

Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 2

May 2024



REMINDER
AGM
Sunday 19 May
10.30am
Bring your Partner

From the President's Desk

Our New Offices. We began the move to our new offices when, over the Christmas-New Year break, the communications box that has our NBN connection and Wi-Fi was moved from the top floor back to its original position in the boardroom. The boardroom will become our new Sub Branch office where our secretary and treasurer will have their desks. This room will also act as a storage area for our merchandise and will have display cabinets for what else, displaying our products.

New furniture was purchased for both the VSC Office and the Sub Branch office and I think everyone has been pleased with the way everything has come together. The offices were up and running in very short time. We have also purchased a very nice meeting table which can accommodate the ten members of the Board. It was used for the first-time at our March board meeting. All we had to do then was wait for our display cabinets.

Under Construction



The two photographs above and one below, were taken just after Craig Thomas finished putting together the three desks that we bought for the

Sub Branch office. He did all this work on his own and I truly admire the effort that he put into the move. The only item missing from these scenes is the conference table which was due for delivery some week or so after these photos were taken.



ANZAC Day. The preparations for this most important date on our calendars was started as soon as last year's Remembrance Day was over. Craig Thomas took the lead on this task and carried it out with enthusiasm and passion.

Following last year's debacle when an attempt was made to take the ANZAC Day ceremonies away from the Sub Branch, it has been a totally different atmosphere from the council and other people. The cooperation has been great. We have been pleased to obtain a sponsorship from Ray White for the supply of bottled water for the next two years.

When the day came, we could not have wished for a nicer day. The Dawn Service began with a march down the Gold Coast Highway which was well received by the public. The estimated attendance at the service was 10,000 and it was very gratifying to see the return of the public to our site. Following the Dawn Service, we invited everyone to go to the Bowls Club for a Gunfire Breakfast and drinks. There were more people that we could handle that chose to come to our venue although a significant number also went to that place we do not talk of.

We had no less than five jeeps to head up our Citizens March and funnily enough, had trouble getting enough people to ride in them. The march was massive with many more of the local schools marching in groups.



The Dawn March Begins



Part of the Dawn Service Public



The Beginning

Legal. The judgement for the first case we have had against the Memorial Club was for \$192,820 and by the time they were forced to pay us, interest of \$32,471.81 all of which is comfortably deposited in our savings account.

As to the second case—the loan default—the next step will be to have a mediation on 17 May, so I will not be able to report on that outcome until the next newsletter. Of course, if you can

come to our AGM on the 19 May, I will be able to give a verbal report.



Phone Calls to Members

In the past we have tried to call our members in an ad hoc fashion to see how they are travelling. This was particularly relevant during the COVID crisis.

This year we are trying something different. We are calling our members on their birthday. We have been doing this since the beginning of the year and have found that some of you are hanging up on us—probably because you think it is a crank call—it **isn't**. So, when your phone rings on your birthday, say hello to our director, Sandy Riebeling, who has taken on the rather pleasant task of wishing every member a happy birthday on behalf of all our members.

Get your relatives speaking to one another again by sending a heartfelt Christmas card with a picture of your family with an extra child nobody knows.

My Story

By John Riebeling

My first attempt at providing a Newsletter for our members began shortly after I was trapped into taking up the President position of the Sub Branch. At first there were very few stories to tell and the first few issues only ran to two-pages. Gradually the stories started to come in and the pages increased—the biggest issue having no less than 14-pages. Then the stories began to dry up and I battled to get even six-pages done.

I made several requests to all our members to share their life's experiences but the response has been disappointing to say the least. As a "punishment" I put a few of my own experiences into the newsletters and I find myself still in that predicament.

So, before I go down that track again, I will ask once again. I am positive there are members out there that have led more interesting lives than I and all I ask is you put pen to paper and let us publish your story.

In the meantime—here is another of my stories.

RAAF Base Fairbairn. There is no Air Force base at Canberra any more, although the VIP squadron still operates from there. In 1963 I was on an attachment to the Base. My primary job as a ground radio technician, was to help look after the Commonwealth Weather Broadcasting station which was in a suburb of Canberra—Gungahlin. This station, while being maintained by the RAAF, was used by the Weather Bureau to send weather information to shipping out in the Pacific Ocean. The following is an excerpt from a very long story I have been writing for years:

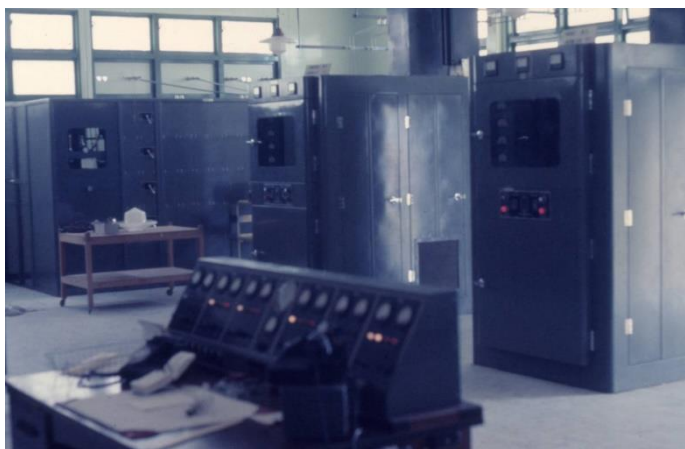
I spent about two months working at the weather broadcasting transmitters at Gungahlin. When at Canberra we used to live on the main base at Fairbairn, which shared the airstrip with the civilian airport. When on duty—we manned the transmitting station 24-hours a day—we would be driven from Fairbairn to Gungahlin for our shift.

One of the things we had to do when on our shift was to cook a meal for ourselves. There was a well-stocked kitchen in the transmitter building and we used to take it in turns to cook. Some of the fellows were quite good cooks too. There were a couple of married quarters located a

short distance from the transmitter building and sometimes one of the wives would cook for us. I remember a couple of very nice roasts.

Eventually however, it was my turn to cook. At that time in my life my cooking experiences were somewhat limited, so I was rather nervous about having to cook for several of my fellow technicians. What would I cook? After a search of the refrigerator, I concluded that there were enough eggs to cook scrambled eggs for everyone. There were also tomatoes and onions aplenty, so I decided to do scrambled eggs the way my mum did them—with onions and tomato. I cut up the onions and tomatoes and proceeded to cook them in a large frypan. While they were cooking, I prepared the eggs. I must have cooked the tomatoes and onions for just a little too long because when I added the eggs I ended up with a horrible brown-looking dish. Not to be put off, I served it up and I must say I got some very strange looks from the fellows. Fortunately, it didn't taste as bad as it looked. They never asked me to cook again though.

The work at Gungahlin was interesting as we were looking after some very large transmitters, if memory serves me right, they were about 100 kW (maybe more) each and we would have three or four on line at any given time. The transmitters were so large (old as well) that you had to walk inside the cabinets to service them. The output tube took two men and a hydraulic lifting device to replace it—and it wasn't a throw away either. The anode cooling fins were solid copper and when one failed it would be sent back to the manufacturer for repairs.



The Transmitter Hall at Gungahlin showing the AT-24 Transmitters and their Control Panel

We could watch the weather map facsimile transmissions going out and the teletype messages that followed each map. Some messages were quite personal.



Facsimile Monitors at Gungahlin

One night we had a bad storm and one of the transmitters failed. We couldn't find any faults and it seemed to work OK into the dummy load we had, but we couldn't load it to the antenna. The conclusion was that we had sustained some sort of damage to the antenna and so we called out the linesman we had on staff. When he arrived, he picked up a fluorescent tube and walked out into the night. As he got to the antenna paddock the fluorescent tube struck from all the RF energy from the other transmitters. That was all the light he needed to find the fault and repair it.

It was during this attachment that the Queen visited Australia, and I remember having to set up the URD2a (direction finder) and stand by it as she flew into Canberra. This piece of equipment was very temperamental and needed several finely balance vacuum tubes to make it work properly. In view of the person my piece of equipment was going to help guide into Canberra, you can bet your bottom dollar I made sure it was up to the job.

On the day I was required to be within calling distance in case anything went wrong, so for the Queen's arrival, I was stationed in the top floor of the hangar adjacent to the control tower. The Queen arrived and her aircraft taxied to the hard-stand in front of the hangar and when she alighted and inspected the honour guard, I probably had the best view of anyone in Australia that day.



**The Fairbairn Control Tower
With the hangar to its left**

Veterans' Morning Teas

All veterans, members, their care-givers, partners, friends, 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 May 24	19 June 24
17 July 24	21 August 24
18 September 24	16 October 24
20 November 24	11 December 24



Supermarine Spitfire MkIXe, ML407, Sqn Ldr John 'Johnnie' Houlton

Constructed as a Mk IXc variant at the famous Castle Bromwich 'Shadow Factory' in early 1944, Supermarine Spitfire ML407 stamped her name in history as the first Allied fighter to claim a Luftwaffe aircraft shot down following the Allied amphibious landings on D-Day. It

also boasts an impressive post-war flying career which continues to this day.



She flew operationally throughout the final months of the Second World War, serving with six different squadrons of the RAF's 2nd Tactical Air Force and amassing 176 combat sorties and 319 hours of combat flying in the process. She was delivered to No. 485 (New Zealand) Squadron on 29th April 1944, where she became the aircraft assigned to Flying Officer Johnnie Houlton in preparation for operations covering the D-Day landings.

