



# Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch Newsletter

July 2017

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Sub-Branch continues to make positive strides forward for our members in concert with the Pittwater RSL Club Ltd.

We experienced an anxious moment in the lead up to the Pittwater RSL Club Ltd AGM. Eleven Special Resolutions (SRs) were being tabled with three of the SRs having an adverse bearing on the Sub-Branch, in contravention of both Clubs' Stated Aims and Deed of Accommodation and Administrative Services. All Sub-Branch 'A' Class members voted against the three SRs at our Special General Meeting on 20 May.

Fortunately at the AGM, 28 May 2017, the three contentious SRs did not gain motions, so were not carried. Based on a renewed understanding by both Clubs, we look forward to closer consultation as we move forward.

The other challenge occurred at the State Congress in Albury 21-24 May where we voted for our new State President. I am pleased to report Captain James Brown was voted in as the State President. James is a veteran of Afghanistan and I personally think he is the right person to steer the RSL after all the controversy over the last 9 months!

We are still waiting for the forensic audit report from KordaMentha regarding the proposed misuse of RSL Life Care's payment to Directors, who were also part of the State Executive.

Bob Wood joins the Executive as our new Librarian and will be working in the Sub-Branch office on a Monday. Bob will be writing a book review for each Newsletter, and we hope to profile Bob in our next Newsletter.

We have extremely sad news to relate. Our Sub-Branch member, Rex Newman, passed away on Monday 26 June in the San Hospital whilst waiting heart surgery. Rex was 84 years. Our condolences to his family and friends. His wife, Val, and their daughter, Tammy, were with him until the end.

Rex will be greatly missed at the Sub-Branch, especially by Graeme Lee, his good friend, and cousin-in-law.

Rex's profile, which was planned for this issue, is on page 2.



Regards,  
Lest We Forget

**Deborah Carter**  
President

## CONGRATULATIONS TO BILL MACKAY, ONE OF OUR "LIVING TREASURES"



On 23 May 2017, Bill was made a Chevalier in the Order of the Legion of Honour on behalf of the President of the Republic of France. This is an outstanding achievement of a very prestigious award. Bill received his medal on 14 June, and a formal presentation will take place later this year.

Bill served in the 5th Scottish Parachute Regiment during WW2. He fought in Italy up to June 1944, and then jumped into France with the Americans one week after D-Day. France has recognised his fighting for over a month, which contributed to the liberation of their country.



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>President's Report</i>	1	<i>Lieutenant Sam Steel</i>	4
<i>Special Award for Bill Mackay</i>	1	<i>RSLNSW Day Club</i>	5
<i>Rex Newman Profile</i>	2	<i>Sub-Branch Webpage</i>	5
<i>This Day in History</i>	2	<i>Book Review</i>	5
<i>Gary Everitt Profile</i>	3	<i>RSL LifeCare Narrabeen</i>	6
<i>The Sub-Branch Library</i>	3	<i>Vale</i>	6
<i>Brian Strawbridge Profile</i>	4	<i>On the Horizon</i>	6
<i>Celebrating a Birthday</i>	4	<i>Contact Details</i>	6





### **(The Late) REX NEWMAN**

I was born in Geelong, Victoria on 22 Feb 1933.

I joined St Johns Ambulance as a cadet and rose to Sergeant and paraded at Victoria Government House for the Duke of Gloucester (then GG of Victoria).

In 1947 and 1948, I was a Cadet at Melbourne Boys High School, and represented the school in quarter guard competitions at Puckapunyal.

In 1949, I apprenticed as a printer and started playing baseball.

Jan 1952, 14 NSTB "E" Coy – I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> intake in the National Service at "Pucka", and achieved Bren Gun marksmanship. I also ran the mile in 4 minutes 20 seconds on sports day.

I was then posted to 2<sup>nd</sup> light Anti-Aircraft regiment Ripponlea, Victoria. I was appointed in charge of Regimental Aid Post because of my St. Johns background. I was honorary Sergeant at all camps,

and had a double tent with 6 beds all to myself until sick parade. I was popular with those in the know (mainly regulars) because I handed out the leave protection packages. We were in Pucka when King George VI died. In all parades and drills I was left hand rear marker, and when the Queen visited in 1954, I was in her guard at Government House.

I remember the hundreds of fit young supermen lining up for vaccination at the RAP with the big syringes that were then used, same needle for every man – approximately 10% fainted or were sick, also a large number collapsed after standing for any length of time on parade.

