



RSL NSW AUXILIARY NEWS

December, 2021

It is so hard to believe 2021 is almost over, for many they will be very grateful for that, it wasn't a year we envisaged and one that hopefully won't be repeated. With one thing and another the last few years haven't been easy for our organisation but some wonderful things have been achieved and we want to thank you all for continuing to support RSL NSW, our veterans, their families and each other. We have an amazing and dedicated group of members and we are looking forward to getting back to some normality next year and doing what we do best.

It is early days with this new Covid variant but the scientists seem hopeful that it won't be as devastating as Delta, we need to hope and pray that they are right.

Over the last couple of weeks I have sent a few emails out and I have been asked why I have changed my sign-off to Susan Allen, there are two reasons, the first is that there is another Sue Allen who is not involved in RSL NSW but Quilts for Valour so the names cross.

The second reason is that I get referred to as Suellen, which makes me seem like the drunk in Dallas, so to make things very simple I will be signing off official things as Susan, in everything else I am still Sue.



On behalf of RSL NSW,
Pauline and myself,
thank you for your continuous
hard work and support,
we wish you
and your families a safe and
wonderful Christmas
and health and happiness in the
coming year.



I know it's only a couple of months since the last newsletter (yes, that one was very late) I want to thank all of you who have sent me lovely comments on it and also to those who have contributed to this one. We may be individual Auxiliaries but we all belong to the one League. It wonderful to share what is happening locally, how we are fundraising etc. As you will see in some of the photo's in the Around the Auxiliaries, the great fundraising ideas that are being used.

This is so important as we start a new year to remember we are a fundraising arm of the League and we need to get out there doing what we do best, at the same time been seen, proudly show our badge and hopefully encourage new people to join us.



Many of us (yes, including me) don't like reading long items on line, here's a suggestion from Pauline, ask your Local, State or Federal member to print copies of the Newsletter for each of your members, they do assist charitable organisations with their work, also, ask them to add an article to their Newsletters or social media posts, letting people know what we do and how they can help and hopefully join

RSL NSW will be closing for the Christmas/New Year break, 23rd December, 2021 and reopen 10th January, 2021. A very well deserved break, this year has been particularly hard for them not only having to work from home but having to move the office during the lockdown.

On behalf of Pauline and myself, I would like to thank all the staff at RSL NSW, especially State Secretary, Jeff O'Brien and Dianne Naylor, Executive Support Officer who both do so much all of us.

While writing this I have just heard today's Covid Numbers and sadly they are going up again, thankfully Congress was held remotely again this year and not up in Newcastle as intended, where there seems to be a current spike.

I am sure many of you will be interested in what happened at Congress and you can watch a recording of the event at <https://www.rslnsw.org.au/members-suite/congress/>. It was run over two days but is well worth checking out. some wonderful things are happening and we all should be aware of what is happening and what is needed.



A new body has been established to directly advise the RSL NSW Board on matters impacting young veterans.

The RSL NSW Young Veterans Committee will be focused on engaging with young veterans not yet participating in the League to understand how the League, through its sub-Branch network, can better cater to their needs and attract them to participate.





I hope the Q & A in the last Newsletter answered some of your questions, I haven't had any new questions, a few comments though which I will get to later, there are a few things, some new and some I will repeat.

- Firstly. The RSL NSW Board resolved on 27 September that membership for 2022 will be fee free. This includes Affiliate, Associate and Auxiliary Members?
- For new members, a copy of the application form which has been filled out by the sub Branch, is to be forwarded to RSL NSW. The name of the new member will then be added to our portal and a new badge will be sent out. The new badge is only for new Auxiliary members, existing members should keep their existing badges. New badges are free, in the event one is lost or broken we can replace them at a cost of \$6.00
- Auxiliary donation (from your sub Branch) to DefenceCare, should be deposited to RSL of Australia NSW Branch BSB 062-016 Account No 0000-074, please note on the deposit that it is a donation for DefenceCare from your Auxiliary, they will then be eligible to enter the Lady Woodward Cup.
- Newsletter -will be published twice a year, contributions very welcome. RSL NSW will email a copy of the Newsletter to each sub Branch and a copy will be placed on our website. I will email a copy to each Auxiliary and any individual member that I have an address for, if any members would like to be added to my database please send their email address to me at sueallen123@bigpond.com and I will add them.
- From time to time I do send out some information which may be of interest to your Auxiliary so it would be wonderful if I could have a contact email address for each Auxiliary, I thank those who have already advised their email address.
- ANZAC & Remembrance Day Tokens are no longer sourced from DefenceCare, it is up to each sub Branch to source tokens etc. All monies raised are retained by the sub Branch.
- Contact details - Would all Co-ordinators please send me contact details (phone number & email address) for themselves and their Deputy Co-ordinator.





Over the 6th & 7th December, 2021 RSL NSW held their State Congress & AGM,

Distinguished guests, delegates, ladies, and gentlemen. Welcome to the 2021 RSL New South Wales State Congress.

I wish to also acknowledge all current Serving members of the Australian Defence Force and all veterans who have served our nation with pride and remember those who are no longer with us.

"It was eighteen minutes past four in the morning of Sunday, 25th April when the first boat grounded. So far not a shot had been fired by the enemy. The men leapt into the water, and the first of them had just reached the beach when fire was opened on them from the trenches on the foothills. The men did not wait to be hit ... they simply rushed up the steep slopes." That was war-time correspondent Charles Bean describing the landing at Gallipoli by the ANZACs in 1915. The survivors and families of those lost in that campaign started the League less than a year later. The League has been the foundation of veteran welfare, support and advocacy since those Diggers returned from the shores of Gallipoli.

That is who we all must remember when we make decisions during this Congress and everyday as members of the RSL. First World War Australian Military Commander, General Sir John Monash said, "Equip yourself for life, not solely for your own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole community." A quote which can easily be applied to all of us here. We are not members of the League for our own benefit, which is prohibited by the Law, but we are here for the benefit of all veterans and their families in our communities.

Our State and Nation have endured further lockdowns and travel restrictions in 2021 which has impacted our organisation on many different levels. Our members rely on coming together, sharing our stories, and helping each other. Many of our members are elderly and have been isolated in nursing homes, unable to see family and friends. The monthly sub-Branch meeting, which we have taken advantage of for so long, appears to be a distant memory. My own sub-Branch at Ingleburn has been unable to meet for a long time.

Some commemorative services had to be suspended which has been hard for our membership and the families of veterans who served in those battles, conflicts, and wars. However, we have adapted to remote commemorations and smaller services to keep these traditions alive.

During this Congress, delegates will be debating and voting on some internal reform to our Constitution. The major reform and modernisation of your League was commenced in 2019 with a new 21st Century Constitution. Its intent and purpose should not be dramatically changed. We all need to be sensible and put self-interest aside and focus on the greater good for veterans and their families. Our members, other Ex-Service Organisations and the broader veteran community are watching us. They are waiting to see if we can continue to be mature enough to accept the modern realities of the world today. This includes the need to ensure we are accountable at all levels of our organisation.

As the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide commenced on 27 November, the Commissioners began the listening phase of the Commission last week.

They are listening to veterans and their families about their experiences in the Australian Defence Force, with the Department of Veterans' Affairs and, with the Ex-Service Organisation community.

We have heard about the tragic experiences of veterans and families who have experienced suicide. We will hear more stories next year as the hearings turn to an inquisitorial process. We will undoubtedly hear about extreme sexual and physical abuse, of isolation, of abuse of administrative processes by the ADF, of cover ups and the ill treatment of veterans and families. We will hear the horror stories of DVA not doing enough, of turning their back; bureaucracy that has failed veterans and their families. We will also see the RSL and other Ex-Service Organisations needing to explain what we are doing with our hundreds of millions of dollars of assets. How do we use the proceeds of large investment funds? Do we do more than fund a monthly meeting with dinner and drinks? How do we assist not only our members who have served, but all veterans and their families?

