

# Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 4

December 2021



**REMINDER**  
**General Meeting**  
**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December**  
**10.30am**  
**Bring your Partner**

## From the President's Desk

**Legal Issues.** On the 14<sup>th</sup> October an email from our legal team had an attachment that set out the hearing dates for our case against the Memorial Club regarding the eviction of the Sub-Branch from the building still referred to as RSL Club Southport. There are two days set aside for the case to be heard in the District Court in Brisbane. The dates are the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

**General Meeting.** As those that attended will know, both my wife Sandra and myself missed the General meeting held on September 19<sup>th</sup>. The reason for our absence was the fact that we had driven to Rockhampton for that weekend to watch our granddaughter, Charlie, row for her school in several heats of the rowing carnival held over the four days around that weekend.

The reports that I got from the members of the Board that were at the meeting were all of a positive nature and I would like to personally thank both Ken Orr for chairing the meeting and Rodney Tagg for getting everything ready.

**Emu Park.** While we were in Rockhampton, we took the opportunity to drive to Emu Park to visit their War Memorial. This War Memorial features in an article in Edition 3, 2021 of the RSL News. The article does not do justice to the Memorial which is, in my opinion, one of the most spectacular in Australia. If you are ever anywhere near Rockhampton, you should make a detour to Emu Park.



**A Small Part of the Emu Park Memorial**

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1919 there was a meeting of Veterans from the Great War held in the Southport Town Hall. The meeting was to investigate the forming of a Sub-Branch of *The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA)*. The meeting was well attended and there was overwhelming support for the proposal. At that meeting the first officers of the Sub-Branch were elected and

members joined. So came about the Southport RSL Sub-Branch.

We were unable to celebrate this occasion on the anniversary date because of the upheaval taking place in the Sub-Branch and then the pandemic. But the anniversary has been finally commemorated. A 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Certificate from National RSL was presented at the Veterans Health Week event held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October.



**Pat Fairon (District President) Presents  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Certificate**

**Veterans' Health Week.** For the first time in recent history, the Sub-Branch took part in the annual Veterans Health Week. It was combined with our regular monthly Morning Tea and the turnout was very pleasing indeed. There were a number of veterans in attendance who do not normally attend our monthly gathering.



**Members and Guests  
at the Veterans' Health Week Function**

There were a number of guest speakers who offered services to improve the health of our members. Several members participated in barefoot bowls. A morning tea was served before the presentations and these were followed by a "healthy lunch". Many stayed and took advantage of the great facilities to socialise with those present. It was well after 3:00pm before the last left.

## **Sabah Borneo** **Why were we there?** by Warren Hulyer part two

In the second half of 1966 the 22nd Construction Squadron Group CSG of the Royal Australian Engineers were dispatched to the Malaysian State of Sabah to continue a road building task other RAE Groups had been working on for some time under Operation Granite.

A majority of the 22nd CSG soldiers were National Servicemen from the first and second intakes of the two-year National Service Scheme which commenced in 1965.

But, why were we there at all?

Between 1962 and 1966 President Sukarno of Indonesia was intent on destroying the newly created Nation of Malaysia. This was referred to as the Confrontation or Konfrontasi.

Australia wanted a strong, united anti-communist Malaysia but did not want armed conflict with Indonesia. This was the prime reason for the introduction of the two-year National Service Scheme in Australia.

During 1963 the Indonesian military sent small parties of regular and non-regular soldiers to wage terrorist attacks in the former British Borneo area, now the Malaysia States of Sarawak and Sabah. In 1964 they also initiated raids on the Malaysia Peninsula

The main focus of Australian attention was in Sabah and Sarawak. Fighting was difficult due to the terrain and the oppressive jungle climate. As a part of Operation Claret, Australian troops were strategically located along the Indonesian border to protect population centres from terrorist attacks. They also made frequent, though secret, incursions into Indonesia territory, forcing the Indonesia forces to defend rather than attack.



**Soldiers of 3RAR Boarding a Belvedere Helicopter  
In Search of Indonesian Infiltrators (1965)**

The Operation Granite road being built, was aiming to provide a more accessible route to the Indonesian border should the conflict escalate. The mountainous jungle covered terrain made road construction perilous and slow. Local soil topped the road and the regular tropical rain would make the road unusable. Tree felling was also a hazardous process, with incredibly thick jungle vines causing trees to fall in unintended places and injuries were incurred due to this problem.

During Operation Claret, 3RAR had four major contacts with Indonesia forces and suffered casualties in 1965. In 1966 they were replaced by 4RAR. In addition, two SAS Squadrons, Artillery batteries, RAN ships and, of course RAE Engineers were involved. Twenty-three Australians died and 109 were wounded during this campaign.