I got my first driver's license in a Jeep. I brought home the papers to sign to go to Korea, however, the conflict was over before my papers were processed. Six of my Uncles served overseas in WW2, and I was very proud of them.

National Service added 6 months to my apprenticeship which I completed in 1954.

I met my wife on 1 March 1952 on my first leave from camp. We were married on 2 March 1957. We transferred to Sydney in December 1960 for my work as a flexible packaging printer.

My wife and I celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2017.

## **THIS DAY IN HISTORY** *Compiled by Darren Crabb*

### **July**

- 1911, 10      Formation of the RAN. In its original form, the Royal Australian Navy consisted of the battle cruiser Australia and several cruisers, destroyers and submarines.
- 1916, 1      First day of the battle of the Somme. This was the worst single day in the history of British arms, with 60,000 men being killed or wounded.
- 1942, 1      Sinking of the Montevideo Maru. It was carrying more than 1050 Australian prisoners, when it was sunk by the American submarine USS Sturgeon. None of the prisoners survived.

### **August**

- 1944, 05      Mass breakout of Japanese prisoners at Cowra POW camp, NSW. This was the largest ever mass escape from a POW camp with some 378 Japanese prisoners escaping the camp, of these, 234 were killed and 108 were wounded.
- 1945, 06      First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The bomb was dropped by a US B29 bomber nick named "Enola Gay"; it was estimated to have killed some 140,000 people by August 1946.
- 1966, 18      Battle of Long Tan, South Vietnam. 108 men of D Company, 6th Battalion, RAR, supported by artillery and a timely resupply by the RAAF, fought off an attack by an enemy force of more than 2,000 in a rubber plantation near the abandoned village of Long Tan.

### **September**

- 1912, 20      Official formation of the Australian Flying Corps. The AFC served in Mesopotamia, the Middle East, and the Western Front, and was the forerunner of the RAAF.
- 1914, 14      HMA Submarine AE1 lost off New Guinea. The AE1 and AE2 were the first submarines to serve with the RAN. The AE1 disappeared without trace during operations for the capture of German New Guinea.
- 1939, 03      Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand declare war on Germany.



**GARY EVERITT –  
Sapper 2786607**

I was born in Manly Hospital on 23 February 1945. My parents were Margaret and Ron Everitt.

After school, I joined the Merchant Navy and went to sea training as a Marine Engineer officer with Blue Star Line.

I was called up for National Service while with Blue Star, entered the Australian Army Service 8<sup>th</sup> National Service intake in April 1967.

I was posted to 32 Small Ship Squadron R.A.E. as ships engineer, Army Landing Ship CLIVE STEELE, rank Sapper.

We sailed for Vietnam in January 1968 with a cargo of 6 Centurion Tanks weighing 60 ton each. The voyage took 4 weeks and we travelled 4,000 nautical miles. We were caught in a typhoon in the South China Sea four days out of Malaya. The seas were mountainous and battered the ship for five days – a very harrowing experience.

Equipment, Fuel, Explosives, Ammunition and other

various cargoes, all destined for South Vietnam, inland rivers and the South China Sea.

Our crew was relieved by a fresh crew in July 1968. The Clive Steele remained in South Vietnam for nearly 2 years. I remained in the unit until my National Service was completed. I was discharged in April 1969.

My Father - Sgt Ronald Everitt, served in WW2 - Royal Australian Artillery, Unit 2/1 Field Regiment, 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division. Service: Middle East, Papua New Guinea.

I thoroughly enjoyed my Army Service, and made some lifelong friends.



**THE SUB-BRANCH LIBRARY**

*Written by Bob Wood*

Some of you may not be aware that we are the proud possessors of a very interesting little library.

The Library is located in the Sub-Branch office (in the demountable, middle level of the RSL car park) and consists mainly of books with Navy, Army and Air Force connections. Some are fiction, but the majority are non-fiction and contain all sorts of information about Australia's involvement in conflicts and other operations throughout our history.

The content of some of the documentary works is outstanding and all are well worth reading.

You can borrow books whenever the office is open, usually on a Monday, between 11:00am and 3:00pm (not public holidays, however). The phone number is 8401 0785, and you can leave a message.

We only ask that you complete the Library Borrowing Register when you remove a book, and also when you return the book.

*You can read Bob Wood's book review of "44 Days" by Michael Veitch, on page 5 in this issue.*

**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.*



**BRIAN STRAWBRIDGE - CMF**

I was born on 25 September 1931 in Sydney.