The monthly meeting is important, it can provide an opportunity for camaraderie which can be beneficial for many, but what about the veteran who is unemployed, divorced, lonely and has their children on a Sunday, which clashes with a sub-Branch meeting? Should they go to a meeting for camaraderie, or should they spend time with their young children who they only see once a fortnight?

Our Constitution is our contract with the members. It is also a contract with the veteran community and their families. As members of a charity, we are unable to obtain a benefit unless we are a veteran in need of support. Defining our charitable purpose enables us to register as a charity. It is our noble purpose. Our delegates agreed unanimously that we should remain a charity at the Congress in 2019 and remain a member-based organisation. Therefore, not only was the Strategic Plan prepared on this basis, but we also have a duty to ensure that every dollar our sub-Branches spend is going towards our charitable purpose.

What is our charitable purpose? It is written in clause 3 of our Constitution.

Our charitable purpose is:

1. providing assistance, care, and relief for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families who are suffering from physical or mental ill health, social disadvantage and isolation, distress, poverty, homelessness, or destitution including without limitation those who are elderly.
2. providing support and assistance for current and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families including without limitation to obtain compensation, benefits, and assistance to which they are entitled and in relation to all aspects of transitioning from military service to civilian life, particularly where the member has been detrimentally affected by their service.
3. providing validation of service and sacrifice by commemorating those who have served and preserving the memory of those who have suffered and died.
4. promoting and facilitating the prevention of social isolation as a cause of veteran ill health by fostering and enabling community engagement, social connection, and camaraderie by and between former and current members of the Australian Defence Force and their families.
5. doing all other things necessary, ancillary, or incidental to pursuing and implementing its benevolent charitable purpose including without limitation:
 - establishing, maintaining, and regulating the operation of RSL NSW sub-Branches in New South Wales.
 - researching, promoting, and publicly advocating for the interests of former and current members of the Australian Defence Force and their families on matters of public policy.
 - establishing and maintaining literary, social, educational, and benevolent activities for the benefit, promotion, and advancement of former and current members of the Australian

Defence Force and their families particularly where the member has been detrimentally affected by their service; and

- promoting the defence of the Commonwealth of Australia and guarding the good name, interests and standing of serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

Every single member of the League should clearly understand our charitable purpose. Every decision made by your Executive should align with our charitable purpose. When we forget our charitable purpose, we are at risk of breaching the Constitution and our broader legislative requirements. We also start to undermine our ethical and moral obligations to veterans and their families. The asset pool, both cash and property of RSL NSW and its sub-Branches, is enormous. No other ESOs outside of the RSL movement across Australia can come close to what we have built up since Returned Soldiers and Sailors of the First World War began our League.

Our League made a tough decision to broaden membership in the post-Vietnam War period. Especially as we saw a reduction in members of the ADF who had participated in Active Service and War-like operations in the 1980s and 1990s.

Today many of our sub-Branches, Executives and District Council representatives did not see active service during their various military careers, but they served our Nation and were prepared to do their duty. This has created a broad church of members. This is great for our organisation. However, over the past 20 years the ADF has been heavily involved in war-like operations, which has resulted in many veterans with various levels of combat and related war fighting experience. Our sub-Branches may not understand the complexity of the younger veteran who has had war service in the last two decades. As the Case for Change in the Strategic Plan, written after extensive quantitative and qualitative research identifies, these younger veterans do not relate to a once-a-month gathering for a meeting, and in some cases a beer and a roast dinner. While a social gathering is important and can be beneficial, evidence shows that it is highly ineffective in attracting and retaining younger veterans.

Meanwhile we have young veterans being discharged from Defence, being unable to buy a home, being unable to find a job, being unable to get quality support and care. This is where we can unite our collective resources as the Strategic Plan envisions to be ready and relevant to address this. Then, not only will our veterans know what the RSL stands for and does, so will the wider community. A positive experience will attract people to join the RSL movement.

We need to consider if we are actually addressing each of the charitable purpose parts of our Constitution.

Yes, we do a great commemorative service, but our custodianship of our national events is threatened if we cannot renew our membership.

Yes, we do a great monthly meeting but what do we actually do to support members in need, or veterans in our community?

Can we honestly sleep at night knowing that our sub-Branch has millions of dollars sitting in a fund, gaining little interest, and yet a veteran is homeless on the street?

Can we be happy with ourselves knowing that a veteran is unable to pay their mortgage or get a deposit for a home loan?

Can we be happy with ourselves knowing that a veteran cannot get a job because they have PTSD, and the employer believes they are a risk?

Can we be happy with ourselves that if the ADF or DVA have caused significant harm to veterans for decades and have to have a Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide?

Many of you have been critical of the League. This has included spreading a narrative that the Board and State Branch just want sub-Branch's money. We all know that this is not true. The Board is working transparently to ensure the future of the League is strong and relevant by mobilising our collective resources. It is by working as one League the RSL will be renowned and respected by all serving ADF personnel and they will want to be involved when they leave. They will want to be involved to help their fellow veteran and stand for all our veterans by being united and proudly wearing our iconic pin.

The funds held in trust across the League is for all, not a few. I thank those who have seen this and share this vision for the future.

Given some of the submissions, the Royal Commission may see our League and other ESOs as being inept and ineffectual. I want every member of the League to engage with the Royal Commission and put yourself in the shoes of a veteran who was wounded or injured in Iraq, Vietnam, or Afghanistan. I want you to put yourself in the shoes of a widow of a veteran who killed themselves. I want you to put yourself in the shoes of parents of a veteran who committed suicide on an Army base after being subjected to bullying. I

want you to put yourselves in the shoes of the children whose mother or father are dead because of their service to our Nation.

We cannot continue to sit back and do nothing. Why have so many new ESOs been set up? I am told by younger veterans that the RSL is outdated and not relevant, so a void has been filled. This is a reminder of why we proudly wear our membership pin and what it stands for and can and must change with the times to be relevant to all generations. We must renew, unite, and work together. We cannot achieve what we need to by being just focussed on our own sub-Branch, we need to proudly work as one in today's cyber driven world.

I would like every member to reflect on the scourge of veteran suicide. We should ask ourselves what else could we have done to prevent it? Have we been too inwards focussed? Should we have done more to fight for better veteran support services. Our forefathers got off their backside, with significant combat injuries from the trenches of Gallipoli and the Western Front to influence legislation and support for veterans.

I think too many of us are focussed on what is in it for me, what do I get by being a member of the RSL? We are a charity benefitting from what our forefathers did to build wealth and influence. It is up to us to protect this legacy and rally together for this century. We live in an interconnected world, and we can build strength together in every community in this State. We must mobilise our collective resources to honour those who have gone before and do what is right for all veterans and their families. We cannot, as members, just live high on the hog ourselves locally, we must support each other as members through the benefits of social connection and reach out proactively to all veterans.

Many of you will not like what I am saying and that is because this is the truth. We have important motions for debate at this congress. Many are required to rectify some issues with the Constitution. But where are the brave policy reforms or ideas that are needed to help veterans. Do our motions ensure we meet our charitable purpose? Will your motion stop veterans killing themselves? Ask yourself these questions. Should we have so many motions about how we govern ourselves, or about what can we do together to ensure a better future for all our veterans?

We are volunteers, and I respect every single person who steps up to volunteer, but we need to ask ourselves why am I doing this? What am I doing to ensure the RSL is achieving what our forefathers wanted, and what veterans living in today's society need? Are we doing everything to achieve our charitable purpose?

Your Board is focused on our charitable purpose and ensuring that we maintain a high level of accountability and governance. The Board is doing that, while discharging our obligations under the ACNC's Enforceable Undertaking, we remain focussed on ensuring we continue to meet our regulatory requirements, which includes performance of all sub-Branches. Through our Act and Constitution, your Board is accountable for all actions taken across the entire League in NSW. Tough decisions must be made, but in the end that is why we must continue to have strong leaders at all levels.

Our Strategic Plan recognises that our volunteer leaders are passionate about what the RSL stands for and does, and this is why we are looking at ways to support sub-Branches through providing services like the Aggregated Investment Manager and streamline the onerous regulatory and reporting requirements we have. The Strategic Plan enables our volunteer leaders to do what we want the League to be renowned for, standing for and supporting our veterans and their families.