There was very little media coverage of this campaign in Australia at the time because of the sensitivity of the operations and the covert cross-border activity. Australian troops who entered Indonesia Territory were sworn to secrecy and it was not until 1966 that the "Invasion" was publicly admitted.

A military coup against Sukarno bought an end to the confrontation and 22nd Construction Squadron RAE were the last to work on the road, leaving Sabah in late 1966.

Construction of the road ceased in 1966 with the departure of the 22nd CSG, but the extraction of valuable timbers and the introduction of Palm Oil Plantations many years

later saw the development of an all-weather road to service the area. This road is now a major factor in the Sabah economy and it all started with the Royal Australian Engineers.

## **Dressing Ship**

by Matthew Luscombe

On the 4th October 1913, the first RAN fleet, under the command of Rear Admiral Sir George Patey, RN, in HMAS Australia, (battle-cruiser), entered Sydney Harbour. With HMAS Australia were her consorts HMAS Melbourne, HMAS Sydney, HMAS Encounter, HMAS Parramatta, HMAS Yarra, and HMAS Warrego.

This day is commemorated every year by HMA Ships and Establishments by 'Dressing Ship'.



**Dress Ship at HMAS Cerberus 4th October 2021**

**I have a pencil that used to be owned by William Shakespeare. He chewed it a lot. Now I can't tell if its 2B or not 2B**

## Green Side Up

A woman showed an Aussie builder around her home and told him what colour she wanted each room to be painted. *“This one will be a light blue,”* she said in the first room.

The builder nodded, walked to the front door and yelled, *“GREEN SIDE UP!”*

He went back inside the house and followed her to the next room. *“I want this one to be painted yellow,”* she instructed.

The builder nodded, went to the front door and yelled, *“GREEN SIDE UP!”*

He went back inside the house and the owner told him that the next room was to be painted red.

Again, he nodded, went to the front door and yelled, *“GREEN SIDE UP!”*

When he came back inside the next time, the owner asked him: *“I keep telling you what colour to paint the rooms and you keep going to the front door and yelling ‘Green side up!’ What does that mean?”*

The builder replied, *“Oh, I have a couple of Kiwis laying turf in the front yard!”*

## Cyclone Althea 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by John Riebeling

For those who can't remember, cyclone Althea struck Townsville in the early morning of Christmas-eve 1971. The build-up to the storm was quite intense. Throughout the night we had listened to the weather reports and advice as to what to do when (or if) the storm struck. But nothing can really prepare you for something like that though.

At first it was all very interesting – the driving rain and the noise. I remember thinking how funny it was when the outside toilets (which were no longer in use) all began to blow over. But then all the light switches disappeared into the walls. The power cables ran through the roof, and as the storm started to lift our roof, the cable pulled all the switches into the cavity of the wall.

At first, we didn't realise what was going on. You could hardly hear anyone talk because of the noise – like a jet plane flying over very low,

but constant. Then our roof blew right off, but most of the ceiling stayed. The rain poured in and everything started to get stained with the brown from the masonite of the walls and ceiling.

As soon as the storm abated a little, and using pillows to protect ourselves, we ran across our backyard, jumped the (low) fence and made it to the house at the back of us. That is where we spent Christmas day and a few more days until the RAAF found temporary accommodation for us.

The house they moved us into was an old married quarters that no longer met with the required standards. The back yard (in fact the whole yard) was waist-high with thick grass that was almost impossible to walk through. The house was not high-set—as were most of the married quarters in Townsville—but was built on stumps. The underneath of the house seemed to be a little lower than the rest of the yard. As a result, we had a little lake underneath the house which turned out to be a magnificent breeding ground for frogs. We had never seen so many frogs before or since. In addition, the house had no fly-screens, so the insects were pretty bad. We had to eat with hats on to keep the beetles out of our hair. That's how we played cards at night too. We stayed in that house for several weeks before they moved us back to Garbutt and a better married quarter.

But getting back to the cyclone and the damage it did to other parts of the town. As you can imagine, it was a little while before Sandy and I could get ourselves organised enough to get out and see what had happened to the rest of the town, so by the time we did a lot had been cleaned up.



**Damage to Radio Antennae Masts**

Of course, I had to get back to work as soon as I could and I must say that there was quite a bit of damage to the base, especially to our radio communications.

When I first got to Townsville most of my time was spent in the air traffic control (ATC) transmitter hall and radio workshops. These consisted of some old corrugated iron huts (circa WW II—I think we referred to them as igloo huts) and these sustained quite a bit of damage along with the masts for our antennae.