I attended Ashbury Public School, and studied at Ashfield Technical High School and only went to Intermediate level.

Growing up and being one of three boys, the house always seemed to be full of boys and mum. I enjoyed sport - soccer, league, tennis, cricket, softball, swimming, running, shooting, fishing, rock and mountain climbing, cubs and scouts, and started to enjoy dancing and holidays away.

In 1949 I joined the CMF (Citizens Military Forces) with an Artillery Regiment and was posted to Ashfield in the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Antitank Regiment as a gunner (Service number 2/107835) on 17 pounder A/T (Anti-tank guns), crew of 8. They really weren't my scene, as I had served at high school in the cadets in Platoon 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Ashfield Cadets 1945 and in 1946 made Lance Corporal.

I commenced work in the hardware industry with Traversi Jones P/L Ashfield in March 1947, being trained in all areas. In 1950 I was promoted to Shop Receiving Manager. At this point I made the decision to leave the CMF, and was discharged in 1950. Further advances in hardware were to happen.

After many promotions and transfers, I was promoted to General Manager in 1971. We eventually had 11 stores, a staff of 50 managers and 432 general staff. On 23 Dec 1994 I decided to retire, aged 64 years. I had worked for this company for 47 years and 9 months.

Janelle Matthews and I had met in 1959 at a night tennis meeting. We were married on 26 Feb 1960. We have been blessed with three children, Robert, Colleen and Wendy. All three are married, and between them, we have 10 grandchildren.

My family had a distinguished military history. My father, Robert Strawbridge, was in the Malayan campaign, a prisoner of war at Changi prison. My older brother, Robert, was a Fighter Pilot with 77 Sqn in Korea. He served two tours and did 221 combat missions. Robert was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal and the US Air Medal.

On returning to Australia, Bob was commissioned Pilot Officer with a Permanent Commission and Flying Instructor. On 29 Apr 1953, while training in Mustangs off Morna Point, Port Stephens, in a mack run (power dive) in a Vampire, a mid-air collision occurred and neither pilot was ever recovered. This was the worst thing that had ever happened in my life, as we were very close.

I have been a member of Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch since 1999, 18 years, and have served in various capacities on the committee as Vice President/Senior Vice President, Trustee and Assistant Secretary for 15 years under three presidents.

*Celebrating Birthdays in July, August, September*

Peter Rumble	03 Jul	Sam Steel	05 Aug	Howard Lockwood	01 Sep
Chris Bedwell	07 Jul	Cecil Capon	06 Aug	Cliff Gravenor	02 Sep
Shane Fender	07 Jul	Walter Nicholls	14 Aug	Barry McFarland	08 Sep
Don Tierney	08 Jul	Geoffrey Jones	16 Aug	Lily Randall	12 Sep
Jack Evans	10 Jul	Drew Johnson	19 Aug	Darren Crabb	17 Sep
Bill Nichols	13 Jul	Gerald Locke	24 Aug	Bill Mackay	18 Sep
Dorothy Clark	20 Jul	<b>Bernard O'Neill</b>	27 Aug	Robert Crowe	18 Sep
Jim Colbeck	21 Jul			Brian Strawbridge	25 Sep
Colin Petersen	23 Jul			John Williams	26 Sep
Deborah Carter	23 Jul			John Vandyke	28 Sep
Julian Vanslambrouck	27 Jul				
Peter Whipp	31 Jul				



**Congratulations Lieutenant Steel!**

On 16 June, Sam Steel, was promoted to Lieutenant, and will commence training as a Maritime Warfare Officer on 26 June at HMAS Watson.

Good luck, Sam! Jacquie, his wife, and their two children, Maximus and Alexander, were at the promotion ceremony.



## RSLNSW Day Club - 40th Birthday Celebration

Day Clubs were established in NSW in 1977 as a joint venture between the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), NSW Office and the Returned & Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch) (RSLNSW).

Sponsored by RSL Sub-Branches and supported by the DVA, each Day Club is open to any interested member of the community for a small fee, not just ex-service people.

Currently, about 80 people attend the Pittwater RSL Sub-Branch every Thursday from 10:30am until 2:00pm. Everyone is invited to attend.

A typical day's events are: gentle exercises, an exercise routine suitable for older adults; morning tea; a program of mentally stimulating and interesting activities; community involvement, speakers and entertainment; Lunch; and ending the day with leisure activities, cards or table games.

It's an enjoyable social day out for many members of our community.



