



THE LISTENING POST

The Official Journal of The Returned & Services League of Australia WA Branch Incorporated

DECEMBER 2022

**SUPPORTING
YOU IN 2022**

**Ambassador
Ariana**

REMEMBRANCE

**DVA VISITS TO
REGIONAL WA**

**TWO MEN
ONE SERVICE
NUMBER**





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RSL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The RSL was founded in 1916 to provide comradeship and support to Australia's Veterans and their families.

That core mission has never changed but has continued to evolve to meet the needs of each generation of servicemen and women.

We have a branch network that covers Australia and any veteran who needs help will get it - every serving ADF member and veteran will be warmly welcomed at their local RSL Sub-Branch or club.

We advocate for the best possible conditions for our serving men and women and for those who have served the nation in the past.

We foster respect and thanks from the nation for all those who have made sacrifices in Australia's name and we will provide a strong voice on issues of national unity and security.

PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Copies of *The Listening Post* are available on our website:

www.rslwa.org.au

PUBLISHING

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To all Sub-Branch Presidents and Secretaires: Send photographs (1MB plus) and a short article (in a Word document) on special activities at your Sub-Branch to *The Listening Post*.

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23 February 2023

The preferred method of receiving submissions is by email. Photographs should be attached separately and a minimum of 1 MB. This is our magazine and contributions and letters are welcome.

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INSIDE

FEATURES

- 12 Ambassador Ariana
- 18 Two men one service number

REGULAR

- 3 From the President
- 4 From the CEO
- 31 The Last Post
- 32 Unit and Kindred Listing

EVENTS & NEWS

- 2 DVA visits to regional WA
- 6 Remember to Remember
- 22 National ESO Forum
- 24 The Better Together Ball

COVER PHOTO



Doug Farmer and Phillip Skelton AM, Sub Wardens of the State War Memorial

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STOP PRESS!

DVA MOBILE SERVICE CENTRE COMING TO REGIONAL WA

Veterans and their families in regional areas will have face to-face access to Department of Veterans' Affairs and Services Australia through their Mobile Services Centre in early 2023.

The bus will be travelling across the state from 17 January 2023 starting in Giddegannup then through many towns in the Wheatbelt, Goldfields, Great Southern and Peel finishing in Pingelly on 5 April 2023.

The stopping locations will be promoted in each town and on social media before each visit.

Wi-Fi is available and staff can help:

- create a myGov account
- register a DVA online account
- lodge DVA forms and supporting documents
- confirm documents and supporting information, such as certifying copies of a birth certificate
- provide information about support and benefits available for veterans and their families.

To view the itinerary visit: servicesaustralia.gov.au/mobileoffice or telephone 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) to find out more.



Members and veterans.

As we emerge from the shadow cast by the passing of the Sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Remembrance Day, the RSL across Australia has much to be proud of.

FROM THE STATE PRESIDENT



DUNCAN ANDERSON
RSLWA STATE PRESIDENT

I would like to recognise all those involved in the organisation of Remembrance Day services throughout Western Australia. Remembering those that have served and given so much for our Country is a sacred duty that RSLWA will continue to lead on behalf of our community.

The Returned and Services League Australia was one of a small number of Commonwealth Nations veteran organisations that was invited to attend the funeral in London. The National President attended, representing the League on this historic occasion.

Notably the National President also attended the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL). The RCEL consists of Commonwealth Ex-Services League Presidents. It was evident from this meeting that veteran organisations throughout the Commonwealth are facing very similar issues. However, interestingly the system in Australia is seen as one that is well developed and well resourced. This perspective is one that many in Australia would find challenging, especially noting the current recommendations of the Royal Commission.

At the most recent Annual General Meeting of RSL Australia, Greg Mellick was re-elected as National President until the AGM in 2025. This appointment provides stability for the League in Australia which is essential. Along with the findings of the Royal Commission, RSL is working to not only support all members throughout Australia but provide leadership within the broader service organisation community. Alone we can make a difference, working together we can make significant positive change for veterans and their families nationally.

Closer to home positive progress is being made throughout RSLWA. A committee has been working to review our constitution and by-laws that presented a series of recommendations to the November Board meeting. As a result of this your Sub-Branch presidents will have received the suggested changes and communications relating to an Extraordinary General meeting to be held in early February 2023. The proposed changes seek to streamline several processes including membership and elections. Elections will continue to be conducted by a suitable, independent third party, adding the option of secure electronic options for voting.

I would like to congratulate the team for working alongside the Royal Agricultural Society to play our part in the first veteran day at the Royal Show. Supported by Hancock Agriculture and Hancock Prospecting, veterans and their families were able to gain free entry to the Royal Show. Roughly 1500 veterans and family members participated, a wonderful outcome! The inaugural Better Together Ball was held on the 12th of November and was a great success. In partnership with Legacy we will continue to work to establish this as a key fundraising activity with funds raised flowing directly to services that support veterans and their families. To everyone involved in the organisation, thank you!

The Royal Commission continues its critical work to support the veteran community throughout Australia. We continue to look after our mates through our welfare and advocacy team, and broader networks in Western Australia. I cannot stress enough our individual and collective responsibilities in helping those that need it.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Much has been achieved and there is much to be done in 2023 and beyond. Thank you for all you do.

FROM THE CEO

Since commencing in August, I have been grateful for the warm welcome received from members. I have been visiting as many Sub-Branches and community events as I can; from Yanchep to Claremont and North Beach, Mandurah to Albany. I'm getting a feel for the things that are important to you, learning about what we need to do to stay relevant for our current and future membership.

You will have by now received your 2023 membership renewal notice in the post. If you haven't please email membership@rslwa.org.au. We are pleased this year to offer a new, annual automatic renewal option for credit card payments.

