



March 2017

# SIT-REP

CAIRNS RSL SUB BRANCH

## *Member Magazine*



*The price of liberty is eternal vigilance*



# KOKODA HALL

115 The Esplanade (Upstairs) Cairns

8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

**FREE ENTRY**



## The Returned & Services League of Australia Cairns Sub Branch

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Lyn Warwicks Farewell

From left: Ellen McCallum, Lyn Warwick,  
Norma Short





## PRESIDENTS REPORT



2017 has brought many new faces and ideas to the Cairns Sub Branch. Lyn Warwick has retired from her position as Secretary with Lara Wilde joining the team to carry on her work. On behalf of the board I thank Lyn for her

tireless efforts to support our members and veterans in the wider community. We hope that Lyn will visit again soon.

The new team in the office of Lara, Rebecca and recent addition Cameron Vonarx is proving successful with an outstanding International Women's Day Breakfast event and record attendance at the first ever Monthly Mess luncheon. Other new initiatives the team are implementing include a monthly art showcase, new operational policies and procedures, new services for clients, training and development for volunteers and new profiles on social media to keep everyone informed.

The Sub Branch Board had set a target for the staff to sign up 35 new members in 2017. On March 1st, Rebecca reported that there were 32 new members and still 10 months left in the year. Rebecca is also working hard to discuss membership options with people as they renew. These include not only offering a life time subscription rather than an annual payment option but also getting feedback about the services that members would like the Sub Branch to deliver. Some of the member services being examined include discounts to ticketed events like the International Women's Day Breakfast, family friendly social events and employment services such as resume writing and practicing job interviews.

The Kokoda Hall was officially opened in November last year and has proved very popular. The new bunker room and armoury are almost complete and new reading chairs are arriving to encourage guests to enjoy the air conditioning and read some of the many books available in the library. Admittance to the Kokoda Hall is free and the

museum is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm. I encourage you to visit and explore with your friends and family. The museum is a great credit to the team of volunteers who have put it together.

You will observe in this issue of Sit Rep, the date for the AGM has changed from May to April 2nd. This date change was to allow us to meet the requirements of our constitution. There are some positions on the board vacant and available for nomination this year. If you haven't received your form to nominate yourself or someone else please contact the office immediately.

The draft State constitution has been sent out to members for comment. This is also available from reception. This constitution will be voted on at the State AGM in June, if you have any comments please forward them on to myself or reception.

With the AGM in early April the next major event on the calendar is ANZAC Day on April 25th. The theme this year is Light Horsemen at the Battle of Bersheeba. We are fortunate that the new Commanding Officer at 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment is Lt Col Tim Rutherford, a cavalryman with a true affinity for the Light horse.

The Rotary Clubs have again stepped up this year to put on their Dine with a Digger event on April 24th, the Monday before Anzac Day. At this event the Rotary members offer to drive to the door of a Sub Branch member and provide a lift to the RSL Club for dinner. The Rotary Club pays for the members' dinner and then provides transport to return them safely home. The guest speaker this year at the dinner will be Rob Lee from Mates 4 Mates. If you are able to support this excellent initiative and would like to attend please let the office know so they can book you a free ticket.

The redevelopment of the club is going well and I look forward to the opening and the new services that will be provided to members in the near future.

I look forward to the year ahead and hope to see you at the AGM and/or ANZAC Day.

**Buster Todd, President**



# FROM THE EDITOR

As I sit down to write my first ever Sit Rep I reflect on the history of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch and the huge responsibility I have in managing the day to day running of our organisation. Thank you for the warm welcome. So many of my predecessors have left a lasting mark on the military community and I hope that in time I will have the chance to do the same. I have big shoes to fill and much more to learn from Lyn and the team at the Sub Branch.

The depth of knowledge held by our volunteers is incredible and I am in awe of the work that they do for free week in and week out. For more than 100 years the Sub Branch has been driven by the passion and dedication of our volunteers. My first 3 months with my feet under the desk have not delivered a single dull moment and I have loved the challenge of the very steep learning curve.

The first challenge that I have tackled head on is to implement policies and procedures to protect and grow the Sub Branch. This has involved sitting down one on one with each volunteer to discuss the work that they do and the ideas that they have. We are now working on an induction

handbook for volunteers, staff and directors. We have also been reviewing the management practices of the Sub Branch and looking for new innovative ways to continue to deliver our work as well as meet the needs of our members by developing new services. One example is our option to provide free child minding with every event we run to encourage members to bring their spouse and attend events as a family.

As we step into 2017 we have added to our team of staff and expanded their roles. Rather than simply delivering administration services to the PAWS team, the staff are now focussed on facilitating exceptional events, spreading the word that we provide free services to support our community, serving our members in new innovative ways and developing new streams of income to financially support our organisation to grow. If you have an idea to improve the value of membership or grow the Sub Branch please send me an email or drop in to tell me about it over a cup of tea.

