

Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 2

May 2026



Quarterly General Meeting Report

The Quarterly General Meeting was held on Sunday 24 May and was attended by 24 members and 3 guests. The meeting was over in less than 30 minutes and was followed by a much longer period of members socialising over a few cold drinks and light refreshments. The reports that follow are from the meeting documents.

The President's Report

Over the past three months, my primary attention has been devoted to preparations for ANZAC Day. Despite somewhat challenging weather conditions, both scheduled services were successfully conducted. The commitment and perseverance shown by our team ensured that the event was executed smoothly and effectively. This outcome highlights the dedication and teamwork of everyone involved in making ANZAC Day a memorable and meaningful occasion for all participants.

Harry has been diligently working to ensure that all outstanding bills are settled, which is essential for us to successfully acquit the \$61,000 allocation. At this point, the only invoices yet to be received are from the council and it looks like we will come in under budget.

Heath, Geoff, Kevin, and I were invited to SOPO to take part in carrying the flag. Combined fundraising from the Two Up event and the flag activity raised nearly \$7,000. CSI has also contacted us to advise that it will be providing an additional donation, which will give our

fundraising efforts a further boost. We expect to receive this contribution this week.

Looking ahead, I will review potential destinations for a social outing, as discussed at recent morning teas. Ken and I will be attending the state congress in Brisbane in mid-June with representatives from over 200 QLD Sub Branches. I will report on any outcomes from that at our next Quartey meeting.

Ken has arranged for the New Zealand Department of Veterans' Affairs to use our facilities in the coming weeks for interviews and discussions with our Kiwi brothers and sisters in South East Queensland. More on that to come in the following weeks.

Ken and Harry recently met with a prospective accountant. This meeting was held to explore accounting solutions that will aid in maintaining accurate financial records and reporting. Ken and Harry will provide further details in the coming weeks about this discussion and any perspective outcomes.

The tee shirts remain a popular and successful item among our members. With plans to advertise them in the upcoming newsletter, we anticipate continued interest and engagement. Despite a setback related to the board blazers, all blazers have now been issued to those entitled. This ensures that both merchandise lines are progressing, with tee shirts maintaining strong demand and board blazers distributed as intended.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed their time and effort before, during, and after ANZAC Day.

Additionally, a heartfelt thank you goes out to all the organizations that participated and supported the day. Their involvement and contributions were instrumental in making ANZAC Day a meaningful and memorable occasion for all.

Duty First

Craig Thomas

President

The Secretary's Report

Since our last meeting in February, there has been considerable activity within the Sub Branch.

Sadly, the Sub Branch lost long-serving Director and Advocate, Claude Palmer, the day following our AGM. Claude was farewelled at a Memorial Service held at the Bowls Club and conducted by our Chaplain, Father Don Parker. Representatives from his former Workshop Unit 106 attended, together with family, friends, District Staff and other Sub Branches and many members of our Sub Branch. Claude's commitment, advocacy, and years of dedicated service to veterans and the community will be fondly remembered.

A significant amount of time since the AGM has been focused on preparations for Anzac Day. Unfortunately, as in previous years, the weather was once again challenging. Despite the rain, both services were well attended, although numbers were slightly lower than in past years. Craig once again did an exceptional job coordinating the day, particularly while navigating ongoing council-related issues. Heath Mason also performed admirably in his first year as Parade Commander. Events of this scale are only made possible through the efforts of the many volunteers and members who contribute both behind the scenes and in public-facing roles. My sincere thanks and congratulations go to everyone involved. The Gunfire Breakfast was also a great success, with the stew and mashed potato receiving excellent feedback from attendees.

In March, a large number of Sub Branch members rejoined the SOPO Club to farewell Laurie Pollard following his removal from the SOPO Board. The newly elected Board is making genuine efforts to rebuild relationships that had previously deteriorated, not only with the Sub Branch but also within the wider

community. The SOPO Board invited the Sub Branch to conduct the Anzac Day flag procession around the club, and all funds raised from the day's flag collections and 2-UP activities were generously donated to our Sub Branch. These positive steps are encouraging, and it is hoped the relationship between both organisations will continue to strengthen in the future.