Through prudent decision-making and despite the pandemic, as the Annual Report reflects, we have also built a strong and sustainable foundation for the League, and I thank you all for supporting this work to strengthen our future.

The Strategic Plan implementation is underway, and the CEO has been tasked with its delivery. Tomorrow we will receive a report on its progress and an outline of the difficulties, due to COVID and because some members have not understood what we are striving to achieve. Essentially, it is about future proofing the League and modernisation. It is about renewing our membership, establishing systems, processes and procedures that will ensure we achieve our charitable purpose while ensuring our long-term presence in all our communities. The Plan is something that should be embraced by all members who care about what we stand for, and what we do.

Some self-interested members may not like the Strategic Plan, but they cannot articulate what is wrong with it, nor can they provide an alternative. The time to fight or reject the Strategic Plan is over. It has already landed on the beach and is moving inland. It is time to get onboard and help the Board and State Branch to implement it all.

The Board has the power under the Constitution to implement the Strategic Plan. It is what most members want us to do, and that is what we are doing. We were elected to lead based on this Plan which we see as the Members' plan. It was widely consulted, and all sub-Branches and members need to bond together and do all within their powers to implement it together. I hope that we do work together on its implementation because it will ensure that your League survives the next 5, 10, 20 and 100 years. Remember there

is an annual review process of the Plan, and members will be consulted on this too, as we need to evaluate progress, and continually test our strategic direction

Our RSL Auxiliaries continue to work hard, even with Covid. I encourage our Affiliate members to join the RSL Auxiliaries and ensure that our fundraising arm of the League continues to support veterans and their families.

We are called to the vocation of being a volunteer. Being a volunteer enables us to fulfil our common good to each other. We are members of our communities, and volunteerism is one way we can contribute and give back. It is healthy for our soul and minds. When we sanctify ourselves in our ordinary life, we build better communities and a better society. We are an organisation that gives, and therefore volunteers are the backbone and life blood of the League. We belong to the RSL because we all care about veterans and their families. Other Ex-Service Organisations do not have the membership or the number of volunteers that we have. We should be proud of all those who volunteer to make this League what it is. Without our volunteers we would not exist. We wear one of Australia's most recognised symbols, and we are justifiably proud to do so.

I want to thank the ANZAC House team for their great commitment and work over the past 12 months. It has been incredibly challenging for all of them. They work long hours to ensure our sub-Branches and members are supported. The Board challenges the Executive regularly to rise to the occasion and they continue to perform at a high level. As the Strategic Plan continues to roll out its phases it will be the staff at ANZAC House on the frontlines ensuring the work is done.

I want to thank all the members, the sub-Branch Executives, District Councils and District President Council for all the hard work you have done during the past 12 months. It has been difficult with no face-to-face contact and ensuring that veterans in the community are supported. Whilst some of us differ on what the League should be doing, and I value debate, I appreciate everyone's commitment to the League and what it stands for and look forward to a return to a super active sub-Branch network in 2022.

We have lost many of our members over the past 12 months. We should all take time to remember them and pay our respects. We are custodians of the eternal flame, and we should continue to remember what that means.

I look forward to the debate and discussion in this 2021 RSL NSW Congress. I encourage all delegates to be involved and remind you all that we are here to ensure we achieve our charitable purpose. The community is watching us, and we should remind them that we do care about all veterans and their families, and not just ourselves.

LADY WOODWARD CUP

Also during Congress Ray announced the winner of the Lady Woodward Cup for 2021, this is what he had to say:

"I'd like to mention Lady Woodward cup competition which commenced in 1957 for our RSL Auxiliaries to participate in Fundraising, this year 2021 it is 64 years since this yearly competition commenced. The winning Auxiliary for 2021 is "ANZAC HOUSE RSL AUXILIARY (Penhurst) Congratulations go to Norma Alexander the Coordinator and her Auxiliary team for their effort during such a difficult year with the Covid restrictions.

The Lady Woodward Cup will be presented to "ANZAC HOUSE RSL AUXILIARY (Penhurst) in the new year.

While on the Auxiliaries due 2021 and with COVID restrictions we still have two new auxiliaries being Old Bar & Bulahdelah who are a part of their respective sub Branches.

Another milestone re the Auxiliaries is the Poppy Mask Project which has been a big success led by The RSL NSW Auxiliaries State Coordinator Pauline James, Deputy Coordinator Sue Allen, along with Jenny Leach, Heicke Keefe & Christine Frame, in excess of \$10,000 was raised selling the poppy masks to sub Branches, individuals as well as to the ANZAC memorial Hyde Park for sale to the general public, all proceeds were donated to RSL NSW DefenceCare well done ladies for your fundraising effort.

Let's see all auxiliaries in 2022 getting back to doing what they do best fundraising for our service delivery arm of our charity to help veterans and their families in need which is our charitable purpose!

Also the "Thank You for your service quilt" project has continued during the covid period where several sub branch members have been presented with a quilt, again congratulations to all who received a quilt during 2021"

What is the Lady Woodward Cup ? It is an award (started in 1956) that recognises the fundraising efforts of Auxiliaries. The award is currently given to the Auxiliary that donates the most money to RSL DefenceCare on an annual basis. Due to our organisational changes, the criteria for the cup is currently under review but will most likely result in recognition of the combination of:

- The amount of money donated to RSL DefenceCare
- The number of tokens sold for Anzac Day
- The number of tokens sold for Remembrance Day

How is the Lady Woodward Cup competition administered ? Administered by the State Secretary of RSL NSW in conjunction with the Auxiliaries State Coordinator and Deputy State Coordinator, Jeff O'Brien (State Secretary), Pauline & I are currently working on a revision of the criteria for participation in the Lady Woodward Cup

How do sub-Branches Auxiliaries register to participate in the Cup? There is no registration as such. Recognition of an Auxiliary is based on the record of monies donated by an Auxiliary to RSL DefenceCare. The amount of money donated is identified via checks with RSL NSW Accounts Unit. **Now that the money is coming via a sub-Branch (rather than directly from an Auxiliary), it is crucial to ensure that recognition of the Auxiliary is included when the donation is made.** As I mentioned earlier, Auxiliary donation to DefenceCare, should be deposited to RSL of Australia NSW Branch BSB 062-016 Account No 0000-074,

please note on the deposit that it is a donation for DefenceCare from your Auxiliary, they will then be eligible to enter the Lady Woodward Cup.



LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

What are the criteria for Life Membership of the RSL Auxiliary? An Auxiliary Life Membership form which is available on the website will need to be completed and signed by the RSL Auxiliary Coordinator detailing whether the Auxiliary Member has met the eligibility criteria before the application progresses to the sub-Branch. Life Membership is the highest honour which can be bestowed on an Ordinary Member of an Auxiliary and therefore submissions should not be taken lightly. All applications for Auxiliary Member honours and awards must be endorsed and submitted through the sub-Branch or the RSL Auxiliary Coordinator to RSL NSW for approval. The nominee must have had at least fifteen (15) years of continuous service as a member of an Auxiliary, ten (10) years of which are considered honorary service. Honorary service work must be associated with RSL work and Charities only. In country areas some recognised charities [not RSL exclusively] may be considered. Service rendered as Patron or paid Auditor is not considered as qualifying service for the award nor are services rendered to a Registered Club or to local Schools, Churches, Surf Clubs, Scouts etc. are considered. No member can nominate themselves. Once the nomination is received by RSL NSW it will be put to a Selection Committee. This Committee comprised of four (4) members and an approval of 3 out of 4 is needed to have the nomination proceed. Should any member of this committee have a personal connection to the nominee they will stand aside and have no further involvement in the process. There is no longer a charge for Life Membership Nominations. We are only able to award a certain number of Life Memberships in any one year. The number available is calculated on a ratio of the number of members to the number of Auxiliaries. Sadly, as Auxiliaries close, the number of Life Memberships also decrease. Currently we are only able to award nine in any one year, therefore it is imperative that the Nomination Form is completed correctly so that an appropriate.