It's a timely reminder to consider the benefits of your RSLWA membership; from individual advocacy that has in the 9 months to the end of September resulted in over \$21m DVA compensation claims secured, assisted veterans and their families with rent and mortgage arrears, supported transition to civilian employment with resume writing, interview training and connections with potential employers.

You also have free access to the award winning ANZAC Club (see page 15) and discounts with Quality Hotel Ambassador Perth, Comfort Inn & Suites Goodearth Perth, Quay Perth and Accor Hotels Worldwide.

I've also been spending time meeting key corporate stakeholders and ex-service organisations. I found time to do a few radio interviews too, which you can listen via our website at: rslwa.org.au/news-events/latest-news.

As acknowledged by the President, I would also like to thank all those involved in the Poppy Appeal (see page 21) and Remembrance Day services (page 6). Two critical events on our annual calendar, and ones that we must strive to keep relevant, and in the minds of all of our community members.

Thank you also to all of the volunteers that keep our Sub-Branches running smoothly, and to the team at RSLWA, for your hard work and dedication in all that you do for our veterans and their families.

Christmas is almost upon us. Enjoy spending time with your friends and families. I am very much looking forward to 2023 and all that it may bring.



APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Welcome to the RSLWA team, Allison Stephens.

Allison commenced as Chief Operations Officer in September 2022 following an external merit-based recruitment process. Her position provides significant input towards the day to day running and ongoing efficiency and improvements across all facets of RSLWA operations.

Allison has significant experience in membership organisations, fundraising and developing strategic business partnerships, corporate HR and procurement.

She spent over three and a half years at the Bravery Trust, a national charity providing financial assistance and support to current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families; in a role that built the Trust's essential foundations including government funding, building strategic business partnerships, marketing and communications, strategy development and fundraising campaigns.

Allison said: "It is a privilege to be a part of such an iconic organisation that so deeply cares for its members. I will be working hard to develop and implement initiatives that meet our objectives of engagement and sustainability."

The experience of being at the Bravery Trust has never been far from my mind since, and I am pleased to be back in an environment supporting the delivery of such positive outcomes again."

APOLOGIES TO JOONDALUP CITY SUB-BRANCH

We are sorry for an omission in our last edition, in the State Congress wrap up article. The much coveted Newdegate Cup was awarded to Joondalup City Sub-Branch. This recognises all round excellence for a Perth metropolitan Sub-Branch with membership numbers greater than 60 and efforts in governance, membership, Poppy Day and ANZAC Day appeals, welfare, youth, community involvement, commemoration and fundraising. Sorry we missed you off the list of winners Joondalup!

SUPPORTING YOU IN 2022

As the year draws to a close, the RSLWA advocacy team share the below stories to highlight some of the successful outcomes they have achieved.

If this makes you think about your situation, or a veteran you know may need help, you can contact the team by email at advocacy@rslwa.org.au or telephone 9287 3799 during office hours. This service is free and confidential for all veterans.

PAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING DEBT

Working collaboratively, RSLWA, Wounded Heroes and the WA Aged Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, Relief Fund assisted a veteran with a \$4,000 debt. After RSLWA assisted the veteran escape a domestic violence situation and secure safe accommodation, the veteran put the bulk of their belongings in storage, but misunderstood the contract terms and was at risk of the belongings being disposed of.

A payment plan was put in place with the storage company, with agreement that if the veteran stuck with the plan an application to assist with reducing the debt would be made to the above mentioned organisations.

A HOME OF THEIR OWN

A veteran who was homeless had all of their claims determined through support of the RSLWA team, and was then in a position to be able to buy a home with the compensation awarded.

EVICITION SUPPORT

RSLWA, together with Open Arms and WA Aged Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, Relief Fund assisted a veteran who faced eviction from their rented apartment after it was sold. The veteran had received sixty days' notice to exit the property but in the last week had not found a new rental and then developed COVID-19, discharging from hospital on the eviction date. The team found the veteran temporary housing, and a new property was secured within two weeks.

DENTAL TREATMENT

RSLWA worked with a dental service provider to ensure a veteran could get the correct treatment.

AGED CARE ENTITLEMENTS

A war widow with a DVA Gold Card was having difficulty accessing aged care entitlements. RSLWA took up the issue, which had been very worrying for the widow, and it was resolved to everyone's satisfaction within half an hour.

SPEEDY SURGERY

A sense of urgency from the RSLWA team in their liaison with the surgeon's rooms and DVA allowed a veteran to get short notice back surgery that has reduced their pain considerably.



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REMEMBER TO REMEMBER

Remembrance Day 2022 marked the 104th anniversary of the armistice which ended the First World War when the guns fell silent on the Western Front at the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month.





RSLWA's official Remembrance Day at the State War Memorial in Kings Park included an address from the Governor and the traditional wreath laying. The Last Post was sounded at Kings Park, at the same time as buglers located at eight CBD locations including the balcony at ANZAC House.

His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson APM, RSLWA State President Duncan Anderson and RSLWA CEO Vince Connelly all presided over the service for the first time in their respective roles. But for Churchlands Senior High School, this was the 20th year that the school band has been involved in proceedings.

The formalities were concluded with the official handing over of the Warden of the State War memorial. RSLWA has appointed a Warden of the Memorial on the 11th of November each year since 1929. This year Commodore Brett Dowsing JP RAN (Ret'd) will take over from Major General Barry Nunn AO RFD ED.

RSLWA Sub-Branches ran services at various locations across Perth and regional Western Australia from York to Dwellingup, Kalgoorlie to Kalbarri, Mount Barker to Carnarvon.









NORTH BEACH SERVICE

North Beach RSL Sub-Branch Remembrance Day was attended by several hundred members of the community and a large contingent of members. Following the service, five plaques were unveiled on the Wall of Remembrance.

The Wall of Remembrance was dedicated in May 2015, and there are now 52 plaques that honour and remember those veterans and members of the North Beach RSL Sub-Branch community who have passed.



