



RSL NSW
Coffs Harbour

Issue 217
February
2024

2024 Executive

President:

John Lloyd
0438 325 205

Hon. Secretary:

Warren Sowter
0423 418 651

Hon. Treasurer:

Garry Heskett
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Asst Treasurer:

Margaret Black

Vice Presidents:

Garry Heskett
Ian Johnston

Asst Secretary:

vacant

Visitation Team:

Rev. Dr. Graham
Whelan OAM
Ray Squires

**Indigenous
Liaison Officer**

vacant

Cenotaph

Custodian:

Paul Bamford Jnr.

Office Hours:

Mondays:

10.00 am-12.00 pm.
Other times by
appointment.

Thursdays:

Office meetings by
appointment.

The ChargeSheet

The Coffs Harbour RSL sub-Branch Inc. Newsletter



Email: coffs-harbourSB@rslnsw.org.au | **Ph:** 0423 418 651

Website: <https://cex.com.au/community/rsl-sub-branch/>



sub-Branch Newsletter Highlights

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Sub-Branch Administration

Veteran & Veterans' Families Welfare & Well-being

Coffs Coast Veteran and Family Wellbeing Centre

Founding member of the Veterans Wellbeing Network MNC, the Centre's advocates and wellbeing support officers are authorised to lodge your claims for DVA entitlements, link you with wellbeing service providers and advocate on your behalf. Getting support is simple, secure, and online through:

<https://www.vcmnc.org.au/veteran-and-family-triage/>

Location: 4 Scarba St, Coffs Harbour (Inside Legacy Op Shop)

Phone: 02 6521 8108 | **Email:** contact@vwnmnc.org.au

Coffs RSL Sub-branch Inc. Meetings

Monthly General Meetings

Monthly General Meetings: held on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10.25 am.

Location: C.ex Coffs Club Vista Lounge Function Room, followed by lunch in the Bistro. Partners always welcome.

Dates: 17th Feb 2024 (incl AGM); 16th Mar 2024; 20th Apr 2024

Annual General Meeting

2024 Annual General Meeting will be held on the 3rd Saturday of February.

Location: C.ex Coffs Club Vista Lounge Function Room, followed by lunch in the Bistro. Partners always welcome.

AGM Date: 17th Feb 2024 starting at 10:25 am, followed by Feb GM.

Membership Fees

Member's Admin Support Levy

In their Strategic Plan 2020-2026, RSL NSW waived Annual Membership Fees.

Our sub-Branch has introduced a Member's Voluntary Admin Support Levy for the coming years to assist with our operating costs.

The Members Voluntary Admin Support Levy of \$15 falls due on the 31st of December each year.

Members' Payments may be paid directly to our BCU Account as below:

A/C name: Coffs Harbour RSL sub-Branch Inc. | **BCU BSB:** 533 – 000

A/C number: 3285 6268 **(Please include your name and description)**

Payments can also be made using our 'Tap-n-go' electronic swipe card facility.

Member Clothing

The sub-Branch Committee has organised several items as part of our sub-Branch 'identity' and as part of the RSL NSW Branch.

The Committee has made arrangements with a local supplier to maintain and enhance the sub-Branch's connection with the Coffs Coast community.

Supplier: 'Wear It!' (*Speak to Tanya*)

Address: 1/21 Isles Drive, Coffs Harbour

Contact: Ph. 6652 8211

If you would like to obtain any items:

⑩ to ensure correct sizing make your way to 'Wear It!' and try on some items.

⑩ order what you want via Tanya.

⑩ let Warren know that you have made an order.

⑩ when it arrives, you can pay for it via the Secretary or Treasurer

We are now resourcing women's versions of these items.



L/S Shirt – Est. \$55.00



S/S Shirt – Est. \$53.00



L/S Rugby – Est. \$44.00



s/s Polo - \$22.00



Jacket - \$133.00

Regular sub-Branch Activities

Coffee@C.ex – Every Thursday at 10.00 AM.. including the holiday season.