A special thank you goes to Carmal Hartwig for volunteering to coordinate the rosters for the Shopping Centres Anzac Day Appeal and once again stepping forward to organise the Remembrance Day Appeal rosters. On behalf of the Board, I also extend sincere thanks to all members and volunteers who generously gave their time to assist with the appeal. For the Sub Branch to continue conducting these important community appeals and maintain our visibility within the community, we require ongoing support from members and volunteers. If those who regularly attend our morning teas were able to volunteer for even one morning or afternoon shift during the appeals, roster coverage would become far more manageable. I encourage all members to consider giving a small amount of time back to support the important work of the Sub Branch. If you are able to help please see Carmal.

The Sub Branch is also undergoing a significant refresh in both appearance and presentation. We are transitioning to updated branding incorporating the new King's Crown. New T-shirts representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force in service colours are now available for purchase. Board Members are also being fitted with blazers displaying both the RSL logo and our Sub Branch name to present a more professional image within the community. Members also have the opportunity to have their own blazers embroidered with the new logo at a very reasonable cost. The only requirement is that the blazer lining must provide suitable access for the embroidery work to be completed. In addition, the Sub Branch has acquired two new gazebos, Southport RSL Sub Branch stickers, and new merchandise display stands. These improvements reflect the beginning of a new era for the Sub Branch, and we hope all members will join together in building a stronger and more united organisation.

Members will also have noticed several recent upgrades around the Bowls Club, including new

carpet throughout the club and our office areas, updated fittings, and the appointment of a new Manager, Mark Randle, together with new staff and a new Board. Doors throughout the club now display both the Bowls Club and Sub Branch logos, reinforcing the close relationship between our organisations. The Bowls Club continues to support the Sub Branch, and I encourage members to support the club in return by considering it for future functions, gatherings, and events.

In addition to regular Board responsibilities, Board Members Craig, Ken, Harry, and myself attended the Gold Coast District AGM held at Helensvale. The Board will also shortly undertake Governance Training, which is an annual requirement, along with additional training courses throughout the year to ensure continued professional development and effective governance.

Finally, I remind all members that the Sub Branch belongs to you. The role of the Board is to represent and protect the interests of our members. If you require assistance, advice, or wish to put forward ideas or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Advocate support through Mark Anderson is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the office remains open daily from 0900 to 1300 hours.

Michael Burg
Secretary

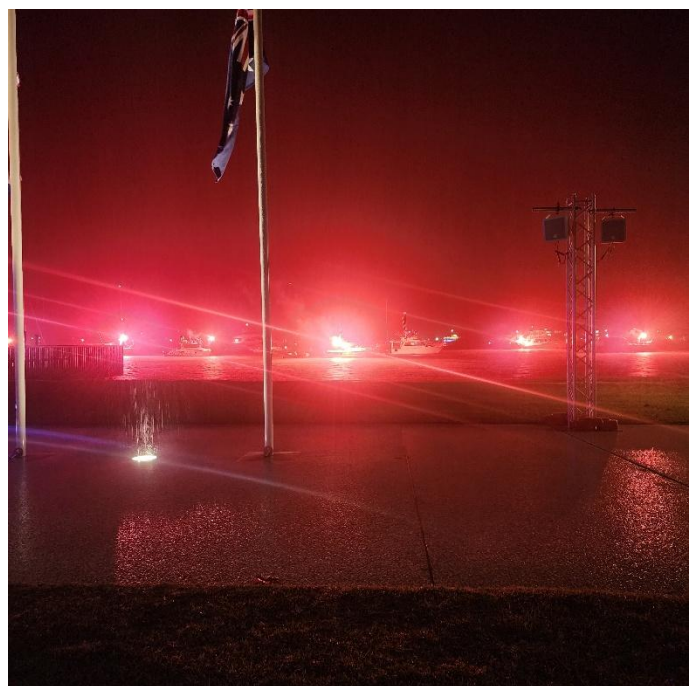
ANZAC Day 2026 by John Riebeling

The weather forecast for the day was not good with the promise of high winds and rain. As it turned out, it was not as bad as it could have been. Certainly, nowhere near as bad as last year when the Community Service had to be cancelled and those that attended the Dawn Service were somewhat waterlogged.