**Lara Wilde**

**[secretary@cairnsrsl.com.au](mailto:secretary@cairnsrsl.com.au)**





## 10 QUESTIONS WITH LARA WILDE

1. **Best part about your job?** *I know it sounds corny but the best part of my job at the Sub Branch really is making an impact in someone's life... not in a year or two but right there and right then. Our members may have been battle hardened warriors who were willing to enlist to protect our country not only risking their personal health and safety but making many other sacrifices that we take for granted such as special moments with their family and friends. While they will stand up and fight for us, the slightest thing can become an insurmountable obstacle to them. The ability to pay their rent, finding school books for their kids, gaining the confidence to go for a job interview or navigating the DVA can bring the greatest warrior to his or her knees. At the Sub Branch we can support our current and ex serving members and remind them that they are never alone. As long as the RSL is here we will fight with them.*
2. **How will you know you have been a success in 12 months time in your current role?** *In 12 months, if I have implemented a management system that gives the Sub Branch robust confidence and sustainability as we move forward then I will consider 2017 to have been a success.*
3. **What do you think is the greatest challenge facing veterans today?** *It has never been easy for a hero to ask for help. When your purpose has been to protect and serve those you love, it can be your greatest challenge to be vulnerable and ask for help, especially if the injury is not easily bandaged. Despite Hollywood's best attempts, it is still impossible for a civilian to ever truly understand what military life is like and the impact it has. The greatest challenge facing veterans today is still the challenge to process the impact of military life without losing the unique identity that it gives them so that they can become a fully functioning member of their community and their family.*
4. **What do you think is the biggest opportunity for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch in the future?** *Now is the opportunity for a new era of the Sub Branch with renovations currently underway, a development in the works and a new wave of younger members who want to have a say in the next 100 years of the organisation. The first step is for the Sub Branch is to embrace a model of professional management moving forward to provide transparency and accountability to members. We must maintain our charitable status, explore new options to generate income and listen to our members to make sure that the services we deliver are effective and appropriate. Currently there are more than three thousand organisations in Australia offering to support former members of the Australian Defence Force. The RSL is the oldest and by far the most well known. We have a strong credible brand, a reputation for delivering services and an asset base to finance our objectives. Through professional management, the RSL can grow the capacity to deliver services and can adapt the services to suit the needs of our youngest veterans. The Board of the Sub Branch recognises this opportunity and is already looking for ways to provide transparent and accountable management systems, succession planning for the next generation, strategic management of assets to generate income and reduce risks, and develop open channels of communication with members to be responsive to their needs.*
5. **What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?** *Join the Cairns RSL Sub Branch*
6. **What size mirror ball do you recommend to hang in a bathroom?** *I like to choose a mirror ball that fits easily into the sink for cleaning purposes but is not so small that it washes down the drain.*
7. **If you had a magic wand what is the one thing you would ask for and why?** *Lots of magic wands – one for everyone.*
8. **What skills do you have that can help your community?** *I have two main skills that are of use. Firstly I like to see the big picture. I can see who is who and how all of the pieces fit together. Secondly I know people. If I don't know the guy, I know the guy who does.*
9. **If you could invent one thing what would it be?** *Magic wands*
10. **If you were stranded on an island what 3 things would you want with you?** *A satellite phone with a charged up battery, a direct line to ring the Navy to come and get me, ice cold Mint Juleps until the Navy arrives.*

# NEWS BRIEFS

➤ The Cairns RSL Sub Branch and Kokoda Hall museum now has a strong presence on social media with many members staying up to date on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you would like to keep your finger on the pulse follow us:



**Facebook** @CairnsRSLSubBranch  
[www.facebook.com/CairnsRSLSubBranch](http://www.facebook.com/CairnsRSLSubBranch)



**Instagram** @cairnsrslsubbranch  
[www.instagram.com/cairnsrslsubbranch](http://www.instagram.com/cairnsrslsubbranch)



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**Instagram** @kokodahall\_museum  
[www.instagram.com/kokodahall\\_museum](http://www.instagram.com/kokodahall_museum)

➤ The Cairns Men's Shed generously donated a board to hang keys on in the Sub Branch offices. The polished timber board was hand crafted by the members of the Men's Shed and has been a much welcome addition to the office.



➤ Vice President Phil Warwick has been working tirelessly with the Cairns Regional Council to advance the Cenotaph Refurbishment Project. The refurbishment will involve repairing cracks and damage due to old age, as well as adding conflicts post WWI such as WWII, Vietnam and Afghanistan. Phil hopes to see the refurbished cenotaph and surrounding area unveiled before the Centenary of the end of World War 1 on Remembrance Day November 11th 2018.





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Treasurer Ben Hemphill and Secretary Lara Wilde attended the Cairns Chamber of Commerce Austal Sundowner in February. Mr Robert Jackson, Head of Sustainment for Austal, presented an overview of the company's national sustainment operations and current in-service support programs, including the Cape Class Patrol Boat sustainment program for the Australian Border Force and the recently awarded Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement project for the Commonwealth of Australia.

Austal, the Australian shipbuilder, is Australia's only ASX-listed shipbuilder and global defence prime contractor delivering multiple defence and commercial vessel programs for the world's leading operators. The company has delivered over 255 vessels to 100 operators in 44 countries since 1988 and operates three shipyards and multiple service centres around the world.

With construction due to commence on the Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement project in April 2017, Austal is now looking to engage Cairns region suppliers to help deliver ongoing sustainment and in-service support for the 19 vessel program, from 2018.



## REUNIONS

*The Cairns RSL Sub Branch welcomes the following groups to Cairns for their reunion in 2017.*

### OTU 1/71 Scheyville

May 17th to 19th



### 55 AESS – EWPS Vietnam Veterans Reunion

September 6th to 11th



*We hope that each group can find time to tour our Kokoda Hall Museum and say hello.*



# MONTHLY MESS

The first Monthly Mess of the year was a great success with the majority of attendees being from 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment and a few of our Sub Branch volunteers. 13 new members joined the Sub Branch and the management team received positive feedback from everyone who attended the event. A huge thank you to Rob “Brucey” Lee for his assistance.