Members gather for coffee, a chat and to tell stories, embellished, exaggerated and in some cases total lies, over coffee.

Join us for convivial, but rarely contentious discussions and recollections.

Location: Vista Lounge of the C.ex Coffs Club. Partners, visitors, veterans.

Walking Group– Usually, 2nd Friday of the Month. (But if ya don't want to walk, just come for the BBQ)

Last Walk: Spring Tank Rd, Bongil Bongil Nat Park on Friday 9thFeb '24.

- We commenced from the junction of Overhead Bridge Road and Spring Tank Rd. in Bongil Nat Park. The walk was cool and flat for the most part. A few local leaches were obviously enamored by our walkers and tried to attach themselves, but 'Salty Bill' had their measure.



- At completion of walk we returned by car to the BBQ area in the Bongil^Ø Picnic Area, Williams Rd., Bonville – the site of our January BBQ; where Rose shared her snags with the Kookaburras after torrid wrestle over 10 rounds, which she lost.

Next Walk: TBA

Refer to The Walk Info Sheet for full details. Collect at 'Coffee@Cex' on

Thursdays in Feb / Mar and GM on Sat 16th March.

Motorcycle Riders Group – Usually, 3rd Friday of the Month

LasT Ride: Operation Nambucca Heads on Fri 15th December.

1. Future rides include a trip to the Ballina Navy Museum. More later.
-

Lawn Bowls Group – Usually, Last Friday of the Month

Next Game: Friday 23rd February – subject to fine weather.

1. Join us at 10:00 am for a few ends on the C.ex Greens.
2. Finish the morning with some cool drinks or coffee in the Club..
3. Cost \$5 per player.



Sub-Branch News & Updates

Membership

Vale: James McLenson RAN D.O.D. 14 Jan 2024

We will Remember Them

HMAS VOYAGER February 10th 1964.

Gary "Hippy" Perrin vividly remembers 60 years ago today when he was thrown from his bed on board the Australian Navy ship HMAS Voyager. "We were all over the place. Lockers, everything, came down on us," he said. "Everything went dark except the emergency lights."

The then 17-year-old said he went into survival mode before discovering the HMAS Voyager had been struck by another naval ship off the south coast of New South Wales.

"When we finally made it out of the mess and onto the deck, we saw we'd been cut in half," Mr Perrin said.

On February 10, 1964, Mr Perrin became one of 232 sailors who survived the HMAS Voyager and HMAS Melbourne collision near Jervis Bay — one of the most traumatic maritime events in Australia's peacetime history.



Sailors from HMAS Voyager swap stories after the collision. (Supplied: Australian War Memorial)

The disaster left 82 sailors dead.

"It was surreal. Something you think happens to someone else," Mr Perrin said.

"I lost a lot of friends that night."

The Voyager was carrying 314 people when it was accidentally sunk by the Melbourne just before 9pm.

The ship's front section disappeared less than 15 minutes after the impact.

The HMAS Melbourne at sea off NSW following the collision on February 10, 1964. (Supplied: Australian War Memorial)

More than 50 per cent of the sailors on board were teenagers on their first voyage, including then 17-year-old Duncan Fletcher who, "by a stroke of luck", survived his serious injuries.

Mr Fletcher was in the middle of the ship at the torpedo tube waiting for his shift to start when he was thrown from "starboard to stern on the port side".

"We heard the ship shutter. We heard, 'Full speed ahead', and then I looked up and saw the carrier coming over the top of us," he said. "They found me wrapped around the guard rails."

Mr Fletcher was crushed by the impact and said the sound of screeching metal still haunted him

today.

Sixty years on and still shrouded in anguish, 19 of the estimated 100 remaining survivors reunite with the families of the victims at Voyager Park, Huskisson, to remember the tragedy.