From a personal perspective (the editor), I did not go to the Dawn Service this year but I am told that it was reasonably well attended and despite some untimely rain, went off rather well. After the conclusion of the service there was a great turnup at the Bowls Club for the traditional gunfire breakfast. This year, a hearty beef stew, served with mashed potato and a bread roll was the fair and around 350 patrons took advantage of the meal.

We had been promised six jeeps for the community march but due to circumstances beyond our control, only three vehicles were made available and they were rather restricted in the number of persons that they could transport. There was a jeep that our President, Craig was to travel in, a Land Rover that could have carried more except for the difficulty for the elderly to get into the back, and a dodge ute that could only carry one passenger.

There were a few brief showers of rain just prior to the kick-off of the march and when it did start the small numbers of people lining the route made the prediction of inclement weather very obvious. Despite this, there were a good number of veterans and public that turned out and the ceremony went off without much thought to the light showers that persisted.







Claude Palmer – Addendum

By John Riebeling

In the last newsletter we advised the passing of a much-admired member of our Sub Branch – Claude Palmer. On Friday 6 March, a memorial service was held for Claude which was attended by family, friends, members of our current navy and RAEME personnel from the RAEME Unit based at Enoggera. The service was led by our padre, Father Don Parker from the Southport Anglican Church with a small input by yours truly for the poppy service.

The night before there had been a good lot of rain, so with the sunshine on the day, you could almost feel the moisture raising from the ground. We held the ceremony with the public sitting in the pavilion; however, Father Don and I were out on the grass in a minimum of shade.

The ceremony went well despite the failure of both the available PA systems and I think we did Claude proud. The ceremony was followed by a wake in the function room on the top floor of the Bowls Club. It was here that the family were able to address the gathering with some heartfelt comments.



Father Don at the Table with Claude's medals and slouch hat.

I will conclude this little story with something Claude penned just before he went to hospital. I think he was thinking we could use it at the memorial service but I think it is better here where all can read it.

CLAUDE PALMER-A CADET'S PROGRESS

Born to a WW1 Veteran of 42 Bn AIF Father, and a mother whose brother earned a Military Cross in 9 Bn AIF in 1917, with Uncles on active service

during WW2, Claude's enlistment in his Anglican Grammar School Cadet Corps, where he received his first Commission-at the time, Cadet Lieutenants actually received that from the Governor-General-commenced his military career.

On leaving School, Claude enlisted in 2/14 QMI (CMF). He then completed his National Service 3 x month Course in 11 NS Bn, where was selected for Royal Military College, Duntroon. Graduating from Duntroon, he completed his Engineering Degree at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. His subsequent Army postings included:

- a. Deployment to the Papua-New Guinea/West Irian border with 17 Construction Squadron RAE during Indonesian Confrontation.
- b. Royal Military College of Science, UK.
- c. Deployment to 1st Australian Task Force, Nui Dat, Vietnam.
- d. Deployment to 28 ANZUK Brigade, Singapore.
- e. Australian Embassy, Washington, DC, USA.

Resigning his Regular Army appointment in 1978, Claude transferred to the Army Reserve, returning to Queensland, where he joined AMPOL Petroleum, becoming Chief Engineer. Unimpressed by a forthcoming CALTEX takeover of the previously Australian owned AMPOL, he resigned in 1991, joining Griffith University School of Engineering as Sessional Lecturer.