We are currently reviewing some aspects of Life Membership to reflect the current organisation and will advise any changes if made, the Nomination Form can be found on our website,



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE QUILT

DAVID (PADDY) McGARRY



Warrant Officer David McGarry, or as most of us know him as "Paddy", who has been serving his country as the Regimental Sergeant Major, Joint Ceremonial New South Wales since 2019.

Paddy has gone above and beyond to assist RSL NSW and our sub-Branches to plan and enhance our annual commemorations. His unwavering support of the veteran community, and the League, is second to none.

JAMES PARK

Balmain/Rozelle sub Branch

James has been a member of the League close to four decades.

James military service covers British army, RAN reserves and the Navy cadets.

He has been active and held and still holds positions on the Executive, committee and trustee of his sub Branch as well as delegate to District council and delegate to Congress for decades.

He has been active in all fundraising activities and commemorative events for over two decades, his commitment to the welfare of veterans and their families has been exceptional and he continues to help those who need and seek help today.

His commitment and involvement in the local community events is well documented and known.

James has been the face of the Balmain/Rozelle R.S.L. sub Branch especially in the Balmain/Rozelle community for many years.

James was instrumental in the re-establishment of the Balmain/Rozelle R.S.L. sub Branch Auxiliary the fundraising arm of our R.S.L. sub branches.

James also received a Certificate of Appreciation from RSLNSW for Esteem Services rendered as State Councillor Western Metropolitan for period 2005 to 2008.

James has received numerous letters of appreciation from Local, State and Federal members of government as well as schools and other charities in the community.

As a volunteer James goes above and beyond he gets satisfaction from helping others, that's what makes James the man he is a good friend, mate and a well respected man in the community and in the League.

Congratulations James it's both an honour and privilege to be able to present you with your Life Membership of the League this recognition is truly deserving.

Ray James 11.12.2021

Thank you for Your Service Quilt, James it's been a wonderful few years working with you regarding the RSL Auxiliary
I appreciate your work with your Sub Branch and Auxiliary



So it gives me great pleasure in making this presentation of the beautiful Quilt made by Kaye Brown and her wonderful Camden Country Quilter's

Pauline James 11.12.2021

KEN YOUNG OAM



Mr Ken Young OAM

This has been a long time coming the Thank You For Your Service Quilt was supposed to be presented on Ken's 80th Birthday but the virus had other ideas, Ken you go way above your call to duty, I have personally worked with you for over 10 years you are generous with your time for the RSL and never afraid to put your hand in your own pocket to help veterans and widows. It pleases both Ray and myself to make this presentation to you today at your beloved second home Fairfield RSL Club

If you would like to nominate someone to receive a Thank You For Your Service Quilt please contact Pauline at auxiliaries@rslnsw.org.au.

AROUND THE AUXILIARIES

ANZAC HOUSE RSL AUXILIARY (PENSHURST)

Report received from Norma Alexander, Coordinator



This badge and its' predecessor has been and is worn with pride by all members of the ANZAC House RSL Auxiliary (Penshurst)

Whenever we are fund raising for DefenceCare members wear their badge and when we have our meetings the badge is on display.

This Auxiliary has been through a lot over the past five years and it has emerged stronger and better than before. From being decimated to only 5 members we now number 14 members and soon will be 15. Our aim is to build a solid base of loyal, hard working men and women to ensure the Auxiliary continues to raise funds for our veterans and their families in times of need.

Some innovative ideas have been used to raise funds, besides a Bunnings sausage sizzle and our ever popular raffles held at Maso's Club, Mortdale, we have also undertaken a Kokoda Walkathon, so named as it was 96kms, the length of the Kokoda Track. One of our senior members, Edvina Prest raised $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total funds on her own.

As lockdown prevented our annual Fathers' Day raffle we are having a bumper Christmas raffle which will be drawn on December 10th. There has been a great deal of interest in our raffles and people look forward to our 3 major raffles



At the walkathon.



11 great prizes



Enjoying ourselves at one of our 'socials' always smiles and laughs after the hard work of fund raising!

following night we shall be meeting up for our annual Auxiliary Christmas dinner. This is another way we keep in touch, every alternate month we have a 'social', whether it is lunch or dinner at various locations we always seem to have a lot of laughs and good times. Our Welfare officer endeavours to contact every member every month to ensure if anyone is in need of help one of us will be there. As with DefenceCare looking after the veterans we also look after our members.

There is a great spirit of camaraderie amongst the members of the ANZAC House RSL Auxiliary (Penshurst) that ensures that after our 75th anniversary next year we shall continue to grow, have fun and raise even more funds for DefenceCare.



GLOUCESTER RSL AUXILIARY

The Gloucester Auxiliary is a small organisation our main fund raisers are Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and our Ladies luncheon. With COVID-19 putting restrictions on a lot of functions not much has happened throughout the year with fund-raising, sadly also, we couldn't celebrate our 80th Birthday. With Christmas soon upon us and the New Year just around the corner, hopefully it will bring a better year for all of us.

Kind regards

Susan Heard Gloucester RSL Auxiliary Coordinator



SOUTH WEST ROCKS AUXILIARY– 50th Birthday 5th October, 2021 celebrations will take place when Covid restrictions ease



OLD BAR BEACH RSL SUB-BRANCH AUXILIARY

A report from Coordinator Vickie Jackson

Old Bar Beach RSL Sub-branch is a fast-growing Sub-branch on the Mid North Coast of NSW. The Sub-Branch has grown from approximately 12 members to over 40 in 18 months. With the growing numbers, President Mr. Jeffrey Earley and the committee were approached by Vickie Jackson and Teresa Earley about starting an Auxiliary. In a matter of months, the Sub-branch was proud to gain 18 auxiliary members consisting of both males and females.

Our Sub-branch is like a big family, and we all support the Veterans of the community and one another.



The Old Bar Beach RSL Sub-branch Auxiliary is involved in fundraising by helping with Saturday morning meat raffles and monthly raffles at our local Tavern. In addition, we have auxiliary members who help advertise the Sub-branch by running social media pages and participate in marketing and promotional work and they assist with clerical duties. We also participate in voluntary work in the kitchen when hosting events and helping with working bees at our Soldiers Memorial Hall. The Auxiliary is also putting together a Welfare Group to help members with shopping, respite and visiting ill Veterans and their partners.

The Auxiliary also believe that keeping our youth involved in commemorations is important and therefore are organising to go into our local school and preschools to read children's books in reference to ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day and present craft activities, such as making paper poppies.

The biggest attraction I feel of the Auxiliary is getting away from the idea that the RSL is a men's club. Old Bar RSL Sub-branch has changed the direction of the branch and made it extremely family orientated, with younger members, more female members. It has become a family branch, where Sub-branch members, their wives and family, the auxiliary and partners are all involved to form what we call a family branch. It is our agenda to become independent, with our own raffles and sponsors as our source of income, we do not rely on any club or gaming venue for our funds. We have built our Soldiers Memorial Hall in Old Bar as our home base. I believe therefore the Old Bar Beach RSL Sub-Branch is moving in a progressive direction.

Our Sub-branch and auxiliary members work together as a team. We all dig in and help each other with all our different activities including cooking, working bees and fundraising. I believe this is the reason we are creating such an effective auxiliary in this area.



BATEMANS BAY SUB BRANCH AUXILIARY

Report from Tricia Wheeler

Sending a few pics from today's service.

The two School Captains from Batemans Bay Public School placed their Wreath before service.

A teacher accompanied them but because of COVID rules were unable to remain .

Like all Auxiliaries not much fundraising was done this year but we managed to earn \$1,000 with our " ! Cent Auction",

will get Sub branch to forward for DefenceCare.



Selling tokens , June Brooks, Dorothy Jennings & Noreen Bain



School Captains, Bimi Freeman & Isaiah Fulton.



