

QUEENSLAND RSL NEWS

100
YEARS
~
SINCE
THE QUEENSLAND
DIGGER



THAT'S THE ANZAC SPIRIT

FROM COAST TO COUNTRY
PEOPLE OF ALL AGES ROSE
EARLY THIS ANZAC DAY
TO HONOUR THOSE WHO
SERVED OUR NATION

**CONNECTING
COMMUNITIES**

CELEBRATING THE
INCREDIBLE CONTRIBUTION
OF OUR VOLUNTEERS



RSL
Queensland

2025 // EDITION 02

The official publication of the Returned & Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch)

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RSL Queensland has a suite of services designed to make life better for veterans and their families. Whether it's DVA advocacy, employment opportunities, emergency financial support or online learning programs like RSL Be:Well and Go Beyond.



RSL
Queensland

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Poignant and powerful, early covers of *The Queensland Digger* spoke of war and loss in ways that only art can.

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From Papua New Guinea to Japan, WWII Army veteran Dawson Reimers shares his experience during the world's largest war.

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During National Volunteer Week, we took the opportunity to acknowledge the incredible impact our members have in fostering connection, belonging and building thriving and inclusive veteran communities.

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RSL Queensland and the Naval Association of Australia have joined forces to honour veteran Murray Shepherd for his service during Cyclone Tracy.



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Thirty years after Australian peacekeeping efforts during the Rwanda Civil War, Townsville RSL Sub Branch hosted a national reunion for Rwanda veterans from 22 to 26 April.



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THAT'S THE ANZAC SPIRIT

From coast to country, people of all ages rose early, marched proudly, and honoured those who served our nation.



Rosewood RSL Sub Branch Vice President Bernie Mason and his grandson Theo Kinkead at the Rosewood ANZAC Day service.

Celebrating service, volunteering and membership growth

OUR mission on ANZAC Day was, as always, to bring veterans and the community together. We came together to remember and recognise all who have put on the uniform of our Navy, Army or Air Force and committed themselves to the service of our country.

And we came together to celebrate the ANZAC spirit of mateship, courage, ingenuity, endurance and good humour in the hope that we can inspire our fellow Australians.

This year marked 110 years since the Gallipoli landing in 1915 – a moment in time where the ANZAC spirit was first forged on the shores of Türkiye.

Where this honour and continuation of legacy was most notable was our RSL Sub Branches across the state – from the NSW border all the way up to Weipa, west to Mount Isa and everywhere in between.

Our Sub Branches have done an outstanding job in rebuilding the services and marches that the pandemic largely put on hold for a few years. This year, across Queensland, the League held more than 500 services – more than in living memory. This is a testament to their determination to ensure the community commemorated, together.

I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who contributed to organising the services on this important day. Wherever you were on ANZAC Day, thank you for taking the time out to reflect and honour the sacrifice of our veterans.

As ever, the weather was a variable, and several Sub Branches, notably on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, had their services disrupted. Nambour RSL Sub Branch had to cancel its

service altogether and we wish President Wes Davidson and your outstanding team all the best as you recover from the flooding and look forward to a great parade next year.

VOLUNTEERS BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

I am grateful, and proud, that RSL Queensland has thousands of members to recognise during National Volunteer Week in May. Individuals who volunteer for our organisation are fundamental to what we do for veterans and their families.

This year, the National Volunteer Week theme of 'Connecting Communities' describes well what we do. Our Sub Branch members connect those in their community needing assistance with the support services they need, they bring together like-minded veterans to share a brew and a chat, and they create strong ties with local councils, schools, sports clubs and cadet units that contribute to the health of their community.

I want to emphasise that our volunteers not only take time out of their own lives, but they also bring a variety of skills, and compassion, to their duties. From checking in on a widow who lives alone, to facilitating commemorative ceremonies throughout the year, to giving veterans opportunities to bond and belong, volunteers are vital to RSL Queensland's mission.

I want to express my gratitude to every RSL Queensland member and volunteer. Thank you for the countless hours you give, your dedication to supporting your community, and for the impact you have on the lives of veterans and their families across Queensland. Read more on page 30.

VOLUNTEERING FRAMEWORK

RSL Queensland is developing a volunteering framework to help attract, support and retain both current and future volunteers across Sub Branches. This has included engaging with District Presidents and conducting research with the public and prospective volunteers.

We know that volunteering is the lifeblood of our organisation – and we're committed to building an environment where more people feel valued and inspired to contribute.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH CONTINUES

I'm pleased to report that RSL Queensland's membership continues to grow, with 2025 marking our fourth consecutive year of growth. We now proudly have more than 34,000 members.

This trend is a positive reflection that we're on the right path and providing the supportive care, the heartfelt commemoration and the camaraderie that veterans and their families value. Congratulations to Districts, Sub Branches and our State Branch Membership team for your continued efforts.

Stephen Day



**RSL Queensland State President
Major General Stephen Day DSC AM**

THE INVISIBLE IMMIGRANTS



'THE TEN POUND POMS COMMEMORATIVE COIN'

The years following the end of World War II were especially unsettling ones for Australia. Many wartime survivors were incapacitated or ill, resulting in a depleted workforce within an already low population of about 7.4 million. This led to the creation of the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme and the phenomenon of the 'Ten Pound Pom' - a nickname Australians gave to British immigrants whose arrival began in 1945 and continued in evolving forms for several decades. In typical Aussie style, 'Ten Pound Pom' was a light-hearted reference to the heavily subsidised ten-pound ocean liner fare here. Eventually over a million UK migrants came to settle in Australia by the end of the scheme in 1982. The Bradford Mint is very proud to commemorate to those 'invisible immigrants' with this exclusive 65mm, 999 pure silver coin, which has been meticulously crafted to the highest numismatic standards. Its central motif is built around an abstract rendition of Australia as a roofed brick structure symbolising the family home to be had here. It is flanked by a landed passenger, an arriving ship and anticipation-filled passengers. The obverse features finely rendered portraits of King George VI and his daughter Elizabeth, soon to become

our much-loved Queen. Join us in celebrating the courage and contribution of the 'Ten Pound Poms' as they alighted for the very first time on the shores of their new home.

*Call one of our Senior Executives now
on +612 9841 3324 to obtain to this already
sought-after issue.*

SPECIFICATIONS

YEAR OF ISSUE	2025
ALLOY	999 Silver
DIAMETER	65mm
WEIGHT	5oz
MINTAGE LIMIT	299 worldwide
QUALITY	Proof - the highest quality possible
REVERSE	An abstract composition of roofed Australia depicts Ten Pound Poms arriving via sea or air for their new home.
OBVERSE	Portraits of His Majesty King George VI and his daughter Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



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**THE
BRADFORD
MINT**

Growing the ANZAC spirit

FROM fun runs to commemorations, RSL Queensland continues to strengthen its connection with veterans and the community. The ANZAC spirit campaign and Run Army are two examples of how we're building relevance, unity and wellbeing.

ANZAC SPIRIT CAMPAIGN DRIVES CONNECTION

In 2025, our ANZAC spirit campaign drove a 25% year-on-year increase in website visits from people seeking information about planning their ANZAC Day. With more than 500 services conducted across Queensland, the League is not only maintaining but growing its relevance in delivering this important national commemoration. Community interest – reflected through our communication channels and the remarkable turnout at services and events – remains significant.

We were once again proud to partner with the Outdoor Media Association, whose generous support helped the ANZAC spirit campaign reach audiences nationwide through billboards and digital signage, including in shopping centres and transit centres. The ANZAC spirit website, hosted and maintained by RSL Queensland, offers Australians a single unified platform to view commemorative events run by the RSL across the country.

This central point of reference strengthens national awareness of the RSL's role in commemoration and presents a cohesive view of our shared mission.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT ON THE GROUND

The key to ANZAC Day, however, is community. Once again, RSL Queensland members

and supporters have stepped up to represent the best of our community. Growing attendance reflects the ongoing efforts of Sub Branches to continue the legacy.

I would like to thank Warwick RSL Sub Branch and the Southern Districts Ex-Service Association for inviting me to their pre-ANZAC Day dinner. It was a wonderful evening of camaraderie and commemoration.

RUN ARMY RACES AHEAD

Run Army continues to go from strength to strength, with around 7,000 runners participating in Brisbane and 2,500 in Townsville this year. RSL Queensland has proudly supported Run Army from the very beginning and remains committed to working with the initiative as it evolves.

More than just a race, Run Army promotes public health and wellbeing, while strengthening connections between civilians and the military in a positive and engaging way.

I was fortunate to attend the Townsville event, where I was able to connect with many of those we are here to serve. From our own teams providing services, to Sub Branches delivering on-the-ground capability and supporting event logistics, the growing relationship between serving members and the RSL – particularly at the leadership level – is heading in the right direction.

Importantly, our RSL Be:Well initiative was promoted strongly at both events, offering valuable resources to veterans and families. The program is accessible online at rslqld.org/rslbewell.

FUTURE GOALS AND DIRECTION

As we look to the months ahead, there are several important questions we continue to explore.

Firstly, what will RSL Queensland be known for under the 'care' pillar of our 2030 Strategy? Each year we grow our capability through a range of investments, but we must ensure we're clearly articulating the value we deliver – to stakeholders, and more importantly, to those who may need our support – in simple and effective terms.

Secondly, we are moving forward with key steps to ensure the long-term success of our commercial operations, which play a vital role in enabling our strategic goals. A number of projects are already in train, and I look forward to sharing more about these as they come to life.

Finally, how do we better engage with the RSL – both here in Queensland and nationally? Over the past nine years I've seen a significant shift in the right direction, but the journey is still ongoing. A united RSL, with clarity around our shared purpose and contributions, will provide a solid foundation for working as part of a broader support model – alongside government and other agencies – to deliver meaningful outcomes for veterans and their families.

Robert Skoda



RSL Queensland Chief Executive Officer Robert Skoda

OUR VIETNAM VETERANS' HARDEST BATTLE WAS FOUGHT AT HOME.



'AUSTRALIAN FORCES ARRIVE AT VUNG TAU COMMEMORATIVE COIN'

Those who served in Vietnam hold a special place in our nation's history - suffering as much at home as they did on the battlefield. Still, they never wavered and with the support of family and each other, they stood proud. On 3 August 1962, thirty Australian officers and senior non-commissioned officers arrived in South Vietnam's capital, Saigon as the newly formed Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) or 'Team' as it became known. Our involvement in a foreign-shore conflict that became a bitter pill for many to swallow, didn't stop there, though. On June 8, 1965, the HMAS Sydney III - a former aircraft carrier refitted for troop transport, arrived at Vung Tau, carrying the bulk of the Australian forces, including the 1RAR. Moving battle by battle - under intense and unprecedented war conditions -our troops fought communist forces in Phuoc Tuy and the surrounding provinces successfully reducing their treacherous attacks. Distinguishing themselves bravely at Long Tan, Coral-Balmoral, Binh Ba and Long Khanh, as well as a thousand minor skirmishes - often in hand-to-hand combat with an enemy indistinguishable from civilians, the Australians added to the ANZAC Legend on a daily basis. Tales of their mateship, courage, commitment and sacrifice was lost under the morass of negative media that flooded the TV screens back home. The Viet Cong's massive 1968 Tet Offensive - though a military failure - convinced many ordinary Australians that decisive victory was impossible, whilst horrific scenes on television screens, sapped support further. Eventually the government responded to public outrage and protest by steadily withdrawing troops and the last arrived home in December 1972. The 'Team' - the first troops to deploy to South Vietnam would be among the very last to leave. In all the AATTV had lost 33 men and saw 122 wounded, with four of its members awarded the Victoria Cross. All told, some 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1973, where 521 died and over 3,000 were

wounded. Now recognised as some of the bravest ANZACs ever, this .999 Silver Commemorative pays tribute to the heroic qualities which defined our Vietnam heroes from the first day they set foot in Vung Tau to the last. We like you, salute those who bravely fought in a war unlike any other.

SPECIFICATIONS

YEAR OF ISSUE	2025
ALLOY	999 Silver
DIAMETER	65mm
WEIGHT	5oz
DENOMINATION	Ten Crowns
MINTAGE LIMIT	299 worldwide
QUALITY	Proof - the highest quality possible
ISSUING AUTHORITY	Ascension Island - approved by Buckingham Palace
REVERSE	Features the fully-etched images of HMAS Sydney III offloading at Vung Tau and members of 1RAR, the first Australian ground forces arriving in South Vietnam in June 1965
OBVERSE	Portrait of His Majesty King Charles III



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THE BRADFORD MINT

Opportunities for genuine conversation

EACH ANZAC Day, I'm reminded of the absolute dedication and commitment of our members, volunteers and their families, who contribute not only to ANZAC Day events but throughout the year.

We are all one veteran community – and a subset of the Australian community – and our purpose delivers impactful and considered results within both communities. The strength of the RSL lies in veterans, members and their families, and in how we integrate and support our local communities.

I recently attended six of the 10 District Annual General Meetings (AGMs) across the state, with three more scheduled before our State Congress in June. I congratulate the Districts, committees and their delegates for their professionalism and respectful discussions.

Many delegates raised important matters for awareness at the State Branch level. My AGM travel also provided the opportunity to visit several Sub Branches, and I look forward to continuing these visits throughout the year. I will reflect on those conversations and the issues unique to different regions across Queensland.

Visiting Sub Branches offers a chance for genuine conversation and insight into what is happening within our state, Districts and Sub Branch regions. As many of you know, the focus of these visits is to say 'g'day', get a feel for your location, and better understand the Sub Branch so we can support you more effectively moving forward.

A sincere thanks to the Districts and Sub Branches that facilitated my visits and engaged in open, honest dialogue. After our State Congress on 21 June, I hope to get back on the road to visit the Sub Branches I'm yet to see.

Iain Carty



**RSL QUEENSLAND STATE
SECRETARY IAIN CARTY CSM**

MAIL BOX

THANKS FOR THE HISTORICAL TIME CAPSULE

I ENJOYED reading the insert of *The Queensland Digger* in the 100th anniversary edition of *Queensland RSL News*. The advertisements were fascinating – homemade cakes at the Central Station Café and new cars with “five full balloon tyres”. Sadly, the car dealerships no longer dominate Adelaide Street, and left-hand drive fruit trucks are no longer imported from Canada.

The minutes, messages and letter summaries were equally interesting. Today's veterans would likely endorse the then Prime Minister's advice to “keep clear of party politics” and the wish of the Commemoration Committee that ANZAC Day “never lose [its] solemnity and devout character”. Readers will need to overlook (British) General Birdwood's suggestion that Australia “became a nation” on 25 April 1915. Veterans of the Boer War were the first to appreciate that Australia became a nation in 1901.

Thanks for this souvenir time capsule.

Greg Ivey
Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch

GREATER ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE FOR VETERANS AT VFWC

VETERANS and their families now have greater access to healthcare with the opening of Total Veteran Healthcare Outpost at RSL Queensland's Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre (VFWC) in Brisbane.

Total Veteran Healthcare is a dedicated provider offering veteran-centric care through a national network of primary, allied and specialist services. Partnering with leading clinicians and facilities, they deliver tailored medical support to the veteran community.

The new Outpost is a key step in improving healthcare access for veterans, providing

education, support for wellbeing goals and continuity of care throughout treatment. Open five days a week, the Outpost features a nurse-led team and a service-aware GP, offering health assessments, specialist referrals, and support with DVA claims and Coordinated Veteran Care plans. ←

PICTURED: From left, Total Veteran Healthcare owner and CEO Josh Hall, Total Veteran Healthcare Chief Commercial Officer Joel Tunstall and RSL Queensland Deputy CEO - Veteran Services Troy Watson.



Learn more at rslqld.org/find-help/veteran-family-wellbeing-centre-brisbane or totalveteranhealthcare.com

Serving Australia in Disaster Preparedness, Relief and Recovery



Disaster Relief Australia is a veteran-led not for profit helping communities prepare for and recover from disaster. Join us to connect with like-minded people who are united in their purpose to serve.

[Apply to volunteer](#)



Disaster Relief Australia

disasterreliefaus.org

NEWS



Pictured from left: Queensland Ballet Head of Community, Education & Dance Health Lily Spencer, Queensland Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek MP, Queensland Ballet Artistic Director Ivan Gil-Ortega, Dr Rick Maher, Queensland Ballet Van Norton Li Community Health Institute Director Zara Gomes and RSL Queensland Deputy CEO - Veteran Services Troy Watson.

QUEENSLAND BALLET AND RSL QUEENSLAND UNITE TO SUPPORT VETERANS THROUGH DANCE

QUEENSLAND Ballet, in partnership with RSL Queensland, presents Dance for Veterans – an eight-week program designed to enhance the wellbeing of veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder or other trauma-related psychological injuries.

Launched on 8 April, the program invites veterans and current serving Defence members to join sessions led by experienced dance-teaching artists. Drawing on historical connections between military movement and ballet, Dance for Veterans uses dance to encourage expression, build confidence and develop new skills.

Delivered at Queensland Ballet's home, the Thomas Dixon Centre in Brisbane, the program fosters psychological, physical and social health in a supportive environment.

It was first piloted in 2023 as part of a PhD study by Dr Rick Maher, in collaboration with Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Ballet.

"Dance and the development of military tradition are ancient companions," Dr Maher says.

"Louis XIV, considered the father of modern ballet, drew inspiration for early ballet technique from the movements of the body in combat."

The first round concluded in May, with a second block scheduled for September 2025. For details and eligibility, visit rslqld.org/find-help/queensland-ballet-dance-for-veterans. ←

VETERANS' ENTITLEMENTS, TREATMENT AND SUPPORT BILL 2024

THE Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 passed before Parliament in early 2025. This Bill is important for the veteran community as it brings together three existing legislative provisions into a single Act.

While the Act isn't due to come into effect until 1 July 2026, RSL Queensland will be monitoring through the implementation and ensuring RSL claims advocates within Queensland – who work with veterans and their families every day – are ready and well equipped for the change. ←



BE:EXERCISE INSPIRED – NOW AVAILABLE ON RSL BE:WELL

EXERCISE benefits us in so many ways. But when you leave Defence, staying active – and enjoying it – might be easier said than done.

Be:Exercise Inspired – the latest free module on RSL Be:Well – is designed to help veterans achieve healthy, enjoyable exercise goals.

In just 20 minutes, you'll learn:

- expert insights from an exercise physiologist (and veteran)
- your personal barriers and motivators to exercise
- simple, practical and sustainable ways to stay active

- where to find quality support.

It's simple, backed by research and made for veterans of all lifestyles and health conditions. ←

RSL
Be:Well
VETERAN WELLBEING **ONLINE**

Learn more at rslqld.org/find-help/rslbewell

NEWS

BRISBANE AND TOWNSVILLE LEAD THE CHARGE FOR RUN ARMY

THOUSANDS of Queenslanders laced up for a good cause as Run Army returned to Brisbane and Townsville in 2025, drawing record numbers and strong community support.

Run Army is a partnership between RSL Queensland and the Australian Army, promoting fitness, connection and veteran wellbeing. Since launching in 2021, it has become a key event ahead of ANZAC Day, inviting people of all abilities to take part.

This year's events included greater involvement from Defence and emergency services, with military displays, Army band performances and interactive exhibits adding to the atmosphere.

Brisbane's 30 March event welcomed nearly 8,000 participants, while Townsville hosted more than 2,500 on 6 April. A virtual option allowed people to take part from anywhere. ←

TOP RIGHT: Runners pass by the Shrine of Remembrance in Brisbane. Photo: Defence Images. // **RIGHT CENTRE:** The Townsville event saw people of all ages participate. // **RIGHT:** The start line of the Townsville event. // **BELOW:** Participants run past Anzac Square in Brisbane. Photo: Defence Images.





Join the Journey to Better Health with DVA's Heart Health Program

Increase your physical and mental health with our FREE program.

Created 24 years ago by the DVA for the benefit of Vietnam veterans, the Heart Health Program is now open to all veterans with operational service; peacekeepers; and those covered under the ADF firefighters' scheme.

The program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise support and 12 months of health coaching on healthy lifestyle choices. Both will be provided by one of our team of highly qualified allied health professionals.

You don't need to participate immediately. Enrol today, and participate when you're ready.

You don't need a White Card or Gold Card. You just need to be a returned veteran, peacekeeper, or ADF firefighter who has not participated in the past five years.

You can participate at your own pace with our supportive professionals, or you can even enrol in the Individual Program.

Fully confidential: your medical history will be kept in strictest confidence.

Group and individual programs are available everywhere.

Check your eligibility here



DVA Heart Health Program

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Exploring the origins of RSL Queensland

It started quietly – with returned soldiers building their own support.

✍ Dr Susan E. M. Kellett

IN early 1916, 60 invalid soldiers met in Brisbane and voted to form a Returned Soldiers' Association (RSA), laying the roots of the RSL in Queensland.

LOST IN TRANSITION

Two days after his comrades from the 9th Battalion landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, Sergeant William Millward was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Several months earlier, the 21-year-old had been struck by an

automobile while stationed in Egypt. Unconscious and bleeding from an ear, he was transferred to hospital where he regained consciousness four days later. Millward was diagnosed with a fractured base of the skull and deemed unfit for service.

Millward disembarked in Melbourne in mid-April 1915 and, two days later, was aboard a train bound for Queensland. Once home in Toowoomba, he resumed his career as a schoolteacher. However,

the ongoing effects of his injury – headaches, dizziness and earaches – made managing a class difficult. His transfer to a smaller regional school did little to alleviate his symptoms and, in late 1915, Millward accepted a position as a clerk in Brisbane.