Claude soon qualified as Advocate at the old Southport RSL Memorial Club. In 1994, DVA sponsored joint Veteran Support Centres (VSC), so our VSC was raised as a joint venture with Vietnam Veterans and Incapacitated Services Associations. This arrangement proved invaluable during subsequent financial problems in both the Club and Sub Branch, enabling the VSC to continue its advocacy with funding either from RSL Queensland or the Vietnam Veterans Association. In 1995, Claude was elected to the Sub Branch Board.

The VSC's assistance to Veterans and Families has been recognized, in 2012, by a Moncrieff Award and United Nations Volunteer Medal, and, in 2021, by RSL Life Membership. Claude's Army Service was recognized in 2018 by the Governor-General naming his Vietnam Unit's new Headquarters/Workshop Building at 7 Brigade, Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, in his honour.

Claude is survived by a loving Family: Daughters Melissa and Julie, and adult Grandchildren Damon and Hayley.



**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**



New Sub Branch T-Shirts

We have new T-Shirts available for purchase by our members. They come in three colours to align with the colours of the three services—grey for the Navy, green for the Army, and blue for the Air Force. They cost \$35 each. All enquiries to the Sub Branch office.

A Veteran's Tale

Corporal AT Dean

2/3 Ordinance 22nd Brigade, 8th Division AIF

Part 5

We went back to our company and had a good feed. We had not had any for some time and were greeted soon after with the news that everybody had to march out to Selayang (?) area (near Changi) where we would have to make our own accommodation (a distance of approx. thirteen miles). We took off next morning and as you can guess nobody was very fit and quite a few wounded and also sick men. One thing I always remember was one of our chaps (Chris Rand) took ill about half way so I took his haversack, which to my mind was rather heavy. I thought if this is tinned food I may, at least, get a feed later for my effort. We finished the march and finished up at what was previously the HQ of the Gordon Highlander Battalion. We were directed to houses previously held by their officers (150 men to a six-roomed house. No beds etc, just floors and walls. The houses had previously been looted by the local natives. I look up Private Rand the next morning and found him on the floor fooling with a marble

mantle clock and I asked him if that was what was in his pack on the march. He said yes (it was not going) and he said he thought he could fix it. I told him that I should wrap it around his head. How thick can one be?

Selayang was OK. Nice and quiet and we were not worried for a while. There came work parties into Singapore, cleaning up wreckage, loading material in the dock buildings (known as Godowns) for shipment to Japan. I will relate a few events humorous and otherwise that happened on these occasions.

When you went to work in Singapore you had more guards than in camp. They had to watch you as you may steal things and you were always searched on going back into camp in case you have illicit goods. Early in the piece we were taken down to the Godowns to load Nestles Condensed Milk (in cartons both cardboard and then timber and also loose tins. You had to carry a big nail (sharp) and some sort of small tubing, one to pierce a small hole through the case and the other to suck it out of the tin. We did this job for a week or two and consumed a lot of milk (a lot of cartons must have reached Japan with a lot of empty tins). There was a Jap officer who spoke good English and stood up one morning before we started work and told us the Australians were all thieves (how right he was). He continued by looking all round to see if anybody was looking, grabbed one man's hat, rushed over to a heap of cartons and pulled a tin out and put the hat over it. He said that was how we did it and Nippons were not all fools. He then stepped back and lifted the hat and presto no tin. He turned into a raving lunatic in five seconds flat. No sense of humour.

We were instructed on all working parties if we went into a place that happened to have a wireless kick it to pieces and bring as much as you could get past a search as you could and they had the men in camp to put it together.

We eventually had two small radios that brought in news from Delhi in India run by the BBC. But it was properly policed and only used for one purpose. The only time I heard it was when the Yanks landed in Tripoli in 1943. We even carried it up to Burma but it was useless for a while until our doctor (one Major Hunt) asked the Nips for a light for an emergency that may happen at night. After a big cross-examination they agreed to his request and from then on, we had a bit of news (?). This was

never written it was always word of mouth by Senior NCO's.