Finding comfort in company

Now aged in their late 70s, best mates Mr Fletcher and Mr Perrin say being with each other and their fellow survivors helps them cope with their post-traumatic

stress. "It's extremely important. We never got any help when it first happened and I think that was a mistake," Mr Fletcher said. "Someone should've helped us."



A damaged HMAS Melbourne in dock at Garden Island after the collision with HMAS Voyager. (Supplied: Australian War Memorial).

Both men say they neither forgive nor forget the events that led to two royal commissions in pursuit of justice and the truth.

"The royal commissions weren't worth a dill of cold water," Mr Perrin said.

"The government of the day, well, you could've bought the whole lot of them for two-bob."

"Apology? Never heard of it."

Lest We Forget

Major new exhibition at Australian War Memorial to honour 4100 Bomber Command airmen who died defeating the Nazis

- By ELLEN WHINNETT



[Members of the crew of G for George, the veteran Lancaster aircraft of 460 Squadron RAAF in the UK, in front of their aircraft in 1944. Picture: Australian War Memorial.](#)

They were some of the bravest fighters in World War II, their theatre of war the most dangerous, with a death rate of 44 per cent.

Yet for decades, Bomber Command, the airmen drawn from across the then-British Empire, was shrouded in controversy and their sacrifice overlooked.

The bombing raids which destroyed the German city of [Dresden](#) late in the war, killing at least 25,000 civilians, made political leaders uneasy about praising them – UK prime minister Winston Churchill failed to mention Bomber Command in his speech at the end of the war, despite the more than 55,000 airmen who died fighting for the Allies.

And in Australia, the story of World War II tended to focus on the fight against the Japanese around the Pacific, rather than the European air wars against the Nazis. A memorial to Bomber Command was only erected in Australia in 2005, while it took until 2012 for London to dedicate a memorial to its lost airmen from Bomber Command.

Now, a major new exhibition is being planned for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Scheduled to open in 2025, the exhibition will highlight the role played by the 10,000 Australian airmen who served in Bomber Command – and the more than 4100 who died fighting a far-off war in Europe.

“They weren’t able to fly during daytime, it was too dangerous, so they had to fly at night. They didn’t have hi-tech navigational systems, it was all by dead-reckoning in the early years of the war. It was not until later in the war that they had electronic navigational systems such as radar or the [H2S \(new technology radar\)](#).

“And so the bombing campaign escalates into one that starts bombing area targets in Europe as well.”

Area targets – widespread areas – included the cities of Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg and Dresden, as the bombers moved from specific strategic targets to wiping out entire city blocks.

The decision by British military leaders to target civilian areas, much as Germany had done with the London Blitz, was designed to terrify the population and destroy morale in the hopes of bringing the war to an earlier conclusion.

But the flattening of Dresden over two days in February 1945, just three months before the end of the war, posed a significant moral dilemma for many, including Churchill.

“It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing of German cities simply for the sake of increasing the terror, though under other pretexts, should be reviewed,” he wrote in a memo immediately after the attack.

Dr Grant said: “It’s a very complex story given the escalation of the bombing campaign, the decisions that were made.”

He and colleague, senior curator Shane Casey, have been working for months on the Bomber Command exhibition, which will feature the stories of Australian airmen through photographs, videos and audio exhibits, many of them new to the memorial and never before seen in public.



[View from the German city of Dresden's town hall of the destroyed Old Town after the allied bombings on February 13-14, 1945. Picture: AFP/Slub Dresden Deutsche Fotothek/Walter Hahn](#)

The memorial will also bring out of storage its famous plane G for George, one of the original Avro Lancasters flown by Bomber Command, of which only a handful are left in the world.

“We are trying to cover this big picture of the bombing war in Europe but through the eyes of the Australians who were part of it,” Dr Grant said. “These are people from ordinary backgrounds from across Australia, from all different walks of life, different trades and backgrounds. “They all volunteered to go over. They weren’t a part of that decision-making process about what were the targets, it was just following what they were tasked to do. The aircrews themselves weren’t necessarily told they were bombing civilians, although they always had a bit of intuition that this was going on. So it’s a very complex story, one that affected so many Australians.