THE QUEENSLAND RSA IS FORMED

Once settled in Brisbane, Millward joined a growing community of 9th Battalion men who, after being invalided home, craved the bonds

LEGEND

- Military events
- RSL Queensland events

Key events in RSL Queensland's history

A timeline of key events in RSL Queensland's history, from the start of WWI to today.

Primary source: Australian War Memorial. Dates are reflective of Australia's involvement.

● 1914-1918 - World War I (WWI)

● 1915 - The word ANZAC was formed from the acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during the Dardanelles campaign.

● 1915 - The ANZAC landing at Gallipoli on 25 April created a lasting day of national remembrance.

1900

● 1914 - The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force participated in the capture of German New Guinea.

● 1915 - Returned Soldiers' Associations (RSAs) began forming.

● 1915 - The first wounded Australian soldiers, some from Gallipoli, arrived in Melbourne aboard the *Kyarra*.



of camaraderie that they had experienced in the AIF. By late 1915, RSAs had formed in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia and, following the lead of their interstate comrades, the 9th Battalion men formed a committee to establish an RSA in Queensland. Millward was elected its Secretary.

Millward threw himself into planning for the new association and, on the evening of 23 February 1916, he convened the meeting at which the Queensland Returned Soldiers' Association (QRSA) was formed. Mindful of the men who carried physical limitations, Millward chose Temperance Hall – a handsome red brick and cement building located directly opposite Central Station – as its venue. Of the men who attended the meeting, around 40 were still wearing the uniform of the AIF.

FOR KING AND COMRADES

The meeting was a relatively informal affair. Millward explained the principles of the QRSA and it was agreed that the association should be non-political and non-sectarian in nature. Membership was open to returned men of good character, although those discharged for 'disciplinary reasons' might be admitted if approved by the committee.



TOP: Sidney Riley Studio (1918): Returned Soldiers' Cricket Club 1918. William Millward is standing at the far right of the rear row. Millward eventually returned to teaching. He settled in Warwick and remained a member of the RSSILA. He died in 1958 aged 64 years. (State Library of Queensland) // **ABOVE:** Brisbane City Council (c.1903). Temperance Hall. This building was located on the corner of Ann and Edward Streets and its meeting hall was located on the first floor. It was demolished in 1927 and replaced by the Canberra Hotel (since demolished). (Brisbane City Council Libraries Service)

● **1916** - The Queensland RSA (which would later become RSL Queensland) was formed in February.

● **1916** - In June, RSA delegates from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and NSW voted to federate into a national body – the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA).

● **1917** - The first RSSILA badge was issued with only two figures (sailor and soldier) as the RAAF was not yet established.

● **1916** - The first ANZAC Day commemorative services were held in Australia and London on the anniversary of the Gallipoli landing.

● **1916** - In September, the RSSILA was officially formed at a congress in Brisbane. Initially, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania were represented in the national body.

● **1917** - RSSILA Queensland's Charter of Membership was officially signed on 25 April. NSW joined the RSSILA.

1917

THE QUEENSLANDER FOR MARCH 2, 1917—(PAGE 25.)



THE DISTRICT COMMANDANT AND STAFF, FIRST MILITARY DISTRICT.
 Top row (left to right): Captain W. H. Raymond, R.A.F. (A/S.D.M.), Captain H. J. Handman, A.D.A. (A/S. D.C.A.), Lieutenant F. G. Darcy, 5th Infantry (Intelligence Sec'y), Lieutenant C. L. Collins, 2nd Light Horse (A.I.F.), Co-Commandant.
 Middle row (left to right): Captain R. H. Walsh, Unattached Lia. (S.O.O.), Major R. H. Walsh, V.D., Unattached Lia. (Adjutant A.I.F. Camp), Major H. W. Nelson, 2nd A.E. (O.C. 1st Pioneer and Light Horse-Transport, A.I.F.), Major W. R. E. Sayers, A.S.C. (S.O.R.S.), Lieutenant J. Southwood, R.A.M. (District Officer), Major A. T. Jackson, Unattached Lia. (Superintendent Rife Corps).
 Bottom row (left to right): Major C. J. W. Weaver, R.A.A. (Commandant A.I.F. Camp), Captain N. H. Crickman, A. and I.S. (D.A.Q.M.G.), Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace Brown, A. and I.S. (D.S.O.), Brigadier-General G. I. Lee, C.M.G., D.S.O. (District Commandant), Major F. G. Darcy, 5th Infantry (D.A.A.G.), Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. McIntosh, A.A.M.C. (P.M.O.), Major J. T. Fitzgerald, A.A.P.C. (D.P.M.).
 —Pagan photo.

ABOVE: Photographer unknown (1917). The District Commandant and Staff, First Military District. Richard Walsh is standing second from the left in the middle row. He did not stand for re-election of the RSSILA Presidency in 1917 and was elected vice-president. He continued his AIF service as the Camp Commandant of Enoggera Camp [Gallipoli Barracks] and returned to the Queensland Health Department after the war. He died in 1949 aged 75 years. (*The Queenslander Pictorial*, 3 March 1917, 25).

Veterans of other imperial conflicts were eligible to join. An annual subscription fee of five shillings was set and this included a handsome red, white and blue enamelled badge in the shape of a 'Q'.

The QRSA's draft constitution was based on the Victorian RSA's constitution. It aimed to: "foster a spirit of loyalty to the King and cultivate an Imperial sentiment and patriotism; keep green the memory

of fallen comrades; lend a hand to deserving comrades who have fallen on evil days; hold social reunions of members; assist in patriotic movements of charity; foster and encourage the universal defence system; and affiliate with kindred associations having similar objects".

The men adopted the draft and also agreed to hold an annual parade "in honour of fallen comrades". Major Richard Walsh was appointed

the QRSA President and Millward agreed to continue as Secretary.

MORE THAN CAMARADERIE

Richard Walsh enlisted in the AIF in early 1915 and landed at Gallipoli as part of the 9th Battalion reinforcements in May. The following month, while supporting a British attack at Gaba Tepe, Walsh's company came under "murderous fire from machine

● **1918** - The Armistice signalled the end of WWI, which saw Australia lose one in five men who served.

● **1918** - Western Australia joined the RSSILA.

● **1919** - Australian Light Horse regiments helped suppress the Egyptian Revolution.

1917

● **1918** - A Federal Congress of the RSSILA was held, with all member States represented.

● **1919** - Repatriation of Australian forces from Europe was completed.

● **1919** - Australian units served in the Russian Civil War.

Read more about the four QRSA delegates (John Collins, Herbert Maddocks, Sidney Cripps and William Burns) in Queensland RSL News 2024, editions 1 and 2, available at rslqld.org/news/queensland-rsl-news



LEFT: Queensland Returned Soldiers' Association badge, issued in 1916.

BELOW: Corner of Ann and Edward Streets today. (Author's image).



guns, shrapnel, bombs and rifles". Despite sustaining two gunshot wounds to his right leg, Walsh continued to command his men until the company withdrew. When his recovery was complicated by paralysis and anxiety, Walsh was returned to Australia to convalesce.

By May 1916, membership of the QRSA numbered 600 and this figure continued to rise as men returned home. Walsh understood that the RSA's role needed to exceed camaraderie alone; as a young officer he had served with Queensland's colonial forces in the South African [Boer] War (1899-1902) and while his return home in 1901 had been uncomplicated, other men struggled with transitioning back to their pre-service lives. For some, charity became their only option when the Government's enlistment promises proved hollow.

ONE NATIONAL VOICE

When the QRSA was established, the Repatriation Commission [Department of Veterans' Affairs]



did not exist. RSA leadership in the southern states had, like Walsh, recognised the challenges that the number and nature of casualties being repatriated posed; they could not be managed by charity alone. While the four RSAs were already exerting pressure to address some of their concerns, all understood that more influence could be wielded if they acted together.

Delegates from the four RSAs met in Melbourne on 6 June 1916. By the end of their conference, a collective decision to federate into the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) had been made. Within two years, the RSSILA had established itself as the representative voice of Australia's returned community at local, state and federal levels. 🗨️

● **1919** - (RSSILA) Queensland Branch decentralised and implemented the District and Sub Branch organisation model.

● **1924** - Queensland's first ANZAC House opened on Elizabeth Street.

● **1927** - ACT Branch joined the RSSILA.

● **1919** - Queensland Branch published its first member magazine, *The Crusader* (published until 1924).

● **1925** - RSSILA Queensland published *The Queensland Digger* Vol.1 – No.1.

● **1930** - The Shrine of Remembrance and Eternal Flame in Brisbane were dedicated on Armistice Day by His Excellency, Sir John Goodwin, Governor of Queensland.

1930



ANZAC cover art of The Queensland Digger

Poignant and powerful, early covers of *The Queensland Digger* spoke of war and loss in ways that only art can.

✍ Dr Susan E. M. Kellett

OVER the past century, the covers of *The Queensland Digger* (now *Queensland RSL News*) have illustrated the progress of the RSL and the events that have affected its evolution.

In this first instalment of a two-part series on selected publication covers, the stories of two early images related to ANZAC Day reveal how art played an important role in uniting the League's membership while also softening the lasting impact of loss in the decades after World War I.

A COVER BORN OF COMMEMORATION

The first edition of *The Queensland Digger* was strategically published in April 1925 to align with the 10th

anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. Its cover was commemorative in tone and featured an Australian Imperial Force bugler sounding the Last Post from atop an image of Australians and New Zealanders dashing ashore under heavy fire at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

For League members, this image represented the shared experience of war. For others, it represented a therapeutic link to the past.

British artist Charles Dixon (1872-1934) was an accomplished British maritime artist commissioned by his government to paint events related to the Dardanelles campaign during WWI. In 1916, his large-scale oil, *The Landing at Gallipoli* (1915), was purchased by British politician Austin Taylor for £500 and presented

to the Australian Government. The work was hung in the Queen's Hall of Federal Parliament which, prior to 1923, was in Melbourne, before being loaned to the National Gallery of New South Wales.

Dixon's painting struck a chord with the Australian public. Thousands of people flocked to the gallery to view the work and, for those bereaved by events at Gallipoli, it provided solace by revealing the previously imagined context of a loved one's death.

For others, the canvas offered a first glimpse at the event touted as "the young nation's baptism of blood." Images of the artwork were printed in newspapers and framed black and white reproductions proved popular with schools, public buildings

● 1939–1945 - World War II (WWII).

● 1944 - ANZAC House on Elizabeth Street was sold, and the League moved into a temporary building on Wickham Terrace.

● 1945 - WWII ended, with 21 Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians for their bravery during the war.

1930

● 1940 - RSSILA's name was changed to 'Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia' (RSSAILA), with the figure of an airman added to the badge to recognise the RAAF.

● 1945 - The RSL grew during the 1940s and 1950s, with new Sub Branches established to accommodate a new wave of veterans.

● 1946–1952 - The British Commonwealth Occupation Force occupied Japan following WWII.



and Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) Districts and Sub Branches.

With few exceptions and despite changes to the publication's banner, *The Landing at Gallipoli* remained an integral element of *The Queensland Digger's* cover for nine years.

HONOURING THE ANZACS THROUGH EVOLVING ART

In February 1934, *The Queensland Digger* was relaunched with a

fresh new format that included special ANZAC numbers (issues) featuring coloured cover art. While early commemorative numbers incorporated simple sketches related to remembrance – a laurel wreath and an eternal flame – their subject matter gradually evolved to include complex messages about memory, loss and grief.

In 1936, *The Queensland Digger* commissioned Ian McBain (1905-1995), a veteran and cartoonist



ABOVE: Charles Dixon (1915). *The Landing at Gallipoli*. Oil on canvas. Parliament House Art Collection. Black and white framed prints of this painting can still be found in some Districts and Sub Branches.

LEFT: An enlistment photo of cartoonist and veteran Ian McBain (1940).

● **1947** - Australia began its first peacekeeping mission with the United Nations.

● **1950–1953** - Korean War.

● **1950–1963** - Australia makes military commitment to the Malayan Emergency.

● **1951** - Papua New Guinea Branch of RSSAILA opened.

● **1956** - RSL Art Union (now the Dream Home Art Union) formed to raise funds for veteran welfare.

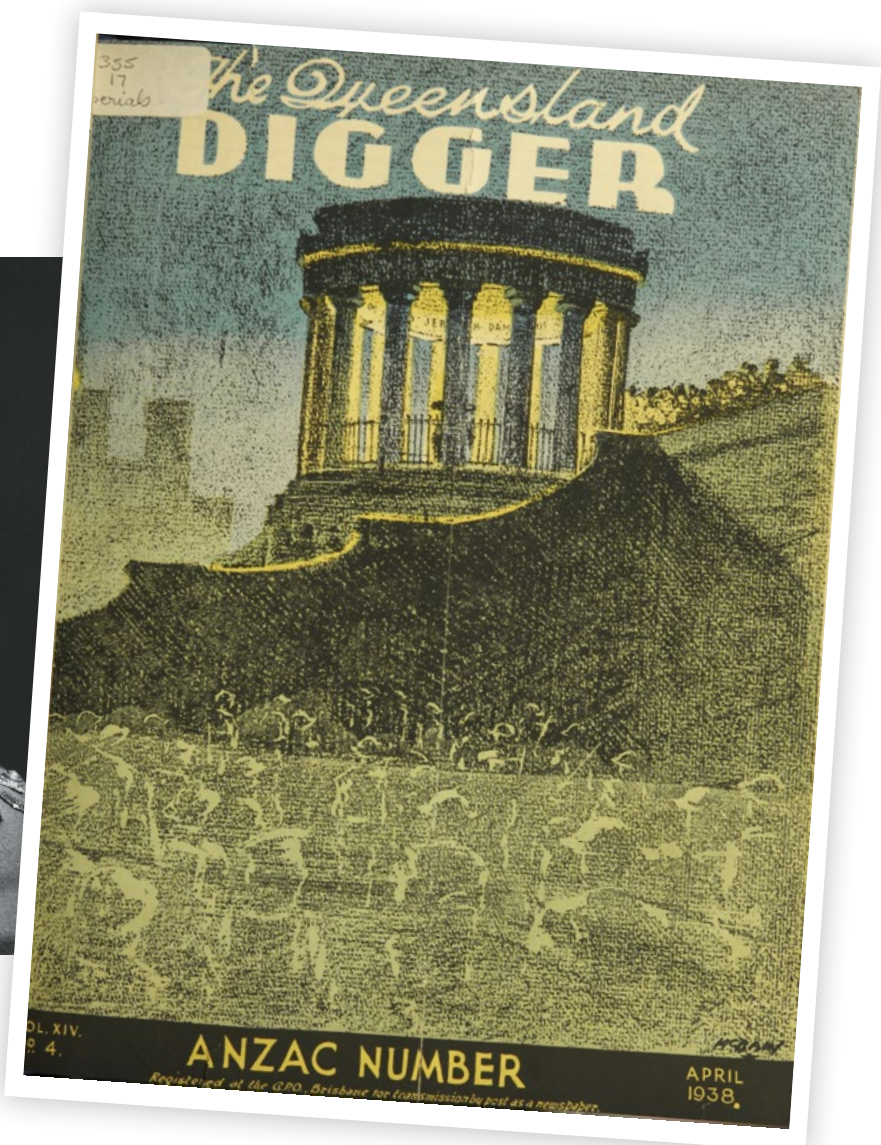
1956

100
YEARS
SINCE
THE QUEENSLAND DIGGER



ABOVE: Will Longstaff. AWM J01940. Tamla Studios (c.1917). Longstaff fought in both the Boer War and WWI before being appointed as an Australian war artist in 1918.

RIGHT: Ian McBain was commissioned to draw this cover of *The Queensland Digger* from April 1938. He channelled the painting *Menin Gate at Midnight*.



with *The Courier Mail*, to design a series of covers for the publication. His 1938 ANZAC number featured ANZAC Square just as dawn breaks across the Brisbane skyline.

To the right, a crowd huddles in the glow of the cenotaph's eternal flame while the memory of the fallen – whether family members

or comrades – stand watch in the shadows below. In his haunting depiction of a Dawn Service, McBain channelled what is arguably the most powerful commemorative painting in the nation's memory of war: *Menin Gate at Midnight* (1927).

THE HAUNTING APPEAL OF MENIN GATE AT MIDNIGHT

In July 1927, the Menin Gate Memorial was unveiled in Belgium

to commemorate the missing British and Commonwealth men lost to battles around Ypres. Its poignant epitaph, "They are not missing. They are here", was carefully crafted to provide comfort to thousands of bereaved family members.

Australian war artist Will Longstaff (1879-1953) had served in the area during the war and attended the monument's unveiling.

● **1957** - Australian forces finally withdrawn from Korea.

● **1962** - *The Queensland Digger* changed its name to *Vigilance*.

● **1962–1966** - Indonesian Confrontation.

1956

● **1959** - The RSL 'Girl in a Million' Quest began, starting a successful and popular 50-year fundraising and ambassadorship program for young women.

● **1962–1975** - Vietnam War.

● **1966** - A further name change to 'Returned Services League of Australia' was made at the 50th national conference.

Unable to sleep that night, he went for a walk along Menin Road.

Just as the town clock pealed at midnight, Longstaff "...felt, and then actually saw, thousands of phantom Diggers arising from the ground, quietly, serenely, but grimly watching... the harder I looked, the more I saw" he told a journalist, before adding, "No, I was not drunk". The artist remained haunted by his vision until he was able to commit it to canvas.

In early 1928, the Secretary of Queensland's London office brought the painting to the attention of British philanthropist Lord Woolavington, who subsequently purchased it for 2000 guineas (£2,100). It was hoped that Brisbane would benefit from the Lord's largesse; however, he instead gifted the canvas to the Australian Government.

Menin Gate at Midnight created a sensation when exhibited in Britain and Australia. Longstaff's subject matter tapped directly into the profound emotions of loss and anxiety that a battlefield death represented to the bereaved.

It also presented the comforting illusion that death was not the end and that loved ones who lay in foreign lands far away were not alone. During its exhibition in London, a mother who grieved three sons lost at Ypres visited the painting daily and searched for the familiar faces of her boys among the ghostly



ABOVE: *Menin Gate at Midnight*. Will Longstaff (1927). Oil on Canvas. AWM ART09807. The artist donated 400 signed colour copies of his painting to the RSSILA. These were sold for £10/10/- each and the funds were divided among the State Branches.

army. She admitted that Longstaff's work provided her with "a greater consolation than if I could visit their graves... somehow I now know that they are happy and not really lost".

Upon its arrival in Australia, *Menin Gate at Midnight* toured the nation's state capitals and major cities. The RSSILA ensured that its arrival in Brisbane corresponded with the Ekka (Royal Queensland Show) so that regional visitors could view the work.

It is probable that Ian McBain was among the 50,000 Queenslanders who patiently waited outside the

city's new town hall to view the canvas during August 1929. He would have witnessed the profound emotional impact it had upon those who searched for a familiar face amid Longstaff's moonlit shadows.

Rather than being merely decorative in nature, the early covers of *The Queensland Digger* played a much more important role. Their commemorative artwork connected members with the shared experience of war while also providing context and comfort related to the ongoing pain of a battlefield loss. 📣

● **1967** - *Vigilance* ceased production.

● **1990** - Delegates to the 75th National Congress voted to change the organisation's name to 'Returned and Services League of Australia' to include current and former Defence members, and the figure of a service woman is added to the badge.

● **1989** - RSL Queensland's member publication relaunched as *Queensland RSL News*.

● **1990–1991** - Gulf War.

● **1991–1993** - Australia deployed UN peacekeepers to Cambodia.

1993



WWII Aircraftwoman

celebrates 100th birthday

BETTY Robinson, a WWII veteran and Life Subscriber of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch, recently reached the incredible milestone of 100 years. Surrounded by loved ones, she celebrated this special occasion on 21 January at Club Tweed, reflecting on a century filled with service, family and cherished memories.

DEFENDING AUSTRALIA'S SKIES

Betty (nee Lewis) was born in Hobart in 1925 and later moved to Sydney with her family. After working for her aunt in the fashion industry, she decided to join the war effort, enlisting in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) on 25 February 1943, aged 18.

Initially posted to No. 5 WAAAF Depot, she was later stationed at Air Defence Headquarters Sydney, playing a crucial part in plotting aircraft to defend Australia's skies.

While serving, Betty formed deep and lasting bonds with two fellow



ABOVE: World War II veteran Betty Robinson of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch, who celebrated her 100th birthday on 21 January, receiving her 100-year certificate from Sub Branch Director Geoff Partridge and his wife, Wellbeing Support Officer Jan Partridge.

servicewomen, Nancy Hayes and Valmae Klein. Though her dear friends have since passed, Betty still fondly recalls the camaraderie they shared during and after the war.

FROM SERVICE TO RAISING A FAMILY

Betty's time in uniform came to an end on 24 September 1945 when

she was discharged at the rank of Aircraftwoman. Though she took great pride in her service, she happily shifted her focus to family life.

In May 1945, as the war entered its final months, Betty married RAAF member Noel Clive John Robinson. Together, they built a life filled with love and dedication, raising two daughters and later welcoming

● **1992–1995** - Australia deployed UN peacekeepers to Somalia.

● **1999** - Unrest in East Timor saw Australian troops become part of a multinational peacekeeping taskforce.

● **2001–2021** - The war in Afghanistan.

1992

● **1993** - Australian troops were sent to Rwanda on humanitarian and peacekeeping missions.

● **2001** - A new generation of veterans emerged in this time, from various conflicts and humanitarian missions.

● **2003–2009** - Iraq War



RIGHT: Betty Robinson enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) on 25 February 1943, aged 18.

BELOW: A recruitment poster for the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force.