104 YEARS YOUNG



Former RAAF WWII mechanical engineer, Jim Forster, with daughter, Jenny Marwick, celebrating his 104th birthday.

Life Member, James (Jim) Forster, celebrated his 104th birthday on 13 October 2022, at the St Michael's Residential Aged Care facility in North Perth.

Having served in both the Army and, later, the Air Force, Jim spent a large part of his RAAF career in Papua New Guinea during WWII where he was a mechanical engineer.

"They only called on you when they were in trouble" said Jim "and that was most of the time because we serviced fighter jets and they'd inevitably come back from a mission with bullet holes in them.

We'd then get called on with the rider 'don't forget your tool box', then they'd want us to patch up the aircraft straight away so they could go out again later that day."

Happy birthday Jim from all of us at RSLWA.

RSLWA'S NEWEST MEMBER

Beverley from Gooseberry Hill is one of RSLWA's newest members. Her husband, also a veteran, enjoys spending time at the Kalamunda Sub-Branch; but Beverley prefers to meet her friends at the ANZAC Club which is why she decided to become a member.

"We meet maybe half a dozen times a year. The ANZAC Club is a great central location with easy access on public transport. And the dining is five star" says Beverley "it's glorious, the views, the food, just fantastic."

Beverley served in 7th Field Ambulance until 1991.



Tell us why you became a member.

Email us at publicaffairs@rslwa.org.au

AMBASSADOR ARIANA HIGHLIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN OUR HISTORY

I have been given the opportunity to be the 2022 Youth Ambassador for the Kalamunda RSL Sub-Branch and in my role I am focused on the importance of children and young people knowing about our defence history and the outcomes.



by Ariana Dix O Neill

As a community and a country we have much to be thankful for and have huge respect for all those who served. Our history presents a learning opportunity for young people, who are eager to pay respect and also to understand what life was like for those who have, and those who continue to, serve their country. Some paying the ultimate sacrifice.

I grew up here in Kalamunda and attended Walliston Primary School. Each year we would have an ANZAC Day service in which my school would invite a veteran to speak, my family also attends the local services to pay our respect to family members and their comrades who also served.

To myself and many others these speeches were empowering and thought provoking. They were never dwelling on the past but talking about the future, the importance of things like friendship, bravery, courage and how helping a mate in need is as rewarding for that person as it is yourself.

All of these things occur in war, but also in society.

In every conversation I had ever had with a veteran I always come away from it with a new perspective of what war was to that person and how it can be prevented in the future. I have also taken the time to further research my own family history.

It has helped me to understand what my great-great pop, Oak Sounness, and his brothers Tom and Frank who fought in World War I went through. Frank was the driver in an artillery team and was killed in action. He is buried at Blight Valley Cemetery in Northern France.

I have learned what my other family members such as Francis O'Neill endured in World War I along with Morris and Ray O'Connor in World War II, and their nephew, my great uncle Robert O'Neill in Vietnam. My mums family members such as Albert Reynolds (WX386) was a prisoner on Crete from the 2/11 Australian Infantry Battalion and was killed in Crete. Clement Henry Reynolds (WX34092) who was a Lance Sergeant. Norm Reynolds, my great pops uncle who was a Trooper in the 10 Light Horse Regiment and a Warrant Officer Class 2 (W893) and William George Reynolds (WX 13772) who was part of the 2/28 Australian Infantry Battalion. My mum's cousin, Mark Reynolds also served.

AUSTRALIANS HAVE A PROUD HISTORY OF HELPING THOSE IN NEED, PUTTING THEIR HAND UP AND GIVING THEMSELVES, DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. IT HAS BECOME EMBODIED IN OUR CULTURE AS THE ANZAC LEGEND LIVES ON, ALONG WITH ALL OF THE STORIES OF THE PAST.

I hope we can have a future focused on peace. I am grateful for all of those from my family and community, along with those who I have never met, who stepped up to the call of duty and helped to protect the freedoms that we enjoy in Australia today.

I hope that we never see conflict on our shores and that all of the brave men and women currently representing Australia are able to complete their duties safely.

I encourage all members of the community to learn about their family and their communities defence history, to continue to pay their respects and to be as educated as possible as we all work together to look after our family and friends who have served as they re-enter civilian life and to all work together for peace.



Former Federal Cabinet Minister Mr Ken Wyatt, Donna Farragher MLC, Ariana, Senator Linda Reynolds and Geof Irvin, Kalamunda RSL Sub-Branch President.

OUR COUNTRY'S SERVICE

A POEM BY ARIANA DIX O'NEILL

*As a community and a country, we keep thanking
History teaches young people, who are showcasing
Respect. Understanding what life was like.
For those who have and who continue serving
Some paying the ultimate sacrifice.
Veterans speaking to local students,
empowering and thought provoking.
Never dwelling on the past.
Talking about why we halve the mast.
Our future together.
The importance of friendship, bravery, courage.
Helping a mate in need is as rewarding
for that person as it is yourself.*

DEFENCE AND VETERANS LEGAL SERVICE

The Defence and Veterans Legal Service (DAVLS) provides free and independent legal advice and support to people who want to engage with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

DAVLS PROVIDES ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO:

- current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force (no matter the length, nature, or branch of service), and
- family members, carers and supporters of current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

WHO SHOULD ENGAGE WITH THE ROYAL COMMISSION?

The Royal Commission wants to hear your story if your mental health and wellbeing, or that of a loved one, has suffered as a result of things like:

- the impact of ADF service (e.g. on family and home life)
- problems getting veteran entitlements
- no support when leaving the ADF
- lived experience of suicide, or
- any systemic issues relating to the ADF, Department of Veterans Affairs or Department of Defence.

HOW CAN DAVLS HELP YOU?

DAVLS can help you by providing advice about your legal rights and protections, giving you practical assistance to write a submission, support you to share your experiences through a private session, and connect you with other legal and non-legal support for matters that are not related to the Royal Commission.

