



RSL NSW Coffs Harbour

Issue 241

Feb 2026

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0438 325 205

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vacant

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0414 512 302

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Visitation Team:

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Whelan OAM

Ray Squires

**Indigenous Liaison
Officer**

Peter French

0423 770 578

Cenotaph

Custodian:

Paul Bamford Jr.

Office Hours:

Mondays:

10.00 am-12.05 pm.

Other times by
appointment.

Thursdays:

by appointment during
or after 'Coffee@Cex'.

The ChargeSheet

The Coffs Harbour RSL sub-Branch Inc. Newsletter



Email: coffs-harbourSB@rslnsw.org.au

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

sub-Branch Newsletter Highlights

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Monthly Highlights

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Every Thursday | Coffee@Cex 10.00AM - All invited. |
| Thu 12th Feb | Coffs Creek Walk. Start from Cex car park at 8.30AM. Easy walk followed by Coffee at Cex. Bring Family, kids, friends and stretch the legs. |
| Sat 21st Feb | 10.25am Feb GM followed by lunch. NB the AGM has been moved to the March meeting on Sat 21/3/26. |
| Fri 27th Feb | Lawn bowls at 10am Cex Club greens. A little relaxing fun and exercise. Bring the family & friends. |
| Thu 12th Mar | Botanical Gardens Walk. An easy flat walk, suitable for members, family & friends. Depart at 9.00AM from the Garden’s car park. |

Quote: “The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.” **G. K. Chesterson**

Coffs Veteran and Family Wellbeing & welfare Services

Founding member of the Veterans Wellbeing Network MNC, the CCVWC in the CODA building provides advocates and wellbeing support officers to assist, listen and help lodge your claims for DVA entitlements. The support personnel can 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/>

and in person: CCVWC in the CODA building, Vernon St. opposite the Cex Club.

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

Coffs Coast Veterans Wellbeing Centre NOW OPEN in the CODA building opposite the Cex Club in Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour.

Coffs RSL Sub-branch Inc. Monthly Meetings

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

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

2026: 21st Feb, 21st Mar +AGM, 18th Apr, 16th May.

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 is now due.

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.

Veterans' Assistance

Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling Service.

Open Arms is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or visit OpenArms.gov.au.

Veteran care is the mission of RSL LifeCare.

<https://rsllifecare.org.au/home-care/departments-of-veteran-affairs>.

PH: tel:1300 853 146

Coffee@C.ex – Every Thursday at 10.00 AM in the Vista Lounge

Members gather for coffee and enjoy a chat, tell stories embellished, exaggerated and educational. Join us for convivial but rarely contentious discussions and recollections in the C.ex Vista Lounge. Partners, family, visiting Vets, all welcome.

‘Bourke & Wills Wanderers’

Next Walk: Thursday 12th March. Coffs Botanical Gardens walk. Bring family, friends & kids for an easy flat walk. **Subject to fair weather.**

- Car pool from Cex Car park at 8.30AM.
- Meet at the Gardens Car Park at 8.55AM (gates open 9.00am).
- Confirm with Bill Beamish M: 0432 634 220 or John Lloyd 043 325 205.
- Very easy walk, Coffee@Cex upon completion, bring hat, block-out, water.

Last walk: Thursday 12th Feb. From Cex Car Park at 8.30AM. An easy flat walk around Coffs Creek and through Coffs Nature Reserve and back to the Cex Club for the usual Coffee@Cex. Too easy!

Lawn Bowls Group Last Friday of the Month (usually).

Friday 27th February. Join us at 10:00 AM for a few ends on the Cex Greens. Talent is admired, but not necessary. Complete the morning with some cool drinks or coffee in the Club. Cost \$5 per player. Bring family & Friends.

Open to all Veterans and their family et.al.

Coffs Vets Motorcycle Riders Group

**“Brrrmm ... Brrrmm ...
Headin’ down tha highway
Tryin’ ta void dementia
Born to be miild Brrrmm”**

- Riders usually meet up at the Cex Car Park at 8.30AM.
 - Next ride TBA.
 - Refer Garry Heskett 0414 512 302.
-



We Will Remember Them

VALE:



The Defence all-hours Support Line is a confidential telephone and online service for ADF members and their Families **1800 628 036**

Open Arms provides 24-hour free and confidential counselling and support for current and former ADF members and their families **1800 011 046**

Soldier On is a national support services provider for Defence personnel, contemporary veterans, and their families. Contact during office hours - **1300 620 380**

Lifeline: 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. Call 13 11 14
Text 0477 13 11 14. Chat to Lifeline online (7pm – midnight, 7 nights) www.lifeline.org.au

The Fall of Singapore occurred on 15 February 1942

When Japanese forces captured the British stronghold, it marked one of the largest surrenders in British military history.