The Monthly Mess was graced with the presence of the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Tim Rutherford and Regimental Sergeant Major David Marendy. They were both very supportive of the event and Lieutenant Colonel Rutherford gave a very positive speech on the importance of the relationship between the service community and the RSL.

The Monthly Mess replaces the Rifleman’s Lunch held on the last Friday of each month. The purpose of the event is to bring together current and ex serving military personnel to network and socialise. If you would like to attend the Monthly Mess please call the office on 07 4051 5254.





# SIT-REP



# NEW ADVOCATE TRAINING SYSTEM

By Phil Watson

In the last six months the method of training pension officers, advocates and welfare officers has changed dramatically. Where previously we were trained under the Training Information Program (TIP), we are now trained under what is known as the Advocacy Training and Development Programme, (ATDP). As part of this new system, people are now either known as a Compensation Advocate (Level 1, 2 3 or 4) or a Welfare Advocate (Level 1 or 2).

Where TIP was an organisation that provided courses run mainly by experienced Advocates and Welfare officers and each state had its own way of doing things, different standards and varying course material, ATDP has nationally recognised training and defined competencies. In addition, the training is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, (DVA), a Registered Training Organisation, (RTO), and the RSL.

New trainees are required to meet certain standards before they start their on-the-job and formal training and must maintain a log book of all work performed. Most formal courses (and there are quite a number of them), will be done on-line with a consolidation face to face course with the RTO to confirm competency in each level before they can proceed to training for the next level. Log books play an important part in this assessment. Any trainee must have an assigned mentor with whom they work in the initial stages of training and who then advises them when they start to work on their own. The mentor has to be registered with ATDP and must willingly accept the position and be prepared to spend the time necessary and accept

the responsibilities involved. This of course means the mentor must have met the competencies at the level to which they are guiding and providing advice to the trainee.

Practicing pension and welfare officers have to attend Recognition of Prior Learning, (RPL), courses to ensure that they meet the competencies required by ATDP and meet the national standard. Failure to attend an RPL course will eventually lead to the withdrawal of the persons Authorisation, (endorsed by their Organisation, in our case by the RSL sub branch), to work in a particular field. Without this authorisation a person is not covered by any insurance in the event that an error is made and legal action is taken. In addition, anyone who wishes to act as a mentor must attend a mentoring course to ensure they have the necessary skills to perform the job correctly.

As this is a new system just getting up and rolling, there is a certain leeway as to when all criteria must be met. Currently Cairns Sub Branch PAWS section has one compensation advocate who has been RPL'd to Level 2 and completed a Mentoring course. (RPL for levels 3 and 4 will be rolled out this year). There is one trainee compensation advocate. Two other advocates and two welfare advocates have applied for RPL and this will be done in the near future.

A thing to note is that everyone will eventually have a registered mentor who they can approach with any queries and generally the mentor will be an equivalent or higher level than the practitioner. At level 4 it would appear that peer to peer mentoring will be the only option.



Under the current insurance system, three yearly refresher training was a requirement to maintain your Authorisation. This training was initially run by TIP and the training was essentially a repeat of your initial course. For the last couple of years RSL Queensland ran 'update' refresher training which was an improvement on what TIP provided.

With ATDP, the future here is unclear however it would appear that a combination of type and perhaps quantity of work done, presentation of this work perhaps to a board or submission of copies of work performed

(all suitably redacted of course), use and presentation of log books and the allocation of points each time until a suitable number is reached, is the possible scenario.

However this is achieved, it remains that the new system is an improvement over TIP. We now have nationally recognised training, constant mentoring at all levels of competency, a training system that is defined by meeting competencies as a trainee progresses and an overview (probably by the RTO), of practicing advocates to ensure that competencies are maintained.

## DIRECTOR PROFILE

### Katherine Young



**Best part about your job?** *Seeing people achieve milestones and participate in opportunities that they didn't think possible.*

**How will you know you have been a success in 12 months time in your current role?** *If I have successfully helped medically discharging members transition smoothly and done the best I can for them.*

**Are you a member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch?** *Yes*

**How do you stay involved with the Cairns RSL Sub Branch?** *Board member and volunteer for events*

**What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?** *There is life after defence, and give yourself time to adjust*

**Why did you enlist?** *Change of career and wanted something more challenging*

**If you won a million dollars today what would you do with it?** *Pay off my mortgage; give some to my family, trust fund for my daughter, holiday and donation to animal welfare organisations*

**What is your philosophy or value that you hold dearest in life?** *Treat others how you want to be treated and that sometimes you need to think outside the box*

**If you could invent one thing what would it be?** *A clone of myself so I could spread my commitments between 2 people*

**If you were stranded on an island what 3 things would you want with you?** *A good book, some moisturizer, first aid kit.*



# FAREWELL LYN WARWICK

Our much loved Secretary of 8 years, Lyn Warwick retired in December 2016. For those of you who did not have the pleasure of knowing Lyn here is the lady behind the legend.

Lyn was born and educated in Cairns. After completing her Senior Certificate at St Monica's College Lyn moved to Canberra to commence a career in the Australian Public Service. She met and married her husband, Philip, in Canberra and over the ensuing years moved around Australia during Philip's tenure with the Australian Regular Army.

During that time they had two children.