WHO CAN YOU SPEAK TO ABOUT DAVLS?

We have lawyers in every state and territory in Australia – the DAVLS solicitor for Western Australia is Mitch Caubo. For more information or to book an appointment, please call 1800 33 1800 or visit the website at www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au



TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FROM GASCOYNE COMMUNITY

The Gascoyne RSL Sub-Branch has received tremendous financial support from the local community in its bid to install new disabled toilets at its Carnarvon facility.

Local not-for-profit organisations Friends of Citizens under Stress (Focus) and the unusually titled Australian Order of Old Bastards* (Carnarvon Branch) have both made very significant contributions towards the project.

Gascoyne RSL Sub-Branch President, Bruno Bacci, said: “The support from both organisations has made a tremendous difference to what we’re able to achieve for our members in the Gascoyne, many of whom are getting on in years and who will be assisted greatly by the new project.”

** The Order of Old Bastards began when a group of people banded together after World War II to assist in fundraising for people and organisations in need and came from the greeting “G’day you old bastard” which the American servicemen were surprised to learn was a term of endearment, not an invitation to start a fight! The Australian branch was begun in 1968 by Leo Bradshaw MBE and his wife Joan Bradshaw OAM.*

RAISING FLAG POLE FUNDS IN CARNARVON

As most readers will know, the maintenance and upkeep of war memorials is the responsibility of local shires and councils. Gascoyne RSL Sub-Branch and the Shire of Carnarvon are in the process of raising funds to replace the ageing locally fabricated flag poles at the town’s war memorial at a cost of \$2,400 each.

A special account has been set up at the Shire Office for \$200 donations, all of which are tax deductible. Moneys left over from the flag poles purchase and installation will go towards an upgrade of the monument, standing on the intersection of the two main streets, for its 100th anniversary celebration on 11 November 2023.

ANZAC HOUSE GETS TWO NEW AWARDS

Two very special awards worth a mention were received in September at this year's Clubs WA Industry Awards for Excellence.

ANZAC House Veteran Central Manager, Matthew Holyday received the *Long Term Service Award* which recognises an employee with more than five years' service, who has consistently demonstrated excellence in the workplace having had a significant impact on the club, staff, members and volunteers. Congratulations Matthew, a very well deserved acknowledgement of your hard work and dedication.

ANZAC House was awarded *Functions Facility of the Year*, judged on the versatility of the venue, range of services offered and presentation of the area.

Whether you're looking to host a meeting, luncheon, dinner, sundowner, cocktail party, conference or even a wedding, ANZAC House offers three floors of flexible modern event spaces with state of the art facilities. For more see www.anzacclub.org.au/venue-hire or call 9287 3700.



Matthew Holyday,
Long Term Service
Award 2022

The ANZAC House team
won Functions Facility of
the Year 2022



SUPER-SCHOLAR SOFIE

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) held a scholarship presentation in Perth in October; and this year the RSL Captain Reg Saunders MBE Scholarship was awarded to Western Australian, Sofie Gilmartin, pictured with RSLWA CEO Vince Connelly. Congratulations Sofie. We wish you well in your studies!

The presentation was held at ANZAC House. Scholars, their families and distinguished guests were welcomed by Peter King, Deputy Commissioner Department of Veterans Affairs.

Current AVCAT scholar, Taryn said: "... this scholarship has assisted me not only financially but emotionally. I know that I need to keep pushing myself to study and to improve due to the fact that other people are wanting me to succeed."

AVCAT scholarships, are tertiary scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans and between \$4,000 and \$6,000 per year, for three years.

AVCAT assist approximately 250 young people each year nationally to reach their potential through achieving a range of academic and personal goals. AVCAT sponsored scholarships are funded by ex-service organisations and private donors. For more information see www.avcat.org.au



CONGRATULATIONS! JUDI WELCH

All round stalwart, Judi Welch, who does so much for RSLWA, the Servicewomen's Sub Branch, the WRAAC and the greater community was one of the worthy recipients of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Award 2022, in recognition of her dedication to the services of others.

Judi is pictured with the Hon. Chris Dawson APM alongside the other winners; Kylie Russell, a Registered Nurse who worked in East Timor and at 13 Brigade who is involved in the new RAAFWA project for homeless and in need veterans being established in Cannington, and Dianne Buckles, who has tirelessly been a member of the Red Cross for 23 years, attending all sorts of disasters and emergencies.

Judi said: "Poppies, Vets, WRAAC, Air Force wife stuff, Christmas Lights, Disability and Aged Care, all that sort of stuff I do...and love to do....and will continue to do."

What a force to be reckoned with. Thank you Judi.



MINISTER PAYS ANZAC HOUSE A VISIT

The Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel and the Federal Member for Burt stopped by ANZAC House recently for a chat with our service providers. We had some productive discussions and we are grateful to have such a solid relationship with the Minister.



DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR ANZAC MARCH

If your organisation is part of the RSL United and Kindred Group, or you have marched before, and are planning to march again on ANZAC Day 2023, we need to know.

Please fill in the online form at:
rslwa.org.au/commemoration/anzac-day

Even if it is not 100% confirmed that you are going to march, please still fill in the form. You can always update us at a later date.



(Left) CEO South Fremantle Football Club Cameron Britt and President Legacy WA Peter Emmett

An event, started during the pandemic, has turned into a tradition and proved to be a good kickstart to Legacy Week in WA. Current serving and retired members from RAAF Base Pearce have made attending the South Fremantle Football Club 'Bulldogs' versus East Perth 'Royals', WA Football League game an annual event with supporters of both teams from the Base engaging in healthy banter and camaraderie.

RAAF PEARCE KICKS GOALS FOR LEGACY WEEK

In perfect alignment for the start of Legacy Week in WA, State President Legacy WA, Mr Peter Emmett (a South Fremantle supporter), was an opportunistic last minute addition to the line-up.