[The Lancaster Aircraft G for George of No. 460 Squadron RAAF, estimated to have flown 90 sorties, including strikes on Berlin, Munich and Hanover. Picture: Australian War Memorial](#)

with the visitors here at the memorial and the names of all of those 4100 are listed on our roll of honour here.”

Part of the exhibition will tell the story of the Pathfinders – the elite members of Bomber Command who flew ahead to light up the intended targets, and who were sent again and again into battle. The Pathfinder force was created in 1942 to try to better pinpoint the targets and try to stem the horrific losses of the Allied planes that were being shot down by the Germans.

The leader of the Pathfinders was a tough Queenslander, [Vice Air Marshal Donald Bennett](#). “Bennett was a real taskmaster,” Mr Casey said. “He would often fly in his Mosquito aircraft over a target, observe the results, fly back to England and then meet the incoming crews and have at them as to why they hadn’t marked the target properly. “He was a real stickler for it.

“The Germans had diversionary targets marked out on the grounds, they would build fake cities, they’d try to fire flares in the air to try to replicate Pathfinder flares. They never quite managed to pull it off and Pathfinders would always have these coded flares, they would have a set sequence for a particular night and a timing of those sequences.”

Dr Grant said Bomber Command, with its 44 per cent death rate, was “one of the most dangerous places for Australians to serve in World War II, and 55,000 of the 125,000 Allied airmen who served in Bomber Command were killed.

The men were sent out on dozens of sorties each, attacking targets such as telecommunications and electronic goods factories and engine manufacturing centres, but also taking out entire city blocks.

“Berlin was one of the main centres of industry in Germany and they were trying to affect Germany’s industrial output,” Dr Grant said of the bombardment of Berlin. “But of course in bombing large areas of Berlin they were also bombing houses and this was a deliberate tactic of the RAF. “The view was that by destroying the homes of workers, you would affect the morale of workers. “This of course didn’t happen.”

While the Royal Air Force led the bombing attacks on Germany, Allied countries including Australia, played an important part in the operation.

“Right at the beginning of the war in 1939, the Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand governments decided to pool their resources to train aircrew for the war ” Dr Grant said.

“This was called the Empire Air Training Scheme, or EATS for short. And one of the major reasons for this was England being such a small country, it didn’t have the space for training hundreds of thousands of aircrew, so the big open spaces in places like Canada, Australia and Rhodesia were better suited for aircraft training.”

Recruits trained in Australia, Canada or Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) then transferred to the UK to complete their training and be assigned to a squadron in Bomber Command.

The War Memorial will focus on the journey of recruits who enlisted in Australia and ended up flying with Bomber Command.

“The journey of these Australian airmen from all around our nation to going abroad, is that very few of them had the skill even to drive a motor vehicle,” Mr Casey said.



[Australian War Memorial senior curator Shane Casey and senior historian Dr Lachlan Grant in front of the Lancaster bomber known as G for George. Picture: NCA](#)

[NewsWire/Martin Ollman](#)

“Yet within a couple of years they’re flying the most sophisticated aircraft in the world at that point in time, the Lancaster.”

G for George was flown to Australia in October 1944 to become part of the War Memorial’s collection, after it was retired from active missions.

“It was pretty clapped out by that stage, it had flown 89 (missions),” Mr Casey said.