Funny thing the wireless, we carried it into Burma, we left the train at a place named Ban Pong about fifty miles west of Bangkok. Each train had five hundred passengers (or slaves, which ever you like to use), and everyday five hundred from the day before left the staging camp on the road to Burma (not Mandalay) and one of the chaps moving out said "if you have any contraband, get rid of it as the Kempe Itai search everyone coming in and the search was the most thorough, they had ever seen. Our chap that was carrying the wireless took note and there was a RAP at the gate with an old bucket with rubbish in it alongside. The RAP chap gave him the nod, he dropped it in the bucket and the RAP chap instantly put a heap of rubbish on top of it. Next morning on the way out the same proceedings went on, only in reverse and it stayed with us until we brought it back to Singapore.

The march from Ban Pong started the next morning (if you could call it a march). It was a long walk. It was evening not morning as the Nips were concerned about recce planes as they (our planes) used to fly over regularly. They must have had photos of every part of the country. We used to stop at staging camps on the way and by the time we arrived at our destination up in Burma, fifty per cent were left in staging camps along the way. Overall, it took sixteen nights and a lot of missed meals. Every day it was approx. 300 (?) (30)? kl along jungle tracks. You could hear a tiger roar now and again, which gave you added incentive to keep moving and the natives often attacked stragglers and stole their packs. Quite an interesting trip.

When we arrived at our destination, which was a place called Sonkrai (Songkurai). We were put to work immediately, first making road and bridge, raining a lot of the time but it never ever got cold. But all the different tropical diseases made up for that. People soon started to lose weight and get very sick and a lot was to blame for lack of food and malaria. I had malaria B+ etc thirty-two times while I was a POW and every known tropical disease except for cholera and smallpox of which a lot of the boys died. Another chap and I were detailed to work on the fire burning the bodies of our boys who died from cholera. We burned forty-five boys in three

days and were then replaced by two more to do the job. People talk about stress but don't know the true meaning of the word. It was hard on the nerves and all the time you were aware of how contagious it was and at the time we were down to a tablespoon of cooked rice a day for ten days due to lack of transport, the state of the track, the monsoons, and a couple of times we had to pull a cart through the mud because the elephants and yaks refused to do the job. We went right into the north towards "Ye" a town on the way to Rangoon.

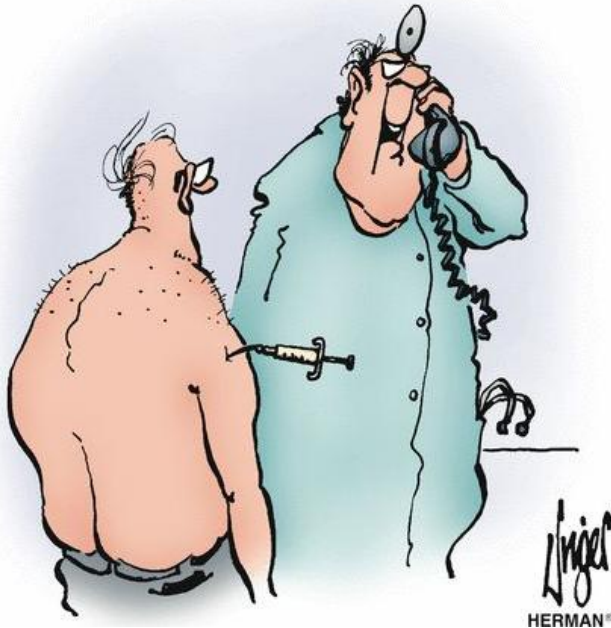
We first had to put down a road and then build the embankment for the railway and shift a lot of mud to try to make a foundation for a railway line. We made very slow progress but in the long run it happened after a loss of a lot of the boys. You must remember that this job was all done with manual labour, not one item of equipment and, of course, the lack of knowledge of our captors was infuriating. You could see certain ways of doing a job better but that was a no-no as we were not there to help only to hinder where possible. As an example, they put down a lot of corduroys of logs in their roadwork. They put the logs down lengthwise — the way a vehicle would move in a certain direction and, of course, we complied with their orders until one day a bigmouth Australian shows a Jap engineer the correct way — crosswise. I am afraid that chap got to know the full meaning of the word "ostracise". He was told (off) so many times for opening his big mouth.