Day Club Coordinator, Sally Bromley, and volunteers, Marcia Gravenor and Lorraine Dwyer

### SUB-BRANCH WEBPAGE

It was time for a new look for our webpage. This has been updated by Sandra May and Georgia Scapens, the Social Media contact in the Pittwater RSL Club. A special "thank you" to Georgia for all her assistance.

Our webpage, on the RSL Club's website, can be viewed at...

[pittwater.rsl.com.au/sub-branch.html](http://pittwater.rsl.com.au/sub-branch.html)

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Our next General Meeting on Sunday 09 July, will take place in the Viola Café, which is on the same level as the Distillery.

Please remember, the Meeting will commence at **10:30am**.

## BOOK REVIEW

**"44 DAYS", Michael Veitch, Hachette Australia, 2016.**

***The epic battle in the skies above Port Moresby. 75 Squadron and the fight for Australia.***

Most of us will be aware of the heroic defence of Malta in 1940 by totally inadequate aircraft (Gloster Gladiator biplanes) against the overwhelming force of the Italian Regia Aeronautica. Definitely one of the "legends" of WW2.

This book, which was the subject of a TV documentary, tells of another heroic, one-sided battle that may well be considered as helping to create the platform that enabled the subsequent fighting withdrawal and later victory on the Kokoda Track.

I was not aware of these early actions by 75 Squadron until I picked up the

book. The story, as beautifully told to us by Veitch, has many twists and turns. Points that jump out immediately are:

1. The totally deplorable under preparedness of the Squadron;
2. The total confusion (and incompetence) of Australia's military and political leadership;
3. The inability of staff to provide supplies, re-supplies, replacement parts and aircraft and all other forms of support.

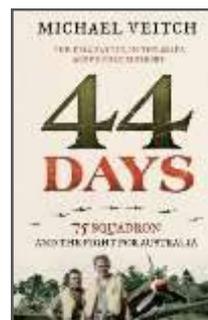
Add to these the fact that nobody in Australia (especially military leaders) had any idea of the demands that the environment and conditions in Papua and New Guinea were like. How DID we manage to win the war???

From the poor selection of high ranking officers, the abysmal attempts at re-supply and the tactical inadequacies of their aircraft, the story shows us how it fell to the men

on the ground to use their skills of initiative, improvisation and courage to carry out their duties. Heroes all, from ground crew to pilots to medical staff and Squadron Leaders, it is all there in a book that is a great read about a very little known part of the war that saved Australia from invasion.

All Australians need to know more about it.

*Written by Bob Wood,  
Sub-Branch Member*



## OUR VISIT TO RSL LIFECARE - ANZAC VILLAGE

On Tuesday 20 June, 14 Members enjoyed a day's outing funded by the Sub-Branch. Everyone met at the Pittwater RSL Club, and were safely driven to RSL LifeCare, Narrabeen, by Julio, in the courtesy bus.

On arrival, we had morning tea. This was followed by a guided tour of their first class Museum, which houses many displays from the Boer War to modern conflicts. Our guide was Julian Vanslambrouck. We then visited their Chapel with Helen Gribble. A very nice luncheon was enjoyed in the Somalia Room, and everyone arrived back at our Club at 3pm.

Special thanks to Julian Vanslambrouck, Helen Gribble, Museum President, and staff at RSL LifeCare, for hosting such a successful event.



## VALE - LEST WE FORGET



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

**Walter Kirk**, WW2 RAF  
B: 13 December 1921. D: 27 May 2017

**Harry Burns**, Army NX181068  
B: 19 June 1927. D: 16 June 2017

**Rex Newman**, National Service 3/712084  
B: 22 February 1933. D: 26 June 2017



### ON THE HORIZON...

Sunday 09 Jul	10:30am	Meeting
Sunday 13 Aug	10:30am	Meeting
Sunday 10 Sep	10:30am	Meeting

### 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](mailto:pittwaterrslsubbranch@gmail.com)

### 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.

### WELCOME TO OUR RECENTLY JOINED SUB-BRANCH MEMBERS

Sam Steel  
Terry Jones  
Dorothy Clark  
Inese Carrodus  
Donald Newport  
Lavinia Waller  
Sandra Langfield  
Carolyn Noble

We look forward to your participation and support.

### 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](http://pittwaterrsl.com.au/sub-branch.html)

Newsletter No. 10 - July 2017

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

Produced by Sandra May - 0417 944 244. [smay44@bigpond.net.au](mailto:smay44@bigpond.net.au)

Current Membership: 128