

# Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 1

February 2024



**REMINDER**  
**General Meeting**  
**Sunday 25 February**  
**10.30am**  
**Bring your Partner**

## From the President's Desk

**Remembrance Day 2023.** The weather was to be fine—that is what the weatherman said. The morning started with a heavy shower of rain and when it stopped, it was very overcast with thick dark clouds everywhere. However, following that first burst of wet weather, we had no more rain and a gentle breeze to cool things down a bit.



**Our New Gazebos in Use**

There were about 300 people in attendance by the time we got underway. We started a little later than scheduled and use a different format for the ceremony. Our aim was to have the minute's silence take place right on 1100—we missed by two minutes and will do better next year. The new format entailed having the wreath laying after the Ode, Last Post, Silence, and Rouse. That way we could more accurately time everything.

One of the things that was missing from our ceremony this year was the presence of our Catafalque Party. Unfortunately, our request got lost in the mysteries of the internet and by the time we discovered this, it was too late to remedy.

The ceremony began with our regular Padre, Father Don Parker from the Southport Anglican Church. This was followed by the very formal part of the ceremony—the Ode and Last Post, Silence, and Rouse. The bugle calls were delivered live by Trevor John.

Our guest speaker for the day also gave us some anxious time as he had to pull out at the last minute due to medical reasons. We were, fortunately, able to get a replacement from the Canungra Land Warfare Centre. It was rather pleasing to have as the replacement, A serving member of the Army, WO2 Matthew Julian.

The traditional poem In Flanders Fields, was beautifully delivered by Charlie Browne from the Southport Yacht Club.

Following the ceremony, several veterans and members of the public found themselves at the Southport Bowls Club where light refreshments

were served and the odd ice-cold drink was downed. All-in-all, this was one of the best Remembrance Days I have been privileged to be part of.



**November Quarterly Meeting.** The last quarterly meeting for 2023 was held at the Bowls Club on Sunday 19 November. Our attendance continues to decline and we barely made the quorum of the board number plus one. It would be great if some of the more able-bodied members could come to our meetings.

None the less, we had a good meeting with a nice lot of interaction between people. Following the meeting we all went down to have

cold drinks, nice refreshments, and great chats with a lot of reminiscing about our times in the services.

**Of course I talk to myself.  
Sometimes I need expert advice.**

**Sub Branch Accommodation.** Just before the November Quarterly Meeting, I was able to send out a special edition of the Newsletter advising that the Sub Branch and Bowls Club had finally been able to come to an agreement which both parties were happy with. There were some compromises on the part of the Sub Branch but I think we have now been able to relax and get on with our business of looking after our members and the wider veteran community.

We have abandoned our plans to refurbish the top floor of the Bowls Club and outfit it with office space and a meeting area. For at least the next six years the Sub Branch will be situated in two ground-floor office spaces at the western end of the building. There was some work to do on both office spaces before we could move into them and that began in December of last year.

On Tuesday 29 November we signed the new License Agreement which gives us a year with three plus three years of tenancy. We are now paying a much simpler monthly fee that includes all out-goings. This certainly makes budgeting a lot easier to predict.

### **Legal Matters.**

***Loan Default*** In the period immediately after the publication of the last Newsletter there was some movement with our Loan Default case. This involved several meetings with potential witnesses and documents being requested from organisations I had no idea would have any bearing on the case.

***Eviction.*** As you are aware from previous issues of this Newsletter, we won this case against the Memorial Club who then appealed the decision. We won that appeal, so the Memorial Club decided they would challenge that decision in the High Court of Australia. It gives me great pleasure to be able to tell you all that we won that one too. We have won all three cases with costs awarded in our favour. Now comes the battle to get paid. In each of the wins we have been granted costs which are now almost as big as the initial penalty.

**Christmas Gift to Southport Police.** Every year the Sub Branch says thank you to the men and women at the Southport Police Station by delivering tins of chocolates and biscuits to the station. The delivery is made on Christmas morning so that the officers that are on duty that day have something to cheer their day along.