A TREASURED LONG-TIME MEMBER

Betty joined Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch in 1976 and remains a treasured member. She actively attended member meetings before moving to a nearby nursing home in recent years. Sub Branch volunteers pay Betty regular visits, keeping in touch and offering assistance. However, Sub Branch President John Griffin says she's rarely needed help.

"She's one of those people who keep on going," he reflects. "I'd like to get to 100. Whether I'll look as good as Betty does, I don't know!"

To honour Betty's birthday, Sub Branch Director Geoff Partridge and his wife, Wellbeing Support Officer Jan Partridge, were delighted to present Betty with her 100-year certificate from RSL Queensland.

THE SECRET TO 100 YEARS

Once an enthusiastic tennis player, Betty now enjoys more leisurely activities such as chair tennis and bingo.

She credits her longevity to her positive outlook and always seeing the bright side of life.

She looks forward to enjoying more celebrations with her family, who are extremely proud of her legacy. Her story is one of service, adventure and love – an inspiring testament to a life well lived. 🍷

roles in the workforce. She worked in a bakery in Cooma, New South Wales, before later becoming part of the team at the Kirra Beach Hotel on the Gold Coast. However, it was always family that remained at the centre of her world.

Over the decades, Betty's

family expanded to include grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and even great-great-grandchildren. Despite the passing of her beloved husband in 2000, she continued to embrace life with her trademark positive attitude.

multiple generations into their growing family.

A LIFE WELL LIVED

Betty and Noel settled into post-war life, with Betty taking on various

● **2013** - The evolving style of combat and increased social awareness of mental illness saw the needs of contemporary veterans diversify, with research and rehabilitation programs aimed at addressing post-traumatic stress disorder proving necessary.

● **2016** - RSL marked 100 years of service to the veteran community.

● **2020** - During the global COVID-19 pandemic, RSL Queensland adapted commemorations by promoting virtual ANZAC Day services and the 'Light up the Dawn' initiative.

● **2013** - Australia's military involvement in East Timor ended.

● **2015** - The Returned and Services League grew to 1,500 Sub Branches Australia-wide and more than 240,000 members, making it the largest ex-service organisation in Australia.

● **2018** - RSL Queensland expanded support services for veterans, introducing new programs such as RSL Employment and wellbeing programs.

2020



Veteran spotlight

Arthur Leggo's road to 100 years

As part of our centenary celebrations, we are also recognising remarkable members who will celebrate their own 100-year milestones this year. Veterans like Arthur Leggo remind us of the enduring legacy of service, resilience and community that the RSL represents.

✍ Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch Secretary Ross Carruthers

IT'S Remembrance Day, and I spot Arthur sitting on the recently renovated back verandah of Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch with a cold drink in front of him.

"How are you, Arthur?" I ask. "Any chance of a chat?"

"Of course, Ross," he replies, and we settle down for an enthralling 30 minutes of discussion about World War II and his lifetime of memories. What an amazing man.

ENLISTING AGAINST THE ODDS

Arthur Leggo was born in Sydney on 2 December 1925. As soon as he was able, he applied to enlist in the Australian Army in December 1943, during World War II.

However, it wasn't as easy as it sounds. Arthur was employed as an assistant motor mechanic – an occupation that was, at the time, regarded as a protected industry.

To enlist, he first had to secure approval from his boss and then from Manpower Australia. After significant effort and persistence, he gained those approvals and enlisted in January 1944.

FROM COWRA TO NEW GUINEA

Arthur completed his recruit training at Cowra in NSW. Towards the end of his training, the Cowra Breakout occurred, during which

● **2021** - The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide was established and RSL Queensland made its initial submission.

● **2024** - The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide released its Final Report, with the government accepting most recommendations and outlining a reform plan to support Defence personnel, veterans and families.

● **2025** - ADF personnel continue to serve on international operations and exercises.

●.....●
2020

● **2024** - RSL Art Union changed its name to Dream Home Art Union and offered the largest prize in Australia's history – a \$13 million Gold Coast beachfront complex.

● **2025** - RSL Queensland marks the centenary of *The Queensland Digger*.

● **2025** - RSL Queensland grows to 34,192 service members, with around 230 Sub Branches and 10 Districts.

●.....●
2025

Arthur Leggo
aged 18.



Arthur Leggo became a member of Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch in 1993 and will celebrate his 100th birthday on 2 December 2025.

1,104 Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) escaped from a nearby POW camp.

It was the largest prison escape of WWII, and one of the bloodiest. Arthur played a role in locating and capturing escapees and later helped escort them to a new camp in Hay.

He was subsequently sent to Canungra in Queensland, then shipped off to Wewak in New Guinea, where he joined the 2nd/4th Infantry Battalion. By then, the war was largely over, and Arthur participated in end-of-war mop-up operations out of Wewak and Rabaul.

Returning to Australia in 1945, he was promoted from Private to Sergeant and posted to Holdsworth

Barracks and then Victoria Barracks in Sydney. He left the Army in 1946 to be with his girlfriend, who promptly dumped him – a rough welcome home for a young soldier.

Arthur loved the camaraderie of the Army. He had four great mates in recruit training, and they reunited after his discharge. He valued the discipline and structure of military life, which made transitioning to civilian life challenging at first.

A LIFE SHAPED BY SERVICE AND LOVE

After the Army, Arthur spent a year as a truck driver, seeing the country, then worked as a roustabout with his Army mate Jim. While working

near Tamworth, he met Doris, the hotel cook, who later became his wife. They had three children and remained married until her passing just three months before their 60th anniversary.

Arthur moved to Tin Can Bay in 1989 after retiring from a particleboard factory in Gympie. He first joined the RSL in 1946 and became a member of Tin Can Bay RSL Sub Branch in 1993. Arthur will celebrate his 100th birthday on 2 December 2025.

Arthur's advice to young people today is simple: 'Join the services; it will set you up for life.'

Well, Arthur, we all appreciate your advice and your service. 🇺🇸



100th birthday *honour roll*

As we celebrate a century of The Queensland Digger, we also honour close to 50 RSL Queensland members reaching their 100th birthday in 2025. Congratulations on this incredible milestone, and thank you for your years of service and dedication. The list includes each member's surname, first name and RSL Sub Branch.

Baker, Richard – Nerang
Berry, Ernest – Maroochydore
Bochenska, Patricia – RSL Queensland
Boerlage, Gerrebrandus – Runaway Bay
Bramwell, Dorothy – Gaythorne
Burgoyne, Graham – Nambour
Crane, Charles – Coorparoo and Districts
English OAM, Philip – Malanda
Francis, William – Miles
Garnett, Hilda – Currumbin/Palm Beach
Gibbins, Colin – Southport
Gosney, Dennis – Greenbank
Hart, Ian – Tamborine Mountain
Huggett, Daniel – Townsville
Hush, Raymond – Southport
Imrie, Helen – Currumbin/Palm Beach
Klass, Keith – Wandoan
Leggo, Arthur – Tin Can Bay
Logan, Frederick – Currumbin/Palm Beach
Marcus, Elvie – Sherwood-Indooroopilly
Marnock, Gladys – Townsville
McDonald, Philip – Currumbin/Palm Beach
Moroney, Frank – Wynnum
Muir, George – Maroochydore
Obst, Mavis – Kedron-Wavell

Owens, Dudley – Emu Park
Partridge, Rex – Kingaroy/Memerambi
Pescott, David – Mudjimba
Powell, Gordon – Mareeba
Rayner, Pett – Kenmore/Moggill
Richardson, John – Southport
Robinson, Betty – Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
Rosser, Allan – Tamborine Mountain
Ryan, Jessie – Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
Sander, Keith – Hervey Bay
Sanderson, John – Maroochydore
Shannon, Wallace – Kedron-Wavell
Shaul, Elsie – Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
Sinclair, Leslie – Townsville
Statham, Lloyd – Salisbury
Stevens, Laurie – Caloundra
Thompson, Frederick – Tully
Veivers, Trevaughanna – RSL Queensland
Voll, Lyle – Goombungee
Wagner, Otto – RSL Queensland
Wilcox, William – Wynnum
Williamson, James – Wynnum

This list is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

Century celebrations

Honouring some of the members celebrating their 100th birthdays in 2025.

TOWNSVILLE RSL SUB BRANCH



LESLIE SINCLAIR CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY

Townsville RSL Sub Branch Vice President Adam West DSM was delighted to present Leslie Sinclair a 100th birthday certificate on behalf of RSL Queensland.

Leslie, who lives independently in a local aged care home, turned 100 on 9 March and received letters and birthday wishes from the King and Queen, the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, the State Premier and the acting Mayor of Townsville.

Leslie is a proud infantry man who served with the 2/33 Infantry Battalion AIF. He spoke in detail about his active service in Borneo, including the Battle of Balikpapan in 1945. He shared photos and stories, proving the sharpness of his mind. His secret to a long life? He "tasted beer once, never smoked and didn't drink cups of tea".

Lucky to have survived the conflict, he returned from WWII and lived a full life in Townsville. Still surrounded by family, Leslie is one of the few surviving WWII veterans in the area and hopes to be able to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific this August.

GAYTHORNE RSL SUB BRANCH



DOT BRAMWELL'S LIFE OF SERVICE AND SONG

Dorothy (Dot) Bramwell, a proud WWII veteran, celebrated her 100th birthday on 21 April. The only WWII veteran at Azure Blue Retirement Village, Dot remains a beloved presence at ANZAC and Remembrance Day services, proudly wearing her medals and sharing stories of service.

At 17, Dot attempted to enlist by putting her age up, but her mother intervened. Determined to contribute, she joined a civilian defence group and was on duty the night Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour. Her role was to patrol neighbourhoods and remind residents to close their curtains and darken their homes to avoid detection.

After turning 18, she officially enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Corps, training in Morse code and signals and serving in Sydney, Darwin and Bathurst. She also performed country and western songs – including yodelling – for wounded soldiers in hospitals.

Dot's connection to Defence runs deep. Her father was a WWI prisoner of war, her uncle was killed on the Somme, and her late husband, Arthur, served in New Guinea during WWII. A proud member of Gaythorne RSL Sub Branch and the Ex-Service Women's RSL Sub Branch, Dot believes women can do anything they set their minds to.



From the Districts

Centenary reflections

As we celebrate the centenary of The Queensland Digger, we asked each of our District Presidents to share their thoughts on what this milestone means to members and the importance of having a publication that gives veterans a voice.

BRISBANE NORTH



Mark Orreal

President, Brisbane North District

"The magazine is a great resource to learn about what's happening across the state and read historic and contemporary stories. It defies the trend of devaluing wordsmithing and does a great job of preserving our traditions and memories, communicating to a broad audience and ensuring that we will always remember them."

FAR NORTHERN



Kenneth Willoughby

President, Far Northern District

"One hundred years is an achievement that has to be recognised as we move forward in providing guidance, advice and support – not only to RSL Queensland members but also to service personnel who are not part of this amazing organisation."

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND



John Edwards

President, Central Queensland District

"Congratulations on keeping the veteran community informed and connected. Through the publication's commitment to truth, history and support, it ensures that the sacrifices of our service men and women are never forgotten."

GOLD COAST



Pat Fairon

President, Gold Coast District

"Since 1925, The Queensland Digger has informed veterans and their families with stories of welfare and human interest. Today, Queensland RSL News continues this vital role – more polished, but just as important. Keep up the great work!"

MORETON



Paul Rogers

President, Moreton District

"It amazes me to think that both my father and grandfather read this magazine back in the day. While the content has changed greatly since then – the first edition briefly mentioned female service – today it's a much more prominent focus."

SUNSHINE COAST AND REGIONAL



Grendell Antony

President, Sunshine Coast and Regional District

"Veterans continue to navigate new challenges – transitioning from Defence, navigating health issues, unemployment, isolation and finding a new purpose. Queensland RSL News remains a vital source of information and encouragement, keeping the 'light in the window' burning bright."

NORTH QUEENSLAND



Garry Player

President, North Queensland District

"Our magazine honours the courage of its contributors, who share their personal journeys and provide readers with a deeper understanding of the realities of military service, encompassing both the hardships and the successes."

WESTERN



Dennis Pollard

President, Western District

"I was sitting on my front porch enjoying a coffee when the postie arrived with my mail. The magazine caught my eye, and as I picked up Edition 1, I noticed the gold badge. I started reading right away and couldn't put it down. Our magazine always features great stories, photos and characters, and the centenary edition was excellent as ever."

SOUTH EASTERN



Kerry Gallagher

President, South Eastern District

"For 100 years, our magazine has been a steadfast voice – delivering truth, timely information and the stories that matter most to veterans and their families. This commitment has not only kept our community informed and engaged, but also strengthened the RSL's core pillar of camaraderie, earning deep respect within and beyond the veteran community."

WIDE BAY AND BURNETT



Neville Tarry

President, Wide Bay and Burnett District

"Reaching 100 years of publication is a mighty feat. Thank you for spotlighting the achievements and challenges faced by our veteran community. Your dedication to keeping our community connected is truly reflected in this milestone."

WORLD WAR II VETERAN SHARES HIS STORY AHEAD OF 80TH VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY

From Papua New Guinea to Japan, WWII Army veteran Dawson Reimers shares his experience during the world's largest war.

Jasmine Halley

"We all cheered, 'Hooray!'. Then bang, bang, bang, everyone was firing off their bullets into the air."

NIGHT had fallen over the jungles of northern Papua New Guinea in 1945. Victorian-born Dawson Reimers was on guard duty when he was informed that Japan had formally surrendered to the Allies.

"We all cheered, 'Hooray!' Then bang, bang, bang, everyone was firing off their bullets into the air," Dawson, now 100 years old, gleefully recalls.

Commemorated annually on 15 August, Victory in the Pacific Day marks Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender, which ended World War II.

Ahead of the 80th anniversary in 2025, WWII Army veteran and Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch member Dawson looks back on his time in the Army during the largest war the world had seen.

"I went to enlist in 1943 when I was 18, after my dad came home ill," Dawson explains.

"I was moved around a bit in Victoria and New South Wales and completed a motor transport course. I was then told to report to the Jungle Warfare Training School up in Canungra in Queensland.

"Then one night in 1944, the big troop ship came in, put us on and took us out into the darkness to Wewak in Papua New Guinea. That was my first deployment."

Dawson served with the 6th Division 2nd 9th Australian General Transport (AGT) Company and was

tasked with driving supplies and officers around the jungle to troops. He remained in Papua New Guinea until the end of the war.

In February 1946, after Papua New Guinea, he boarded the Taos Victory ship with about 1,000 other personnel headed for Japan – six months after the atomic bomb had fallen.

"We landed in Kure before heading to Kaitaichi, which was about 8km from Hiroshima. We were sent there to take possession of the petrol place and provide sanitation. As Hiroshima had been a garrison city, we were involved in the disarming of repatriated Japanese soldiers returning to the city," he says.

"I had a change of heart when I was in Hiroshima. I remember looking up to the sky and in my mind, thought about the huge plane that would have flown over, and then I looked down at a devastated city.

"I thought about how most of the people killed were men, women and children, and how so many of those who survived would be affected by the radiation. That turned me around. It made me hate, hate."

Dawson served for five years and two months and was discharged in May 1948 when he returned to Victoria.

"After I was discharged, I was given a month of leave that I had accrued after being in Japan for

two years without leave," Dawson explains.

"I then went on a month-long, self-march up in the hills of Mount Baw Baw outside Melbourne before returning to work as a butcher, which was what I was doing before joining the Army."

When he came back from Japan, he also joined Thornbury RSL Sub Branch, with a lot of other service men at the time.

"Following that, I joined the Army again when the threat of the Cold War became apparent. I was in the 5th Battalion, Victorian Scottish Regiment," he says.

Dawson served part time and rose to the rank of Lieutenant the second time around.

"I was a trained soldier. The very fact that I walked up into the mountains when I came home from Japan shows it was ingrained in me."

During this time, Dawson married his long-time sweetheart and raised three children in Coburg. In 1971, the family moved to Townsville while Dawson continued to work. Thirteen years later, the couple purchased their home on Magnetic Island. A few years after moving to the island, Dawson joined Magnetic Island RSL Sub Branch, where he was one of a few in the Sub Branch that was a member for more than 30 years.

Now armoured with a few more years of life experience, Dawson looks back at his time in the Army with pride and attributes his long life to finding a purpose.

"I am proud of my service. I also came from a family that was in poor circumstances, which meant I started working at the age of 13. I kept going for them and here I am. I'm happy with my life; I have been lucky. I'm living by myself now and have got great neighbours that visit me."

Sadly, Dawson passed away on 26 April 2025. His humour, kindness and positivity will be deeply missed. ←

OPPOSITE PAGE:
WWII veteran Dawson Reimers enlisted in the Army in 1943 aged 18.



National Volunteer Connecting Communities Week

19-25 MAY 2025

National Volunteer Week is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering, held from 19 to 25 May in 2025. This year's theme, 'Connecting Communities', celebrated the power of volunteering to bring people together, creating lasting relationships that enrich lives and strengthen communities. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible impact our members have in fostering connection and belonging and building thriving, inclusive veteran communities.

Lending a hand to honour service personnel

In the remote town of Weipa in Far North Queensland, the volunteering efforts of veteran Lloyd Williams have allowed Weipa RSL Sub Branch to shine when it comes to paying tribute to those who served.

Olivia Lawrence

LLOYD served in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) reserves for 28 years, which included 20 years with No. 13 Squadron in Darwin and an eight-year stint as an electrician at RAAF

Base Scherger – a military air base around 25km from Weipa. Soon after transitioning out of Defence, Lloyd was encouraged by some mates to join his local RSL Sub Branch.

“It didn't take long, and I felt a part of the team almost immediately – didn't matter your rank or background, I was treated like an equal and that meant a lot to me,” Lloyd says.

Still continuing to work full-time, Lloyd has been a member and volunteer with Weipa RSL Sub Branch since 2012. It wasn't long after becoming a member that Lloyd transitioned to President in 2014 – using his skills and passions to take the lead with various volunteering activities.

"Volunteering is so enjoyable for me," Lloyd says.

"It has allowed me to create connections and camaraderie with fellow veterans and the community."

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY FOR COMMEMORATIONS

A particular volunteer focus for Lloyd has been fundraising and hosting commemorative services for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day at the local memorial, for members and the wider community.

"I take on the role of Master of Ceremonies (MC) for each commemoration, organise groups and individuals to be a part of the order of service and spread the word to local veterans, the 51st Battalion and members of the public to come along or to lay a wreath," Lloyd says.

"We have a lot of local veterans who come out to our commemorations, which is great to see, and I am always encouraging veterans to become a member or volunteer with the Sub Branch."

Lloyd also organises and runs a fundraising stall in the town's local grocery store ahead of ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, which raises several hundreds of dollars.

"I am also proud and grateful of the long-standing relationship the Sub Branch has with the Weipa Bowls Club," Lloyd explains.

"We have given them authority to host a two-up fundraising event on ANZAC Day each year and they match the proceeds that are donated by community members.

"Volunteering is so enjoyable for me. It has allowed me to create connections and camaraderie with fellow veterans and the community."

"Last year, thanks to the generosity of the community, a local sports group and the Weipa Bowls Club, we were given a donation of \$5,000.

"We are lucky to have such a giving community – it makes the volunteering I do that much more impactful."

EXPLORING THE PAST: A PROJECT TO SHARE LOCAL WAR HISTORY

Knowing how important ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services are for the community, Lloyd has been working on a memorial walk project to give the community another opportunity to honour local service personnel.

"So far we have implemented a beautiful steel memorial statue that natural light shines through, but the bulk of the project will be historical

signage for residents to view and learn more about local war history," Lloyd explains.

"For the signage, I am planning to work with a local historian from Cairns to gather the information. Much of our local war history focuses on Indigenous veterans from Napranum – a remote town just 6km south of Weipa, so I am looking forward to the project and sharing more about their contributions."

"My hope is that my volunteering and positive experiences, all while working full-time, can inspire other veterans and locals to join me in becoming a member or volunteer for Weipa RSL Sub Branch.

"I would love to see the Sub Branch grow so we can continue to offer the services and support we do to veterans and their families, but also expand what we can offer too." ←



LEFT: Lloyd Williams accepts a donation from Weipa Bowls Club Operations Manager Karen Phillips. (Photo: Cape York Weekly).

Brews, bonds and heartfelt conversations

As an Army veteran and a veteran's spouse, Nea Storan knows firsthand the importance of giving back to veterans and their families.

Olivia Lawrence

GOLD Coast veteran Nea Storan, 78, has been volunteering for not one, but two RSL Sub Branches for several years.

"I joined Nerang RSL Sub Branch about six years ago and I immediately started chatting and connecting with veterans. I just enjoy interacting with people over

a cup of tea or coffee," Nea says.

"I think that comes from my time as a Corrections Officer but also my time in the Army. In addition to my service, I worked as a Defence Family Liaison Officer for a couple of years."

Noticing Nea's ability to bond and relate with others, the Sub Branch

asked if she would be interested in doing some hospital and home visits for veterans and that is really how her volunteering began.

CONNECTING WITH GOLD COAST VETERANS

Today, Nea is a Wellbeing Officer certified to assist in the wellbeing



RIGHT: Gold Coast veteran Nea Storan assisting Grant Cotterill with his accreditation studies.

“Volunteering keeps me going, and I have no plans of slowing down any time soon. Bringing a bright spot to someone’s day or helping them connect with others – that’s what warms my heart and why I do it.”

and compensation space and also assists with sausage sizzle fundraisers and badge selling for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

Nea has fond memories of her service with the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps in Melbourne (1966-1968). However, she also sees the importance of ex-service organisations and volunteers assisting those who served, as well as their families.