BARADINE RSL AUXILIARY

Remembrance Day Baradine RSL members

Moy Lane and Norma Frater who laid wreaths on Remembrance Day



Members of the Baradine RSL Auxiliary at Remembrance Day on November 11th 2021



SAWTEL RSL AUXILIARY

On Friday 03 December, 2021 at the Sawtell RSL Club's Boardroom, Patricia Buttenshaw and Patricia Parker each were awarded a Life Membership Badge's and a Certificate from Returned Services League of Australia, NSW Branch Auxiliary.

The Award is the highest honour which can be bestowed upon an Ordinary Member of the Auxiliary.

Patricia Parker joined in 1998. She has held the positions of Secretary, Publicity Officer and Treasurer over a number of years.

Patricia Buttenshaw joined the Auxiliary in 2003. Since she joined she has also held a number of positions of Vice President, Treasurer, on the Social Committee and Welfare.

Both Ladies have contributed to our general fundraising efforts and purpose of the Women's Auxiliary. They are willing to share their time and talent to lend a helping hand and to show kindness and caring that makes the greatest difference in the lives of the individuals who are touched by their generosity. Both are still very active and forthcoming members which has had a profound and lasting impact on fellow members of the Auxiliary.

Without the generosity of these local women and others that have tread this path from before, both ladies made a commitment to share that most precious of resources- their time and labour to make life better for those past and present service men, women, families and not forgetting the local Community. While I know that you both choose to volunteer selflessly and without expectation of being recognized or rewarded. Your dedication is appreciated, and it is important you know that what you do does make a difference!





Thank you for giving your time to help our cause. I look forward in the future to continuing to work with both of you.



KEMPSEY MACLEAY RSL AUXILIARY



70th Birthday Celebrations

Members of the Kempsey Macleay RSL AUXILIARY enjoying a special lunch at the Kempsey Heights Bowling Club on Monday 1st November 2021. 11 of the remaining members with 5 Executive Members attended. The Coordinator Elaine Brown was recognised for her ongoing

contribution to the Auxiliary over many years by her members , who themselves totalled well over 100 years of continuous service . A collection of photographs and the meeting albums from the early 50's provided a tangible trip down memory lane for members. The moments and shared the stories of their friends present and past was a highlight.

A cake celebrating the occasion was enjoyed by all. (The Auxiliary was formed with support of the local sub branch on the 13th April 1951 with 9 members. Unfortunately, although the AUXILIARY existed prior to that date from 1942, all records were destroyed during one of the periodic floods of the Macleay River. Membership reached low 40's during Vietnam and post Vietnam era with wives of returned servicemen keen to fulfil their role, and doing so with great care, compassion ability and spirit. Currently there are 13 remaining members who are part of the Returned Services League who continue to provide support to the Sub Branch and to the Community.)



DUBBO RSL AUXILIARY

Fundraising, selling tokens and Poppy scarves





Some pics from the Dubbo RSL sub-Branch Remembrance Day Service in Victoria Park, Dubbo.



- Dubbo RSL sub-Branch Executive and members in the sub-Branch marquis on Remembrance Day
- Coordinator Lee Davis and Auxiliary member Trish Howell selling tokens on the day
- Auxiliary member Vi Palm, a 97-year-old WW11 veteran, participated in the march to the Dubbo War Memorial for the wreath laying ceremony and commemoration service.



INGLEBURN RSL AUXILIARY



Patricia Perry presented with her Life Membership



Linda Whieldon being presented with her Life Membership at their Christmas function



CITY OF LISMORE RSL SUB BRANCH AUXILIARY



Vickie Youngberry at Lismore Central Shopping Centre.



GUNDIGAI RSL SUB BRANCH AUXILIARY



Selling Tokens for Remembrance Day



BALGOWLAH/SEAFORTH/CLONTARF RSL SUB BRANCH AUXILIARY



DOYALSON WYEE RSL AUXILIARY



Selling tokens for Remembrance Day at Bunnings lake Haven



GOSFORD RSL AUXILIARY



REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021: Gosford RSL Sub Branch President Greg Mawson - Dr Gordon Reid (Representing Liesl Tesch, Member for Gosford - Carol Bancroft (Gosford RSL Auxiliary)

Kathy Kennedy & Carol Bancroft



LEETON RSL AUXILIARY



Street Stall



PORT MACQUARIE RSL AUXILIARY



CASTLE HILL RSL AUXILIARY

Auxiliary 1st Anniversary

Unofficially our Auxiliary started some years ago with the sub-Branch supporting the activities the ladies undertook, the Auxiliary was officially recognized on the 1st December 2020.

Castle Hill RSL Auxiliary celebrated their 1st Anniversary with a recruiting drive. From the beginning of the drive and on the day we recruited 8 new ladies, with 2 ladies and 1 male pending.

The day went well with an Address by Brigadier Phillip Bridie, a Director of RSL NSW and entertainment by Lester Miller, with an insight into being a fulltime actor, singer and stage director, Lester was very entertaining.

The day was celebrated with a High Tea, 41 people attended. There were displays of the work the members had been involved in, Invictus Games Tote bags, Wall Hanging full of poppies, poppies for sale for fundraising, planting poppies around the RSL Club for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, making hampers for our 70 widows. The ladies have also made pouches for native animals injured in the bushfires. Our lone male helps with the heavy lifting. In our first year the Auxiliary has raised over \$6,000, which has been distributed to RSL Defence Care and our Welfare programme.



COFFS HARBOUR RSL SUB BRANCH & AUXILIARY



Ray & Pauline attended the Remembrance Day Service at The Bungarby Memorial Hall Sunday the 7/11/2021

The Bungarby Memorial Hall is in the locality of Bungarby on the Monaro in southern NSW. It was built early 1900s and served as a focus point for the local community and during the Great War, as a recruitment centre. 20 men from the district joined up to fight with the 1st AIF, some at the Bungarby Hall and they formed part of a larger group known as the Snowy River men. 6 did not return and their names are on the memorial stone in front of the hall.



Jeff Stokes Cooma Monaro RSL sub Branch,
Ray & Pauline James, Sue Stokes



IMAGES OF REMEMBRANCE DAY 11.11.2021





This is not Auxiliary related but I'm sure you will agree with me this is a wonderful achievement.

Congratulations to John Partridge of the Maitland RSL Sub Branch who received the rare '75 years of service' certificate.



Thank you, John for 75 years of supporting the RSL's mission to respect, support and remember our veterans and their families.



FUNDRAISING

A quick reminder, Anzac Day & Remembrance Day Tokens are no longer sourced from DefenceCare. It is up to each sub Branch/Auxiliary to source their own and now all proceeds are retained by the sub Branch.

A lot of sub Branches/Auxiliaries have tokens left over from previous years, these can still be sold however, to do this the any mention that the proceeds go to WBI or DefenceCare must be removed, it is very important that this be removed as it is breaking the law for it to falsely adverted this way.



For Anzac Day this year, we want to send out a big thank you to the Auxiliary members who came into ANZAC House today to help with getting the tokens ready for sale

If you would like to purchase these masks, they are available for \$10 each (minimum order of 20) plus postage. You can email your order through your sub Branch to auxiliaries@rslnsw.org.au, an invoice will be issued by RSL NSW to that sub Branch.

Jenny is also making Badge Holders, these are \$10 each plus postage to purchase please contact Jenny direct at jenniferlesley0456@gmail.com



We are always looking for ideas for fundraising, I got this from Harrington-Crowdy Head RSL Auxiliary I hope they don't mind me using it bit I think it's a great idea



Congratulations to the three winners of the competition in the last Newsletter

- Robyn Mackinnon Port Macquarie Auxiliary
- Anita Barnes Batemans Bay Auxiliary
- Thel Gardiner Malabar Auxiliary

I will be in touch shortly to get your details so that we can send you your prizes, a Poppy Mask and matching Scarf.