**Preparing to leave for the Police Station**

Immediately following his breakfast, your President, John Riebeling set off for Southport and delivered the annual gift to a very appreciative constable. He thanked the officers of the Station for the marvellous way they had looked after the Sub Branch over the year, particularly on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day. He wished them all a happy and a safe 2024 and wished those officers who had been rostered for duty on Christmas Day a very Merry Christmas and hopefully, a nice quiet day.

**Volunteers.** Every year the Sub Branch would like to man two locations for the selling of badges and poppies to the public. There are two reasons why we do this and the most important is to make our presence in Southport known to as many people as we can. The second, and less important reason is to raise money for the ongoing operations of the Sub Branch.

When we tried to man the two locations, one at Australia Fair and the other at Southport Park, we came up short. We could not get enough volunteers to man both locations and had to pull out of Southport Park.

I do not think it is much to ask that for only two periods a year that our members hold up their hand and volunteer a few hours to publicise our wonderful Sub Branch and to raise some money for the continued services we provide to our veterans. So please, when we next ask for volunteers, could you consider lending a hand.

**New Treasurer.** I was approached by one of our members at the Quarterly General Meeting in November last year, saying he could make himself available to help with the work that the treasurer does. It didn't take me too long to convince Harry Hansen to take on the treasurer's job fulltime. He was officially appointed to the position at the December board meeting and commenced duties in January this year.

## District Christmas Lunch

The annual District Christmas Lunch was held at the Currumbin RSL on Sunday 26 November. The Sub Branch was allocated six positions that the district would pay for while additional places were paid for by the Sub Branch. We had a total of eight attend with one person having to pull out at the last minute due to a bout of the dreaded COVID. Representatives from most Sub Branches were present and the day turned out to be a very pleasant one with an interesting speaker giving an insight into how the Australian War Memorial in Canberra functioned when he was a member of their board.

## Save a DUI Charge – Take a Taxi

By John Riebeling

I would like to share a personal experience I had about drinking and driving.

This might save you the embarrassment and cost of being arrested for DUI.

As you know, people have been known to have unexpected brushes with the authorities from time to time, often on the way home after a "social session" with family or friends.

Well recently, it happened to me. I was out for the night to a party and had more than several margaritas coupled with a bottle of rather lovely red wine. It was held at a great Italian restaurant. Although relaxed, I still had the common sense to know I was slightly over the

limit. That's when I did something I've never done before... I took a taxi home.

On the way home there was a police roadblock, but since it was a taxi, they waved it past and I arrived home safely without incident. These roadblocks can be anywhere and I realized how lucky I was to have chosen to take a taxi.

The real surprise to me was, that I had never driven a taxi before. Not sure where I got it, and now that it's in my garage. I don't know what to do with it. If you want to borrow it, give me a call.

### VALE – WAYNE COLLINS

Many of you, particularly those that have attended any of our commemorations or Quarterly General Meetings will have seen and probably met a man who epitomised what the RSL is all about. Wayne Collins was not an ex-serviceman and only became a social member of our Sub Branch in late 2023. Wayne devoted more time to supporting our Sub Branch than most other members and will be sadly missed. For as long as I can remember, Wayne would man the sign-in table at all our General Meetings and was the first to put up his hand when help was needed.