**AS A YOUNG CHILD MY
MOTHER TOLD ME I CAN
BE ANYONE I WANT TO BE**

**TURNS OUT THIS IS
CALLED IDENTITY THEFT**

Sub Branch Notice Board

The Sub Branch receives a lot of flyers from various organisations, some of which are of some interest. There are too many to post on the usual Notice Board, however, those flyers that might be of some interest with our members, are place on a clip board attached to the notice board. You should have a look at these flyers as they may be something of interest to you.



"I'd better go now, Snookums.
I'm with a patient."

**Messerschmitt Me 410A-1
Black F, 14./KG2, Late 1943**



The Luftwaffe's long range night intruder campaign towards the end of the Second World War was intended to disrupt Allied air operations, spreading confusion and panic by infiltrating bomber streams, or striking at aircraft whose crews had 'switched off' as they approached their base at the end of another long mission. The Messerschmitt Me 410 was ideally suited to this task - fast and heavily armed, these Fernnachtjagd aircraft operated in conjunction with the regular Blitz bomber force, with more specific targets and often operating alone in the dark night skies.

Despite being an extremely capable aircraft in this role, night-intruder Me 410s were hunted mercilessly the second they crossed the English Channel, and no mission ever passed without incident. Britain's air defence network had been fine-tuned to make any incursion over the country a torrid experience for Luftwaffe pilots and the cover of darkness offered little protection. RAF de Havilland Mosquito nightfighters were the perfect nocturnal hunters, taking a heavy toll of Luftwaffe aircraft of all types, including the Messerschmitt Me 410.

The aircraft here wears a camouflage scheme which was perfect for night intruder operations and was flown by one of the Luftwaffe's very best, Rudolf Abrahamczik, a highly decorated bomber pilot with at least 233 combat missions to his name, many of which were in this role.



"There's nothing on TV. D'you want
to have an argument?"

General Meeting Dates

AGM	Sunday. 21 Feb 27
Quarterly General	Sunday, 23 May 27
Quarterly General	Sunday, 23 Aug 26
Quarterly General	Sunday, 22 Nov 26
All meetings commence at 10:30 am	

Poppy Service



A Poppy Service is a moving tribute to farewell a veteran who has passed away. It is an honour and a privilege to pay our final respects to those who served our country.

Although it is not a pleasant thing to talk about, I would like to remind all our readers, especially those that are looking after our aging and frail veterans, that when the time comes, the Sub-Branch offers a Poppy Service to all those that have served, whether a member of the Sub Branch or not.

Remember, a veteran is someone who has put on the uniform of an armed service. **They do not have to have served overseas.**

Please contact the Sub-Branch office for any further information. **(Phone 0484 280 750)**

Position	Year of AGM		
	2025	2026	2027
President			
Deputy President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Director 1			
Director 2			
Director 3			
Director 4			
Director 5			
Director 6			

Current Board Members

Craig Thomas	President
Ken Orr	Deputy President
Harold Hansen	Treasurer
Michael Burg	Secretary
vacant	Director 1
John Riebeling	Director 2
Geoff Young	Director 3
Kevin Lloyd-Thomas	Director 4
Sandra Riebeling	Director 5
Heath Mason	Director 6

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 Mr Rob Molhoek MP, State Member for Southport (**Mail**)

Weekend Breakfast
 Saturdays and Sundays
 Barista Coffee and cakes available also.
 8am-11am