The link between South Fremantle Football Club and RAAF Pearce lies in ACDRE Sir Hughie Edwards VC who was born in Fremantle and played aussie rules football for South Fremantle circa 1935, consequently the Junior Aviators' mess at RAAF Pearce is named The Hughie Edwards Club.

Members from RAAF Base Pearce looking for things to do in the locked-down State of WA, decided to form a group and attend the Presidents match-day function followed by the game in 2021 - It was declared an annual must-do after the success of the day.

"Of course, being a Bulldogs supporter I jumped at the chance to go along and was very grateful for the support that South Fremantle offered through their acknowledgement of Legacy Week. The \$1,000 donation was unexpected but very welcome, and a perfect way to start our key fundraising week of the year," Mr Emmett said.

Senior Australian Defence Force Officer, Wing Commander (WGCDR) Paul Taylor was delighted to continue the annual tradition.

"It's great to see the engagement of RAAF members with the local community at events like this, the generosity of the club in contributing to a cause which supports Defence veterans and their families is wonderful," he said.

And the game score? Let's just say that had the Royals supporters in the group not also been Defence members, they may not have agreed the statement that 'everyone was a winner on the day' - Bulldogs by nine points!

N·V·L

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#2445

Ron Baker's grandfathers shared a love for their family and country, but they also shared their service number, 2445, in the First World War. This is their story.

Bob Heard Baker was born in Devon in the UK in 1885 into a farming family, but as a 15 year old chose a different path that took him to London, as an errand boy for his great Aunt who ran a boarding house, then to Western Australia as a steward and hall porter at the Weld Club in Perth.

It was there he met florist, Florence Ferrier and it wasn't long before wedding bells were ringing in St George's Cathedral. They worked hard and bought a house in Victoria Park, where their daughter Rhoda was born in 1914. When World War I began, Bob, aged 29, left his pregnant wife and joined the 16th Battalion and sailed to Egypt on the HMAT Chilka.



It was 2 August 1915 when Bob landed on the shores of Gallipoli. Four days later he was wounded and sent to hospital in Mudros, Malta and then onto London to recover. By January 1916, Bob was well enough to return to battle; but before he left England, he wrote to the Army to say, "please send my Mother who is a widow and living in England, one shilling every pay, and as I am returning to the front, please be mindful

my dear wife in Australia is expecting our second child soon and if the worst happens take care of them all."

At the end of February 1916, Florence bore a son, Robert. Bob was sent to Alexandria and eventually to Marseilles, France. At the end of August 1916, not far from Pozieres, Bob was reported missing in action. Soon after it was understood that Bob had been killed in action.

Florence was told the news and began trying to find out about his belongings. A Canadian Soldier who had retrieved Bob's dog tags wrote to Florence and sent them to her on a ship from Glasgow in Scotland, but it was sunk, and the tags were lost forever.

It took many years of letter writing and pleading with the authorities before Florence received recognition of Bob's passing in those battlefields. Bob's name is on the wall at the Australian War Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux.

Florence was among many women that planted a tree in the Kings Park Avenue of Honour as a memorial to the man, Bob Heard Baker, that did not return.

George Julian Howell was born in the Sydney suburb of Enfield in 1893 into a large family of builders. George was known as Snowy because of his white-blond hair and played rugby for the local club with his brothers. When the time came to start work he had an apprenticeship as a builder.



When WWI began, George joined 1st Battalion and within 6 weeks, he was aboard the Orsova on his way to the Middle East. He landed in Gallipoli early in November and was there until the evacuation late in December 1915. From there to Egypt and onto Marseilles on the Invernia in March 1916, with plenty of action seen, until a gunshot wound at Pozieres sent George to an English hospital.

George returned to the battlefields in November 1916 and a promotion to Corporal saw him in heavy fighting at Demicourt for which he was awarded the Military Medal. In May 1917, at Bullecourt he was awarded the Victoria Cross, for his brave actions which were an inspiration to his comrades. He received his medal at Buckingham Palace from the King.

During the last days of 1917, George returned to Australia to a hero's welcome. It was a busy time for a Victoria Cross recipient, lots of official events for recruiting and motivating speeches to be written. Late in 1918, George fell in love with a nurse, Sarah Yates, known as Sadie. They married in St Stephens Church in Sydney and later had one daughter, Norma Lillian. Snowy continued with dinners, marches and entertaining over the next 20 years or so.

George joined the Army again in the 2nd World War but was only allowed to have a desk job and was frustrated, so he got himself discharged and joined the USA Small Ships Transport Service and saw action in the Philippines.

After Sadie's death in 1953, their beloved daughter had married a Western Australian born sailor, so George moved west. George Julian Howell VCMM passed away at Hollywood Hospital in December 1964 and was given a Military funeral at Karrakatta Cemetery.

One service number, two incredible men, both forever remembered.

Thanks to Ron and Tina Baker for supplying this story, which has been abridged by the editor. Some readers may be interested to know that prior to the introduction of army numbers in 1921, soldiers serving in the Australian Military Forces were assigned regimental numbers. These numbers were allotted at either battalion or corps level and were not unique.

FOSTERING STRONGER COMMUNITY RELATIONS



John Rolfe, North Beach RSL Sub-Branch, and Lt Paul Clinton from TS Marmion

North Beach Sub-Branch have donated ten kayaks to TS Marmion Naval Cadets, based at Hillarys Marina, as part of its programme of fostering stronger community relationships with service related organisations. The kayaks will assist the Cadets gain a broader range of water related skills whilst at the same time, having fun.

Members of the Sub-Branch have themselves been paddling kayaks on waters around Perth for a number of years as part

of their commitment to improve members' health and to build camaraderie.

President of the Sub-Branch, John Rolfe, said, "Our group kayak twice weekly, and as part of that collect debris such as plastics to contribute to keeping the waterways clean. We were fortunate to receive a grant to purchase new kayaks, so this gave us the opportunity to make this donation to TS Marmion."