No. 485 Squadron moved to operate from RAF Selsey, as this was the closest UK mainland airfield to the landing beaches the squadron's aircraft would have to protect on 6th June 1944. On D-Day, Houlton caught sight of a Junkers Ju-88 attempting to find cover in the clouds, and, having adjusted his new gyroscopic gunsight for a longer distance shot, gave the Luftwaffe aircraft short burst from around 500 yards.

The Ju-88 burst into flames and plummeted earthwards, with the crew taking to their parachutes. Houlton and Spitfire ML407 had just become the first Allied pilot/aircraft combination to shoot down an enemy aircraft following the D-Day landings.

Note: *If you want to read more about Johnnie Houlton, just enter his name into a Google search. There is a lot to read.*

THE BLACKBOARD DUSTER

By Claude Palmer

Royal Military College, Duntroon, 1954. A delinquent junior Class was being admonished by a Lecturer because of poor test marks. To emphasise his disappointment, Lecturer threw the blackboard duster onto the Lecturers' table.

Duster bounced along the table, then out of the open window.

Seconds later, the College Gardener appeared at the door. *“Hit me with this duster, so cop this”*, throwing the offending duster back at the Lecturer! Class dismissed!

Anzac Biscuits

Makes about 20 biscuits

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup flattened / rolled oats
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 heaped teaspoon baking soda
- 60 grams butter
- 1½ table spoons of golden syrup

METHOD

1. Combine flour, sugar, oats, and coconut in a large bowl and mix them up a bit.
2. In a small saucepan, melt butter and golden syrup. Stir mixture so they are combined.
3. Put baking soda in a cup and slap in enough boiling water to dissolve the baking soda (about 2 tablespoons worth).
4. Add baking soda solution to the butter and golden syrup. Make sure the golden syrup/ butter solution is still hot but not quite boiling, else it will foam up and over your saucepan.
5. Pour contents of the saucepan into the dry ingredients and mix well.
6. Place a spoonful of the mixture on a greased oven tray. Bake at around 180°C for 15-minutes, or until they are light brown.

WARNING Be very careful because they are highly **addictive**.



Reciting the ODE



Part of the Choir



B Company, 25/49 Royal Queensland Regiment



I tried my Best

Remember when we had to smack the TV because the channel wasn't coming in clearly?
I feel that way about far too many people

Poppy Cards for our Veterans

By Ken Orr

Over Anzac Day we had representation from all levels of St Hilda's School - Senior, Junior, and Pre-Prep (this is the year before starting school). The Senior and Junior school students were well represented at both services and the Citizen' March.



Ken Orr presenting a Card to a Navy Veteran

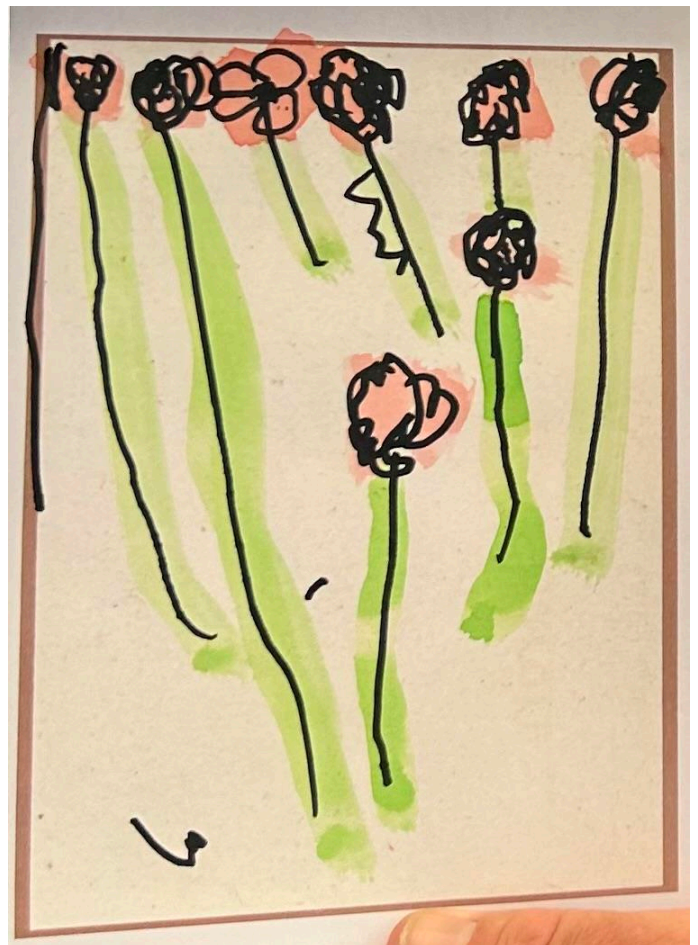
As well as one of the young Pre-Prep children placing a wreath that students had made, they also provided around a dozen cards on which pictures of poppies had been drawn. The aim was for the Sub Branch to pass them on to our veterans, and to send photos back to the students.