### Know and Cherish Your Military Heritage

By Ken Orr

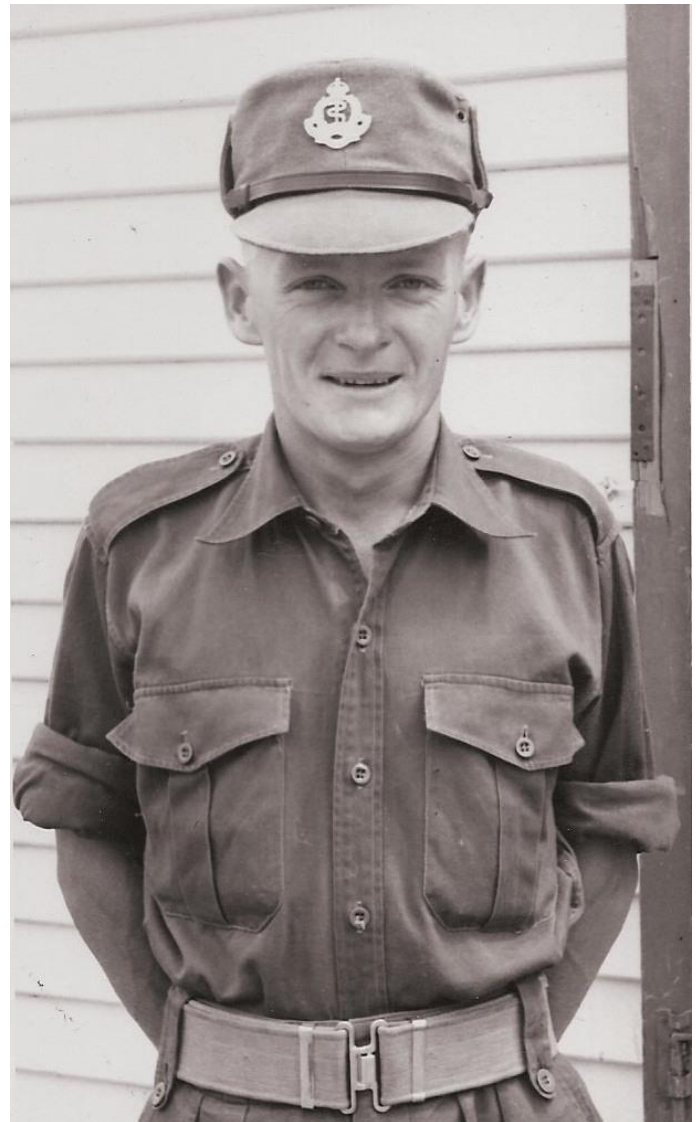
When my son was born, I had a sudden urge to dabble in genealogy. One of my favourite pursuits has been researching my family military history, of which I am very proud. I have also over recent years assisted one of our prominent WWII veterans, the late David Mattiske OAM, with capturing elements of historical military significance.

I encourage you to document your own military experiences, and (if relevant) those of your ancestors. So much information is now available online and is there for the taking. Could I also suggest that where possible involving younger members of your family in this endeavour is very rewarding – as well as having someone on hand to wrangle computer technology for you! It's so important to document our rich military history before the

knowledge is lost to us, and encourage younger generations to embrace and cherish it.

As an example of what can be found, I would like to share a summary of my family military history, which as you can see traverses many generations.

### **Kenneth Orr Sr, 1942-2016** (father)



**Ken Orr Sr.**

Dad was a Medic with the 2nd Bn, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (formerly the Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast Regt, NZ Territorial Force) in the mid 1960's. Unfortunately, I have so far been unable to obtain Dad's military file, though have now been inspired to make yet a further request!

### **Ernest Orr, 1906-1995** (paternal grandfather)

Ernie was initially an Army Cadet, then served with the 1st Bn, Wellington Regt, NZ Territorial Force from 1922-28.

**William Burrows, 1881-1956** (paternal great-grandfather)



**William Burrows**

The town Postman, William first served from 1901-07 in the 3rd Volunteer Bn, West Riding Regt. He then also served in the Territorial Force with 6th West Riding Regt from 1909-13. Although he was getting older, and had a wife and two young children, due to his experience he attested again for second period of Territorial Force service with 2/6 Bn, West Riding Regt on 22 Mar 1915, aged 33. William embarked from Southampton for France 29 Feb 1916, but in May 1916 contracted influenza and was evacuated back to the UK. While recovering from influenza (which took months in those days) on 13 Mar 1917 he was recruited by and transferred to the 4th Bn Machine Gun Corps, aged 35. He fought in engagements throughout France, including on The Somme. He returned to England on 14 Feb 1919 and was demobilised a couple of days later, aged 37.