John also said "Our Sub-Branch has had a long relationship with TS Marmion, and the donation was voted by our members as something that would benefit that organisation and further develop our relationship with them. It would also assist the Naval Cadets understand the values of the RSL."

Lieutenant Paul Clinton and Sub Lieutenant Kate Hartland received the kayaks on behalf of TS Marmion. Lieutenant Clinton acknowledged the donation saying "we have been borrowing kayaks from the North Beach RSL Sub-Branch over the years, and the donation has given us an additional resource for which we are thankful."

A win – win for both the RSL and the Naval Cadets.

TRAFALGAR DINNER: LET THE TRADITIONS LIVE ON



(L-R) Duncan Anderson - RSLWA State President, Commander Larry Menon - Master at Arms for the dinner and Commodore Ivan Ingham AM - Mess President for the dinner.

On Friday 21 October, a formal dinner was held at ANZAC House to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. It was a naval engagement between the British Royal Navy and the combined fleets of the French and Spanish Navies during the war of the Third Coalition. Whilst the outnumbered British fleet were victorious, it was towards the end of this battle that Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson was fatally shot by a French musketeer.

The Hon Kim Beazley AC was the guest of honour at the dinner which is steeped in many inherited traditions of the Royal Australian Navy, including the toast to Nelson which is given while seated. The exact genesis of this tradition is not clear. It is understood to be a dispensation in acknowledgement of limited headroom, but it could also have arisen due to the difficulty for some of maintaining balance in rough seas (with copious amounts of alcohol!).

This was the first formal occasion for almost everyone in the room toasting King Charles, with proceedings wonderfully complemented by the magic of The Royal Australian Navy Band Western Australia.



R&R AND MUCH MORE AT THE VETERANS TRANSITION CENTRE

RSLWA CEO Vince Connelly and the Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister for Veterans Affairs, recently visited the Veteran Transition Centre, near Jarrahdale to see first-hand the important services the Centre, run by veterans, provides.

The Centre provides free short-stay accommodation and supports veterans with transition to civilian employment and provision of confidential counselling services, including mental health, lifestyle and financial.

The property is in a natural bush setting nestled in the Darling Ranges on approximately 42 acres with many serene walking and cycle trails. As one veteran, who wishes to remain anonymous put it: "For me, this facility came out of the blue at just the right time in my life – probably saved it."

RSLWA purchased the property and lease it back to the charity on a long-term agreement – providing certainty to the veterans who run the Centre and supporting initiatives well into the future.

For more see: www.veteranstc.org.au or call 0488 188 806



VETERANS' DAY AT THE PERTH ROYAL SHOW



On Thursday 29 September all serving ADF members, veterans and their children received free entry to the Perth Royal Show and the kids were stoked to also receive a free show bag.

Military equipment and displays dazzled the crowds and included a Royal Australian Air Force fly over and 13th Brigade Fire and Movement display.

Thanks to everyone who dropped by. It was great to see you all!

PEOPLE PICKED UP POPPIES IN RECORD NUMBERS

Friday 4 November 2022, saw the regular annual Poppy Appeal return to the Perth CBD, with record breaking numbers giving generously in return for a poppy.

Over 70 veterans, volunteers and service personnel were at 30 locations throughout the Perth CBD from 7am.

All Poppy Appeal donations go directly to assist veterans in need; whether that be with financial matters, mental and physical health issues or with transitioning into non-military life and employment.

For more than one hundred years, the fundraising through the Poppy Appeal has helped make a difference for thousands of Western Australian veterans and their families.

Over 85 RSLWA Sub-Branches ran collections in suburbs and towns across the State.

RSLWA sincerely thanks everyone who volunteered and supported this year's Appeal.



RSLWA ATTENDS NATIONAL ESO FORUM

State President Duncan Anderson and CEO Vince Connelly, alongside representatives from more than 50 of Australia's leading ex-service organisations (ESO) attended a national forum coordinated by RSL in Canberra in November 2022.



The forum, facilitated by Ms Gai Brodtmann, brought together voices, interests and priorities from across the sector, creating a platform for greater collaboration as all stakeholders work to address the emerging findings of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

The day was a display of experience, insight, passion and commitment; but also a reminder of the shared purpose that unites us and the power of working together to address complex and important issues.

'We need to be clear, consistent and relentless in how we are advocating for veterans and their families with the government, and across society. It was collectively agreed that the establishment of some sort of peak body should be pursued by the sector to better enable this, a move that the RSL is fully supportive of' said RSL Australia President Greg Melick.

It is expected that RSL will publish a report that captures the outputs of the Forum in due course.

APOLOGY

RSLWA apologises for a mistake in the September edition of Listening Post. The article on p35 about Vietnam Veterans Day mistakenly noted 2022 was the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan; it was in fact the 56th Anniversary. We sincerely apologise for making this mistake. It has been corrected in our online edition that can be found in our archive at:

[RSLWA.org.au/news-events/the-listening-post](https://www.rslwa.org.au/news-events/the-listening-post).

HONOURING THE FIRST WA VC RECIPIENT



(L to R) Graham Archer, Warwick Archer (Ex 9 RAR C Coy SVN veteran), David Knox (Ex 9 RAR C Coy. SVN veteran) and Ian Johnson (Ex 36 Water Transport Sqn RAE & 19 RNSWR).

Lieutenant Frederick William Bell VC (b. 3 April 1875 d. 28 April 1954) was awarded the Victoria Cross on 16 May 1901 for his heroism during an action at Brakpan, East Transvaal, South Africa. He was the first Western Australian to be awarded this honour.

During a recent military history tour of France and the UK, on behalf of the Cottesloe Sub-Branch, a wreath was laid on Frederick's headstone at Canford Cemetery, Bristol, UK.