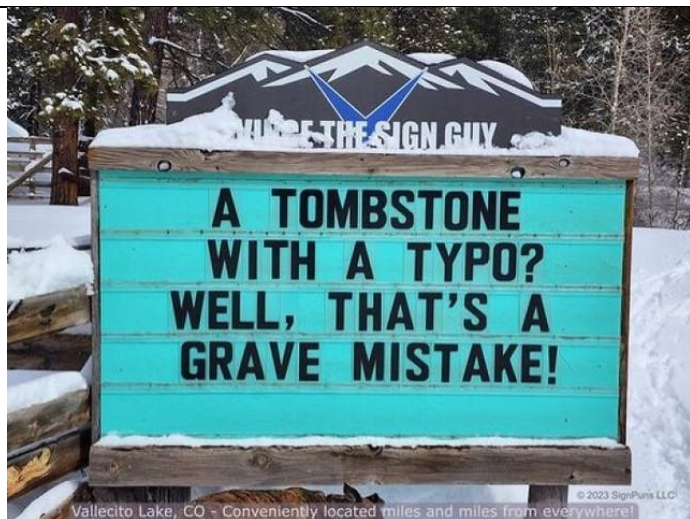
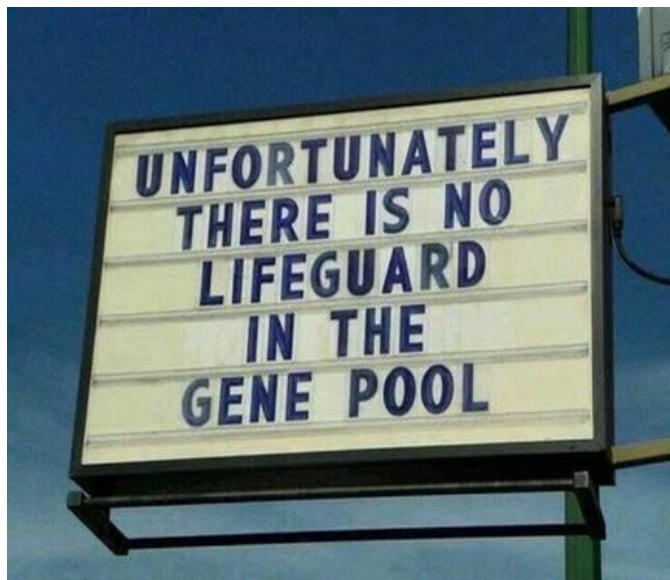
Mr Casey said it was vital to bring due recognition to the role played by Bomber Command.

“There’s a long-lasting legacy in a physical sense across Europe of the Bomber Command campaign, in that so many German cities and French cities and Italian cities were badly attacked and still bear the evidence of that,” he said.

“There’s also an ongoing resonance I think in the current war in Ukraine, where issues of attacks on civilians are being raised.

“I actually think our exhibition is going to be very relevant because of those issues.”

Corn Corner



Padre's Post



**They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.**

Lest we forget.



OUR CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION AND TRADITION

At this important time I want to also remember our promises to God. May I encourage you with the truth of God's providence when we are faithful and truly honour Him:

"The LORD declares 'Those who honour me I will honour...'"
(1 Samuel 2:30)

LEST WE FORGET

Our RSL Prologue

On this day we remember the sacrifice of such men and women for an ideal, a way of life.
Let us take strength in the knowledge and hope that our sons and daughters will never forget
the example set by their forefathers.

On this day we think of every man and woman who, in those crucial years, died so that the lights of freedom and humanity might continue to shine. We nurture, too, the obligation of showing gratitude for the peace we enjoy and the responsibility of ensuring that freedom and liberty so costly won is not lost through our own indifference. In our everyday lives let us carry on those traditions established in past wars and conflicts at such great cost.

So let us mourn with Pride, but let us also remember with equal pride those who serve and are still alive. "See that ye hold fast the heritage we leave you. Yea and teach your children that never in the coming centuries may their hearts fail or their hands grown weak"

OUR CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION AND TRADITION

It is wonderful to be taught from Holy Scripture – Romans 10:8-15

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18).

Sub-Branch Marketplace – Buy, Swap or Sell

Got something you don't need? Need something someone else has got? Interested in a swap? Interested in selling? Advertise in the ChargeSheet!

