017

Submissions by Deborah Carter, Darren Crabb, Sandra May, Bob Wood

Produced by Sandra May - 0417 944 244. smay44@bigpond.net.au

Current Membership: 128