Bell was born in Perth and spent his formative years living in Beach Street, Cottesloe. He served in the Perth Artillery Volunteers before enlisting in the Western Australian Mounted Infantry at the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899.

The Cottesloe RSL Sub-Branch conducts an annual lecture named in Bell's honour, which will be held next in February 2023. A book written by Dr Neville Green AM, a former Sub-Branch President, details the life of Frederick Bell and will be available to purchase at the lecture.

Bell's medal set is on display in the VC Gallery at the Army Museum of WA in Fremantle.

Thanks to Graeme Johnson, Ex 2PIR (now RPIR) PNG, Member Cottesloe RSL Sub-Branch for submitting this story.

BELMONT BATTLE DISPLAY UNVEILED

On 26 October 2022, the South African Military Veterans Organisation of Australasia (SAMVOA) were honoured to have RSLWA President Duncan Anderson visit the City of Belmont Sub-Branch to unveil the WW1 'Battle of the Somme' section of their museum.

The display features a trench scene with a 16th Battalion Aussie 'Digger' at the Battle of Pozieres and a Transvaal Scottish 'Springbok' at the Battle of Delville Wood.

The RSLWA President gave the audience, which consisted of a large number of City of Belmont RSL members, as well as veterans from the Airborne Association of WA, the Rhodesian Services Association and of course veterans from SAMVOA, an informative talk about his vision of the RSLWA going forward which was very well received.

The consensus of the veterans on the night was that we are privileged to have him and his team in charge of RSLWA and we look forward to supporting them in the future.

Thank you to Garth A Pienaar for this submission.



Aussie Digger and South African Springbok somewhere in North Africa during WW2.

BETTER TOGETHER

YES IT WAS!



The inaugural Better Together Ball certainly hit all the right high notes and for all the right reasons!

Not only do we think this was an Australian first, joining up our two organisations - RSLWA and Legacy WA for the night, the energy in the room was fantastic.





It was a memorable night filled with wonderful entertainment, good food, great company and a spectacular setting.

Over 400 guests mingled together in the Optus Stadium ballroom, raising important funds for programs that support veterans and their families.

The VIP list was impressive, from Hon. Mark McGowan MLA, Hon. Matt Keogh MP, Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA, His Excellency the Hon. Chris Dawson APM and a number of distinguished guests from the defence industry alongside some of the RSLWA team and our Sub-Branches.

RSLWA CEO Vince Connelly said: “Coming together with Legacy WA and uniting behind our common goals makes us stronger together.

The event has been met with such positivity and praise that we are already turning our thoughts to how we can make 2023 even better together.

Sincere thanks to our valuable partners of the night. We genuinely couldn’t have put on such a show without your support.”

If you missed out this year, or want to be first in line next year, a waitlist for prospective sponsors and guests has been opened, just email us at marketing@rslwa.org.au to be amongst the first to hear about the Better Together Ball 2023.





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More photos of this amazing night can be found at:
rslwa.org.au/news-events/better-together-ball

HERO'S BLOOD

by Mark Race
Port Kennedy RSL

Federation was gained in 1901
The Boer War raged, the British said it could be won
Help us they cried for we are one
So our men enlisted in a flood
Only to sail away and shed their Hero's Blood.

They fought as Australians for two long years
They gazed into the distance dreaming of
home through their tears
Two long years they suffered but firm they stood
Only to shed more Hero's Blood.

During these years to China they went
A rebellion to quell and so they were sent
Our men and the Boxers fought in the mud
Only to shed their Hero's Blood.

In 1914 the Great War began
What's so great about it the people sang?
62000 men never came home
62000 stayed there alone
It is not forgotten they died in the mud
It is not forgotten they shed their Hero's Blood.

The years went by the war at an end
Back to their homeland where they could mend
They remember their mates as they stood in the mud
They remember their mates and their Hero's Blood.

The war to end all wars didn't end that way
It wasn't long before again they went away
In the jungles and deserts our Soldiers were sent
They fought like demons wherever they went
Through the jungles the enemy appeared like a flood
Once again our people shed their Hero's Blood.

Our Air Force was there and didn't shy
And during the Battle of Britain proved they could fly
Some of our pilots died but not in vain
And their Hero's Blood fell from the sky like rain.

Some of our men sailed the seas
Conveying our troops to destinations not many people see
Travelling and fighting on the oceans in a steel shell
Alas in this place some of them still dwell.

The Kamikaze struck and rained hell from above
But the men stood fast their actions never slowed
They died where they stood and on the ocean
their Hero's Blood flowed.

Prisoners of war our people became
Men and Women were treated the same
Forced to labour again in the mud
Here too they shed their Hero's Blood.

But WW11 wasn't the end
Korea, Malaya and Borneo were just around the bend
In these foreign lands again our people died
And left their Hero's Blood where they lie.

In circles the Politicians ran
When America stated not a war a Police Action. Damn!
But gathered our troops they did again
and sent them off to Vietnam.

In a plantation of rubber in a place called Long Tan
Back in Nui Dat Little Pattie sang
D Company held the enemy flood
And there shed their Hero's Blood.

Many years passed before our troops again had to stand
The Government sent them to Iraq and Afghanistan
Terrorism had taken a great hold, we must stamp it out
and stem the flood
In these countries they didn't know where they stood
And here again shed their Hero's Blood.

Over the years throughout the wars
our men and women would fight and die
No matter the country here they still lie
No matter their colour, religion or blood
wherever they went they stemmed the flood
They are always remembered never forgotten
They are all Australian; they are all Hero's
and all of one Blood.



FORGOTTEN HEROES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

by FLORENCE BREED

This book begins with a remarkable chronological listing of the major Boer War events. The author states the book “is a testimonial to the endurance, discipline and courage of the men from the Donald district who answered their Empire’s Call to Arms” but it is much more than that. The manuscript contains letters, diary extracts, maps, cartoons and excellent photographs which tell in the most vivid and colourful manner of the fighting, marching, riding and terrible defeats suffered by the British and Colonial Forces before the tide was turned and the Treaty of Peace was signed on 31 May 1902.