In 1989 the couple returned to Lyn's home town where Lyn commenced employment as the Cairns Regional Manager of the National Heart Foundation.





In early 1995 Lyn won Liberal Party pre-selection for the state seat of Barron River. In July that year she won the seat in the State election and entered parliament shortly after. Lyn was the first woman to win the seat of Barron River for the Liberal Party and was one of only two Liberal Party women in the coalition government led by the Honourable Rob Borbidge.

During her time in parliament Lyn held numerous appointments, perhaps the most significant being Chair of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

The seat of Barron River was lost by the Liberal Party at the 1998 elections. Despite that drawback Lyn continued to hold a strong belief that more women should be represented in politics and, within a year, was working for the Federal Member for Leichhardt, the Honourable Warren Entsch. Lyn continued to work as Warren's Senior Electorate Officer until October 2007.

On returning from Europe in 2008 Lyn commenced working for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch as Secretary running the office and providing welfare to those in need. When most people think of the Defence community they think of male soldiers and they think of those soldiers as big tough invincible men. Lyn is not most people. Lyn knows that the military is made of many women who serve and many wives and girlfriends who provide a home for men to come home to.

For the past 8 years Lyn has worked tirelessly in the role of Secretary of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch. As Secretary Lyn supported the women of the War Widows Guild, the Women's Auxiliary, the Ex-servicewomen's Sub Branch, the Little Diggers mothers of deployed soldiers, the Laurel Club, the Ladies of Legacy, the mostly female members of the Day Club and the many female members of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch. Lyn distributed grants to a variety of projects to support women and encouraged their social networks and

resources to improve their quality of life in the Cairns community.

It was Lyn's initiative to hold a breakfast for International Women's Day where women are celebrated and acknowledged for the role they play in the Cairns community and in the military.

It was also during Lyn's time as Secretary that she supported and assisted the appointment of the first woman to the board of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch.

Lyn courageously took on a role in a male dominated organisation and used the resources available to support women and their families in the Cairns region particularly from the military community. Through Lyn's generosity and courage, welfare and assistance was provided to thousands of women who were adversely affected by their's or their spouse's service in the defence of Australia.

When women are at their most vulnerable, alone, with young children, homeless, without money for groceries, their spouse away on deployment, new to the region; Lyn was there to comfort them and assure them with her courage that they would be OK and she would help them. In the middle of the day and in the middle of the night, Lyn would arrange emergency accommodation, buy groceries, fill in forms to access Government assistance and provide a comforting shoulder to lean on.

Lyn retired in December 2017 to spend more time at home with her grandchildren. Lyn's husband Phil continues as the Vice President of the Sub Branch and so we have no doubt that Lyn will always be a part of the RSL family. Lyn is greatly missed at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch and we look forward to her next visit in the near future.







# SIT-REP





# WARRANT OFFICER CLASS ONE DAVE MARENDY

**REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR**

**– 51st Battalion The Far North Queensland Regiment**



Warrant Officer Class One David Marendy was born in Mt Morgan, Queensland on 15 February 1966. Warrant Officer Marendy enlisted in the Australian Army in April 1985 and was allocated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. After Initial Employment Training, Warrant Officer Marendy was posted to the 5th / 7th Battalion (Mechanised), The Royal Australian Regiment, where he served in a variety of appointments leaving as a Sergeant in 1995.

In 1991, Warrant Officer Marendy was selected to attend Exercise LONG LOOK and served in England, Canada and also in Germany. In 1994 as a Sergeant, Warrant Officer Marendy was selected as part of Contingent 2B to serve as a member of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai in Egypt.

Warrant Officer Marendy was posted to School of Infantry in January 1995 as a PL SGT and then as the TRG SGT at Depot Company for the last 18 months of that 3 year posting. Warrant Officer Marendy was subsequently posted to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) as the Intelligence Sergeant in 1998, before being promoted to Warrant Officer Class Two in June 1998 and a subsequent posting as the Resource WO / OPSWO of 11th Training Group in Townsville.

Warrant Officer Marendy was posted back to 1 RAR in September 1999, initially as the Training / Rehabilitation PL COMD and then as CSM A Coy and deployed to East Timor with the Battalion Group between October 2000-April 2001.

Warrant Officer Marendy was posted to WONCO Academy, Canungra from 2002- 2007 and worked in both SGT Section and WO Section, finishing as the SSM of WO Section. Warrant Officer Marendy was posted to 31st / 42nd Battalion, The Royal Queensland Regiment (31/42 RQR) as the Unit

Recruiting Liaison Officer in 2008. In December 2008, Warrant Officer Marendy and his family moved to Wales, United Kingdom on a two year posting to the British Army School of Infantry as an instructor teaching Live Fire Tactical Training to students from over 20 different nationalities. In October 2010, Warrant Officer Marendy was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One and in January 2011, assumed command of Small Arms Division at Tactics Wing, School of Infantry at Singleton and in April 2011 was also appointed as the Wing Sergeant Major of Tactics Wing. In April 2012, Warrant Officer Marendy deployed on Operation SLIPPER as a part of the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) as one of the three Training, Standards and Evaluation Warrant Officers Class One, as a part of Afghan National Army Training Centre - Tactical Advisory Group (ANATC – TAG).