The Team

A considerable effort was put in by some of the younger technicians we had there. They were single and living on the base, so were able to get to work quite quickly to get us back on the air.

The Radio Officer at the time, Squadron Leader Parrott, was a keen sailor and approaching

retirement. His ambition after retirement was to sail the South Pacific in a yacht he was building. The boat was a concrete hulled affair that was a popular method for home builders at that time in Townsville. It was supposedly a very strong way of construction and this proved to be the case in this instant. The boat was being built in an old disused hangar on the base and during the cyclone the hangar roof collapsed causing a massive roof beam to strike the boat. The damage was so slight it was hardly worth repairing.



Strong Boat

## Telegraph Newspaper (Brisbane) Friday 4 April 1919, page 2

### RETURNED SOLDIERS' LEAGUE Sub-branch at Southport

A most enthusiastic and well attended meeting of soldiers of Southport, Nerang, Mudgeeraba and Coomera was held in the Town Hall, Southport, on Thursday evening, 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The convener (Mr. A. E. Pacey) opened the meeting by introducing Mr. V. D. Robinson, Brisbane district secretary, who discoursed at length on the various planks of the league's platform, and the advisability of forming a subbranch in Southport. An attentive hearing was given to the speaker, and it was decided to form a subbranch. The following executive officers were duly appointed: President, Dr. Berry; hon secretary, A. E. Pacey; vice-presidents, Messrs Andrews and Groves; treasurer, Mr Murray; delegate to the district executive, Mr. Andrews. Other members from the country centres were elected to the executive.

The enthusiasm shown at the first meeting is a fair precedent that Southport subbranch will become an energetic and prosperous section of the league

## History of the Naval Police (or Protecting the Senior Service)

### Part 2 of 4

By Peter Boyes OAM

After my introduction into the Naval Police last newsletter, in this part we look at the formation of the then Naval Dockyard Police in 1913.

On the 13th May 1913, the first of a series of advertisements appeared in all the major daily newspapers throughout Australia, inviting ex-members of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the Royal Australian Navy to apply for the new 'Force'.

The advertisement read:

**FORMATION OF NAVAL POLICE FORCE**

**RECRUITING**

Applications are invited from persons qualified for appointment as NAVAL POLICE at HMA Naval Establishments Sydney.

Applicants must be not less than 30 nor more than 45 years of age on the 1st July 1913.

Preference will be given to married men who have completed not less than five years service in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, or the Royal Australian Navy.

Applications must be made on the prescribed forms which may be obtained, together with full particulars as to rates of pay, conditions of appointment, etc. on application to the District Naval Officer, Naval Staff Office (in the state of application).

Application must be sent direct to the Naval Secretary, Navy Office, Melbourne, to reach him not later than 9th June 1913.

**S.A. PETHEBRIDGE**  
Secretary

Before the enrolment of the successful applicants the title of the Force was changed to that of "Naval Dockyard Police". The Active Service Police apparently suffered an unsavoury reputation; in fact, Admiral CRESWELL stated that he had the strongest objection to anything that reflected a similar reputation as the ships' police. On the 4th June 1913, the Naval Board approved the title Naval Dockyard Police.

### The Formation of the Force

The formation of the Force had not been given a great deal of consideration between 1911 and

May of 1913, very little time was available to develop a satisfactory uniform and an adequate set of conditions of service. So, for the sake of expediency, the Naval Board accepted the recommendation of the Director of Navy Accounts, Honorary Fleet Paymaster, A. MARTIN, that the Naval Dockyard Police conditions of service, including pay, be aligned with those of the RAN Academic and Instructional Staff. Initial Naval Dockyard Police Constables wore civilian clothes with either an arm band or hat that stated they were police.



However, as no uniforms were available on the 1st July 1913, the branch began its service in civilian clothing wearing Naval Police armllets until they were subsequently supplied with uniforms. The uniform of the NSW Water Police was adopted to give the notion that they were the same as any other policeman.



There were many other major concerns that affected the development of the Force in its early years and were to have far reaching ramifications in its later history. Among these



On the 25th, the memorial ceremony was joined by David Mattiske who was onboard the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS Shropshire at the time. Mr. Mattiske and others from Japan, Philippines, USA and Australia presented flowers to the ocean to respect the lost veterans during the ceremony. The ceremony has taken place every year since 1944.

The battle of Surigao was one of the many battles which occurred within the Battle of the Leyte Gulf. The Japanese fleet led by Vice Admiral Nishimura was heading north from Surigao to Leyte Gulf where it engaged the US Navy fleet and lost 6 ships including battleship Fuso and Yamashiro between 24th and 25th of October 1944. In the same battle, more than 4000 Japanese lives and 45 American lives have been said to have been lost.