Background and Strategic Importance

Singapore was the foremost British military base and economic port in Southeast Asia, considered nearly impregnable due to its strong seaward defenses and strategic location. It was central to British interwar defense strategy and vital for controlling trade routes in the region. Prime Minister Winston Churchill emphasized its defense, instructing Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival to hold the island at all costs.

Japanese Advance and Malayan Campaign

Before the battle, Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita led approximately 30,000 troops down the Malayan Peninsula in a swift campaign. The British underestimated the jungle terrain, believing it impassable, which allowed Japanese forces to outflank Allied defenses rapidly. By 31 January 1942, British Empire forces had withdrawn from the Malay Peninsula onto Singapore Island, with morale low and troops exhausted from prior engagements.

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Battle of Singapore

The Japanese launched their assault on Singapore on 8 February 1942, attacking the weakest part of the island's defenses. Percival commanded around 85,000 Allied troops, including British, Australian, and Indian forces, but many units were under-strength, inexperienced, and spread thinly along the coastline. Communication and leadership failures further weakened the defense. Japanese forces established a beachhead and advanced quickly, exploiting the lack of reserves and poorly defended landward side.

Surrender and Consequences

After a week of intense fighting, Lieutenant General Percival surrendered to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. Approximately 130,000 Allied personnel became prisoners of war, including about 15,000 Australians. The surrender represented the largest in British history and a major strategic loss, giving Japan control over a critical base in the Pacific and enabling further advances into Southeast Asia.

Aftermath

The fall of Singapore had profound military and psychological effects. It demonstrated the vulnerability of British colonial defenses and marked a turning point in the Pacific War. The Japanese occupation led to harsh treatment of prisoners and civilians, and the event reshaped Allied strategy in the region, culminating in subsequent battles such as the Battle of the Java Sea and the Japanese expansion into the Dutch East Indies.

Singapore was supposed to have been an impregnable fortress, and had stood for many years as a potent symbol of British power in South-East Asia. Since the construction of a great naval base at Singapore began in the 1920s, Australian governments had been wedded to this (and the strategy of imperial defence that it encapsulated) as the *lynchpin of Australian defence policy also*.

In the event, Australians discovered too late that the fundamentals of the policy upon which reliance had been placed were unsound. Britain had promised to provide a fleet for the base, whenever needed to deter Japanese aggression, initially within six weeks although this was extended to three months in 1939. When that situation finally arose in November 1941, a matter of weeks before Japan struck at Pearl

Harbor and elsewhere around the Asia-Pacific region, Britain was already heavily committed in Europe and had few ships to spare. What arrived early in December was not a great fleet but a small squadron based around just two capital ships, Prince of Wales and Repulse (one very new, the other quite old). Both big ships were quickly disposed of a few days later by the Japanese in the opening hours of their invasion of Malaya.

Singapore thus remained without the fleet that was its primary rationale. Worse than this, planning for the base had called for roughly between 350 and 550 aircraft to defend it from the air. But this requirement had never been met, either in the number of aircraft provided or effective types. Despite the best efforts of Malaya's aerial defenders, including three squadrons from the Royal Australian Air Force, Singapore found itself at the mercy of an enemy that was vastly superior in air power.

There are many incidents and stories associated with the fall of Singapore, such as the controversial escape by General Bennett back to Australia, and the sinking of the Vynner Brooke and the Banka Island massacre. There are also many popular myths which continue to this day, such as that regarding the fortress guns famously pointed in the wrong direction (when, in fact, nearly all these weapons did engage the Japanese, although there was a shortage of high explosive ammunition).

No aspect arising from the loss of Singapore was more galling than the generally monstrous fate experienced by the Australians who became prisoners there. These men, and a number of Army nurses, were subjected to brutal treatment at the hands of their captors. Those sent on work gangs for the Burma-Thailand Railway especially suffered from overwork, malnutrition, sickness and lashings from guards. Overall, more than a third of their number did not survive the war.

Singapore's fall was not the end or full extent of the grim situation faced by Australia in early 1942. Within four days of the surrender Japanese forces pressed on into the Netherlands East Indies and bombed Darwin. Over succeeding days Australians in Timor and Java would also be fighting for their lives.

But on 15th February we especially remember the loss of Singapore as, in many ways, the highwater mark in the dangerous situation which our nation faced during 1942, and we reverently pay our respects to the men and women commemorated on the fall of Singapore Roll of Honour.