In January 2013, Warrant Officer Marendy was appointed as the RSM of 31/42 RQR and was chosen as the Brigade RSM for 11th Brigade for the entire year of 2014 in the absence of the Brigade RSM, who had deployed overseas. In 2015, Warrant Officer Marendy returned to 31/42 RQR as the RSM. Warrant Officer Marendy is currently the RSM of the 51st Battalion, The Far North Queensland Regiment from Jan 2016.

Warrant Officer Marendy has operational service in East Timor and Afghanistan and non-operational in South East Asia and Sinai.

Warrant Officer Marendy is married to Kellie and they have 5 children aged from 23 down to 13 and one granddaughter. Warrant Officer Marendy's interests include Australian Military History, Rugby League and cricket. Warrant Officer Marendy is also an avid collector, follows Queensland in most sports and Australia religiously in all sports.



## 10 QUESTIONS WITH RSM DAVE MARENDY



**1. What is the essence of good leadership?**

*Although leaders are generally born and not made, I think the qualities of good leadership encompass a couple of things - not expecting our people to do something that you won't or can't and secondly the following phrase sums up my philosophies on life in general:*

*'Some people remember a little of what you say... More people remember more of what you do...but everybody remembers how you made them feel!'*

**2. Who are you currently serving with?** *I have served in the Army since 23 Apr 1985.*

**3. What is your role in the Military?** *I am the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) at 51 FNQR and I am the senior soldier between Tully and PNG and West to the Northern Territory border. My job is to provide advice and guidance to our officers and to mentor, teach and guide our soldiers.*

**4. Best part about your job?** *Everyday is different and life in the Defence Force offers wonderful experiences, camaraderie and mateship not normally replicated in other work environments and also provides challenges, opportunities and a variety other benefits.*

**5. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing veterans today?** *I think the challenge of ensuring our current veterans are embraced into the RSL and other veteran organisations and also are compensated on par with other members of society in relation to their pensions and entitlements.*

**6. What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?** *I think quite often that when a member discharges that they 'sell' their qualifications short to prospective employers. The ADF provides some excellent skills which are transferrable at a higher level than many leaving the Defence Force think or represent in their search for civilian employment*

**7. Why did you enlist?** *I wanted to join the Army since I was seven, after seeing an Army truck drive through my home town of Mt Morgan. I told my parents and my mum said 'you might want to be a teacher or a doctor', but I have known this was my career destiny since then.*

**8. What was the highlight of your military career?** *The two years that my family (my wife and 5 kids) spent in Brecon in Wales in 2009-2010. In 4 hours we could all be sitting on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. We ended up visiting all of the United Kingdom and 18 countries throughout Europe. An opportunity we would not have had if I was not in the Army. I even managed to squeeze some 'work' with the British Army in during the 2 years that we were there. We were also invited to Buckingham Palace and I was called out to meet the Duke of Edinburgh and also met the Duke of Westminster (Queen's cousin) and visited his estate in North England as a family.*

**9. Which was your favourite posting?** *And Why?* *See above; however, in Australia I must say that here in Cairns is equal to any other job I've had around Australia and I reckon service with 51 FNQR is the best kept secret in the Australian Army.*

**10. If you met someone who was recently posted to Cairns what are the first 3 things you would recommend they do?** *There is such an array of interesting things to do up here in Far North Queensland. My suggestion would be not to waste any opportunities whilst posted up here and if you leave saying 'I wish I had of done ....' then you have probably not made the most of your experiences or time spent in Cairns and beyond.*

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

There is no doubt that the key note speaker at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch International Women's Day Breakfast on March 8th is smashing glass ceilings. Lieutenant Colonel Gabrielle Follett made the trip from Townsville to move, touch and inspire more than 120 guests with tales of her career in the Australian Army. Lt Col Follett said in her speech that "the Australian Defence Force is representative of the wider Australian community" and praised the work of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch to support women particularly who had served in the military.

Long serving Secretary of the Sub Branch, Lyn Warwick was nominated for a Cairns Regional Council International Women's Day award for her work through the RSL specifically for establishing an annual event to celebrate International Women's Day. The first event that Lyn ran for the Sub Branch was in 2015 with just 30 people

attending. The 2017 event was standing room only as men and women came together to acknowledge and celebrate women from all walks of life.

Cairns RSL Sub Branch President Buster Todd was overwhelmed by the support from the community for the event. "Lt Col Follett is an amazing woman and just one example of the exceptional leaders who are moulded in the Defence force who will go on to lead our community in the future. Extraordinary women like Gabrielle are an inspiration and role model for young girls and boys everywhere" commented President Todd.

The RSL Far Northern District President Peter Sterling was very impressed with the morning stating that "Lt Col Gabrielle Follett was inspirational and spread the good word about a career in the military." To reinforce the District





# SIT-REP

support of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch and the International Women's Day event the Far Northern District donated \$1,500 to allow tickets to be given to Veterans to attend and to cover the cost of flights and accommodation for the speaker.

All proceeds from the breakfast will be used to deliver pensions, advocacy and welfare services through the Cairns RSL Sub Branch to veterans for free. These services include supporting the women of the War Widows Guild, the Women's Auxiliary, the Ex-servicewomen's Sub Branch, the Little Diggers mothers of deployed soldiers, the Laurel Club, the Ladies of Legacy, the mostly female members of the Day Club and the many female members of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch.