“Some veterans need a little extra support and so do their families, so I make it a priority to work with veterans and veterans’ spouses who need that helping hand,” Nea says.

“I always say it takes a community to support our veterans and each of these individuals has their own queries or needs. That’s

what encourages me to keep volunteering.”

Volunteering keeps Nea busy. She clocks around 40 hours per month, going for regular coffee catch-ups with individuals or groups, as well as to ladies’ morning teas.

“One of my coffee groups, I call us ‘the groupies,’ Nea says with a chuckle.

“They are a group of veterans and widows who are unable to come into the RSL Sub Branch for meetings anymore, so I pay them regular visits at their retirement village and it means a lot to all of them.”

Nea is also part of Mudgeeraba-Robina RSL Sub Branch’s welfare team. The network of veterans and families that Nea works with has really expanded since she started

volunteering and her impact continues to grow.

EXTENDING HER REACH IN THE COMMUNITY

“I was recently appointed to the Gold Coast District Board as Vice President (VP) of Welfare,” Nea says.

“This means I interact with members of the board to discuss care for veterans and their families, and share insights on how each RSL Sub Branch within the Gold Coast District is supporting its members.”

Nea says the new appointment will be a challenge for her, but she is eager to jump in with both feet.

“Volunteering keeps me going, and I have no plans of slowing down any time soon,” Nea says with a smile.

“Bringing a bright spot to someone’s day or helping them connect with others – that’s what warms my heart and why I do it.” ←

BELOW:
Nea Storan assisting veteran Doug Kelsall with a claim application.



National Volunteer Week shines a light on the ways volunteering brings us all together, builds community and achieves vital work across Australia. Find your local RSL Sub Branch and become a member of RSL Queensland today.

50 YEARS ON NAVY VETERAN RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE DURING CYCLONE TRACY



RSL Queensland and Naval Association of Australia have joined forces to honour veteran Murray Shepherd for serving during Cyclone Tracy.

Jasmine Halley

If you're looking for support, browse RSL Queensland's range of services for veterans at rslqld.org/find-help



ROYAL Australian Navy (RAN) veteran George 'Murray' Shepherd was recently presented with the 50th Anniversary of Cyclone Tracy commemorative coin, recognising him for his service during the 1974 natural disaster.

THE DEVASTATING NATURAL DISASTER

Cyclone Tracy devastated the city of Darwin during the early hours of Christmas Day in 1974. The Category 4 cyclone, with winds over 217km/hr, damaged 70% of the city's homes and left 41,000 people homeless. Sixty-six people also lost their lives and more than 645 people were injured as a result of the catastrophic event.

Murray was just 20 when he arrived in Darwin on board HMAS *Stalwart* (II) to help in the aftermath of the cyclone. He was part of the RAN's largest peacetime disaster relief operation at the time, which involved 13 ships, 11 aircraft and approximately 3,000 personnel.

"I was a communications electrician and was part of the team that helped rebuild the entire communications network for the police, fire and ambulance up there. It had all been flooded," Murray explains.

In 2024, a commemorative coin was commissioned by Member for Solomon, Northern Territory, Luke Gosling OAM to recognise the service of those involved in Cyclone Tracy relief and rebuilding efforts 50 years on.

Later that year, Ray Sandford, Vice President and Advocacy at the Naval Association of Australia Queensland Branch, travelled to Darwin with 26 former sailors for the 50th anniversary, but Murray was unable to make the trip due to being in hospital.

To ensure Murray was also honoured, Ray presented Murray with the commemorative coin in February 2025. Ray says the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy is



a significant occasion, and it's important to rightfully honour those who assisted in the aftermath.

"Cyclone Tracy was a moment in time of major significance for the Royal Australian Navy, and the sacrifice and service those people put in shouldn't be forgotten," he says.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Further to organising this recognition for Murray, Ray recently connected Murray with Kedron-Wavell RSL Sub Branch and RSL Queensland, which – together with the Naval Association of Australia Queensland Branch – have been assisting Murray with wellbeing, DVA advocacy and housing support.

"Murray's recent journey is a great example of ex-service organisations working together to

support a veteran," Ray says.

"The collaboration between the Naval Association of Australia and RSL Queensland to assist Murray has been incredibly positive.

"This sort of networking within the ESO community can work really well and should be celebrated."

Murray says the support he's received from Kedron-Wavell RSL Sub Branch and RSL Queensland has been outstanding.

"I can't speak highly enough of what the RSL has done for me," Murray says.

"Victoria, my Wellbeing Advocate from RSL Queensland, has been doing an amazing job supporting me, and I can't speak more highly about her manager Natacha. Both have been fantastic assisting me during this time, and I can't thank them enough." ←

ABOVE: Navy veteran Murray Shepherd, centre, with RSL Queensland Engagement Officer Hannah Axford, left, and Naval Association of Australia Queensland Branch Vice President Ray Sandford.

Rwanda veterans reunite

Thirty years after Australian peacekeeping efforts during the Rwandan Civil War, Townsville RSL Sub Branch hosted a national reunion for Rwanda veterans from 22 to 26 April.

 **Jasmine Halley**

RIGHT: Rwanda veteran and Townsville RSL Sub Branch President Colin Mosch marches on ANZAC Day 2025.

“This year marks a significant anniversary as 30 years ago the two contingents overlapped, signifying a defining moment in the mission.”

Townsville hosted several events for the 30th Anniversary Rwanda Veterans’ Reunion, designed to bring Rwanda veterans together and honour their service.

Rwanda veteran and Townsville RSL President Colin Mosch says the reunion offered multiple opportunities for Rwanda veterans to reconnect and commemorate this significant deployment.

“Given we’ve got veterans living across the country, it can be really hard to get a lot of people together at the same time to catch up,” Colin says.

“So, we wanted to create an event with multiple opportunities across a few days for people to reconnect with each other to make their trip up north even more worthwhile.

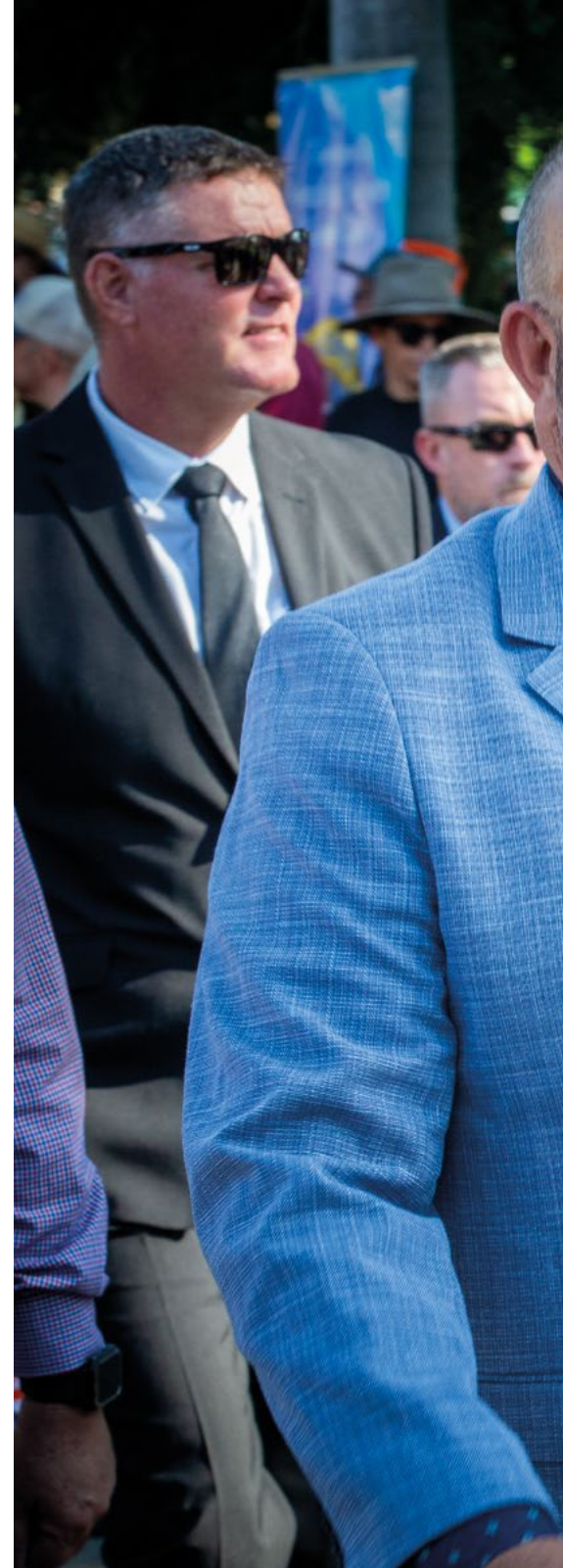
“All Rwanda veterans trained here before deployment and for many of us, Townsville was where our military careers were shaped.”

A MISSION THAT LEFT ITS MARK

Between 1994 and 1995, Australia was involved in one of its most difficult peacekeeping missions ever undertaken. More than 600 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel served on Operation Tamar as part of the United Nations’ second taskforce, United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda II (UNAMIR II).

The mission itself was made up of Army, Navy and Air Force personnel, deployed primarily to provide medical and humanitarian support where possible.

These Australians made up two ADF contingents, both of which served in Rwanda for six months: one from August 1994 to February 1995 and the other from February to August 1995. This year marks a significant anniversary as 30 years ago the two contingents overlapped, signifying a defining moment in the mission.



“Both contingents faced extreme challenges, arriving in a country that had just suffered one of the most brutal genocides in history. The cruelty the Rwandans inflicted upon each other was horrific,” Colin recalls.

“It was a unique situation to observe – truly a bit surreal.”

REUNION EVENTS AND ANZAC DAY MARCH

Through the support of Townsville RSL Sub Branch, the five-day



reunion included a mixture of relaxed and semi-formal events, with a meet and greet, official reunion dinner and farewell drinks.

"We then organised for the Rwandan veterans to be the lead

veteran group for our ANZAC Day march," Colin says.

"The Sub Branch also covered the cost of the banner that the Rwanda veterans carried during the march and – like we with did with INTERFET veterans last

year for the 25th anniversary of Australian service in Timor Leste – we encouraged all the Rwanda veterans to sign their name and leave a message on the banner, which went into our memorabilia display." ←

INSET (FAR LEFT): Pictured at the reunion dinner were, back row from left, Terry Pope, Jeff Bowker, Stuart Benfield, Scott Britnall, and seated from left, David and Kylie Hawkins and Simone and Kelby Eddington

INSET (LEFT): Rwanda veterans lead the Townsville ANZAC Day march.



Purpose guides RAAF veteran to rewarding new career

RAAF veteran Bart De Vree made a “life-changing” career switch thanks to the RSL Employment Program.

Belinda Crossman

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) veteran Bart De Vree always saw himself working in tech.

But a low point in his life saw him rethinking – and transforming – his career through the RSL Employment Program.

“I’ve got quite a technical background and I’d always thought technical work was what I wanted to do,” Bart explains.

“Through career counselling and the RSL Employment Program, I realised, no; I don’t really want to do that. I really want to engage with people and serve the community and do some good.”

A PIVOTAL REALISATION

Bart served in the RAAF from 1997 to 2000, including a deployment to East Timor – a “definite highlight” of his military career.

“I was an Avionics Mechanic with 37 Squadron Hercules. We stationed in Darwin and flew in and out of Dili several times a day

– refitting aircraft, doing on-tarmac repairs and so on to keep the aircraft flying,” he says.

“Getting to put into practice those things that you’re trained to do, and the camaraderie and teamwork – that was definitely a highlight.”

Years and several life-changing events later, Bart found himself “in a really bad place”. Grappling with financial pressures and a stressful work environment, he reached out for support.

“I’d taken quite a downward turn, so I engaged with RSL Queensland, Open Arms and Mates4Mates,” he says.

“Through counselling, it became apparent that one of the big factors in my life that I was unhappy with was what I did for work.”

The RSL Employment Program helped Bart realise why: his job didn’t match his values.

“I thought I was a technical person, and I still enjoy that as a hobby,” he shares. “But I get the most satisfaction out of working

with people, and I didn't really know that about myself until I really engaged with the program."

SUPPORTED TOWARDS SUCCESS

With Bart's career goals now clear, the RSL Employment Program team could focus on finding and preparing him for suitable roles.

"Amy, my Employment Consultant, was great," Bart says.

"She was able to guide me to career opportunities that I wouldn't have looked at before.

"She kept in constant contact, making sure that I was okay, that I had enough assistance, and letting me know about the employer partners they had aligned with. The service provided was really good."

The team also helped Bart to spruce up his resume, write job applications, prepare for interviews and better understand the civilian employer mindset.

"The military is a world unto itself. The skills carry over, but not necessarily how we interact with superiors and all that sort of stuff," he says.

"In 'Civvie Street,' you've got to sell yourself, and that's not something a lot of us are very good at. So, that guidance on interview techniques and how to interact with civilian employers was really beneficial."

REAL WORK REWARDS

With the program's help, Bart landed a role that truly aligns with his values. He's now an

Access Assessor for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which assists eligible people with disabilities to live more independently, access more opportunities and enjoy a higher quality of life.

"I look at the evidence that people provide and see whether they meet the criteria to receive support from the NDIS," he explains.

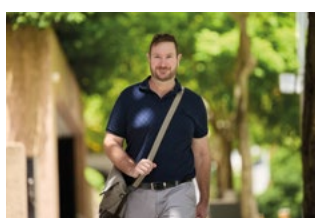
"It's incredibly rewarding to let people know that there is help available and we can provide that for them."

Importantly, it's a secure, stable role that provides Bart with connection and purpose.

"In the technical world, you can spend quite a lot of time in your

BELOW:
RAAF veteran Bart De Vree, left, with RSL Queensland Employment Consultant Amy Bond-Scott.





YouTube



SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO

own space and doing a one-person job," he says.

"This is much more collaborative. It's a very welcoming environment to work in, and it's very person-focused. Everyone I've spoken to wants to do good for people, and that's similar to my time in service. Most people join Defence to serve their country, their community.

"In the NDIS, I don't have to worry about meeting sales targets or turning a profit. I can just focus on each applicant or participant and providing the best service that I can.

"That's the best thing about it – the connection with other people and the satisfaction of contributing in a way that I find meaningful."

"LIFE-CHANGING" GUIDANCE

Bart is immensely grateful for all the support he's received. He recommends the RSL Employment Program to any veteran who's

seeking a new job or career change.

"Get involved. It's such an incredibly helpful, easy service to engage with," he says.

"They've provided me with services that I didn't even realise I needed. It really helped me get started on the right career path and secure a role that I take great satisfaction in.

"To really analyse what your core values are, and then be guided towards finding meaningful work that aligns with your values, it's life-changing." ←

ABOVE:
RAAF veteran Bart De Vree, right, with RSL Queensland Employment Consultant Amy Bond-Scott.



Available nationally, the **RSL Employment Program** is open to ex-serving Defence members and the partners of current and ex-serving Defence members. Register or find out more at rslqld.org/find-help/employment

“The statues are unique and strongly connected to the El Arish community. The small town has had a link to soldiers and horses since it formed in 1921.”

TULLY RSL SUB BRANCH HELPS LOCAL TOWN HONOUR THE AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE

Tully RSL Sub Branch has donated \$10,000 to help fund a rural Queensland town’s memorial to the Australian Light Horse.

Olivia Lawrence

IN Far North Queensland, Tully RSL Sub Branch is doing its part by generously supporting its local military community.

Tully RSL Sub Branch Secretary Karl Adams says the Sub Branch

and RSL Far Northern District are proud of their recent \$10,000 donation to the nearby rural town of El Arish, which allowed the town to establish two cut-out metal statues at their local memorial.

“In 2023 the El Arish Hall Committee contacted the Sub Branch seeking assistance to implement two statues: one depicting an Australian Light Horse, and the other a horse pulling a plough,” Karl says.

“From war horse to plough horse is the idea; it represents the soldiers and horses who served in the Second Boer War and World War I, but also how some servicemen returned home to Australia and became farmers.”

A SPECIAL TIE TO THE MILITARY

The statues are unique and strongly connected to the El Arish community. The small town has had a link to soldiers and horses since it formed in 1921.



El Arish was named after the city of Arish in Egypt, where the Australian Light Horse saw action in December 1916 during World War I. Part of the Australian Imperial Force, the Australian Light Horse was a formation of soldiers who mostly fought dismounted – riding their horses to and from the battlefield – and sometimes fought mounted, like cavalry.

Not only does El Arish have a military-related name; some of the light horsemen moved to the small town and were given parcels of land to farm.

“The Sub Branch and District believes it’s important to support local towns where we can, especially ones with a military background,” Karl explains.

“It’s quite an amazing rural town

because some ancestors from the original settlers still reside there.

“Although El Arish doesn’t have its own Sub Branch, we live close by so we are happy to lend a helping hand when the community needs it. They are always welcome to call on us for assistance.”

A MONUMENT TO PRESERVE THE LEGACY

On 13 November, the official opening of the war horse to plough horse statues took place at the El Arish War Memorial by the Honourable Bob Katter MP.

“The El Arish Memorial project was extensive and done in three parts, which included a memorial and flag posts, coat of arms and then the horse statues,” Karl says.

“We are honoured we had a

part in helping this project come together, stepping in to assist at its final phase.”

According to Karl, attendees and speakers at the statues’ unveiling included family members of the fallen, veterans, Cassowary Coast Regional Council Mayor Teresa Millwood and representatives from RSL Far Northern District Sub Branches.

“This memorial will serve as a sacred place for the town to continue to hold commemorations on significant dates like ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day,” Karl says.

“We are proud to be surrounded by communities like El Arish, who support not only the legacy of our service personnel, but also animals of war.” ←

BELOW:
RSL Queensland members from across Far North Queensland attended the unveiling of the memorial.



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A BEACHSIDE DREAM HOME AND LIFE-CHANGING STORY

WHILE every Dream Home Art Union winner is special, some stories truly stand out. Our Draw 422 winners, Justin* and Mia*, exemplify dedication to improving lives both professionally and personally.

Justin has spent his life helping others, while Mia has cared for countless veterans in aged care. Their work has been deeply fulfilling, but financially, retirement posed challenges. Winning a \$3.5 million beachside apartment at Mermaid Beach has given them the freedom to retire comfortably and continue helping others.

The life-changing prize left them speechless.

"Yeah, it's scary," Justin said. "It changes what you thought your life would look like. I feel like it just gives me a bigger responsibility now.

I want to help where we can."

When Justin first received the call, he was in disbelief.

"Natasha from the prize team called me back after the original call and started going through the next steps. Then I saw my ticket number on the winners' page of the website. That's when it really started to sink in."

Telling his wife was equally surreal.

"I called her, and she was babysitting the grandkids. She didn't believe me at first. When she came home and I showed her the website, I said, 'We need to go check out the prize! We looked at flight details straight away!'"

The stunning apartment, with panoramic ocean views and luxurious furnishings, is more than just a prize – it's a dream come true.

"The view is amazing," Mia said. "And the furniture, the way it's been set out – it's really beautiful."

Their win has also secured their retirement.

"The maths is looking pretty good now," Justin laughed. "We're free to do what we want now!"

Even before their win, Justin and Mia were committed to helping others.

"I've always supported the RSL," Justin said. "I think the men and women who come back from war deserve it. They sacrificed for their country, and I want to help them however I can."

We wish Justin, Mia and their family all the very best as they begin this exciting new chapter. ←

**Names changed for privacy reasons.*



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FOR OUR DEFENCE COMMUNITY

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A message from Georgia.

Recently, we farewelled Emma Whitehead as Chief Executive Officer after three successful years with Mates4Mates. Emma's invaluable contribution to veterans and families throughout her tenure has seen Mates4Mates experience significant growth and impact in the community. Emma will be greatly missed, and in the meantime, I will be Acting CEO.

As we reflect on the first half of the year, it was a challenging start for our communities in both North and South East Queensland, with flooding and cyclones impacting our centres and services. I'm grateful to our teams who remained resilient during these times and managed the priorities of supporting both their own families and our Mates. We hope everyone is safe and keeping well as the rest of the year unfolds.

In this edition of our Mates4Mates magazine, I'm delighted to share our impact from 2024 and how the services provided by our passionate team supported more than 3,600 veterans and family members. It's an absolute privilege to hear Mates' stories about how they've found space to recover and reconnect, and to see the meaningful impact that our work has on the lives of those in the community.

Georgia

Mates4Mates Acting Chief Executive Officer



Thank you from Emma.

It has been an incredible privilege to lead this organisation over the past three years, and I am truly grateful for the passion, dedication and care the team brings to supporting the veteran community every day. Deciding to take the next step in my career and move on from Mates4Mates was a difficult decision but I have no doubt that the organisation will continue to thrive in the years ahead. While I may be moving on, I will always remain a passionate advocate for the incredible work of Mates4Mates.

OUR IMPACT IN 2024

In 2024, more than **35,600 client connections** were provided through our centres in Australia across our mental health and physical rehabilitation services, social connection activities, and Skills for Recovery programs.



For more information about Mates4Mates services, scan the QR code to visit our website.



8,500+ occasions of **physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services** delivered through 1:1 sessions and group classes.



4,900+ occasions of **mental health and wellbeing services** delivered through appointments both in centre and via telehealth.



900+ attendances at **Mates4Mates Skills for Recovery Programs** delivered both in person and online.



21,100+ occasions of **social connection** delivered to support veterans and Defence families with their transition back into the community.



Meet a Mate.

Graham is a Mate living in Hobart who has been regularly accessing Mates4Mates services for four years.

What's your favourite social connection activity?