The US has identified the remains of 5 of the sunk battleships on the seabed, but excavation of this has not been permitted.

### **A Tale of Caution:**

***It isn't always what it appears.***

By Peter Boyes OAM

This is real, it happened at Southport, of course “no names no pack-drill”. A lady presented to the JP signing centre recently with some red-light camera tickets. She wanted to change them into her daughter’s name as she was the one driving. This lady firstly told the story of how the tickets came to pass.

Her daughter was driving through an intersection and she saw the ‘flash’ of the camera. She was surprised as she didn’t think she was speeding. So, she decided to check. A quick left turn, around the block and she drove through the intersection again. Checking her actual speed as she entered the intersection. To her surprise she received another flash.

She became quite angry that she would get a ticket as she wasn’t speeding. So decided to repeat it a third time, this time she would record her speed on her camera phone so she could fight the ticket in court.

Around the block again and she was set up to record the faulty speed camera. She entered the intersection, recording her speedo and yet again she got the flash.

The mother then showed the JP the four tickets received. There were three tickets for failing to

wear a seatbelt and one for holding a mobile phone while driving. Fines totalling over \$1600 and 6 demerit points. The daughter was a bit upset, but Mum demanded she pay for her crimes.

**It truly isn't always what you think.**

### **NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

As part of the IT rollout that is being undertaken by RSL Qld, the Sub-Branch has been issued with four new mobile phones. The numbers are:

**0484 278 987** President

**0484 279 568** Treasurer

**0484 280 750** Secretary

Please use these numbers when trying to contact the Sub-Branch, in particular the number for the Secretary.

### **Remembrance Day 2021**

Preparations for Remembrance Day 2021 began shortly after our AGM in June when Kevin Lloyd-Thomas took on the task of being our major events coordinator. The preparations progressed well and Kevin is to be praised for his efforts. 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 dawned with overcast skies and the promise of heavy showers.

It was probably the threat of the heavy showers that kept the public away and we did not fill all of the seats that had been set up. The bulk of those that attended were wearing medals, either on the left or right breast and quite often, on both.

The ceremony began a few minutes late at about 1036 and went very smoothly until we reached probably the most important part—the playing of the Last Post and Reveille. The music was supposed to be supplied by the audio team, but for some reason, they did not have it. As a result, there was a rather long minute of silence before we had to apologise to the people present.

The Currumbin Sub-Branch had arranged for a flypast of a Spitfire and just as the Ode was recited, the roar of a V-12 Merlin screamed across the sky which in fact turned out to be a P-51 Mustang. It could not have been timed more perfectly.

Following the ceremony, a good proportion of the people made their way to the Bowls Club



where lite refreshments and a few cold beverages were consumed in an atmosphere of friendship and comradery.

All in all, I think it is safe to say that we had a successful day.

There were two of our members that missed the day's ceremony, Ken Orr (our Deputy President) and one of our very few remaining WWII veterans, David Matiske.



**David Matiske was in Hospital**



**Gold Coast University Hospital Veterans Remembrance Day**

Ken was involved with a ceremony at the Gold Coast University Hospital.



## Veterans' Morning Teas

All members, their carers, partners and volunteers are welcome to come to our Veterans' Morning Teas. They are held at the Southport Bowls Club every third Wednesday of the month, commencing at 10:00 am. Put these dates on your calendar:

**15 December  
19 January**

**16 February  
16 March**

## Poppy Service



Although it is not a pleasant thing to talk about, I would like to remind all of our readers, especially those that are looking after our aging and frail veterans, that when the time comes, the Sub-Branch offers a service that goes a long way to honouring the service that he or she has given to our country by putting on the uniform of our Defence Forces.

Please contact the Sub-Branch office for any further information



**In Home CPAP Service now available for Veterans on the Gold Coast**

**Merv Hughes says**  
See my mates at CPAP Direct!

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I TOLD MY WIFE THAT A HUSBAND IS LIKE A FINE WINE...



NEXT DAY SHE LOCKED ME IN THE CELLAR!

**Southport RSL Sub-Branch Inc.**  
2 Marine Parade  
PO Box 31  
SOUTHPORT BC QLD 4215  
T 0484 280 750  
E secretary@southport.rslqld.net.au

**Editor:** John Riebeling  
**Contributors:** Peter Boyes OAM  
Claude Palmer  
Ken Orr  
Warren Hulyer

**Sponsors:** Ms Angie Bell, Federal Member for Moncrieff (Printing)  
Mr Rob Molhoek MP, State Member for Southport (Mail)