## LIEUTENANT COLONEL GABRIELLE M. FOLLETT, RAEME

Lieutenant Colonel Gabrielle Follett was born in December 1977 in Canberra. She completed training at the Australian Defence Force Academy and the Royal Military College - Duntroon (RMC-D), graduating in December 1999. On graduation, she was allocated to the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Lieutenant Colonel Follett completed Lieutenant appointments at the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment as the Officer Commanding (OC) Workshops and at the 1st Combat Service Support Battalion. In 2001 she deployed on Operation Relex, conducting border protection operations from on board HMAS Tobruk. In 2002 Lieutenant Colonel Follett deployed to East Timor on Operation Citadel as part of the 5th/7th Royal Australian Regiment Battalion Group.

As a Captain, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was

posted to the Plans Cell of the Headquarters Logistic Support Force, now the 17th Combat Service Support Brigade. In 2005 she was posted as an instructor at RMC-D and was subsequently appointed as OC Gallipoli Company from October 2005 to January 2007. In 2006, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was awarded a Silver Commendation for her leadership of Gallipoli Company.

In June 2007, Lieutenant Colonel Follett deployed on Operation Paladin and initially worked as a United Nations Military Observer on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights. In January 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Follett moved to Jerusalem to take up the appointment of Staff Officer to the Head of Mission (HoM), an Australian Major General. She held this appointment until January 2009, supporting and accompanying the HoM in his diplomatic missions to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories. For this work, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was awarded a United Nations HoM Commendation.

In January 2009, on promotion to Major, she commanded the Operational Support Squadron of the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. In October 2009 Lieutenant Colonel Follett deployed to Sumatra, Indonesia, on Operation Padang Assist, as the OC of the Combat Service Support Team. During this deployment, she coordinated logistic support to the deployed force, including the execution of logistics over the shore operations in cooperation with Indonesian authorities.

In October 2010 Lieutenant Colonel Follett deployed on Operation Astute as the J5 Principal Staff Officer of Joint Task Force 631. As the J5, Lieutenant Colonel Follett planned the operations of the International Stabilisation Force and developed contingency plans and measures of performance for the Force's



activities. Lieutenant Colonel Follett returned to Australia in 2011 and completed Australian Command and Staff College, receiving the Commander Joint Logistics Prize as the highest placed logistician on the course.

Post-Staff College Lieutenant Colonel Follett was appointed as the DQ/S4 of the 7th Brigade before deploying on Operation Slipper as the S4 of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group. In this role Lieutenant Colonel Follett was responsible for planning and executing the closure of all Australian Patrol Bases outside of Tarin Kowt and as a result of her work was awarded a Commander Joint Operations Commendation. Upon her return to Australia in late 2012, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was appointed as the Brigade Major/S3 of the 7th Brigade, fulfilling this role until August 2013, including undertaking the position of J3 Joint Task Force 637 during Operation Queensland Flood Assist II.

In 2014, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was appointed as the Staff Officer Grade One

Logistics Plans in Army Headquarters, where her responsibilities included the disposal of major platforms, implementing the Defence Seaworthiness Management System across Army and the development of supply-chain reforms. In October 2014, Lieutenant Colonel Follett was selected as the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). As part of CDF's personal staff, she learnt much about the interface between the Government and the Department and about decision making at the highest levels of Defence.

Lieutenant Colonel Follett holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Mathematics, a Bachelor of Medical Science, a Masters of Arts in Strategy and Policy and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has studied Spanish for four years, is a keen long distance runner. She is currently the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion and is the first female to command a unit in an Australian Army Combat Brigade.



## ANZAC MEMORIAL PARK, CAIRNS

As part of the State Library's recent QANZAC 100 Regional Workshops in Atherton on the Tablelands 6 – 9 February, there was time to stop off in Cairns city to experience the Anzac Memorial Park situated near the Cairns Wharf Precinct on the corner of Spence and Wharf Streets.

Winding its way through a tropical landscape, the pathway encourages you to stop and reflect and pause to read the inscriptions mounted on several black granite columns at various points along the trail. Each of the columns is a tribute to those who served in the armed forces, navy, Royal Flying Corps and women who gave their service.

Each column has an inscription dedicated to those who served overseas. This one is dedicated to Air Force personnel. Photo by Anne Scheu, State Library of Queensland, February 2017.



Although difficult to read in this image, the inscription mounted on this column is dedicated to the women who served. Photo by Anne Scheu, State Library of Queensland, February 2017.

The history of the Anzac Memorial Park is well documented. The current site was originally part of the Cairns Customs House reserve and was gazetted as the Anzac Memorial Park in December, 1920.

Anzac Memorial Park, Cairns. The current site was dedicated on 11 November, 1995. Photo by Anne Scheu, State Library of Queensland, February 2017.



The inlaid decal states:

Let their love of country and unselfishness be an example to us and future generations of Australians of what can be achieved in the face of adversity In remembrance 11 – 11 – 95

Twenty-four sites are linked to the First World War in the Cairns Region. They include Trinity Beach in the north, sites across Cairns city and suburbs, settlements south of Cairns – Alooomba, Babinda, and Gordonvale and Bartle Frere, from where the march of the 'Cane Beetles' originated.

"The trail features war memorials, cemeteries, memorial parks and buildings, each with a poignant reminder of the invaluable contributions made by the men and women of the Cairns region."

Part of a bigger project Mapping our Anzac History, the Cairns Regional Council received funding via the Queensland Government's Anzac Centenary peak body to document the Cairns Anzac Trail during the commemoration of the First World War – 1914 – 1918.

The Cairns Historical Society and residents are also acknowledged for their assistance with the project.