**George Burton, 1883-1930** (maternal great-grandfather)

Aged 34, and with four young children at home, local grocer George joined the British Army Reserve on 2 Mar 1916. He was mobilised on 20 Jun 1917 and posted to the 6th (Howe) Bn, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) on 13 Oct 1917. On 14 Nov 1917 he was deployed to Belgium. On 16 Sep 1918 George was discharged from the RNVR and re-enlisted in the Royal Marines as a Saddler with the Divisional Train Reserves - the Train provided horse-drawn transport for a Division. George was demobilised on 3 Apr 1919.

**William Thomson, 1788-1867** (maternal 4th great-grandfather)



**William Thomson  
British Army Records**

Our Scottish Solider, gardener William enlisted in the 43rd Light Infantry Regiment on 3 May 1811. William was initially stationed in Spain and Portugal, then in 1813 proceeded to France. William was known to be involved in several Battles late in the Peninsula Wars – Vitoria, Pyrenees, Nivelle, Nive and Toulouse. William’s initial enlistment was for 7 years, following this he re-enlisted for life at Valenciennes in France on 25 May 1818. During a long career he was stationed in many places – the United States 1814-15, France 1815-18, Ireland 1818-22, Gibraltar 1822-25 (where he met and married my French 4th great-grandmother), England 1826-31, Ireland 1832-35, and lastly Canada 1835-38. William was discharged as a Quarter Master Sergeant on 12 Sep 1838, with his total service 27 years and 135 days. His record notes that he was discharged due to “impaired constitution from length of service; to such a degree as to render him permanently unfit for the active duties of his service.”

## Fifty-One Years

Australia's war officially ended on 11 January 1973 with a proclamation by Governor-General Paul Hasluck. Almost 60,000 Australians from all three services served in Vietnam. More than 3,000 service personnel were wounded and 521 lost their lives.

Let us honour the lives of these extraordinary servicemen and women – their service, their sacrifices, and their lives – the families they

have created; the contributions they have made to Australia, and the dignity with which they have carried forward the ANZAC Spirit.

**Every family has one weird relative  
If you don't know who it is, it's probably you.**



**"I told her, the day I do the dishes is the day the sky falls in."**

## **Battle of Wau**

January – February 1943

In April 1942, the Australian Army established a small guerilla unit, called Kanga Force. It was made up of men from the 1st and 2/5th Independent Companies, as well as the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles.

The 17th Brigade later reinforced Kanga Force, by then concentrated around Wau. Their position was strategically located across a series of tracks and waterways that connected the north and south coasts across the mountains to the west of the Kokoda Track.

On 21 January 1943, Allied forces detected Japanese movement toward Wau. Several

companies of the 2/6th Battalion moved east of the town to block their approach.

On 28 January, advancing Japanese ran into A Company of the 2/6th Infantry Battalion under Captain Wilfred Holden Sherlock at Wandumi, 3 km from Wau.

Japanese attacked with machine guns and mortars. The battle raged during the night, but Sherlock and his company held on. Sherlock was killed the next day trying to break through Japanese lines.

The Japanese got to within a few metres of the Wau airfield. Captain Sherlock became known as the 'Saviour Of Wau' due to his early actions.

The Allies knew they had to defend the Wau Aerodrome. A Company had bought them some time.

On 29 January, the Japanese started bombing the airfield. Meanwhile, battle-ready troops were airlifted to Wau and went straight into action.

Over the next few days, many reinforcements arrived by air. On 31 January, 35 aircraft made 71 trips. On 1 February, 40 aircraft made 53 trips.

The Japanese again tried to cut off this stream of troops by bombing the airstrip. Bad weather hampered this attempt and the Japanese returned to Rabaul.

On 6 February, Allied pilots downed 24 Japanese aircraft and the Japanese forces continued retreating toward Mubo. Australian Army personnel advanced on their heels.

The Battle of Wau was the last attempt by the Japanese to advance towards Port Moresby. Their defeat marked the end of their significant offensive on New Guinea.