For any student of military history, or for any reader interested in this war which for the first time in history saw the use of trench warfare, observation balloons, armoured trains, guerrilla warfare, landmines and concentration camps, this book is a must.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Although Florence was born exactly thirty years after the last shot in this South African War was fired, her parents told her about Mafeking night when people shouted themselves hoarse, singing “Soldiers of the Queen”. Both her father and grandfather served in the Plymouth Division of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, and during their long careers they trained naval gun crews. Her Grandfather was in the Boer War, and father in World War 1 – on sea and land.

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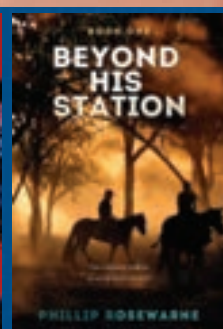
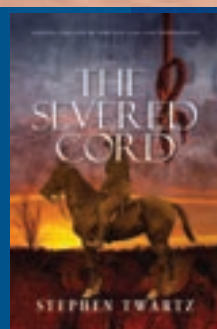
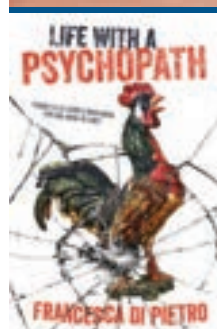
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VALE

ABE SHER

Highgate Sub-Branch have advised of the passing of their oldest member, Abe Sher, in late August 2022. He was 104.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Abe served in the South African forces during the Second World War. He enlisted in the 2nd Natal Mounted Rifles, transferring to the Transvaal Horse Artillery.

Abe was captured at Tobruk in 1942; he spent the remainder of the war in Italian and German captivity. Abe had the added worry at the prospect of being Jewish in Axis occupied Europe, but he noted that his fellow Allied POWs always protected him and the other Jewish boys.

In 1998, Abe migrated to Perth. He quickly discovered the men and women of the RSL. Abe took enormous joy from the camaraderie, fellowship and understanding of his fellow veterans.

Imagine his delight when he encountered an Australian veteran who had also been in Stalag IV-C and who recalled the same experiences, especially the daily bombing raids.



Abe (L) and his brother Bennett, in his kilt, early WW2

Abe's grandson, Jeremy Sher said; "Indeed, my grandfather's monthly lunches were of great importance to him. My grandfather often told me of the experiences of the people that he met at these lunches. He particularly appreciated meeting the occasional ANZAC that had served in North Africa.

"Each year, I was honoured to accompany him to the ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies. He kept attending the ceremonies, including this year. When he put on a suit, he always wore his 'zig zag' artillery tie and RSL badge with immense pride."

Abe is survived by two sons, Julian and David, daughters-in-law, Noreen and Galia, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

VERNON DAULBY



Vern was born on 26 September 1926 in Colonel Light Gardens in South Australia. On 4 January 1944, aged 17 amidst WWII, Vern joined the Royal Australian Navy. Based in Western Port Bay, Victoria, at HMAS Cerberus, Vern trained as a morse code expert. He was seconded to the Army and trained at Canungra, Queensland, before transferring to Naval Beach, setting up ship-to-shore communications.

In June 1945, Vern went to Borneo where he served on the HMAS Hobart and Warrnambool. It was there he witnessed General MacArthur, the man in charge of all operations in the Pacific, be carried ashore from a naval barge.

Vern contracted malaria and was evacuated to Port Moresby in PNG and discharged from service in December 1946.

After the war Vern met his wife Elizabeth (27 May 1925 to 4 September 2022) at a dance in Yorktown, South Australia. He followed Elizabeth back to Western Australia and they were married in 1951.

Soon after, they moved to Mullewa where Vern was the postal clerk and Elizabeth a nurse. They had their first two children, Jan and Garry.

In 1955, Vern and Elizabeth moved to Bridgetown where their third child, Terri was born. Vern was in charge of the Post Office until his retirement in 1986. He was a Life member of the Bridgetown Sub-Branch and member of the Bridgetown Club and Bridgetown Golf Club.

Vern passed away on 8 September 2022, aged 95.

Vern and Elizabeth's legacy are their three children, 11 grandchildren and 13 great children. We will always be grateful to Vern for his service, his character, sense of humour, stories and his contribution to our community.

THE LAST POST

SEPTEMBER 2022 – DECEMBER 2022

ARMY

Beeson, Robert L54988
Boulder

Bignell, Keith M WX22710
Kojonup

Churcher, Ron 5-703491
Victoria Park/South Perth

Coe, Robert 5/410309
Kalamunda

De Pierres OAM, Paul R 5716806
Wyalkatchem

Frear, John 24003291
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Hackett, Basil WX36897
Port Kennedy

Jung, Denis 8238014
Joondalup City

Marr, Raymond 5716860
City of Cockburn

McCormack, Bernard 5715491
Bunbury

Morris, Lionel 5715712
City of Mandurah

Nelson, Jack 213273
City of Rockingham

Panting, Stanley 5/1651
City of Rockingham

BRITISH ARMY

Reed, Frank 14256961
British Army
City of Mandurah

Papalia, Joseph 5/400149
City of Rockingham

Pearce, Colin 5717308
Albany

Rooney, Richard 5714183
Manjimup

Ryan, Harold 5/700671
Yokine-Joondana

Sheehan, Peter T2015453
City of Perth

Smith, Michael 553985
City of Perth

Stretch, William WX9506
Busselton

Thomas, Eric 5/400302
Geraldton City

Walker, Raymond 55865
Peaceful Bay

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If you have recently lost a loved one who was a veteran and would like to have them honoured here, please let us know by emailing membership@rslwa.org.au

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