Tablelands Regional Council and Mareeba Shire Council participated in similar projects to contribute to the commemoration and mapping of the First World War across the whole region.

**Anne Scheu, Coordinator Queensland Memory, State Library of Queensland**



# MATES4MATES UP DATE

By Rob "Brucey" Lee

Mates4Mates has had a cracker start to the year! Our very first major activity for the year was a visit to the Australian Armour and Artillery Museum. We had a great turnout. Fans of armoured vehicles as well as the mildly amused were thoroughly impressed by the display. Some of the pieces of the collection are one of a kind in the Southern Hemisphere. My personal favourite was a fully drivable T-72 Russian Main Battle Tank! These variants are still in service in a lot of countries and saw combat service as recently as the 1991 Gulf War. There is also an extensive collection of Australian kit ranging from WW1 to the current day. Well worth a visit. The staff treated us like royalty. The collection is due to double in the next 12 months and we have been invited back - so watch this space!

I am intending to conduct a major activity for our members at least once a month from now on. The next activity lined up is





# SIT-REP

stand up paddle boarding. The local 'SUP' store has jumped on board and offered us some great opportunities for tours around the local area. I am excited and uncoordinated so if you like a laugh come along.

Along with these activities we are still running our regular national adventure challenges including the Kokoda Trek and The Big Battle Field Bike Ride to name but a few. If you are selected for any of these activities all flights, bookings and accommodation are paid for! What are you waiting for?

Of course all of our activities are completely free to all our members and their partners/wives/husbands/spouse and any children under 18. The only prerequisite to join is to have suffered a wound, injury or illness as part of your service. You do not have to have served overseas in any capacity and there is no age limit. If this sounds like you or someone you know seek out and close with me. Email me at [rob.lee@mates4mates.org](mailto:rob.lee@mates4mates.org) or call me on 0437 203 464. We also offer tons of other services. To find out more jump on our website [www.mates4mates.org](http://www.mates4mates.org). Look forward to hearing from YOU soon.



# 10 QUESTIONS WITH ROB LEE

1. **What is the essence of good leadership?** *Humility, confidence, experience and a big set of brass balls.*
2. **Who do you currently serve with?** *I currently serve with the 51st Battalion the Far North Queensland Regiment as a reserve soldier. I have previously served in the 1st Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment, seeing operational deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor a couple of times. I have also completed training missions in SE Asia and Europe.*
3. **What was your role in the Military?** *I served as an Infantry soldier for 9 years then decided I walked in enough kilometers to last a lifetime and transferred to logistics*
4. **What do you think is the greatest challenge facing veterans today?** *In my personal opinion the greatest challenge is getting the appropriate recognition from government agencies, Ex Service Organisations and the wider community. With special emphasis on potential employers of ex-service persons.*
5. **Are you a member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch?** *Yes*
6. **What do you think is the biggest opportunity for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch in the future?** *The biggest opportunity that the Cairns RSL Sub-Branch has is to engage current veterans. This in my opinion is essential to the RSL's survival.*
7. **Who is your hero / mentor?** *My hero at the moment is CPL Ben Roberts-Smith VC. In my opinion the best example of a contemporary soldier.*
8. **What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?** *"Keep calm and carry on" - Winston Churchill.  
"Be proud and never forget who you are and what you have achieved" - Rob Lee*
9. **What song best describes your military service?** *I'm Blue because I'm Blue because I'm blue because I'm blue (Sing it now 1 RAR winners!)*
10. **What is your philosophy or value that you hold dearest in life?** *The only bad mistake is one you don't learn from.*







## KOKODA HALL

Before continuing I feel it's worthwhile to reflect on what's been achieved so far, that is from the very beginning of our project. In doing so I'm mindful that prior to the Kokoda Hall project the items of memorabilia were purposefully and strategically displayed throughout the entire Club complex. This of course was a good thing however on the down side some items of memorabilia, such as those that were previously in the Board Room and PAWS office were in a way hidden from general viewing.

By all accounts the displays that were in full view were very popular with both members and visitors alike. I feel it's worth mentioning that prior to the renovations the Club complex had evolved over many years. I think it's fair to say that it consisted of many unconnected areas, the decor was outdated and it was in need of a complete makeover. The renovated Club has pleasant open spaces with spectacular views from almost every part. In recent times many members and visitors have commented on the lack of military memorabilia in the Club. While this will be remedied I'm confident that whatever is done will be facilitated

discerningly and in keeping with the ambience of the Club.

The destiny of the memorabilia collection was tested when it was decided to renovate the complex. Luckily clear thinking decisions were made that ensured that the collection would be preserved. It was also decided that the entire collection would be kept. This included the items that were damaged or of dubious worth. These items were kept pending further investigation.

Consequently, most of the available collection was catalogued, packaged and placed into secure storage. I use the term most items as many items have not yet been catalogued. These uncatalogued items were all kept in a locked cabinet in the storeroom adjacent to the Kokoda Hall. At the time access to these items was not possible because the storeroom was almost completely full with furniture and equipment. As it turned out when we finally gained access we had just enough time to stuff the items into a carton for transporting to storage but not enough time to catalogue during that effort. Luckily Roy Hartman had hand written a







list of these items and that list was kept on file.

I believe that when it became necessary to conserve the entire Memorabilia collection there were at least two quite different viewpoints on how the collection would be treated/reinstated once the renovations were completed.

These options were: -

1. Replicate the past and place much of the collection throughout the complex.
2. Establish a purposefully created, quality, centrally located Museum and Interpretive Centre.