"I enjoy going along for Hobart's weekly Tasty Tuesday morning tea and getting to see everyone. I also try to go along regularly to any exercise physiology classes that happen as they've helped me to get back on track after my injury."

Why do you enjoy being a Mate?

"After finding the courage to go into the centre for the first time, the staff made it easy to find people like me who had shared experiences.

It's given me a new reason to get out of the house and being able

to go along to activities and make friendships with new Mates is great."

What impact has Mates4Mates had on you?

"I was forced to retire due to military injuries and it was hard to adapt without work. My wife discovered Mates4Mates on Facebook and persuaded me to join, which has been one of the best things I've done.

From finding a community of like-minded people to social work services, Mates4Mates has given me the tools and support to get through the 'grey days', which don't happen as often anymore."

SHAPE recommits its support for the veteran community.

Mates4Mates is excited to announce that we are once again partnering with SHAPE Australia as its charity of choice partner for their Defence business unit.

After the success of the partnership's first year, SHAPE Defence has committed to continue its fundraising efforts for Mates4Mates to support veterans and families to reconnect and recover.

A trusted national delivery partner for Defence, SHAPE fundraised more than \$40,000 for Mates4Mates in 2024. SHAPE Group Manager – Defence and Federal Government, Mitch Flynn said they looked forward to expanding their support for Mates4Mates and the veterans and families it serves.



"We're incredibly proud to continue our partnership with Mates4Mates and build on the impact we've made together."

**– Mitch Flynn, SHAPE Group Manager
Defence and Federal Government**

"Supporting veterans and their families is something our team is deeply passionate about, and we're committed to raising even more funds to help Mates4Mates deliver essential services to those who have served," Mr Flynn said.

Mates4Mates Acting Chief Executive Officer, Georgia Ash also highlighted the importance of this ongoing partnership.

"It's through the generosity of SHAPE and their Defence team that we can continue meeting the ever-increasing need for more services within the veteran community," Ms Ash said.

For more information about SHAPE Defence, scan the QR code to visit their website.



MATES 4 MATES

Here for those impacted by service.

Did you know Mates4Mates offers telehealth services?

We understand that veterans and family members may not be able to make it into a Mates4Mates centre to see one of our clinicians, but that's where telehealth can help support you.

Telehealth appointments are an online way for people to access Mates4Mates clinical services, operating via videoconferencing and telephone calls.

If you haven't accessed telehealth before, you may not understand how it compares to an in-person appointment. Here are some common misconceptions about telehealth services that we've myth-busted. If you're not sure if telehealth is right for you, speak with your doctor or contact Mates4Mates to discuss.



Myth 1: A telehealth appointment cannot offer the same quality of care as face-to-face appointments.

Studies have found that the clinical outcomes from telehealth appointments are equal to those from traditional face-to-face therapies.

Myth 2: I can only choose telehealth appointments if I live rurally.

Telehealth appointments are available to anyone, not just those who live in rural areas.

Myth 3: Telehealth is only a temporary service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most healthcare providers switched to telehealth appointments. However, following a return to 'normal' life, it is here to stay. It is a safe, secure and effective way to reduce barriers to healthcare treatment for everyone.



At Mates4Mates, our psychologists, exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, counsellors and social workers all understand the unique nature of military service.

For more information about how to access support at Mates4Mates and referral eligibility, scan the QR code. To make an appointment over the phone, you can call us anytime from Monday to Friday, between 8:30am and 4:30pm, on 1300 4 MATES (62 837).

Make the call that makes the difference.

Contact Mates4Mates to find out about our services, how you can access support or get involved.

mates4mates.org

1300 4 MATES



Mates4Mates supports current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families, who have been impacted by their service. We are an initiative established by RSL Queensland. If you would like to contribute to our magazine please contact the Mates4Mates Marketing team via marketing@mates4mates.org or call 1300 462 837.



Support and empathy **GUIDE NAVY VETERAN BACK ON THE RIGHT COURSE**

Navy veteran Michael Thomas finds the right path through the support of Wellbeing Advocate Allan Simmons.

Jasmine Halley | *Matilda Dray*



OPENING SPREAD:

Navy veteran Michael Thomas, left, and Wellbeing Advocate Allan Simmons walk through the Brisbane Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre.

BELOW:

Michael and Allan chat with another veteran in the VFWC kitchen.

Joining the Australian Defence Force at 15 years old, Navy veteran Michael

Thomas had an exciting career spanning pirate patrolling, convoying and sailing through typhoons. He even had the honour of escorting Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the South Pacific for the 1982 Commonwealth Games.

"It was exhilarating – I loved being in the Navy," Michael recalls with a smile.

His seven and a half years of service also took him along the east coast of Australia, New Zealand and southeast Asia aboard several ships including HMAS *Vendetta* (II), HMAS *Kimbla* and HMAS *Torrens* (DE 53).

But when the then 23-year-old was discharged in 1983, Michael found it difficult to adjust to civilian life.

"I got out to be with my girlfriend," he says. "I wanted to get married and have children – start a life together.

"But there was no transition out at all. I had to find my own way.

"I then became angry with the world. I'd get drunk, run amok and

get locked up for being disorderly. I had an attitude and wasn't able to stay in the same job for more than two years at a time.

"Eventually, things kept getting worse, so I left. But to this day I've still got a good relationship with my ex and all my children and grandchildren – it just took me a long time."

A JOURNEY OF SUPPORT AND TRUST

In early 2024, Michael was not in a positive place and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) recommended that he seek homelessness support services from RSL Queensland. From the moment he walked through the doors of RSL Queensland's Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Brisbane, things began to look up.

"I walked upstairs to reception, and then Allan came out. I'm so glad he did," Michael recalls.

Allan Simmons is a Wellbeing Practitioner Level 2 at the Centre, who supports veterans and their families through a holistic approach to veteran-centred care and wellbeing.

"My role is to understand how my clients view the world, and why



they may do things, and then address the support available to their specific situation," Allan explains.

"It's more about hearing their story and providing them with information they can access if they want to."

Allan first assisted Michael with emergency financial support and then introduced him to Compensation Advocate Natalie Millward. Once Allan had built that rapport with Michael, it opened the door for Allan and Michael to discuss Michael's mental health and general wellbeing.

Michael says that Allan's support over the last year has been instrumental.

"Allan talks sense, he's compassionate and he understands me. He listens, suggests things, and if I don't take them up straight away, he'll suggest them later and we'll talk about them," he says.

"If I've got a problem, I'll come and talk to him. He'll recognise when I'm stressed and cranky and he won't push."

Allan explains that his role is to stand alongside Michael through his journey – not force any solution or idea onto him.

"I view Michael as the expert in





his life. He's survived it, he's lived his life, he knows what he'll be receptive to and what he won't be. My role is to walk side by side with him and listen, at whatever pace he needs," he says.

When Allan recommended that Michael visit a psychiatrist at a nearby clinic, it took a few visits for Michael to feel comfortable with the process.

"When I first went in there, I didn't know the psychiatrist, didn't trust him, didn't understand him or his questions," Michael recalls. "I just felt out of place."

He went straight back to Allan for guidance.

"I sat with Michael for almost an hour and suggested not giving up on the process but maybe look into it when he feels more comfortable and ready," Allan says.

"I said 'let's work out what went wrong and work out ways to be more prepared next time.' Natalie and I then suggested he write down some questions he had for the psychiatrist so he could understand him more."

After a few attempts, Michael was not only able to successfully receive support from his psychiatrist but also become a shoulder to lean on for others in the clinic.

"He's got a gentle soul that allowed people to just gravitate to him," Allan says. "He would work with and listen to everyone who came up and spoke to him."

"It was good to talk to others there," Michael adds. "It even helped me hearing about other people's problems as it put my problems into perspective."

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Looking back over the past year, Michael says the whole process allowed him to find the right path again.

"It's like I've been at the top of a mountain, and I'm walking down slowly with the help of a medical team, the psychiatrist, Allan and Natalie," he says.

"To know I've got people like Allan and Natalie in my corner to fall back on besides my family is terrific. Sometimes Allan understands me even better than my family.

"But while it's been easier to get through this with the support of a team, you've also got to put in the work yourself to be able to get anything out of it."

Michael advises veterans who might be in a similar situation to reach out to the Centre at their own pace.

"Just walk in the door and have the first conversation – you don't have to do any more than that. Then think about it, write down your questions if you have any and make contact again. Do that as many times as you need," he begins.

"It may be confusing or uncomfortable at first but give yourself the time to understand the information they give or the support they offer. And be honest about your situation – they're there to help.

"As long as you go in there willing to listen and find out what's available, that's all you can do."

Allan adds, "I'm proud of what Michael's achieved and the future he's hopefully going to have. And I'm proud that we can relate part of it back to him walking through the doors of RSL Queensland's Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre Brisbane." ←

ABOVE LEFT: Michael says Allan's compassionate and understanding support has been instrumental.

ABOVE INSET: Michael and Allan chat over a cuppa.



THAT'S THE ANZAC SPIRIT

anzacspirit.com.au



At dawn on 25 April 1915, ANZAC troops landed at Gallipoli, starting Australia and New Zealand's first major action in World War I.

No victory followed. Many thousands lost their lives. But the ANZACs' courage, endurance and mateship set an example that continues to inspire and unite their nations, 110 years later.

This ANZAC Day, RSL Sub Branches across the state hosted more than 500 commemorative events for veterans and the community, including Dawn Services, gunfire breakfasts, mid-morning services, marches and parades.

While the weather impacted a handful of services, it was heartening to see so many members of the community turn up in droves to honour veterans and current serving Defence members.

From coast to country, people of all ages rose early, marched proudly, and honoured those who served our nation. As these photos show, the ANZAC legacy is far from forgotten.

Looking back at 110 years of the ANZAC legend

ANZAC Day has evolved over 110 years since the Gallipoli landings, from solemn marches in 1916 to a revived national tradition.

By Dr Susan E. M. Kellett

THE FIRST ANZAC DAY

In April 1916, the first anniversary of the landing of the ANZAC forces at Gallipoli was marked in Australia and abroad. In London, Australian officials organised a sombre 'celebration', with a march of 2,000 Australian and New Zealand troops to Westminster Abbey, followed by a remembrance service attended by the King, Queen and Australian Prime Minister.

In Australia, communities marked the day in various ways, including church services, speeches, wreath-laying and military parades.



ANZAC Day in Brisbane in 1916.
Photo: Australian War Memorial.

THE EVOLUTION OF ANZAC DAY TRADITIONS

Throughout the 1920s, ANZAC Day continued to evolve. By 1927, it was formally recognised in all states. Some ANZAC Day rituals – such flag-waving, church services, wreath laying and marches – were already established as a familiar part of Australia’s military memorial practices, helping ease the grief of thousands of bereaved families.

Other elements – such as the Dawn Service and two minutes’ silence – evolved as distinctly ANZAC in nature. By the mid-1930s, the traditional structure of ANZAC Day had been established, featuring a Dawn Service, a parade, unit reunions and games of two-up.



A Dawn Service in Redcliffe, Brisbane, in 2017.

ANZAC DAY IN WARTIME AND BEYOND

By the early 1940s, Australia was again at war. While elements of the Defence Force participated, ANZAC Day remained focused on returned veterans. A WWI veteran typically led a parade of returned men and nurses, bands and serving personnel.

By the end of WWII, the appearance of the day had changed. Younger participants joined their older comrades, and for the first time, members of the Royal Australian Air Force and Women’s Auxiliary Services participated in remembrance.



Flag wavers at the Brisbane ANZAC Day march in 2024.

ANZAC DAY UNDER SCRUTINY

From the mid-1960s, changing societal attitudes towards war and the competing agendas of minority groups made ANZAC Day increasingly contentious. Anti-war protestors used 25 April to oppose Australia's involvement in Vietnam, while the Women Against Rape movement regularly disrupted events in Melbourne and Sydney during the 1980s.

A defining moment of this era came in 1982 at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, when returned serviceman and RSL Victoria President Bruce Ruxton confronted members of the Gay Ex-Servicemen's Association as they attempted to lay a wreath. With WWI veterans dwindling, some commentators speculated that ANZAC Day might soon disappear.

A RESURGENCE OF NATIONAL INTEREST

Rather than fading away, 25 April experienced an unexpected revival in the 1990s. A growing public interest in family history and the Commonwealth Government's active support helped renew engagement with the day.

Anzac Cove had long been a popular destination for Australians, but the 75th anniversary of the landing marked a turning point. Bob Hawke became the first Australian Prime Minister to visit Gallipoli, and a telecast of the Dawn Service showed elderly ANZACs and young Australian backpackers united in solemn reflection.

Attendance at Anzac Cove surged, and the 'pilgrimage' to Gallipoli became a significant commemorative tradition.



Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey 2012. Photo: AAP Image.

THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC

In 2015, the ANZAC legend turned 100. Mindful of the popularity of the event, the Turkish Government restricted visitor numbers to preserve Anzac Cove. A ballot was introduced to ensure fair access, with 42,273 Australians applying for one of the 4,000 double passes allocated to Australia. Around the country, record crowds attended local Dawn Services and ANZAC Day parades.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to widespread lockdowns, disrupting ANZAC Day commemorations. It was not the first time a health crisis had postponed the event – over a century earlier, the Spanish Influenza pandemic had led to similar restrictions in Sydney.

Rather than forego the tradition, communities across the nation were encouraged to ‘Light Up the Dawn’, gathering in driveways to honour the occasion in a socially distanced tribute.



A ‘Light Up the Dawn’ service in Brisbane during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A LEGACY THAT ENDURES

This year, as we mark the 110th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing in 2025, it was clear that the ANZAC tradition remains strong. It has weathered many challenges and evolved to reflect the changing times. Yet, at its core, it continues to honour the service and sacrifice of those who have followed in the footsteps of the original ANZACs.



ANZAC Day parade in Brisbane city in 2025. Photo: Defence Images.

ANZAC DAY

In pictures



▲ Children lay a wreath during the Ashgrove Bardon RSL Sub Branch service. Photo credit: Peter Doherty.



▲ Reverend John Mudge MBE welcomed a large crowd to the Atherton ANZAC Day service.



▲ Beachmere RSL Sub Branch Life Member Arnold (Dickie) Bird takes great pride in caring for the local memorial wall. His quiet, dedicated work inspired historian and researcher Karen Wallwork to write a touching poem in his honour, beginning: "There he sits beside the wall, spirit level held with care, hands worn by time, yet steady still, he places each name square." It concludes: "Thank you for what you do, old friend, this wall remembers yet. Each name a life, a debt, a vow – lest we forget."

▶ Cardwell – a resilient community still recovering from the February floods that inundated 79 homes – came together on ANZAC Day to honour past heroes and celebrate life in a lucky country. Attendance rose in 2025, showing the day's deep importance to Australians.



▲ After 31 years of service, Emerald RSL Sub Branch President Noel Mallyon (second from left) is retiring. He is pictured with wife Margaret and sons Ian (left) and Glenn (right) following the Dawn Service.

▼ Members of the Cairns and District Ex-Servicewomen RSL Sub Branch attended a special ANZAC Day service at Emmanuel Uniting Church. They are pictured standing in front of a stained-glass window dedicated to service women.



▲ Edge Hill/Cairns West RSL Sub Branch representatives at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Cairns Cemetery included Secretary John Maschke, committee member Rod Ellis, President Lisa Gray, committee member Rod Hine and Assistant Treasurer Leigh Munro.



▲ Veterans formed up to start the Gladstone march, including, from left, Harry Tattersall, Ed Dahlheimer, David Lang and Ian Hartley. Attendance increased across both services in 2025.

▼ Rain soaked the ANZAC Day service at Greenbank RSL Sub Branch.



▲ Gracemere and District RSL Sub Branch hosted a record crowd of around 2,000 for its Dawn Service and march. Highlights included heartfelt contributions from students, veterans and cultural groups, a moving recital by 7-year-old Adalynn Webb, a tribute to Gallipoli diggers, a recorded Ode by the late Vince Mathers, and a stirring haka after the Last Post.

▼ Veteran John Barbetti attended the Dawn Service at Kuranda Railway Station.



▲ Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch hosted a moving Dawn Service and inspiring main service at Freedom Park, drawing record crowds. Brigadier Les Juckel CSC and Rev. Jeff Jarvis offered reflections, while student Mia Hinsch performed a veteran's version of *Hallelujah*. The program featured contributions from the MC, pipe band and choir, followed by a gunfire breakfast and lunch at the Hervey Bay RSL Club.



▲ A Mount Kilcoy State School student presented veteran Leon Madeley with a thoughtful postcard during Kilcoy RSL Sub Branch's ANZAC Day service. This was part of the Postcards of Honour initiative, led by RSL Queensland.



▲ Kuranda RSL Sub Branch President Craig Kerr spoke at the Dawn Service.

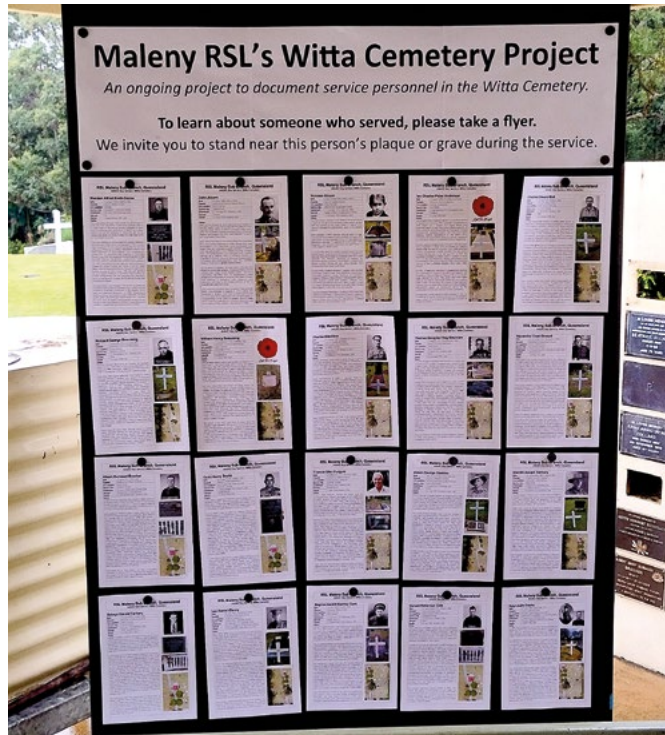


▲ Killarney RSL Sub Branch held its ANZAC Day service under overcast skies. The Sub Branch is preparing to unveil a plaque commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1955 Lincoln Bomber mercy flight crash near Emu Vale.

▼ Laidley RSL Sub Branch Auxiliary President Jan Johnson and President Neville Hayne laid wreaths during the service.



▲ Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch proudly transported veterans in a motorbike and sidecar during the march. Pictured: Driver Frank with Vietnam veteran Ross Thiele. Photo: Sandra McEwan Photography.



◀ Despite heavy rain, Maleny RSL Sub Branch held its ANZAC Day service in Witts Cemetery. Attendees were encouraged to explore a storyboard featuring the histories of more than 140 service personnel documented as part of the RSL Maleny Cemetery Project. Photo: RSL Maleny Story Board.



▲ Mapleton RSL Sub Branch held its Dawn Service in Montville, with strong attendance despite the rain. John Watson performed a song and Roger Loughnan shared his father's WWII story in a stirring address.



▲▼ For nearly three years, Manly-Lota RSL Sub Branch has supported Iona College in restoring a vandalised historic digger statue. Originally part of the Manly War Memorial, the statue was rediscovered in 2013 and restored by Old Boy stonemason Dan Gill. Sub Branch members, many of them alumni, helped secure funding. The restored statue was unveiled at Iona's ANZAC Day service and will soon feature in the new college War Memorial.



▲ 9News' Today Show covered Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch's ANZAC Day, featuring the Dawn Service, gunfire breakfast, march and mid-morning service. President Peter Tsakissiris is pictured being interviewed by presenter Dan Anstey.





▲ Students carrying Australian flags march in Mt Tamborine on ANZAC Day.

▼ A senior student from Miles State High School addressed the service held on 24 April. A Lone Pine tree beside the podium was donated years ago by Miles RSL Sub Branch President Adrian Daveson.



▲ Beenleigh and District RSL Sub Branch member Joe Turra, centre, is pictured at the Mt Tamborine service with his grandsons Louis Schneider, left, and Oliver Schneider, right, both students at The Southport School on the Gold Coast.

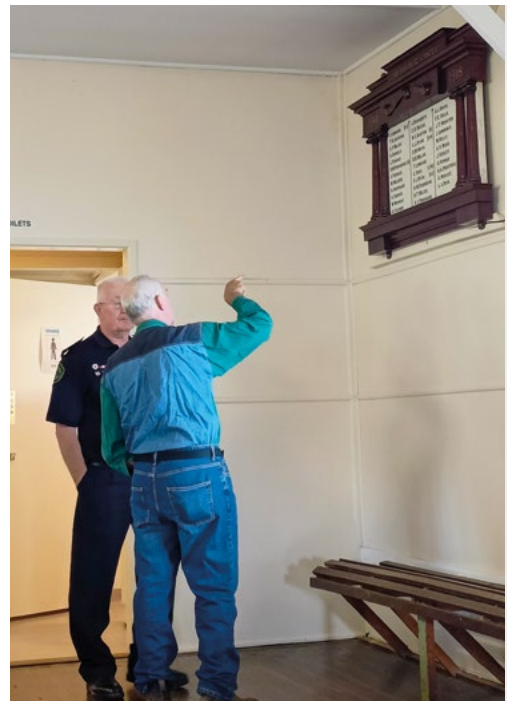


▲ Navy veterans who served on HMAS Sydney (III) reunited at the North Gold Coast ANZAC Day service. Pictured, from left, Nicola Leslie, Melanie Annand, Jarrod Leslie, Kathryn Simeon, Kevin Crandon, Karinda King and Danielle Kellam.