FOR SALE

RSL Bumper Stickers

Allan could not find any RSL Australia stickers available for purchase. He has had printed a number of RSL Australia stickers that can be used for all sorts of purposes including vehicles. He has offered them for sale at cost to sub-Branch members. If you would like some, please contact Allan directly.



Phone Allan Long: 0408 653 970



THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL
VETERAN CLAIMS BACKLOG ELIMINATION IMMINENT

The Albanese Government was elected on a commitment to properly resource the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to eliminate the unacceptable backlog of veteran compensation claims.

In the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report, serious concerns were raised about how the claims backlog - which was at 42,000 in mid-May 2022 – was detrimental to the mental health of veterans.

Thanks to the Albanese Government's increased staffing and resources for DVA, all new initial liability and incapacity claims are now allocated for processing within a two week timeframe – effectively eliminating this part of the backlog and a return to business as usual levels.

As at 31 January 2024, the total number of claims yet to be allocated to a delegate has fallen to 3,697.

DVA is also on track to clear the remaining backlog of Permanent Impairment claims before the end of February so they too reach a business as usual rate of allocation.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide set a deadline to clear the backlog of compensation claims by 31 March 2024. Thanks to the Albanese Government's investments in 500 additional claims processing staff and in ICT, this target will be exceeded.

Eliminating the claims backlog is a huge step in the right direction and the staff in DVA are to be commended for their tireless work.

DVA's claims workforce is continuing to work on processing veterans' claims as quickly as possible.

While more claims continue to be lodged every day, in November a record 9,800 claims determinations were made which means veterans and families are receiving the support they need, sooner.

DVA is now shifting to a new business as usual working model, aiming to allocate all claims to a processing officer within two weeks of receipt..

DVA Media: media.team@dva.gov.au

Supporting Businesses

The following businesses have demonstrated support for the Coffs Harbour RSL sub-Branch Inc. and offer their services to members and their families.

Lawn Care & Maintenance Services

Contact Chris Dooley at
Empire Lawn Care & Maintenance
M: 0429 073 192



Buying, Selling, Looking to Rent?

for Real Estate Needs, Contact

Greg Renet



Licensed Real Estate Agent

☎ 0411 121 579

✉ greg.renet@atrealty.com.au

www.atrealty.com.au



Health and Fitness

HOYS ALLIED HEALTH + Wellness

Physiotherapy • Exercise Physiology •
Dietetics & Nutrition • Remedial Massage •
Occupational Therapy • Core & Exercise
Classes • Hydrotherapy • Radial Shock
Wave Therapy • Women's Health

Visit: Coffs Harbour Jetty

Shop 9, Jetty Village Shopping Centre
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Call: 02 6652 7355

Online: hoyshealth.com.au

Vehicle Body Repairs

MINOR DENTS AND SCRATCHES?

Give Lyle DENSTEN a ring on

0411 506 514.

Lyle is a Vietnam Veteran with a small motor vehicle repair hobby shop for his Veteran & Vintage car maintenance activity that keeps him sane & happy. Lyle is more than happy to assist with small scratches, dents & scrapes repairs for our members.

Motor Vehicles

A locally owned and operated company,
committed to the Coffs Coast Community



TPI/Korean War Veterans can receive a
National Fleet Discount on all New Hyundai
vehicles. Coffs Harbour Hyundai call us on:

02 6652 1933

192-196 Orlando Street, Coffs Harbour
Coffsharbourhyundai.com.au



The following businesses have demonstrated support for the Coffs Harbour RSL sub-Branch Inc. and offer their services to members and their families.

Coffs Park Beach Plaza



**ADVANCED MECHANICAL
SERVICES COFFS HARBOUR**

Unit 6/163 Orlando Street, Coffs Harbour.
NSW. 2450.

(M) 0431 231 920

COAST TO VALLEY EARTHWORKS

*NO NEED TO DEBATE, CALL ME TO
EXCAVATE*

Contact: BRADEN 0432 597 626

E: admin@c2vearthworks.com or

braden@c2vearthworks.com