The Battle of Wau led to 349 Kanga Force soldiers and officers killed, while Australian troops counted 753 Japanese dead.

**The irony of mankind is that a computer program asks a human to prove they are not a robot**

## The Battle of Beersheba

Contribution by Steve Bloxham OAM

On 31 October 1917, the heavily fortified town of Beersheba was the scene of a historic charge by the men of the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Commencing at dusk, the brigade stormed the town, using their bayonets as swords in a highly unconventional charge. The momentum of the surprise attack carried them through the Turkish defences where they were able to secure the town before it could be destroyed by the retreating Turkish force.



**Camp and Horse Lines**

### Commemorations across Queensland

Queensland communities hosted many special events and activities to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Australian Light Horse's daring charge at Beersheba. Discover the exciting commemorations held in partnership with Queensland Mounted Infantry Historical Troop, Australian Outback Spectacular and more.

### The background to Beersheba

The charge of Beersheba by the Australian Light Horse took place on 31 October 1917, during the third Battle of Gaza in Palestine. It was a vital component of the allied forces' campaign to secure the Sinai Peninsula and ensure the shipping corridors along the Suez Canal remained open to Britain and its allies.

The commanders of the allied forces turned their focus to Beersheba, a town at the end of the Turkish defensive line. Although most of the Turkish forces were stationed in Gaza, the 1000 Turkish rifleman in Beersheba had strong defensive positions and were supported by nine machine guns and two aircraft.

To maintain the element of surprise, the 40,000-strong Desert Mounted Corps made the dusty 43km-trek toward Beersheba under the cover of darkness on 30 October 1917. They attacked at dawn the following day, starting with an offensive at Sakati to close the road and halt Turkish reinforcements. The troops then progressed to Tel El Saba, 3km east of Beersheba, but were met with fierce resistance from the Turkish forces.

The Desert Mounted Corps captured Tel El Saba by mid-afternoon, however this left few hours of daylight for the assault on Beersheba. They had to take this town before nightfall, as its wells were the only source of water available in the region and the troops had not resupplied in several days.

### An unconventional approach

Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel put the challenge to Brigadier General William Grant's 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade.

The traditional strategy for the Light Horse—to dismount and attack with rifles from a distance—would leave the men vulnerable to shrapnel fire on the open plains surrounding Beersheba. General Grant devised a different approach; they would attack like a cavalry unit, bayonets in hand like sabres.



**Member of the Australian 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse**

The charge, which commenced around 5pm, caught the Turkish gunners off guard. They had little time to recalibrate their weapons for close range battle, and could largely only fire shrapnel over the charging horsemen's heads.

While the 4th Regiment dismounted at the trenches to confront the awed enemy (ultimately taking over 700 prisoners), the 12th Regiment

further surprised the Turks by continuing their furious charge over the trenches and straight on to the town, capturing it before the Turkish forces could regroup or destroy the wells in a retreat.

### A historic success

The unconventional approach was a success—the town and its wells were secured, providing the 60,000 allied troops with access to the region's only dependable source of water. However, 31 men from the Light Horse lost their lives and an additional 36 were wounded. At least 70 horses also died during the charge.

The occupation of Beersheba was the beginning of the end for the Turkish defensive line. The allied forces were soon able to outflank the forces in Gaza, and the Turkish resistance in the long-contested city collapsed within the week.

### Fast facts

- Many of the Light Horse men involved in the Battle of Beersheba had already proven themselves on the beaches at Gallipoli, although without their beloved horses.
- Only two of the 4th Light Horse's three regiments—the 4th from Victoria, and the 12th from New South Wales—would charge the Turkish position. The 11th Regiment, on detached duty at the time, was ordered to saddle up and follow into Beersheba when ready.
- The 11th regiment was largely formed in Queensland, with one squadron coming from South Australia.
- Queenslander Trooper Thomas O'Leary, of the 4th Light Horse regiment, raced ahead of his unit into Beersheba to capture 30 Ottoman Turkish soldiers single handed, and then assisted in the capture of a field gun. He was awarded the Military Medal for these actions.
- About 800 men and horses made up the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade.
- Over 1000 Turkish prisoners were taken.
- 31 men from the Light Horse were killed, 36 were wounded, 70 horses killed with over 60 wounded.