► Despite wet weather, large crowds attended the Runaway Bay Anzac Place Cenotaph. President Bruce Main delivered the welcome, supported by the 221 Sqn Air Force Cadets catafalque party.



▲ Veterans gather for the Mount Perry service.



◀ Community members reflect before the honour board at the Rosedale Chapter ANZAC Day service.



▲ Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch held its ANZAC Day service in Springwood Park. Around 6,000 people braved rain and soaked ground to take part in a successful morning of remembrance.



▲ Around 600 people attended the Woodgate Beach Dawn Service, which began with a piper emerging from the beach. Warrant Officer Class 1 Philip Anderson (Royal Australian Corps of Signals) delivered a heartfelt address. The ceremony also featured wreath-laying and support from the 9 RQR catafalque party.



▲ Pictured at the Rosewood ANZAC Day march, from left, Rosewood RSL Sub Branch President Colin Plenty, Secretary Carmel Luetchford, Ipswich Mayor Teresa Harding and her husband Steve Voll.



▲ Australian Defence Force nurses march down Adelaide Street during the ANZAC Day 2025 parade in Brisbane. Photo: Defence Images.

▼ For the first time, an Auslan interpreter (pictured with Major Rob Mitchell from 1st Regiment, RAA) supported both the Dawn Service and community service of Sunnybank RSL Sub Branch. The Sub Branch plans to provide this service every ANZAC Day going forward to make commemorations more accessible.



▲ Councillor Penny Wolff, left, and Maggie Forrest at the Toowong ANZAC Day service.



▲ Umbrellas in hand, the community gathered to honour veterans at the Toowong RSL Sub Branch ANZAC Day service.



▲ Veterans and the community pay their respects at the Tweed Heads and Coolangatta Dawn Service, although the march and main service were cancelled due to bad weather.



▲ The Toobeah community gathered to mark the first ANZAC Day service at its newly completed war memorial, established by Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch in Toobeah Park in late 2024. The sandstone memorial honours eight veterans from the Toobeah district who served in WWI and WWII.

Special guest speaker Deborah Wheeler – historian, author and Warwick War Widows group co-ordinator – presented the local preschool with a wreath and a copy of her children's book, emphasising the importance of passing on local military history to younger generations. Duncan McIntyre and Ernie Weeks are pictured at the memorial.



▲ Forest Lake RSL Sub Branch held a small indoor service in its chapel, followed by lunch at the clubhouse. Due to bad weather, the parade and morning service were cancelled for the first time in 22 years, and the dusk service was moved indoors. Despite the rain, members and veterans were proudly acknowledged.



▲ Four Chinook helicopters flew over The Strand as part of the ANZAC Day service in Townsville. Photo: Troy Rodgers.



▲ Sunshine Coast and Regional RSL District supported the Sunshine Coast Lightning in their ANZAC Round against the Queensland Firebirds on 26 April. Pictured, from left, Deputy District President Trudie Avery, Air Force Cadets CO Sunshine Coast Barry McGlynn, veteran and member John Ellis, Sunshine Coast Lightning players Courtney Bruce, Leesa Mi Mi and Tara Hinchcliff, District President Skip Antony, District Vice President Wes Davidson and District Vice President Padre David Eden.



◀▲ Students from Vignacourt School in France laid more than 500 decorated crosses in the local cemetery. Created by children from St Columba's School in Brisbane, the crosses honoured a 1918 promise by the local mayor that the children would "never forget." This shared act continues to unite young people from France and Australia.

ANZAC DAY

Postcards of Honour

Students pen heartfelt messages

IN its third year, RSL Queensland's 'Postcards of Honour' initiative invited students across the state to mark ANZAC Day by creating postcards for local veterans. In 2025, more than 24,000 students from 228 schools took part, expressing their gratitude, knowledge or personal connection to the veteran and Defence community.

Sub Branch members visited participating schools to deliver educational presentations, which helped inspire and guide the students' heartfelt messages. The postcards were then distributed to veterans on ANZAC Day.

▶ Postcards created by students in collaboration with Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch.



▶ Veterans Allan Quartermaine, left, and Brian Ferguson from Kawana Waters RSL Sub Branch speak to students at Mountain Creek State School as part of the Postcards of Honour initiative.



▶ Pacific Paradise State School students with Mudjimba RSL Sub Branch member John Ison.



▶ Pindi Pindi State School students proudly show off their creations, thanks to the support of St Helen's RSL Sub Branch.

ANZAC DAY Partnerships

Sharing the ANZAC spirit

WITH the support of generous partners, RSL Queensland once again helped share the spirit of ANZAC Day with communities across the state. Building on the success of previous years, we partnered with some of Queensland's most iconic sporting teams and Australia's largest outdoor signage companies to amplify the message of remembrance and respect.

"The RSL was proud to once again partner with the Outdoor Media Association, the Gold Coast SUNS and the Queensland Reds to help bring the ANZAC spirit to more Australians," RSL Queensland State President Major General Stephen Day DSC AM said.



▲ RSL Queensland once again joined forces with the Gold Coast SUNS to commemorate ANZAC Day. The 2025 ANZAC guernsey, worn in Round 7 against the Sydney Swans at People First Stadium on 27 April, featured the club's new logo, red poppies, rosemary over the heart, and the words 'Lest we Forget'.

SUNS players joined veterans and ADF personnel at Elephant Rock for the launch. Veterans and Currumbin/Palm Beach RSL Sub Branch members Lauren Darcy and Ben Darcy are pictured with SUNS forward Ben King and defender John Noble, Sergeant Matthew Carlson and Sergeant Craig Whitehead. Photo: Chris Hyde.

▼ For the sixth consecutive year, RSL Queensland teamed up with the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) to encourage Australians to commemorate ANZAC Day. This partnership saw RSL's 'That's the ANZAC spirit' campaign displayed across thousands of digital signs in the lead up to and on ANZAC Day.

Since 2020, OMA members have generously donated more than \$30 million in advertising value in support of the RSL's national commemorative campaigns for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.



▲ As an element of a partnership with the Queensland Reds, RSL Queensland hosted a pre-game activation at Suncorp Stadium during the ANZAC Weekend Round. The event featured military vehicles and provided fans with the opportunity to engage with current-serving personnel and take photos. The activation was part of a broader collaboration to honour service and connect the sporting community with the Defence community.

ANZAC Day in the sky: flyovers in Queensland

In addition to more than 500 ANZAC Day services held across Queensland this year, RSL Queensland Sub Branches supported their communities by organising flyovers, adding another powerful element to the day's commemorations.

Olivia Lawrence

“Warbirds, such as Spitfires and P51 Mustangs, have an iconic and impactful roar from their Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. It’s a distinctive and powerful noise, making it very difficult for people along the flightpath to miss them as they pass overhead.”

WARBIRDS OVER THE GOLD COAST

Currumbin/Palm Beach RSL Sub Branch has helped organise a flyover (also known as a flypast) for its local Dawn Service for several years. Since 2014, and at the request of Ron Workman OAM, Sub Branch Secretary and Board member Roger Collins works with various owner-operators from Lismore, Ballina, Archerfield, Caboolture and Coolangatta regions to help facilitate the flyovers, which usually travel between Brisbane and Tweed Heads.

“The routes, planes and pilots change year-to-year depending on weather and availability, but it’s been great to have that variety,” Roger says.

“We’ve had different vintage military aircrafts over the years, such as a Spitfire or a P51 Mustang.

“Warbirds, such as Spitfires and P51 Mustangs, have an iconic and impactful roar from their Rolls-Royce Merlin engines,” Roger says.

“It’s a distinctive and powerful noise, making it very difficult for people along the flightpath to miss them as they pass overhead.”

Unfortunately bad weather meant the flight plans for 2025 could not go ahead. However, Roger expresses his gratitude to the civil and military aviation personnel who make the flyovers possible and is always pleased to receive positive feedback from the community.

“The inclusion of military aircrafts flying over Currumbin and South East Queensland is a wonderful addition to our service and a great reminder to those who have served and continue to serve,” Roger says.

THE ‘YAK ATTACK’ IN BUNDABERG

Further north, Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch helped schedule a flyover for the community.

According to veteran and Bundaberg RSL Sub Branch member Max Francis, the flyover (organised with support from

Bundaberg Regional Council) was called the ‘Yak Attack’. It took place during the morning civic service at 8:30am, which was followed by the community’s ANZAC Day parade.

“For the first time, Bundaberg local and former RAAF helicopter pilot Pete Marris, who is part of the Queensland Warbirds and Vintage Aircraft Association, flew over in a Yak-52 aircraft,” Max explains.

“In the past we’ve had planes come from Brisbane or the Sunshine Coast, but this year



we were excited to have a local veteran and pilot conduct the flyover.

"The Sub Branch has prioritised facilitating flypasts for many years now because we find it adds another dimension to the commemoration, and it's enjoyed by the community."

Pete says the flyover was a rewarding experience, especially given his military connection and being born and raised in Bundaberg.

Unfortunately weather impacted

their flight plans, but thankfully conditions cleared by 8am, allowing him to do several flypasts.

"I aimed to do the flyover at 200 feet above ground level, provided it was deemed safe to do so – taking into account crowds and built-up areas," Pete explains.

"The Yak-52s have a fascinating history. They were used extensively across the Soviet Bloc and other Allied nations for basic flight training, aerobatics and even light tactical exercises.

"The aircraft became popular

in the West after the Cold War ended and many were imported to Australia and other countries in the 1990s. Today, it's a favourite among civilian warbird and aerobatic enthusiasts like me."

The types of aircraft are often a surprise, but in previous years, the community has been treated to magnificent planes, including the powerful Boeing C-17 Globemaster III rumbling across the sky.

"To see the comparison between the older and newer aircraft is really quite fascinating," Max says. ←

ABOVE: Warbirds flew over Queensland on ANZAC Day, adding another powerful element to commemorations.

United through sport: How RSL Sub Branches commemorate ANZAC Day

Every ANZAC Day, sport plays a special part in connecting RSL Sub Branches with local communities across Queensland.

Jasmine Halley



ANZAC Day is a time to come together in recognition of those who have served and continue to serve our nation. While this commonly means attending Dawn Services or marches, many RSL Sub Branches also get involved with local community sporting events.

BOWLING WITH THE COMMUNITY

A few days before ANZAC Day each year, Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch in Brisbane supports the neighbouring Jindalee Bowls Club competition.

The local competition sees community members, social members of the bowls club and members of the Sub Branch come together to battle it out for the perpetual trophy that honours ANZAC Day.

The competition officially started in 2000 with a few social members of the bowls club – most of whom were also Sub Branch members. Twenty-five years on, Centenary

Suburbs RSL Sub Branch President and Air Force veteran Georges Lefevre says the competition has grown dramatically.

“Every year the event gets bigger with more of our Sub Branch members joining in, as well as community members,” Georges says.

“There are now 35 members of our Sub Branch who are also members of the bowls club that participate in the event each year.

“It’s a great opportunity for our Sub Branch to connect with the community, and for the community to find out more about what we do and join our Sub Branch.”

Every year, the Sub Branch donates funds to support the event and presents the perpetual trophy.

“About seven years ago, we introduced an official ANZAC Day trophy that we present to the winner at the end of the competition. When we present it, we also give a speech about ANZAC Day and how we must



“Our Sub Branch and the Wests know that it’s important to continue this legacy of camaraderie between us to support the community and share the significance of ANZAC Day.”

continue to work together as local clubs to uplift the community,” Georges says.

“It’s become a highlight event on our calendar and a great opportunity to raise awareness for the community to commemorate ANZAC Day.

“Our members also get a lot out of this event because of the social interaction with the broader community; we’re big on minimising social isolation among our members.”

RUGBY, RECOGNITION AND RESPECT

With the support of Toowong RSL Sub Branch, three teams in the Western Districts Rugby Football Club compete at Toowong Memorial Park against other teams in the league after the Sub Branch’s annual ANZAC Day service.

Both the Sub Branch and the rugby union club have deep-seated history within the community, but their strong affiliation began a few years ago.

Each ANZAC Day, the Sub Branch conducts a morning service followed by a gunfire breakfast for the community before the matches begin. And before the main match, a member from the Sub Branch recites the Ode, and speaks about its meaning and the importance of ANZAC Day.

Toowong RSL Sub Branch Treasurer and Army veteran Vince Atley says it’s wonderful that the players are always eager to be involved in the ANZAC Day matches.

ABOVE:
Rugby matches have become an ANZAC Day tradition for many RSL Sub Branches. Photo: Queensland Premier Rugby.

OPPOSITE PAGE:
Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch puts on a bowls competition every ANZAC Day.

BELOW:
With the support of Toowong RSL Sub Branch, three teams in the Western Districts Rugby Football Club compete at Toowong Memorial Park against other teams in the league after the Sub Branch's annual ANZAC Day service. Photo: Wests Bulldogs Rugby.

"It's great that the players are so passionate about the day. They always want to be involved because they know ANZAC Day is important, not only to us but the community more broadly," he says.

"Other teams in the league always want to play against Wests on ANZAC Day, too. It's a big deal and an honour to play on the national day. People know that the game is important, and the community really gets around it."

The final game of the day between the senior teams is televised internationally on Stan and Channel 93, and thousands of people watch the matches in person.

"Around 5,000 people attend our ANZAC Day service in the morning and a couple thousand people stay to watch the games afterwards as well," Vince says.

"The RSL has always been a quiet achiever about the work that we do, but by engaging in community events like this, it lets the public know we're here for them, and for the veterans."





LEFT:
The Wests Tigers 2025 ANZAC Day match jersey, designed by Marian RSL Sub Branch.

“There’s a great community atmosphere throughout the whole day and it’s exciting that the game now gets to be televised for others around the world to see.

“Our Sub Branch and the Wests know that it’s important to continue this legacy of camaraderie between us to support the community and share the significance of ANZAC Day.”

COMBINING FORCES FOR MATESHIP

Just outside Mackay, Marian RSL Sub Branch and Walkerston-Pleystowe RSL Sub Branch have been supporting the ANZAC Day match for local rugby league club, the West Tigers, in recent years.

In addition to conducting a small service before the match begins, the Sub Branches have introduced a medallion that is presented to the best and fairest West Tigers player of the match. The medallion honours a new veteran each year, and the player who receives the

medallion is selected by a few members of the Sub Branches.

Another initiative of Marian RSL Sub Branch is the designing of the West Tigers’ ANZAC Day match jerseys. Through the support of sponsors, the Sub Branch creates a new design each year for the players to wear on the day and officially presents the jerseys to them in the moments before the players walk out on the field.

RSL Central Queensland District President John Edwards says the match has become an exciting event for the community.

“It’s truly a great day. The public gets behind it, as do a couple of other community clubs and organisations,” he says. “We usually get around 2,000 people come to support and spectate.”

The two Sub Branches raise funds for their Sub Branches through gold coin donations, and split the proceeds between themselves at the end of the day. While the event is a great

fundraising opportunity, John says it’s important for both Sub Branches to be involved in community events.

“It’s important to participate in these sporting events because it shows the community that we’re here, we’re here to support veterans and their families in our communities,” he explains.

“The RSL has always been a quiet achiever about the work that we do, but by engaging in community events like this, it lets the public know we’re here for them, and for the veterans. And more than that; it lets them know that veterans are here for them, too.

“Supporting this match is our way of bringing the community together through sport.”

UNITED THROUGH SPORT

All four Sub Branches are passionate about getting involved with their local sporting clubs around ANZAC Day as a way to engage with their community.

“It’s important for us as a Sub Branch to be involved in the community, whether that be for these fun sporting events or for more serious events such as natural disasters. We must show that we’re here for our community and work together with other local organisations,” Georges says.

“Sport brings people together, and many veterans tend to have a strong connection to sport, so why wouldn’t we get involved?” Vince adds.

“Engaging in sporting clubs is a great way for us to feel a part of something again after we finish our service. And a lot of veterans I know also have a strong desire to continue giving back to the community – whether that be playing for the local teams or being involved with the sporting club in some other way. Being involved in a community is ingrained in us.”

“Engaging in sporting clubs is a great way for us to feel a part of something again after we finish our service. And a lot of veterans I know also have a strong desire to continue giving back to the community – whether that be playing for the local teams or being involved with the sporting club in some other way. Being involved in a community is ingrained in us.”

Community built on mateship, advocacy and motorcycles

ANZAC Day is about commemoration and embracing the ANZAC spirit. In some cases, this spirit is honoured through the camaraderie between local RSL Sub Branches and military motorcycle clubs.

Jasmine Halley



him also being the Advocate and Secretary of the MBMMC.

"I began as an advocate for them, supporting veterans with their compensation claims, as well as holding the position of President and Advocate at Mary Valley RSL Sub Branch at the time. As I wore two hats, I opened up our Sub Branch for the MBMMC to host its monthly meetings before they moved into their centre in Gympie," Rex says.

"Currently, our brotherhood club has about 25 members made up of ex-military members and a squad of supporters who we refer to as our 'Sierra Squad'. They're our partners or friends who haven't served but are eager to support us and the work we do for veterans.

"I like to describe the motorcycle club as an RSL on wheels."

Further north, Gordonvale RSL Sub Branch Treasurer Peta Ison says her Sub Branch is also closely linked with the local MBMMC brotherhood, which has 22 members.

ABOVE: Mary Valley RSL Sub Branch has been working with the local Cooloola Sunshine Coast Military Brotherhood Motorcycle Club since its inception in 2014.

RSL ON WHEELS

Like other ex-service organisations (ESOs), RSL Sub Branches and Military Brotherhood Motorcycle Clubs (MBMMC) share the same interest in supporting the wellbeing of veterans. Across Queensland, many RSL Sub Branches – including Mary Valley

RSL Sub Branch – work closely with their local MBMMC.

Mary Valley RSL Sub Branch President Rex Brenneke says his Sub Branch and the local Cooloola Sunshine Coast MBMMC have been working together since the motorcycle club's inception more than a decade ago in 2014, with



LEFT: Veteran and Military Brotherhood motorcycle club life member Stephen 'Moose' Ollier pays his respects at a commemorative service. Stephen is Sub Branch President of the Cooloola Sunshine Coast MBMMC and State President of the Queensland group.

"I'm also the Secretary of the MBMMC brotherhood in Cairns and a few of our executives are on the board of the RSL Sub Branch too," she says. "So, there's a strong link between the two groups, and both are incredibly supportive of each other."

MATESHIP AND MOTORCYCLES

Rex says the brotherhood gives ex-serving members that same level of camaraderie and satisfaction that they had in the military.

"There are many veterans who enjoy riding motorbikes, but it's more than that; it's about the camaraderie," he explains.

"We miss our military camaraderie when we get out, so being around that sense of community is really important.

"The brotherhood also helps combat social isolation and gives us some sense of satisfaction."

"Brotherhood clubs also have a welfare ethos about them, much like the RSL Sub Branches," Peta adds.

"We work as a group and we look after our members and our members' families and the veteran community as a whole too."

COMMEMORATING ANZAC DAY

Every ANZAC Day, both brotherhoods support and take part in their respective RSL Sub Branch's services, as well as

participate in their own traditions.

"Each year, we ride down to camp at Kandanga before the Dawn Service," Rex says.

"We arrive earlier, help set up and pack down everything for the service with the Sub Branch, and just hang out there for a couple of days camping. It's great to be able to talk to veterans or community members that attend the service and take them on rides if they're keen."

Peta says her brotherhood has an annual tradition for ANZAC Day as well.

"We usually have a contingent of our brotherhood veteran members join in on the march and the Dawn Service," she says.

"We also have a tradition to ride up to the Afghanistan Avenue of Honour in Yungaburra on the Saturday before or after ANZAC Day. We do this ride for other commemorations including Vietnam Veterans' Day and Remembrance Day as well.

"It's important for us to commemorate ANZAC Day. If it wasn't for the sacrifice of the ANZACs, we wouldn't be here. We wouldn't have the freedom to ride our bikes; we wouldn't have the freedom to celebrate."

BOLSTERING THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In addition to coming together for commemorations, the

brotherhoods host regular meetings and frequent rides with their members.

"We have a Veterans' Services Centre in Gympie that's open every Wednesday for members or walk-ins to come by, and we host our club's general meeting once a month," Rex says.

"On top of that, we'll also host barbecues, recreational rides or hospital visits for our members.

"We also do a big round-up ride with all the other Queensland branches – similar to an annual general meeting – biennially. They're a great opportunity to meet more members of the other brotherhoods around the state," he says.

In addition to monthly club meetings, Peta's brotherhood also aims to participate in any fundraising rides around the Cairns region.

"We usually participate in a few fundraising rides throughout the year with a couple of other motorcycle clubs in the area, but last year we also started an annual ride fundraising for ex-service organisation Legacy," she says.

Rex's brotherhood participates in many fundraising initiatives throughout the year including sausage sizzles, toy runs, community events and, most notably, the Gympie Music Muster, where they have now become permanent charity partners.

While the fundraising activities greatly benefit the ESO community, Rex says their biggest priority is getting their veteran members back on their feet.

"It's all about creating opportunities for the veterans to get out of the house and into the world again. While we support ESOs in the community through fundraising, we're big on helping the individual through welfare, camaraderie and advocacy – which is at the heart of all that we do." ←

"Each year, we ride down to camp at Kandanga before the Dawn Service. We arrive earlier, help set up and pack down everything for the service with the Sub Branch, and just hang out there for a couple of days camping."