QUICK CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Shortbread is lovely all year round but lots of people keep it as a special treat for Christmas,



Melted butter, to grease
250g butter, at room temperature
100g (1/2 cup) caster sugar
300g (2 cups) plain flour, sifted
90g (1/2 cup) rice flour, sifted

Preheat oven to 150°C. Brush 2 baking trays with melted butter
Use an electric beater to beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy.
Gradually add the combined flour, beating on low speed until almost combined.
Use your hands to bring the dough together in the bowl. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Divide the dough into 2 equal portions. Use your hands to shape 1 portion of dough into an 18cm-diameter disc. Transfer to 1 of the prepared trays. Use a flat-bladed knife to smooth the surface. Pinch the edges to create a fluted edge. Use a small sharp knife to score the disc into 8 wedges and use a fork to prick the dough all over. Repeat with the remaining dough to make a second disc.
Bake the shortbread in oven, swapping the trays halfway through cooking, for 40 minutes or until light golden. Set aside on the trays for 10 minutes to cool before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut into wedges to serve.



Congratulations and best wishes to Anita West on her 102nd Birthday. Anita is a member of Ingleburn sub Branch, she is a former President of Ingleburn RSL Women's Auxiliary until she joined the sub Branch



This article was published 8th December, 2021 in the South West Voice, a local Macarthur paper.

Local resident Anita West, who has just turned 102 years of age, is certain of one thing.

She loves Campbelltown so much she would not want to live anywhere else.

That's what Anita Mable West, to give her full name, told Campbelltown MP Greg Warren, when he presented the centenarian flowers and a certificate in recognition of her 102nd birthday.

"I have lived here for 62 years and I just wouldn't want to live anywhere else," said Mrs West, who must be one of the area's oldest residents, if not the oldest.

Mr Warren visited Mrs West in her Campbelltown home, where she still lives independently.

Born in Manchester City, in the United Kingdom, Mrs West and her late husband moved to Australia more than 60 years ago.

The couple first moved to Glenfield before eventually settling in Campbelltown.

Mr Warren said he was astonished by Mrs West and her ability to live independently at the age of 102.

"Anita is a wonderful character and is simply amazing," he said.

"She has lived by herself in her home since her husband passed away in 1978.

"To reach 102 is a feat in itself, but to still live independently is nothing short of incredible.

"Happy birthday again, Anita," Mr Warren said.



The Hon. (Walt) Walter SECORD, MLC

Member of the Legislative Council

Shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage, Shadow Minister for Police, Shadow Minister for Counter Terrorism, and Shadow Minister for the North Coast, made this speech to the House 11th November, 2021.

REMEMBRANCE DAY The Hon. WALT SECORD (11 November 2021 - 17:39): It is an honour and a privilege to speak to the motion moved by the Government Whip on Remembrance Day. This motion gives us time to reflect on the hundreds of thousands of Australian men and women who have served and the more than 100,000 Australians who have lost their lives since 1860. In the First World War, more than 416,000 Australian men enlisted, as well as 2,500 women who joined as nurses. In total, more than 62,000 people were killed and a further 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. They fought in horrendous conditions, witnessed things that no-one should ever see and returned changed forever, if they returned at all. In World War II, an astounding 730,000 personnel enlisted in the Australian Army, which was 10 per cent of the entire Australian population. There were 400,000 serving overseas, with nearly 40,000 of them losing their lives. Whole generations have been lost to us through conflict, and it has shaped the way we see ourselves. It also shaped the way we live our lives. As a result of their sacrifice, there has been fundamental change in our families and in the way that Australia sees itself in the world. There are currently about 1,000 Australian men and women deployed overseas in various capacities. As members know, while I am a proud citizen of this country, I was born in Canada and I am the son of a Mohawk-Ojibway First Nations man. I draw the attention of the Chamber to the perspective that I bring to Remembrance Day as an Australian of Canadian upbringing. This is a day that both nations have in common. Both Canada and Australia, as we know them today, rose from the British colonial era as former colonies. Both countries are now mature and independent societies, but both have paid the price in their journey to modern nationhood. Both countries had their national identity forged, to a large extent, in World War I. For both Canada and Australia, moments like these were formative in creating a genuine national identity. There is no Canadian child of my generation who has not memorised the lines of In Flanders Fields. I could almost recite the entire poem from memory. The poem was written by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a doctor from Guelph, Ontario. That is the region where I grew up and near where my mother and siblings currently reside. It speaks of the human cost of war, which is something that transcends any national boundary. Like most members of this Chamber, both of my parents have family members who served in World War I. My maternal great-grandfather served in Europe and returned to Canada with a young Welsh wife. Further, both my maternal grandfather and grandmother were in the Canadian air force. My father's Mohawk-Ojibway family has an even longer tradition of serving under the Canadian and British flags. My ancestors fought with the British against the Americans during the American War of Independence and again in the War of 1812 when the Americans tried to invade Canada. Most recently, another Secord, a cousin of mine from the reserve, completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2011 with the Canadian Army. He is still in the Canadian Army. Canada, like Australia, has a long tradition of Indigenous people serving in its armed forces. I move to one Indigenous Canadian soldier specifically, who I believe typifies the personal cost of war. My great-uncle, Thomas Secord, was one of the 4,000 Canadian First Nations people who served in World War I. In total, more than 600,000 Canadians served in World War I. Thomas Secord was one of the very first people, First Nations or otherwise, in the entire country of Canada to enlist in World War I. Imagine the shock for him. He travelled from an Indian reserve in Southern Ontario in Canada, across the Atlantic Ocean to the United Kingdom with the 4th Battalion and to the trenches and mechanised slaughter of Vimy Ridge and the Somme in France. He was wounded in 1917 and

returned to Canada a year later. Like Indigenous Australian soldiers, Canada's treatment of their native soldiers was not always the best or fairest. For Thomas Secord, there were issues about whether his payments were sent to his blind and destitute mother in Canada, and he had disciplinary proceedings against him for drunkenness. While he struggled with alcohol, he received an honourable discharge. In total, he was away from Canada for almost four years. He saw the trenches and experienced poison gas. After the war he was never able to fit back into life in Canada or on the reserve. In December 1924 his de facto wife and her three children died in a fire on the Indian reserve. Shortly afterwards, he petitioned the government and the Indian agent at the time—the so-called protector of natives—to formally leave the tribe. He could no longer live there; he no longer belonged. There are more than 100 pages of notes, official correspondence, evidence from others and materials held in the national Library and Archives Canada on this. It is incredibly sad reading. His time in Europe changed everything for him. Thomas Secord would go on to spend the remaining years of his life as a labourer and a fruit picker. He died homeless, as a recluse living in a cave on an escarpment near Niagara Falls. As a modern day researcher, I was able to find so much about him. I felt deep and profound sadness when I read his military records and notes from the Indian agent—the Canadian equivalent of the so-called Aboriginal protectors here. It wrote and made observations about him that he never would have known about. It is extraordinary. The closest feeling that I could describe it to was reading Kate Grenville's book about writing *The Secret River*, where she reflects on reading notes and observations made by colonial officials about the character and personality of her ancestor, Solomon Wiseman, that he never would have known about, hundreds of years after he passed. You could feel the deep and disturbing racism in the comments and observations about Thomas. Since migrating to Australia, I have had the privilege of attending countless Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies at The Cenotaph and at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, as well as small services in the Eastern Suburbs and with the NSW Association of Jewish Service & ExService Men & Women [NAJEX] in Darlinghurst. I look forward to attending services once again with NAJEX and with my friend, its president, Mr Roger Selby. In the last 10 years I have also made the Australian pilgrimage to Anzac Cove at Gallipoli, visited the Commonwealth War Graves in Beersheba in Israel on the edge of the Negev Desert and visited the site of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, which brought the United States into World War II. In addition, I have also been to the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which I have spoken about on many occasions here. I understand the solemnity of these days and the gravity of the sacrifices made on behalf of our two nations—Canada and Australia. I understand why we can never forget. Finally, I end on a personal and positive shout-out. The veterans Minister, the Hon. Natalie Ward, referred to meeting the RSL NSW president, Ray James, this morning. I refer to Ray James and his lovely wife, Pauline. They are from Sydney's south-west. I met them in 2011 for the first time, shortly after I was elected, when he was the president of the local RSL branch. I heard Ray talking on the radio today about this year's ceremony and being excited about being able to see mates again post-COVID. Mr and Mrs James, their children and their grandchildren are great servants to the community and are active in veterans' rights and veterans' affairs. They do great work and have friends on both sides of politics. While I am not breaching any secrets, Mrs James was once on the ALP ticket for the Legislative Council. For the record, she would have made a great MP. I thank the House for its consideration and commend the motion.