- The British lost 171 troops killed in action earlier in the day attempting to take Beersheba.
- Ottoman casualties are believed to be about 1000 (killed and wounded).
- The success of this charge allowed approximately 60,000 allied troops access to water.
- By 10 pm on 31 October, approximately 58,000 light horsemen and 100,000 animals had swarmed into Beersheba. It took 1,800,000 litres of water to shed their battle thirst.

### Useful links

[A detailed account of the Battle of Beersheba by the Australian War Memorial](#)

[The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918 \(10th edition, 1941\) by Henry Somer \(Harry\) Gullett, Australian War Memorial](#)

[The story of Edward Randolph Cleaver, 4th Australian Light Horse Regiment via Australian War Memorial](#)

[The story of Major George Herbert Bourne, B Squadron, 2nd Light Horse Regiment via the State Library of Queensland](#)

[National Geographic documentary excerpts on Australian war horses](#)

### Events

[100th anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba](#)

### Short Stirling 'Gremlin Teaser'



With its nose rising imperiously into the air, the impressive stature of the Stirling was a result of the massive, lengthened undercarriage the



aircraft employed, a design modification needed to give the Stirling a greater angle of attack during take-off. The Stirling's huge bomb bay allowed the aircraft to carry three times as many bombs as the Vickers Wellington and almost nine times the weight carried by a Bristol Blenheim, presenting the RAF with a potent new weapon with which to take the war to the enemy and pointing the way towards the future of night bombing operations.

Stirling Mk.III LJ542 was unusual in that it sported rather elaborate nose artwork, a feature which was nothing like as prevalent on British aircraft during WWII but was in this case particularly impressive. Named 'The Gremlin Teaser,' the artwork featured a pin-up girl wearing what appear to be strap-on angel wings, the inference thought to be that this angelic figure was flying in defiance of evil, in this age-old wartime struggle of good against evil, something its crew must have felt they were doing on a nightly basis. 'The Gremlin Teaser' would end up being a veteran of 60 operational sorties and during her time with No.199 Squadron, was involved in undertaking vital electronic countermeasures missions, particularly around the time of D-Day, confusing enemy defences in advance of the Allied invasion.

**Never leave home without a kiss, a hug, and an "I love you". Then remove the dog hair from your mouth as you walk to the car**

## Veterans' Morning Teas

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

<b>21 February 24</b>	<b>20 March 24</b>
<b>17 April 24</b>	<b>15 May 24</b>
<b>19 June 24</b>	<b>17 July 24</b>
<b>21 August 24</b>	<b>18 September 24</b>
<b>16 October 24</b>	<b>20 November 24</b>
<b>11 December 24</b>	

## Poppy Service



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

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



**"Keep going! I'll run out and mortgage the house and meet you at the checkout."**

My wife was standing nude, looking in the bedroom mirror.

She was not happy with what she saw and said to me, "I feel horrible; I look old, fat and ugly. I really need you to pay me a compliment."

I replied, "Your eyesight's damn near perfect."

**And then the fight started.....**



General Meeting Dates	
Meeting	Date
General	Sun, 25 Feb 24
<b>AGM</b>	<b>Sun, 19 May 24</b>
General	Sun, 25 Aug 24
General	Sun, 24 Nov 24
All meetings start at 10:30	

Current Board Members	
John Riebeling	<b>President</b>
Ken Orr	<b>Deputy President</b>
Harold Hansen	<b>Treasurer</b>
Michael Burg	<b>Secretary</b>
Claude Palmer	<b>Director 1</b>
Sandra Riebeling	<b>Director 2</b>
Steve Bloxham OAM	<b>Director 3</b>
Kevin Lloyd-Thomas	<b>Director 4</b>
Craig Thomas	<b>Director 5</b>
Keith Bazley	<b>Director 6</b>
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