National service and conscription in Australia

In Australia, there have been 4 national service schemes at different times. All have been for military service.

- Universal Service Scheme 1911 to 1922
- Commonwealth Militia (Citizen Military Forces) National Service Scheme 1940 to 1946
- National Service Training Scheme 1950 to 1959
- National Service Scheme 1964 to 1972.

In the 1964 to 1972 scheme, national servicemen were liable for overseas service in wars and war-like operations. Most of the 63,000 national servicemen served in Australia. More than 19,000 served overseas.

The aims and structure of each national service scheme in Australia depended on many factors at the time, including:

- government defence policy
- international agreements and alliances
- military and defence needs
- size and composition of the Australian population.

To introduce or end national service, the Australian Government has made appropriate laws (legislation). Each of Australia's national service schemes was governed by legislation. The key piece of legislation is the *Defence Act 1903*(Cth).

The National Service Scheme from 1964 to 1972

Unrest in South-East Asia, a deteriorating relationship with Indonesia and increasing military commitments in the region led the Australian Government to reconsider military training in the early 1960s. On 10 November 1964, Menzies announced the Cabinet decision to reintroduce national service. The *National Service Act 1964* (Cth) became law on 24 November.

Eligibility

The National Service Scheme was different to previous schemes.

Firstly, Only army training, the RAN and RAAF were not part of the scheme.

Secondly, it was selective rather than universal. Unlike previous schemes, the new scheme did not apply to all males in a specified age range.

Most men who normally lived in Australia and turned 20 during a specified 6-month registration period were eligible to register.

If they did not register in the specified period, most men remained eligible for registration until they turned 26.

Registration

Registration was compulsory for eligible males. More than 800,000 men registered in the National Service Scheme while it was operating.

Ballot selection

Registered men could be selected in a birthday ballot. The main aim of national service was to increase the strength of the Australian Army to 33,000 personnel by the end of 1966. To achieve this, about 4,000 men were selected in each ballot, with 2 ballots conducted each year.

Exemptions and deferrals

After the call up, men could apply for an exemption if they had a physical or mental disability.

Men received an automatic deferment if they were:

- married before the call up
- a member of the Reserve Forces (Citizen Naval Force, Citizen Military Forces or Citizen Air Force)
- a minister of religion, a member of a religious order or a full-time theological student
- had a serious criminal record or posed a security risk.

After the call up, men could apply to defer national service if they were:

- a conscientious objector (had a moral objection to service)
- a student, apprentice or trainee at a university, teachers' college and technical college
- in a situation of exceptional hardship or that required compassion
- unable to serve due to their occupation.

Between 1965 and 1971, just over 1,000 men applied for conscientious objector status.

Training and service

Under the scheme, national servicemen:

- completed 2 years of continuous service in the regular army
- served another 3 years in the CMF
- from May 1965, could be sent overseas under s32 and s50c of the *Defence Act 1965* (Cth).
- Between 30 June 1965 and 7 December 1972, more than 63,000 men were called up for a period of full-time national service.
- In 1965, nearly 38% of men were classified as unfit for service. This rose to more than 51% in 1970.
- Men registered for national service could choose to join the CMF for 6 years. However, they had to join the CMF before their ballot draw.
- National servicemen did 10 weeks of initial training in one of 3 training battalions:
- at Kapooka NSW, Puckapunyal Victoria, Singleton NSW.

- This was followed by 3 months of corps training, then Corp posting.
- Postings were based on the needs of the Army rather than individual preferences. So, not everyone received their choice of posting. Most national servicemen were sent to the infantry. This enabled the Army to increase the Royal Aust. Regiment to 9 battalions.
- A significant number of national servicemen from the 1965-72 scheme died while serving in Australia. Exact numbers are unclear, but one study indicates that the number could be more than 600.

Overseas service

In 1965, changes to the Defence Act meant that national servicemen could be deployed overseas with their units. In 1966, Prime Minister Harold Holt announced that Australia would be increasing troops sent to Vietnam, including national servicemen. If their unit was posted overseas, they were deployed with their unit. No choice about serving overseas or where they served.

For the Army and the Australian Government, there was also the political issue of national servicemen dying on active service overseas. Individuals having finished their training often wanted to use this in active service, to 'do their bit' or did not want to let their mates or their unit down. Generally, there were more national servicemen who were willing to serve in Vietnam than were needed. Those who were unwilling to serve in Vietnam were transferred to units serving only in Australia.

Nearly 19,000 national servicemen served overseas in the Vietnam War and in Malaysia (including in the Indonesian Confrontation), Singapore and Papua New Guinea. More than 18,000 served in Vietnam.