DefenceCare is important part of our organisation, I thought I would include one of their recent news items.



NOVEMBER 29, 2021

Today we honour Rawdon Hume “Ron” Middleton, VC.

SEVENTY nine years ago today a bomber took off from an air base in Suffolk, England. It was one of more than 200 aircraft on a mission to bomb heavy industry buildings in Italy. The primary pilot was Australian Ron Middleton, a small but wiry and tough man who was schooled in Dubbo and a former jackaroo at Parkes. Rawdon Hume “Ron” Middleton, VC was a bomber pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force and a posthumous recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

On 28 November 1942, Middleton was captain of Stirling BF372 detailed to bomb the Fiat aircraft works at Turin, Italy. It was his twenty-ninth combat sortie, one short of the thirty required for completion of a 'tour' and mandatory rotation off combat operations.

When over the target area Middleton had to make three low-level passes in order to positively identify the target; on the third, the aircraft was hit by heavy anti-aircraft fire which wounded both pilots and the wireless operator. His right eye was severely injured with the bone exposed; it is also reported that he had severe wounds to the body and legs. Middleton was in great pain, was barely able to see, was losing blood from wounds, and could breathe only with difficulty.



With his aeroplane severely damaged, Middleton rejected the options of flying to Africa or bailing out over German-occupied France and insisted on returning to England for the sake of the crew. The flight lasted more than four hours. On reaching the English coast, he flew over land so that his comrades could parachute safely. Five of them reached the ground and survived. He then turned back towards the English Channel to avoid crashing in a populated area. Two of the crew remained with their Captain, parachuted into the sea but unfortunately did not survive the night. Middleton was too weak to leave the Stirling which crashed into the sea on the morning of 29 November 1942, killing him. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross and promoted to Pilot Officer (with effect from 15 November).

Middleton's body was washed ashore at Shakespeare Beach, Dover, on 1 February 1943 and buried in St John's churchyard, Beck Row, Suffolk, with full military honours.

He was the first member of the RAAF in World War II to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

The last line of his Victoria Cross citation reads: "His devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds is unsurpassed in the annals of the Royal Air Force".

RSL LifeCare named our residential aged care home at North Richmond, NSW in his honour. Ron Middleton VC Gardens.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

Honouring our members on their passing is very important and they should be acknowledged here in the Garden of Remembrance.

If possible please also include a photograph.

Obviously it is not possible for Pauline or myself to attend every funeral however we would like to acknowledge the person and this can be done via a letter to be read at the service.

If we can be of assistance with this, please let us know.



PATRICIA BUXTON – MAITLAND

We are saddened by the passing of our member whilst we were in lockdown.

Pat Buxton was a Life member, who worked diligently throughout her time with the Auxiliary. Pat was a good friend to the older members of our Auxiliary and will be sadly missed by all those who knew her.

Even though in her later years Pat was unable to participate in Auxiliary events, due to caring for her husband, an RSL member, she never failed to paint a poppy picture for us to raffle at Remembrance Day.

Pat will be sadly missed but not forgotten by her friends in Maitland Auxiliary.

Christine Kidd Coordinator



HEATHER WHITTAKER – LEETON

We wish to pay tribute to this remarkable stoic woman, who died recently at aged 96 years, as Leeton's long standing RSL Auxiliary President for the previous 11 years, Life Member and Patron of Leeton Auxiliary.

A very community minded lady who worked tirelessly for many organisations in Murrumbidgee, Whitton and Leeton. She not only diligently served the needs of the RSL Sub Branch and Women's Auxiliary for over 44 years but also extended her service widely to the community to encompass



decades of membership and devotion to War Widow's Guild of NSW, Legacy Australia, Murrumbidgee CWA, Murrumbidgee P&C, and her beloved St Peter's Anglican Church.

This remarkable woman never sought any personal recognition. But her lifetime devotion to volunteering for many community organisations resulted in many tributes of recognition bestowed on her: Life Membership of NSW RSL, RSL Women's Auxiliary and CWA. The high regard in which she was held was shown with her appointment as patron of Leeton RSL Auxiliary in 2019. In 2017 The Hon David Elliott MP, Minister for Veterans Affairs, presented her with a Ministerial Commendation, a year later she became Leeton's Australian Day Lifelong Citizen to the Shire, and later listed on the 'Hidden Treasures Honour Roll' for Rural Women acknowledging the important volunteer roles women play within NSW rural communities. Rarely does a person receive three Life Memberships in their lifetime, all for voluntary work, but Heather has been recognized by three organizations for her outstanding community contribution.

She was often the instigator, organiser and 'gatherer' of others; an outstanding example to the younger generation of dedication and commitment to organisations. As Leeton's only Second World War WAAAF veteran, she never missed marching at Leeton's Dawn Service and Leeton and Whitton's Main March. In 2018 she led the march in a wheelchair (due to a knee injury), determined not to miss the opportunity to support the local younger Women in Defence with 'By the Left' right to march movement. Heather also regularly attended Riverina District Council meetings and State Conference in her role as Leeton's RSL Auxiliary representative.

When the call went out to assist with street stalls, badge selling, articles for craft projects, eg knitted poppies for 5000 Poppies project, for Invictus Games, the yellow poppies and laundry bags, the poppies for our local Centenary Celebrations, and so much more. She led by example, out doing all the group collectively combined! She readily made donations of personal items to the Women's Shelter, the first to provide her many handmade articles for her Church Women's Union of knitted articles to send overseas through the Church Compassion programmes. Always involved in all the Church activities, eg catering, church cleaning, Fete and Flower Shows, soup and casserole days, Op Shop, fashion parades, Women's Fellowship Group and Mothers Union and the list goes on.

In 2019 at the Honouring Women United by Defence Service event in Canberra, she attended as a special guest, firstly involved in the wreath laying at the Australian War Memorial and then at the evening dinner at Parliament House, escorted by Minister of Defence, the Hon Darren Chester MP.

This remarkable woman was born in 1925 at Yass, where she was one of eight children brought up on her parent's farm 16 kms outside of Yass during the depression. As life was tough, she was taught to live a simple frugal life; a value she carried through into the rest of her years. In 1944, after she completed her schooling in Yass and as an 18 yr old joined the Women's Auxiliary Australia Airforce (WAAAF) for 2 years, becoming 176448 ACW Heather Reardon, spending her time mostly making and repairing parachutes. It was during her time in Wagga, she met Sapper Victor Benjamin Whittaker (Jim). Upon Jim's return from service overseas, they were married in 1947, moving to a farm in Murrumbidgee, a village outside Leeton, where they lived for 53 years, raising 7 children. Here she worked tirelessly for the Murrumbidgee Parents and Citizens Association and drove the Murrumbidgee school bus. Having joined Murrumbidgee CWA in 1950, she has held several executive positions, was awarded a 50 year membership and a well deserved Life Membership. They were both members of Whitton RSL Sub Branch until it closed, when they moved their membership to Leeton Sub Branch. In 1999, they moved to live in Leeton, but Jim sadly died in April 2000. As a War Widow, Heather also became involved with War Widows and Legacy. She was very proactive in helping others who

are either unwell and needing a hand, disabled, in hospital or simply keeping the groups socially together, especially all the ESOs. She would go that extra length to ensure their welfare and wellbeing is attended to; that they were continuously kept informed of happenings of the organisations they were together in, getting them to outings either meetings, social coffee mornings or lunch gatherings. She was consistently the instigator, organiser, and 'gatherer' of others. She was a quiet 'doer'. We called her our 'boss' in a very endearing way.

In her 96th year, right up until her death, she continued to be inspirational to us all.