ANZAC DAY

Stories

Premier's Anzac Prize recipient Charlie Mudge shakes hands with RSL Queensland State President Major Stephen Day DSC AM prior to the European pilgrimage.



The annual Premier's Anzac Prize is open to Queensland high school students (in years 8 to 11) and teachers. For more details, visit rslqld.org/premiers-anzac-prize



ANZAC pilgrimage “a dream come true”

Retracing ANZAC history through Europe was a “dream come true” for 2025 Premier’s Anzac Prize recipient Charlie Mudge.

Belinda Crossman

European tour

AN Army cadet with proud family ties to service, Charlie has always been interested in war history. And in April, he got to journey through it on a very special pilgrimage.

The 15-year-old is one of eight student recipients of the 2025 Premier's Anzac Prize, a Queensland Department of Education initiative proudly presented in partnership with RSL Queensland.

The prize is a life-changing opportunity to connect with the ANZAC legacy – through learning, fundraising, and commemorating the ANZACs where they fought.

Here's what we learnt about Charlie, his connection to ANZAC history, and his recent trip to the Western Front.

HOW DID IT FEEL TO WIN THE 2025 PREMIER'S ANZAC PRIZE?

Being chosen to represent Queensland was a dream come true. As a boy with autism, it shows I can do anything, and I hope it will help other students like me.

WHAT MADE YOU APPLY?

I have a strong interest in the World Wars and how our soldiers died for us. The Premier's Anzac Prize was an opportunity to understand more about the wars and keep the ANZAC spirit alive.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY'S MILITARY CONNECTION.

My maternal great-great-grandfather George Fay was a Captain of the 8th Light Horse Regiment in World War I (WWI). He died in a battle in El Burj, Palestine.

His son served in the Royal Australian Air Force in WWII. He returned home and first met his son – my grandfather – when his son was three years old.



ABOVE: Students outside the Houses of Parliament in London during the Premier's Anzac Prize trip in April 2025.



LEFT: Students visit the In Flanders Fields Museum in Belgium, which is dedicated to the study and remembrance of the First World War.



BELOW: Charlie reflects quietly under a tree during a visit to Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood.



Applications now open for 2026

The annual Premier's Anzac Prize is open to Queensland high school students (in years 8 to 11) and teachers.

Applications for the 2026 prize are open:

- for students until 5pm on **22 July 2025**
- for teachers until 5pm on **4 July 2025**.

Learn more at:

rslqld.org/premiers-anzac-prize

ABOVE: Premier's Anzac Prize recipients celebrate at the welcome home event on 29 April.

IN A FEW WORDS, DESCRIBE YOUR VISIT TO LONDON AND THE WESTERN FRONT.

The experience was something I'll never forget. To stand in the places where history was made was a great honour.

WHICH SOLDIERS DID YOU CHOOSE TO RESEARCH AND COMMEMORATE AS PART OF THE PRIZE?

My great-great-grandfather George, who wasn't meant to be fighting on the day he died. He just took the place of a mate who was

sick. I paid tribute to him at Menin Gate, because he was buried in Palestine.

I also commemorated a soldier named Walter Henry Lergessner, who died in Belgium. It was nice to be able to honour a Queenslanders at his gravesite, so far from his home.

HOW DO YOU NORMALLY COMMEMORATE ANZAC DAY? HOW DID IT FEEL TO COMMEMORATE AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MEMORIAL IN VILLERS-BRETONNEUX?

I'm a cadet, so I normally march on ANZAC Day. Commemorating this year at Villers-Bretonneux was emotional and beautiful as the sun rose over the monument. I felt so lucky to commemorate the ANZACs in the place where they fought.

HOW HAS THE TRIP IMPACTED YOU?

Before the tour, I didn't fully

understand what the men and women went through during war. Some of what I saw and what they experienced made me feel sick.

It got freezing at night during our trip, but all I could think of was the 1,000-plus soldiers in wet, muddy trenches. That hit me deeply.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHERS CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR THE PRIZE?

I would say throw yourself at the challenge; don't put it off. Even if you're not a historian, it's important for our generation to reflect on how we got here and keep the ANZAC spirit alive.

The friends I made through this experience have become like family. We all had different reasons for being there, and what we experienced together will leave a lasting impact on everyone.

I would like to thank the Queensland Government and RSL Queensland for this incredible opportunity. ←

CURRENTLY OPEN:

Veteran mental health surveys and workshops

CLOSING LATE JUNE 2025

GIFT CARDS
AVAILABLE
FOR
PARTICIPANTS*

Help us better support the lives of current Defence members, veterans, and their families via research that can assist improving transition to civilian life.

*Eligible participants can claim a gift card after completion of a research survey or workshop. Conditions apply.

Families and the military-civilian transition

SURVEY:

Help us understand the experiences and needs of families transitioning from military to civilian life

DDVA HREC Protocol 562-23

If you are:

- a veteran who has transitioned within the last 10 years
- family of a current Defence member who is transitioning or a veteran (who has transitioned in the last 10 years), including:
 - parents
 - partners (including ex-partners for workshops only)
 - adolescents (12-18 years)
- a professional who works with military and/or veteran families (workshops only)

Please complete the 15-30 minute survey here:



WORKSHOP:

Help us design practical resources for families transitioning from military to civilian life

DDVA HREC Protocol 582-24

Please register to attend an online or in-person 2-hour workshop here:



Spill-over effects of informal care in veteran families

SURVEY:

Help us understand the costs, and health and wellbeing impacts of informal care in veteran families

DDVA HREC Protocol 600-24

If you are:

- an adult who has been in a caregiver role to an ill or injured ADF family member for more than two weeks in the past six months, OR
- aged 12-18 years and from a family with such a caregiver

Please complete the 10-30 minute survey here:



01

BLACKBUTT REMEMBERS VICTORY IN EUROPE

On 8 May – the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe – Blackbutt RSL Sub Branch members paused to honour the immense sacrifices made by Australia’s service men and women.

Among those immortalised on the Sub Branch’s WWII honour board (pictured) is local RAAF veteran Gordon Leslie Sim. WO Sim displayed exceptional bravery and expertise, flying numerous missions against the enemy. On one occasion, he successfully completed a mission despite the loss of one engine and a fault with another. During an attack over Oberhausen in the Ruhr Valley, his aircraft sustained severe damage from anti-aircraft fire. Despite his captain being seriously wounded and temporarily blinded, WO Sim’s actions ensured the mission’s success and the crew’s survival.

For his skill and courage, WO Sim received the Distinguished Flying Cross alongside the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-45, Australian Service Medal 1939-45, and the Returned from Active Service Badge.

02

MEMORIAL PLAQUE UNVEILED AT MANLY BOWLS CLUB

A long-awaited memorial plaque was unveiled at Manly Bowls Club on Friday 11 April, recognising the home of the Wynnum Manly War Veterans bowling group. The group, made up of members from Redlands, Wynnum, and Manly-Lota RSL Sub Branches, has worked to ensure this tribute became a reality. Around 30 invited guests attended, including dignitaries and RSL Queensland representatives. WWII Navy veteran Nick Girdis

(95) laid a special wreath in honour of the upcoming 80th anniversary of VP Day on 15 August, ensuring the sacrifices of past generations continue to be remembered.

Pictured at the event, from left, War Veterans President John Willey, Manly-Lota RSL Sub Branch President Harry Pregnell, Member for Lytton Joan Pease, Wynnum RSL Sub Branch President Reg O’Malley, Wynnum Manly Ward Councillor Alex Givney, Commonwealth War Graves Commission Colin Sutcliffe OAM, Rev. Canon Alexander (Sandy) Marshall OAM RFD (Lieutenant Colonel, Rtd), Redlands RSL Sub Branch President Rob Wilson, Redlands RSL Sub Branch member John Buttler, War Veterans Patron Fred Petersen, Selna Park (representing Member for Bonner Ross Vasta) and, front, Hellenic RSL Sub Branch member and former WWII RAN Sub Lieutenant Nick Girdis, who laid a special wreath in recognition of the end of WWII.

03

HMAS MELBOURNE MEMENTOS RING BELL FOR NAVY VETERAN

On 5 March, RAN veteran George Hunt enjoyed a memorable welfare visit from several fellow members of Crows Nest RSL Sub Branch.

Sub Branch Welfare Officer Vanetta Clunie’s mission was to make the visit special by bringing George some former ‘pussers’ and reminders of his service. These items – a HMAS *Melbourne* Silver Jubilee souvenir book, Silver Jubilee compendium and commemorative miniature ship’s bell forged from metals salvaged from *Melbourne* herself – were kindly donated to the Sub Branch by the daughter of the late Ralph ‘Spooks’ Spooner, another RAN veteran who served aboard *Melbourne*.



04



SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO



07

George was “visibly chuffed” to ring the bell, flip through the book and admire the compendium. Clearly lifted, he spent the next 45 minutes chatting animatedly about his life on *Melbourne*.

Pictured (left to right) are Quilts of Valour rep Laticia Hollman, Sub Branch President Greg Watt, George, RAN veteran Joe McDonald, and Vanetta. They were joined by RAN veteran Brian Douthwaite, Crows Post editor Wendy Hughes and Sub Branch Secretary Pete Polkinghorne.

by North Queensland District Garry Player on 24 January.

06 GOONDIWINDI MEMBERS ACKNOWLEDGED

During Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch’s February meeting, members Tony Stepney, left, and Russell Billsborough, centre, received 30 Year Membership Certificates from President Bill Brasington. The certificates are presented by RSL Australia to recognise the service of longstanding members.

07 SALUTING THEIR OVERSEAS SERVICE

In January, Agnes Water/1770 RSL Sub Branch members were presented with Saluting Their Service certificates of appreciation acknowledging their overseas service. The certificates were presented by Federal Government representatives. Pictured at the presentation were (back from left) Stuart Willson, Jim Milner, Dave Weeden, Gary Prior, Tom Berkley, Bob Hickson, Dennis Window and John Turner, and (front row from left) Brodie (presenter), Sue McKie, Steven Dias, John Leggatt and Nicole (presenter). For information about how to apply for a certificate, visit dva.gov.au

04 WWII VETERAN INTERVIEWED BY QUEENSLAND PREMIER

On 8 April, World War II veteran and fighter pilot Roger North sat down with Queensland Premier David Crisafulli ahead of the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. The 103-year-old Coorparoo RSL Sub Branch Life Member discussed his service and experience during the war, and the moment he heard the news that war was over in Europe.

05 JOHN EYLES RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD

Bowen RSL Sub Branch member John Eyles was a proud recipient of the RSL Australia Day award, presented

05



06



01

JIM GREBERT'S 102ND BIRTHDAY

Sandgate Sub Branch member Jim Grebert turned 102 years young on 12 February, celebrating the occasion with Sub Branch Secretary Andrew Law (left) and Sub Branch President John Anderson (right).

Jim served during WWII with the 58th/59th Infantry Battalion Australian Imperial Forces in New Guinea and Bougainville. In 2023, he was flown to Canberra to accept his 100th Year Certificate from RSL Australia.

02

HONOURING 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

Kilcoy RSL Sub Branch representatives John Robinson and May Wallace recently visited Aloaka Nursing Home to present Iris Kuhn with a 60-year service certificate. Iris dedicated decades to the Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary, serving as President for six years and Treasurer for 13. Her unwavering support has left a lasting impact on veterans and the community. Kilcoy RSL Sub Branch thanked Iris for her remarkable contribution and commitment over the years.

03

HONOURING LOYAL COMPANIONS

Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch marked National Day for War Animals on 24 February with a special address by Corporal J Nicholas and his military working dog, Neville. Based at Gallipoli Barracks, CPL Nicholas spoke about the intensive training he and Neville have undergone together – forging a strong and unbreakable bond. Following the address, CPL Nicholas and Neville, left, were joined by escort Private Helin, right, to lay purple poppies

in tribute to the animals who have served our nation. Photo: Sandra McEwan Photography.

04

HERVEY BAY COMMEMORATES NATIONAL DAY FOR WAR ANIMALS

The fourth National Day for War Animals commemoration service in Hervey Bay was held at Freedom Park on 24 February. Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch President Brian Tidyman spoke about the importance of animals in past war efforts and Rev. Chaplain Jeff Jarvis recited a moving poem dedicated to animals of war.

Brian thanked the 5th Light Horse Hervey Bay and Gympie Troops, Stable Mind Equine Assisted Therapy team and the 9th Battalion Ceremonial Guard for their participation in the service.

Member for Hervey Bay David Lee and Fraser Coast Regional Councillor Denis Chapman laid purple poppy wreaths, as did several local ex-service organisations, during the Lament by lone piper Duncan Birt from the Hervey Bay RSL Pipe Band. Service attendees enjoyed seeing the six horses, two dogs, goat and donkey, which were decked out in purple garlands. Pictured are the WBB QMI 5LHR Hervey Bay Troop and the Gympie Troop.

05

SPRINGWOOD TRI SERVICES REMEMBERS HMAS VOYAGER II

10 February marked 61 years since the sinking of HMAS Voyager II – a tragedy that claimed the lives of 82 men.

Four members from Springwood Tri Services RSL Sub Branch attended the full Naval Service held at St Mary's Anglican Church in Kangaroo Point, Brisbane, and laid a wreath in remembrance.



06

RSL MEMBER NOMINATED FOR ROSEWOOD CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Rosewood RSL Sub Branch member Bernie Kington has been nominated for the Rosewood Citizen of the Year Award. The longest serving member of the Sub Branch, Bernie was nominated for his role in preserving the military and local history of Rosewood. Bernie is an avid collector of military medals, badges and uniforms and has been a passionate, hard-working and loyal member of the Sub Branch for more than 38 years.



07

PITTSWORTH RSL SUB BRANCH RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Pittsworth RSL Sub Branch



04



07



05



08



06

was honoured to receive the 2025 Australia Day Community Group Award at a ceremony in the Pittsworth Town Hall on 26 January.

Pittsworth Sub Branch was a dual winner alongside Australian Army Cadet Unit 19ACU Pittsworth, which works closely with the Sub Branch on ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and Vietnam Veterans' Day. Sub Branch Vice President/Secretary Mike Vogler received the prestigious award on behalf of his fellow members.

Pictured from left are Pittsworth RSL Sub Branch Treasurer Darryl Walker, 19ACU Pittsworth CUO Melanie Greenwood, Sub Branch President Allan Petersen, and Sub Branch

Vice President/Secretary Mike Vogler.

08
FORMER WWII COMMANDO TURNS 102

Former WWII Commando Keith Buck celebrated a momentous occasion in February – his 102nd birthday. A long-time Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch member, Keith is described as “a complete memory bank on his WWII actions” in New Guinea, Morotai, and the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. He still lives by himself and is supported by his two sons, both ex-servicemen. Keith is pictured (right) sharing a story on his birthday with his son Ray.

01

WAR DISPLAY FINDS A NEW HOME

Members of Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch and Goondiwindi and District Historical Society (pictured) have revitalised the war display at Goondiwindi Customs House Museum, relocating it to the renovated Burke Cottage. Originally established by the War Museum Committee, the display features WWI and WWII memorabilia, now expanded with private collections. With council support, Sub Branch members have helped prepare the space and will continue working with the Historical Society to preserve this important history.

02

ANNIVERSARY OF RAAF ROLE AT THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR

2025 marks 50 years since the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) played a key role in the final days of the Vietnam War. On ANZAC Day 1975, four RAAF Airfield Defence Guards (ADGs) securing the last RAAF aircraft operations were airlifted from Saigon by a 37SQN C130 Hercules, ending Australia's military involvement.

RAAF Airfield Defence dates back to 1929, with ADGs serving in WWII, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Their role evolved through later decades, with deployments to Cambodia, East Timor, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Today, RAAF Security Force Squadrons continue this legacy. The photo shows one of three sections of the Ground Defence Flight serving as part of No2 Squadron RAAF at Phan Rang Air Base during the Vietnam War. A commemorative service will be held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra at 8:30am on 23 July 2025. Learn more at 37sqnassoc.org/blog

03

RETIRED MILITARY DOGS RECEIVE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

On National Day for War Animals (24 February), two canine heroes were honoured with a new award for distinguished service. In a ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, retired combat assault dog Manic (front right) was presented with the inaugural (2024) Australian Animal Distinguished Service Award. Fellow combat assault dog Aslan (front left) was presented with the 2025 award.

Both Manic and Aslan served for six years with the 2nd Commando Regiment, Special Operations Command Australia. Manic deployed to the Middle East, and Aslan to the United States. Manic now serves as an ambassador for military working dogs, while cancer survivor Aslan helps raise awareness of canine health.

The Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) established the award to acknowledge the outstanding actions or service of individual Australian animals to the community.

04

LOST WWII BOMBER DISCOVERED OFF GREEK ISLAND

The wreck of an RAAF Baltimore bomber aircraft, which was lost during an operational mission during WWII, has been discovered off the island of Antikythera in Greece. Operated by No 454 Squadron, Baltimore FW282 was returning from a mission over the Aegean Sea on 3 December 1943 when it was intercepted by German fighter aircraft, sustaining heavy damage.

The pilot – Flight Lieutenant William Alroy Hugh Horsley (RAAF) – survived and





04



04



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was captured, but his three crewmates were never found.

The wreck's discovery ends 82 years of uncertainty regarding the final resting place of those who went missing with the aircraft: Flight Lieutenant Leslie Norman Row (Royal Air Force Flight Reserve), Pilot Officer Colin William Walker (RAAF), and Warrant Officer John Gartside (Royal New Zealand Air Force). Image credit: AegeanTec (via Department of Defence).

of the United States 6th Army during WWII. These facilities were once part of the US Navy's presence in Brisbane. On 9 October 2024, the club held a special 75th anniversary function attended by RSL South Eastern District Secretary Julia Taunton-Burnet and other RSL representatives.

Club President Charles Edwards (far left) is pictured with members of the New Farm and Districts Historical Association: Gerard Benjamin, Ross and Desley Garnett, Denise Buckby, and Mary and Ron Altman.



06

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VETERAN-ESTABLISHED BOWLS CLUB CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

A Brisbane bowls club with historic links to WWII has celebrated its 75th anniversary. The Queensland Branch of the Returned Limbless Sailors and Soldiers Association (RLSSA) established a bowling green at the riverside site in 1944. Initially named the Limbless Soldiers Bowling Club, it was purposely built as a place for returned service men and women with disabilities to socialise and relax. It officially opened in 1949.

Today's clubhouse building consists of two ex-army huts from Camp Columbia, Wacol – formerly the headquarters

06

MAYOR OF IPSWICH PRESENTED WITH NAVAL MEMENTO

On 24 January, members of the Naval Association of Australia's Ipswich & West Moreton sub section presented a special gift to Mayor of Ipswich Teresa Harding. Mayor Harding, a RAAF veteran herself, has a strong relationship with the local military area and was delighted with the gift – a framed picture of HMAS *Ipswich*.

The presentation took place at Club Services Ipswich, which has strong connections to its local RSL Sub Branches.

WIN

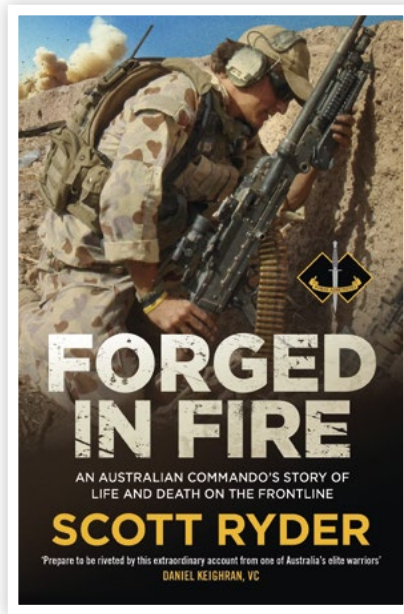
For your chance to win a copy of one of the books in this competition, please enter in one of the following ways:

- Email your name, address and contact number (using the book title as the subject line) to editor@rslqld.org

OR

- Post your name, address and contact number to [Book Title], PO Box 629, Spring Hill Qld 4004.

Competition closes
14 July 2025.



***Forged in Fire* by Scott Ryder is published by Allen & Unwin (RRP: \$36.99).**

Forged in Fire takes us inside the secretive world of the Australian commandos. Garry made a report on the radio: 'I see around 200 women and children heading north up the valley.' Less than 400 metres below us, a steady stream of women and kids were hurrying away in single file. 'Where are all the men?' I asked Garry. 'Waiting for us,' he responded, with a look of concern I had not seen on his face before. My heart skipped a beat – we were on.

From the age of 12, Scott Ryder knew he wanted to join the Army, and he signed up as soon as he could. After serving as a paratrooper and in East Timor with 3 RAR, he wanted more. He trained all summer and took the gruelling selection course for the commandos, earning the prized green beret on his second attempt.

Ryder shares battlefield stories from his tours to Afghanistan, where his regiment saw some of the heaviest fighting Australian forces have experienced since the Vietnam War. After being seriously injured in a shocking Black Hawk helicopter crash in Kandahar, he was the only survivor to return to active service.

Frankly written, with self-deprecating humour, *Forged in Fire* reveals the qualities of strength and mental resilience that characterise Special Forces operators.