The First Nasho? Guess Who!

(he's still a bit sheepish about it!)

He's in the army now

A young Englishman today became Australia's first recruit in the national service call-up.

He is Walter Simms, 20, and he was in the van of more than 700 recruits to arrive at the army training depot at Marrickville.

"I came from England four years ago to get some adventure," Simms said.

"But this is more than I bargained for."

Simms said he had worked mainly on sheep stations as a station hand since coming to Australia.

He had been a trainee engineman for the past two months.

"I don't mind being called up. I didn't try to get out of it," he said.

"I want to make a decent job of it."

"My only complaint is that two years seems a bit long."

"If they take two years out of my life I want to get as much as I can out of it in return."

"I hope I can take an engineering course or something like that."

How would he feel if he was sent overseas?

"Well, I go, don't I?" he said.

"I suppose someone has to do it, and, any-

way, I won't be the only one on the boat."

Simms's parents are both in England.

"I only wrote and told them about this a week ago," he said.

"I'd hate to hear their reaction."

Simms arrived only seconds before Robert McFarlane, a Lithgow youth who has been working in Sydney as a PMG linesman.

"I'm glad I was called up," McFarlane said.

"I think two years in the Army will stiffen me up a bit."

"I couldn't think of anything better."

The third arrival, William Luther, a railway fireman from Dubbo, said he was looking forward to his two years' service.

"I left a girl behind in Newcastle and she doesn't like the idea much. But I think it will be all right," he said.

"It's only what you make of it."

The unhappiest recruit was Eric Lewis, of Shortland, Newcastle — he was married only last Monday night.

"The first thing I'm going to do is ask for a week off so we can have a proper honeymoon," he said.

First of the 7



• Walter Simms, of Coonabarabran, first of the National Service trainees, arrives at Marrickville Army Depot.



PADRE'S POST

RETURNED AND SERVICES
LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

Christmas was weeks ago...

Have you noticed that Easter hot-cross buns are now for sale in the supermarkets now?

At this coming Easter time I am greatly encouraged that Our Lord Jesus told us what would happen to Him. On 3 occasions He told all disciples that He would be Killed, and after 3 days he would rise from the dead: These 3 occasions are recorded in MARK 8.32ff, 9.30ff, 10.32ff. On 1 other occasion He told Peter, James and John His truth at the Mount of Transfiguration MARK 9.2ff. Jesus told us the wonderful saving truth:

Before Jesus was crucified He prayed: John 17.1-5

Jesus Prays for Himself

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.



Early on the first day of the week Sunday, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus was laid and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and John the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord Jesus out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and John started for the tomb. Both were running, but John outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally John, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord Jesus away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher She knew He, Jesus is her Lord and Saviour - also when we believe). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. **Jesus Appears to His Disciples** On the evening of that first day of the week, Sunday, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

***Best Wishes to all
Padre Graeme Whelan OAM***

CORN CORNER

DAD Jokes

What happens when you eat too many Navy beans?

You end up with a dishonorable discharge.



What is the national bird of Venezuela? A US Drone!

What do you call a cult that is hard to get into?

..... **A Difficult.**

What's it called when you drink holy water mixed with laxatives?

..... **A religious movement.**

What's the difference between the bird flu and the swine flu?

One requires tweetment and the other an oinkment.

What's worse than a box full of snakes?

A box that was supposed to be full of snakes!

What do you call a herd of sheep falling down a hill?

A lambslide.

Why should you never eat a clock?

It's too time consuming

Why can't you hear a Pterodactyl using the bathroom?

Because the 'P' is silent!

What do you call a dinosaur that crashes his car?

Tyrannosaurus Wrecks!

"When the waitress asked if I wanted my pizza cut into four or eight slices, I said, 'Four. I don't think I can eat eight.'"

—YOGI BERRA

RD

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 arranged for 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:

- ✓ to ensure correct sizing make your way to 'Wear It!' and try on some items.
- ✓ order what you want with Tanya.
- ✓ let the office know that you have made an order. when it arrives, you can pay for it via the Secretary or Treasurer
- ✓ Women's versions are also available.
- ✓ Personally acquired Short Slive Shirts may also be embroidered



L/S Shirt –



S/S Shirt – You may bring your own shirt for embroidering



S/S. Polo Shirt



Jacket

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

Greg Renet



Licensed Real Estate Agent

0411 121 579

greg.renet@atrealty.com.au

www.atrealty.com.au



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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



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



 **TV Pete**

Servicing the Coffs Coast
From Corindi to Macksville

 **0414 579 161**
tvpeteservices@gmail.com