Heather couldn't make it to the Sub Branch Street Stall because she was in hospital, but she insisted she contribute with her goodies that she had made before she went into hospital. She couldn't make it to the Remembrance Day Service, but she watched from her bed in hospital. She passed away peacefully on 26th November with her family by her side.

Heather's funeral service on 3rd December, was as she wanted it, having given instructions to her friend, Fr Robert of St Peter's Anglican Church and her family before she died. Fr Robert had gotten to know Heather very well for over a decade as she was so devoted to her faith and the church community.

At the beautiful Church service of Heather's chosen pieces, Heather's knitted poppies were worn by many. The women also wore poppy scarves while the men had poppy ties. Her small coffin was covered by her beloved Australian flag. Sadly COVID restrictions limited the number of people allowed in the church but seating was available outside on the beautiful sunny day.

A guard of Honour was held outside the Church by representatives of the many organisations she was involved with. A special guard was held by 4 women from Wagga's RAAF Base who travelled specially to pay their respects. These women provided the salute as she entered the hearse and again as the hearse moved away. It was so very special for everyone to witness, but even though Heather wanted no fuss, she would have really appreciated everyone's effort.

At the Cemetery, another Guard of Honour was held by Ex Servicemen, RSL Sub Branch and Auxiliary members as she moved to her gravesite to join her beloved Jim.

Following Fr Robert's final words, an RSL Service was led by Sub Branch Vice President, John Power who had known Heather for decades. Buglar Ian Bull from Leeton Town Band played last Post and Rouse. Sub Branch President Peter Williams read a lovely letter of condolence from RSL State President Ray James OAM and State Coordinator Auxiliaries, Pauline James OAM. Then following the placing of poppies on the coffin by ex servicemen, Miranda Tait and Brooke Pearce of the Leeton mob of the Ozy Youth Choir, sang a very emotional, special song, 'Everlasting Strangers', especially written by OJ Rushton for our servicemen and women. A very fitting end to the day as we all leave a sprig of rosemary on her coffin as Heather is left to rest with her Jim. An inspiration woman who impacted on far more people that she could have ever imagined. Rest in Peace Heather. Lest We Forget



*NB: I am going to include a copy of the letter of condolence from RSL State President Ray James OAM and State Coordinator Auxiliaries, Pauline James OAM. Not only did Peter Williams read the letter at the service, he also had it framed and presented it to Heather's family.



30 November 2021

Watkins Funeral Directors
57 Kurrajong Ave
Leeton NSW

Vale Mrs Heather Mary Whittaker
St Peters Anglican Church, Church Street, Leeton NSW
Friday 3 December 2021
Service commencing at 2:00pm

We were deeply saddened to learn of the beautiful Heather's passing. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the family and friends in this time of infinite sadness.

A very humble lady, Heather did not need personal recognition or award for her enduring selflessness and acts of kindness. Her solace was that she had given what she had to her best of her ability to support and comfort others. We note Heather's life membership to both the Leeton RSL sub Branch and the Auxiliary, along with an auspicious nomination for an Order of Australia Medal (which she declined).

RSL NSW realise that our volunteers are and always will be our greatest asset, and we are extremely grateful of Heather's dedicated service and commitment to our veteran organization.

I am sure, even during this poignant occasion your hearts will be filled with many warm memories to be shared with your extended family and friends. Please know that our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Ray James OAM
President RSL NSW

Pauline James OAM
State Coordinator Auxiliaries

MARION EFFIE CRAWLEY – GLOUCESTER

Effie joined Gloucester RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary in 1993. A member for 27 years and was President from 1995-2009, 2013-2016, 2019.

Effie was a great support and volunteer to the veteran community of Gloucester over many years and gained respect throughout the community.

Effie was always there to lend a helping hand. Whether it was fundraising, selling badges for Anzac and poppies for Remembrance Day or setting up for luncheons. Her can do attitude inspired us all. She also donated her time making the wreaths for Anzac and Remembrance Day and other commemorations.

A true lady in every sense of the word and Effie will be sadly missed by us and the community of Gloucester.



BERYL JOHANNAH MURRAY – GLOUCESTER

Beryl joined the Women's Auxiliary in Kramback in 1966 and transferred to Gloucester in 1988. A total of 56 years, making her our longest serving member. Beryl served as Treasurer for a number of years and always ready to lend a helping hand. Beryl will be sadly missed by us and the community of Gloucester.



JEAN BEATON – GLOUCESTER

With a sad heart, I am informing you of the passing of Jean Beaton, aged 93 on the 1st December 2021. She was a member of the Gloucester Women's Auxiliary for 39 years. Helped when called on. A lovely lady and will be sadly missed.

Thank you

Co Ordinator Gloucester Women's Auxiliary



CORAL DAWN RADFORD – SAWTEL

21 November, 1937 – 03 December, 2021

Coral was a member of the Sawtell RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary, who served with distinction and faithfully observed the pledge undertaken at the time from when she joined as a member on the 03 June, 2011. Maintaining her membership and never wavering in her support. She last attended our monthly meeting on the 05 March, 2021.

She willingly helped where she could with Anzac Badge Selling, Assisted at Auxiliary Functions, Attended North Coast Councillor Get Togethers, Foyer Raffles, Biggest Morning Tea, Book Selling and Garage Sales to raise funds for the cause.

She was awarded a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement 10 years Service on the 03 June, 2021.



Coral was a valued member, it has been an honour working with her and she will always be missed by all.



HUSKINSON

We lost three of our members last year Betty Webster, Judy Duff, & Lee Wheatley, all long term & hard working members they will be missed

Mary

Deputy Coordinator Huskisson



BARBARA FARR -INGLEBURN 21/10/1939 – 26/10/2021

Barbara joined the Ingleburn RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary on 23 June 2012. She quickly assisted with fundraising for Defence Care and donated items to the Auxiliary trading table. Barbara also assisted in selling Poppy emblems for Remembrance Day and also selling various ANZAC day emblems.

Her nine (9) years of voluntary assistance to the Ingleburn RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary was appreciated and she will be sadly missed by our members at our monthly luncheon meetings.

She will always be remembered as a quiet and private person who loved her participation in the Ingleburn RSL Women's Auxiliary.
Rest in peace.

Lest we forget



BERTHA ELIZABETH EVANS - LISMORE

Bertha joined our Auxiliary in May 2010. She transferred from Mullumbimby RSL Auxiliary and passed away on the 16th May 2020 aged 84. She was married to Len for 63 years. She had 3 children, 4 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and 4 great great-grandchildren.

CARMEL O'KEEFE -LISMORE

Carmel joined our auxiliary in February 2009 and passed away on the 4th May 2021 aged 83.

She was a very dedicated religious woman with a large family and donated a lot of her time as a volunteer in the community and was very popular.

Her husband John predeceased her and she had 13 grandchildren

Both ladies were very active in our auxiliary fundraising and were always putting their hands up to do sausage sizzles and sell badges for Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

They are both sorely missed by all.

RIP Bertha and Carmel

Judy Vivers
Deputy Co-ordinator
Lismore RSL Auxiliary





For those of you who use Facebook, do you know that we have both a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group, why not pop over and join us?

Facebook Page,
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/163434587113422>)

Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/ccwawomensauxiliarynsw>

Battlefields of WWI , Gareth McCray OAM has regular posts, poems from Bill Charlton, so much more.

We are aware some Auxiliaries have their own Facebook Pages/Groups, if you do, please let me know so that I can add the details to the next Newsletter and other members will be able to follow you.

Heicke Keefe has set up a Facebook group for all of us crafters, **Helping our Veterans Craft Group**, pop over and join, some great ideas to help raise funds.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3455036824555520>

CONTACT DETAILS

✉ auxiliaries@rslnsw.org.au

☎ Pauline James: 0411 877 396

☎ Susan Allen: 0409 608 901

sueallen123@bigpond.com

From 23rd August, 2021

Anzac House will be located in
Suite 11.02, Level 11, 175 Pitt Street,
Sydney, NSW, 2000