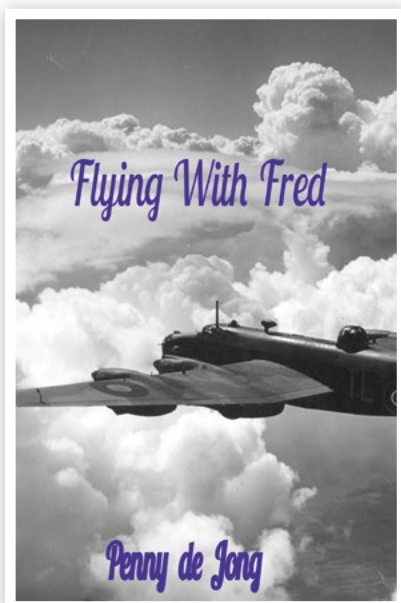


***Trigger Warning* by Nathan Bolton is published by Big Sky Publishing (RRP: \$32.99).**

Trigger Warning is a journey with Nathan Bolton, a former Special Operations Engineer, as he confronts the relentless horrors of combat in Afghanistan. Tasked with detecting and disarming deadly IEDs, Nathan's tours are a combination of chaos and peril, where every step could lead to death or maiming. But the true battleground lies within, as Nathan grapples with the shadows of trauma and the desperate pursuit of his father's approval.

Post-war, Nathan descends into the abyss of despair, contemplating an end to his suffering. Yet, salvation arrives in a most unexpected form – a battered off-road racing sidecar, an echo of his father's past glory. Through racing, Nathan finds purpose and begins his ascent from the depths of darkness.

But this journey is not merely about survival; it's about reclaiming his humanity. Nathan learns that true bravery isn't found in the heat of battle but in the vulnerability of facing one's inner demons. His metamorphosis from a broken warrior to a beacon of resilience is a testament to the power of courage and the indomitable human spirit.



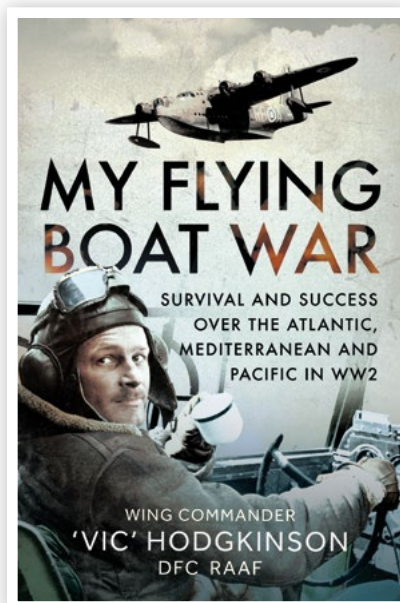
Flying with Fred by Penny de Jong is published by Peggy Bright Books (RRP: \$29.95).

Pilot Fred Bright survived flying 1,015 hours during World War II. He returned safely to Australia in 1945, unaware that his wartime experiences would have a profound effect on those closest to him for the rest of his life.

His 462 Squadron Middle East aircrew exemplified the fierce loyalty shown in perilous situations. Their Skipper Fred 'Shiny' Bright succeeded in maintaining calm with his sardonic humour.

Fred Bright flew from 1941 to 1945 in aircraft that included Gypsy Moths, Fleets, Wellingtons, Halifaxes, Fairchilds, Ansons, Douglasses, Liberators, Defiants and Dakotas. He trained in Australia, Canada and Britain. Wartime Operational Missions were flown over the Mediterranean from North Africa.

This is a riveting, easy-to-read book, which is hard to put down.



My Flying Boat War by Wing Commander Vic Hodgkinson DFC is published by Big Sky Publishing (RRP. \$34.99).

Wing Commander Vic Hodgkinson DFC served as a pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force throughout WWII. Starting in 1939, he was a founding member of 10 Squadron RAAF, operating Short Sunderland flying boats. Loaned to the RAF in early 1940, the squadron played a crucial role in the Battle of the Atlantic, conducting air-sea rescues and attacks on German submarines.

During this time, Vic participated in numerous air-sea rescues, including saving 21 survivors of a U-boat attack. He also conducted depth charge attacks on German submarines. Vic's resilience was tested when his Sunderland crashed into the Irish Sea near Bardsey Island in fog, resulting in the loss of six of his 11 crew members and a gruelling 12-hour wait for rescue.

Later, he flew missions in the Mediterranean, enduring heavy enemy fire to support Allied troops in Crete. Returning to the Atlantic, his crew successfully engaged a Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor.

In 1942, Vic returned to Australia, serving with 20 and 40 Squadrons RAAF, flying various aircraft including the Catalina and Dornier Do 24. His missions ranged from supply drops and minelaying to bombing and reconnaissance. This is Vic's remarkable story, told in his own words for the first time.

QUEENSLAND RSL NEWS
WINNERS
EDITION 1 2025



BUCKHAM'S BOMBERS

J Knox, Sandstone Point
G Hunt, Urangan
B Willett, Bray Park
M Wood, North Tamborine



CHANGING ALTITUDES

W Sanderson, Alice River
V McCarthy, Mt Louisa
P Van Den Langenberg, Goomeri
J Tuttle, Nambour



KRITHIA

G Woodforth, Carina
W Barker, Oxley
K McDonald, Middle Ridge
G Bonnor, Brighton



NEVER FORGOTTEN

B Lassen, Carrara
S Mollenhagen, Malanda
S Walker, Southport
R Lindmark, Ferny Hills

** Winners' books will be posted to the addresses supplied in the weeks following publication of the magazine.*

COMMUNITY CONNECT

SERVICE ANIMAL LEARNING GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND SCOUTS

The Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation (AWAMO) is committed to ensuring all war and service animals are recognised for their deeds and sacrifices through education. To support this, AWAMO has developed a learning guide offering students and Scouts a fresh perspective on the role of animals in warfare, from WWI to the present day.

Aimed at 10- to 16-year-olds, the resource has been written, trialled and reviewed by practising teachers across Australia. It also aligns with a range of curriculum needs internationally. Several posters and interactive activities are available to download at awamo.org.au.

SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORIAL CONCERT

A concert will be held to mark the 80th anniversary of the declaration of peace in the Pacific presented by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra on 15 August. Produced by the Flowers of Peace, this concert will be created by two independent arts practitioners and will explore the impacts of war through music, text and imagery. Tickets will go on sale in early June. Learn more at flowersofpeace.com.au

EXERCISE VAGABONDS TREK

Would you like to help Nui Dat kids in need? Charity Diggers Rest is seeking Australian venues/hosts for fundraising activities in October 2025. Run by Australian Army veteran Jason Fenech, Diggers Rest supports disadvantaged Vietnamese families with food parcels, children's education, accommodation and healthcare.

The fundraising activities can be whatever you wish to host, whether it's a morning tea, barbecue lunch or dinner. Jason will donate raffle prizes or auction items. All funds raised will go towards keeping children around Nui Dat in school.

Diggers Rest is deeply grateful for the support it's received from Mackay, Cairns, and Orchid Beach/Fraser Island RSL Sub Branches. For more info, please email jasonfenech@y7mail.com or visit facebook.com/people/Diggers-Rest/100064814795936.

SUPPORT FOR GUNDAGAI MEMORIAL PROJECT

Gundagai RSL sub-Branch (NSW) is building a memorial to honour the Battle of Coral/Balmoral and Victoria Cross recipient Private Richard Norden. The memorial will commemorate the largest and most protracted battle fought by Australians in the Vietnam War. Over 26 days in 1968, 3,000 Australians faced a well-prepared and larger opposing force, resulting in 26 Australian lives lost and more than 100 wounded. The \$260,000 project includes a bronze statue depicting Norden's heroic actions. So far, \$60,000 has been raised, but additional funds are needed. If your Sub Branch can contribute, please connect with Gundagai RSL sub-Branch via GundagaiSB@rslnsw.org.au.

REUNIONS

HQ1ATF ASSOCIATION REUNION

The HQ1ATF Association will hold its next reunion at the Painters Island Holiday Park in Wangaratta from 17 to 21 November 2025. Book via 03 5721 3380 or stay@paintersislandcaravanpark.com.au.

This reunion has now become an annual event, following a decision made at the 2024 reunion in Adelaide. The 2025 event will include a welcome dinner, tour of Glenrowan and the King Valley, and a commemorative dinner.

The Wangaratta region has a lot to offer, and it's anticipated that members and their partners will enjoy exploring the surrounds. For more information, visit 1atf.org or contact John Verhelst via 0437 212 121 or john@jhconsult.com.au.

RAAOC REUNION

The Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC) Reunion will be held at Kedron Wavell RSL from 9 to 11 October 2026. All RAAOC members who have served or are still serving are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Bill Abboud via billabboud47@gmail.com or 0412 088 349.

Last Post.

Queensland RSL News has published this list at the request of RSL members. Queensland RSL News takes no responsibility for inaccuracies outside the control of RSL Queensland. This list was correct as at 25 April 2025. Surnames flagged with an asterisk (*) have an unconfirmed date of their passing.

The list includes each member's surname, first name, service number and Sub Branch.



ADAMS*, GEORGE P/T929669 Edmonton
AFFLECK, BARRY R64663 Caboolture-Morayfield and District
ALLEN, DOREEN QF273018 Taroom
ALLOWAY, WARREN 1733260 Sherwood-Indooroopilly
ALVERO*, LORENZO 10305091 Edmonton
ANDERSON*, GORDON QX54004 Edmonton
BALLARD (NEE BALLARD), CARMEL W18486 Ipswich Railway
BARNES, WILLIAM QX59505 Maroochydore
BARNES*, ROBERT V72199 Gaythorne
BARTON, DONALD P433051 Kenmore/Moggill
BECHAZ, NOEL 3/721246 Nerang
BENFER, JOHN A12197 Caloundra
BENNETT, MERVYN A13789 Beenleigh and District
BENNETT, ARTHUR 175006 Greenbank
BERG, JOHN R62957 Bribie Island
BERICH, IVAN 84760 Gaythorne
BETTS (NEE EDWARDS), JEAN 2627762 Hervey Bay
BEVAN, MARTYN 5717691 Hervey Bay
BODSWORTH, RALPH 1736766 Gatton
BOLTON, PETER 61294 Townsville
BOSLEY, PAUL 243328 Herbert River
BOWER, STEPHEN 2791080 Hervey Bay
BOWER, STEPHEN 39781 Rollingstone
BOWLES, PETER 446225 Glasshouse Country
BRACKENREG, GRATTAN 150287/A1351 Kedron-Wavell
BRAID, ROBERT 43106 Edmonton
BRAUER, CLIVE 1/709773 St Helens
BROOMHAM, WILLIAM 1/718274 Kawana Waters
BROWN, SYDNEY 02038 Currumbin/Palm Beach

BULL, LEO R36993 Goodna
BULLOCK, ALAN R93635 Maroochydore
BURGE, RALPH 058635 Kedron-Wavell
CAGE, FRANK 137844 Sunnybank
CALWAY, BRIAN R50640 Kawana Waters
CASEY, JOHN 312686 Hervey Bay
CASSIDY, MICHAEL 146144 Redcliffe
CHAPMAN, GEOFFREY 3792375 Caloundra
CHAPMAN, GEORGE 22177780 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
CHAPMAN, JOHN 220276 St George
CLACY, MICHAEL R122681 Russell Island
CLARK, NOEL 1/715245 Caloundra
CLARKE, MICHAEL 8266900 Gaythorne
CLARKE (NEE JORDAN), STELLA VFX64617 Caloundra
COLE, PATRICK 2796032 Roma
COLEMAN, NEVILLE 1/708609 Townsville
COLGRAVE, WILLIAM A317083 Kalbar
COLLIS, BARRY 1/724793 Kedron-Wavell
CONNELLY, BRIAN 37512 Sherwood-Indooroopilly
COSTIGAN, BRYAN 1/701384 Caloundra
COURTE, KEITH 267880 Mareeba
COUTTS (NEE FLOWERS), SHIRLEY 101404 Bundaberg
COWIE, RUTH 107799 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
CULLEN, ELWYN 1/709095 Rockhampton
CURTIS, ANTHONY 1734098 Kedron-Wavell
DALY, GARY 2/779042 Caloundra
DAVIS*, COLIN 135163 Currumbin/Palm Beach
DENLEY, IAN A218217 Gatton
DIXON, DUNCAN 182593 Currumbin/Palm Beach

DIXON, DUNCAN A133278 / 8161844 Currumbin/Palm Beach
DODD, MERVYN 1410946 Townsville
DOHERTY, LESLIE 127653 Mareeba
DONOVAN, DESMOND QX49197 Currumbin/Palm Beach
DOUGHTY, LANCE A15632 Maroochydore
DOWDING, GRAHAM R107887 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
DREW*, JOHN R93651 Murgon
EASDON-SMITH, COLIN 4198539 Herbert River
EDWARDS, LINCOLN 213202 Springwood Tri Services RSL
ELMS, KEVIN 1/732439 Mareeba
ERHARDT, ERIC O19580 Ipswich
EVANS, GORDON LFX87533 Kooralbyn Valley
FLEMATTI, BRUNO 54679 Kedron-Wavell
FORSYTH, GORDON A18407 Ipswich Railway
FRENCH, BRYCE 16158 Ipswich
GARRICK, ARNOLD A14340 Sandgate
GEARSDIE, KENNETH A112956 Geebung Zillmere Bald Hills Aspley
GELDARD, ERIC QX62133 Miles
GEORGE, DARRYL A110930 Townsville
GIBSON, ALLAN 29830 Hervey Bay
GILES, KENNETH 1202621 Bray Park-Strathpine
GILLHAM, REGINALD 2406448/39068 Nerang
GILSON*, BRIAN 1/710443 Emu Park
GILTROW, JOHN 1732448 Mackay
GOOD, EDWARD POX121131 Bribie Island
GOTTSCHKE, BARRY 4722204 Canungra
GOURLAY, ROBERT 2139837 Bribie Island
GRAHAM, MALCOLM R694643/2774318 Caloundra
GRAY, NEIL 210678 Greenbank
GREENWOOD, HAROLD B5199 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
GROVES, ASHLEY 17597 Cooroy-Pomona
GUTH, GRAHAM L31589 Rockhampton
GUY, LYLE 1707111 Warwick
HALL, JOSEPH A23086 Yeronga-Dutton Park
HAMER*, CHRISTOPHER 23242311 Currumbin/Palm Beach
HAMPTON, JAMES 311434 Gaythorne
HANCOCK, LAWRENCE 58559 Springwood Tri Services RSL
HANLON, WADE J16407 Greenbank
HARRISON, ETHEL 102118 Hervey Bay
HEAVEY, PETER R65302 Pine Rivers District
HELE, FRANCIS 42200 Greenbank
HENDRY, RONALD 1724920 Redcliffe
HERD, IAN 43750 Beenleigh and District
HERLIHEN, JOHN Q43938 Yeronga-Dutton Park
HIGGINS, KEITH NZ17740/D/K965001 Beenleigh and District
HILLARD*, CLARENCE 2/722302 Goondiwindi
HOFFMAN, ALBERT 17949 Townsville
HOFFMANN, TREVOR 448484 Blackbutt
HOOLE*, REX A11285 Goondiwindi
HOPPER*, ALEXANDER 153407 Greenbank
HUGHES, PETER 224207 Gympie
HUGHES, ROBERT 147190 Yeronga-Dutton Park
HUTCHINGS, STEPHEN B5273/31846 Mackay

HUTSON*, NOELA QF272809 Redlands
IRLAM, LESLIE A13194 Townsville
IRWIN, NEVILLE 2216650 Goodna
JACKSON, ANDREW 328913 Unattached List
JACKSON*, ARTHUR 54326 Cairns
JAMIESON, ALAN 23235587 Hervey Bay
JARRETT, WALTER 115822 Caloundra
JENKINS, KENNETH 1735032 Goondiwindi
JEWELL, IAN 13446 Redlands
JOCE, GRAHAM A217314 Bribie Island
JOHNSON, NEVILLE 5/400339 Maroochydore
KEANE, THOMAS 220478 Townsville
KEIGHLEY, ROBERT PM5204 Maroochydore
KILLMIER, HILLARY 47024 Hervey Bay
KING, KEITH 138154 Hervey Bay
KUSS, DAVID 8254033 Maroochydore
LAYT, HERBERT B5724 Innisfail
LEES, TERENCE R58252 Gympie
LOVETT, HARRY 16906 Russell Island
MAHER, COLLIN 58881 Beaudesert
MANNION, LEONARD 1202278 Agnes Water/1770
MARJORIBANKS*, WAYNE 223749 Longreach
MARSH, JOHN 129746 Herbert River
MARSHALL, PETER 2791987 Bribie Island
MASCHEK, ALAN A237936 Ipswich
MATHERS, VINCENT 1/1393 Gracemere and District
MAY, VICTOR 140101 Caloundra
MCCLURE*, ARTHUR QX46039 (Q121677) Caboolture-Morayfield and District
MCCOMBE, GEOFFREY 45614 Holland Park Mt Gravatt
MCDONNELL, THOMAS 37693 Townsville
MCGEECHAN, LAURENCE R765331 Nerang
MCGUIRE*, SHEILA NF462507 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
MCKERROW, JAMES 1/704480 Winton
MCLELLAN, IAN 3/35061 Kenmore/Moggill
MCSKIMMING, BRIAN A13419 Hervey Bay
MELLOW, STANLEY A14968 Greenbank
MERRITT, JOHN Mudgeeraba-Robina
MEZZAPESA, MARIO A317948 Bray Park-Strathpine
MILLER, DAVID 226911 Hervey Bay
MINKOWSKI, ROMAN 5716312 Sherwood-Indooroopilly
MORRIS, MICHAEL 112999 Gympie
MOUSTOUKAS, CHRISTOPHER 1/703046 Wondai
MURRAY, ALVIN 1200216 Townsville
NICHOLAS, LESLIE 7110/72069 Caloundra
NITARSKI, HENRY 1736631 Wynnum
NIXON, GEORGE A115450 Kedron-Wavell
NIXON, WILLIAM A114250 Kedron-Wavell
O'NEILL, LAWRENCE 15328 Gaythorne
PADDON, RICHARD 44351 Maroochydore
PASSARIS, JOHN 1/701100 Hellenic
PATON, KENRICK R96251 Geebung Zillmere Bald Hills Aspley
PATTERSON, MAXWELL 46866 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta

PAUL, HORACE QX41404 Bowen
PECK, ARNOLD K769 Redlands
PENSON*, CLYDE 1332230 Toowoomba
PERGER, STAN 157063 Tully
PHILP, RICHARD R94504 Maroochydore
PODOLIAK, GEORGE 135133 Biloela
POLLOCK, DES Tully
POWELL, KEVIN 551292 Townsville
PUCCINI, EILEEN 2812229 Bribie Island
PUNTER, VINCENT 1707800 Gympie
QUILL, RAYMOND R47945 Beachmere Inc
RAFFIN, KEVIN 1/716120 Kingaroy/Memerambi
RAGUSE*, ELLEN 94330 Salisbury
REDCLIFFE, DAVID A19186 Kedron-Wavell
REES, MACKWORTH 2/742138 Stanthorpe
REICHLE, LEONARD 14945 Bundaberg
RENNIE, MATTHEW 2/4932 Ipswich
REYNOLDS, WILLIAM 235154 Kenmore/Moggill
ROBERTS, RALPH R66523 Maroochydore
ROEBUCK, KAREN F1814401/8242153 Crows Nest
ROSS, JEFFREY 42838 Bribie Island
RUCK*, FRANCIS R307878 Redcliffe
RUSSELL, PETER 2101769 Winton
RUSSELL, JOHN 1733077 Gladstone
RUSSO, FRANK R51456 Wondai
RYAN, KEVIN 1732496 Nanango
SCHULTZ, ADRIAN 1733245 Caloundra
SCOTT, DAVID R51626 Boonah
SHEEHAN, PATRICK 38253 Sherwood-Indooroopilly
SIBLEY, HEADLEY 17847 Greenbank
SPANN, RONALD M8074751 Bundaberg
SPRENGER, BEVAN 1/79958 Ashgrove Bardon
ST LEGIER, JOHN B5101 Currumbin/Palm Beach
STAPLES, GERARD G6588236 Greenbank
STEADMAN, KEITH A119102 Ipswich Railway
STEVENS, FREDERICK A28341 Toowong
STRATFORD*, PETER 16846 Goondiwindi
STURGEON, BRIAN 1/61894 Walkerston-Pleystowe
SWIFT, BRIAN 217634 Gaythorne
TAYLOR, ERROL A117284 Bundaberg
TAYLOR, JOHN 311014 / 3/11014 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
THOMAS, MATTHEW R54180 Maroochydore
THOMPSON*, ALAN 133896 Rockhampton
THOMSON, KEVIN 3/757433 Mareeba
THOMSON, MALCOLM N52151/S11460 Kingaroy/Memerambi
TOAL, MICHAEL 2278093 Cairns
TURNER, ARTHUR R38464 Redlands
TURNER, ALAN 1751 Maroochydore
TURNER, DONALD 438406 Cairns
VEARY, MICHAEL V3071 Sherwood-Indooroopilly
WAKERLEY, ALAN Q272142 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
WALLIS, RUTH W24754 Tweed Heads and Coolangatta
WALSH, RONALD 138867 Bundaberg

WALTERS, GRAHAM 168909 / 8256132 Burleigh Heads
WARD*, KEITH 2/410615 Gympie
WATTS, BRUCE 44763 Townsville
WEATHERALL, EROLL 4410756 Gaythorne
WEBSTER, RAYMOND A117997 St George
WEBSTER, TREVOR 437432 Currumbin/Palm Beach
WICKHAM, ROGER 16900 Miles
WIGAN, BEVAN 147416 Kawana Waters
WILKINS, JOAN F28075 Longreach
WOODHOUSE, GARY 374598 Redcliffe
YARROW, KEVIN 221815 Bowen
YOUNGER, BRYAN 1/723774 Oakey
ZAHNOW*, LESLIE 1/704762 Boonah
ZAMMIT, JOSEPH 1/701712 Herbert River

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