Our Sub Branch Deputy President Ken Orr gladly distributed the cards after our Anzac services. Photos were taken and sent to the school, with the response from the Director of Pre-Prep "the children and teachers were thrilled to see them and the joy the postcards brought to the veterans."

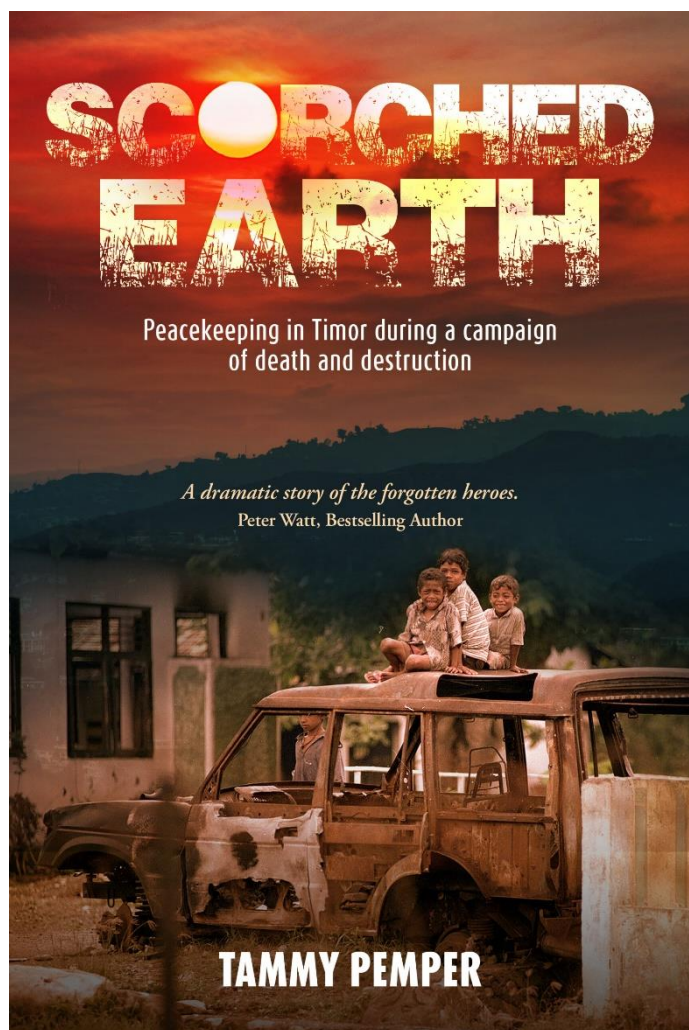
Well-done to St Hilda's for this novel and well received idea.



Poppy Card given to two Veterans



The Poppy Card



About the Author

As an UN peacekeeper, I joined the East Timorese fight for life. By then, the earth had drunk the blood of one third of their population. But worse was still to come.

I would see it for myself.

I saw bodies carried to their deaths, machetes carve flesh from bone, and bullets spray into crowds of Timorese and at us peacekeepers. I learned the true meaning of fear, hopelessness, and courage. Shades of truth were twisted for evil gain. Every day I prepared to die. Decisions I made, which seemed so right, jeopardized the lives of others.

Police held automatic weapons to my head, militia wrote my name on death lists, and people drew their last breath, all of them brave, braver than me.

For this is the true story of my experience. During the East Timorese fight for independence, militia were determined to enact

their scorched earth policy and raze Timor to the ground.

Timorese voted; Timor burned. It is their story, our story: a story that must be told.

Available from all good bookshops.

My wife and I were watching *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* while we were in bed.

I turned to her and said, 'Do you want to have sex?'

'No,' she answered.

I then said, 'Is that your final answer?'

She didn't even look at me this time, simply saying, 'Yes'.

So, I said, "Then, I'd like to phone a friend."

And that's when the fight started...

Current Board Members

John Riebeling **President**

Ken Orr **Deputy President**

Harold Hansen **Treasurer**

Michael Burg **Secretary**

Claude Palmer **Director 1**

Sandra Riebeling **Director 2**

Steve Bloxham OAM **Director 3**

Kevin Lloyd-Thomas **Director 4**

Craig Thomas **Director 5**

Keith Bazley **Director 6**

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