Somewhere in the grand scheme of things it was decided to utilize the remaining floor space of the Kokoda Hall to establish a Museum where the majority of the prime memorabilia collection could be centrally exhibited. It was also decided that at a later date, selected items of memorabilia would once again be exhibited in other parts of the complex where they could be best viewed.

The Kokoda Hall was never going to be large enough to contain the entire memorabilia collection. So far thanks to Murray O'Neill's inventive and somewhat ingenious innovations we

gained a lot of extra space. At this stage it appears that what has already been planned for will fit into the hall, but it will be a tight fit. We also know that once the Club renovations on the ground floor are completed we can set up displays throughout the Club (with consensus from Club Management).

Regardless of this we will still need to be mindful that the Kokoda Hall has space limitations and there is a need to ensure that people can easily and safely move around the displays. The initiative to make all of the cabinet displays portable has already proved worthwhile. So too has the air-conditioning and lighting, besides we still have the ceiling for hanging a few aircraft models.

The initial planning for the Kokoda Room Museum and Interpretive Centre began at a meeting between David Clifton, Roy Hartman and Bob Browne on 29 January 2015. During discussions it became apparent that David and Roy both had a keen passion for the future of the memorabilia. David had obviously put a lot of thought into what the Museum and Interpretive Centre could be. As discussions progressed I became confident that we would in time have a worthwhile high quality Museum and Interpretive Centre. While I shared these thoughts with Roy and David my immediate



motives at that stage were more concerned with the following aspects: -

- Ensure that whatever we did, where ever possible, we did it in line with modern state of the art Museum practices to create a quality venue. At that stage I had no idea what this entailed but David had shown us some examples from other RSL Museums.
- Catalogue all items, (this job is still not completed)
- Ensure that items would not deteriorate in long term storage,
- Ensure records were maintained and or created as necessary,
- Ensure an inventory accounting process was introduced,
- Ensure that we continued to meet our obligation to those individuals and families that had donated the individual items.

On reflection once we got started the core volunteer group soon evolved and as a result our collective passion and concerns became the key driver for the progress that has been made in less than two years. A true team effort.

At that time, it was generally accepted that initially memorabilia from storage would not be displayed throughout the Club complex but in time selected items would be. David was already planning and designing some interpretive displays. Once

completed these visually effective “story boards” were strategically displayed to excellent effect in the Club.

The rest is now history but from this meeting on and in less than two years the Cairns RSL Museum and Interpretive Centre was officially opened by Roy Hartman OAM doing the honours with Sub Branch President Buster Todd as MC.

It was David’s idea to ask Roy to perform this task and those of us in the “Core Group” of Memorabilia Volunteers were delighted that Roy accepted. Roy was the obvious choice because of his dedication to the management of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch Memorabilia over many years and his ongoing contribution. Roy did a great job of the opening with his pièce de résistance being the ceremonial opening of the entrance door.

Even though the Museum is now officially open the volunteers still have a lot of projects to complete some of which are currently in progress.

On behalf of the core group of volunteers of Cairns RSL Sub Branch Museum and Interpretive Centre I consider that I can safely say that 2016 has been a very productive and rewarding year. Much has been achieved and we can clearly see the fruits of our efforts. As a result, it should suffice to mention that in the not too distant future the Museum and Interpretive Centre will be satisfactorily and sufficiently developed to pass all but the hardest to please scrutiny.





The reality is that like all good museums our M&I Centre will be a dynamic venue. There will always be improvements that can be made, themed exhibitions will be developed and managed, new items will be introduced and other items will be archived. One of our key responsibilities will be to ensure the security of the collection and to preserve our memorabilia so that the items will withstand the ravages of time.

Every unique item in the collection must be treated equally regardless of its perceived worth or known value.

“What’s one person’s trash is another person’s treasure”.

For the above reasons there will always be a need for volunteers that have the time, the passion and the skills required to manage and maintain the collection and manage the M & I Centre. Now that the M & I Centre is officially opened a number of new volunteer roles will open up. For example, it would be great if at least one volunteer was present in the Centre for at least part of every day to act as a guide or just a “meet and greet person”. (No roster as that’s far too formal). This volunteer job could also assist patrons who wish to view a documentary video on the Interpretive Centre Bunker Screen.

There will also be a need to carry out preservation and refurbishment work. It is envisaged that much of this can be done in house or in home workshops

but some jobs may need to be done professionally.

Early in February Bill, Fred, Joel and Craig met with representatives of the State Library in the Museum as they wanted to view our efforts. On the next day Bill, Joel & Craig attended a “White Gloves” workshop in Atherton presented by the State Library. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the preservation of WW1 artefacts and exhibits.

On Thursday 23 February Bill Maconachie met with a student at the RSL for the purpose of helping them write a eulogy which he will take to France at Easter as part of his year 10 studies at St Augustine’s.

During February I have had enquires from several people regarding helping them find historical information about their deceased veteran fathers who at some time during service spent time here in Cairns. On all of these occasions I have been happy to help to the limits of our resources and confidentiality aspects. i.e. directing them to the various web sites where I was able to find positive but limited results. Through one meeting I was given some memorabilia for our collection.

We have had several requests from Schools to provide Memorabilia for their ANZAC programs. These requests will be satisfied on a loan arrangement.

**Bob Browne**



# DIRECTOR PROFILE *Ben Hemphill*

**1. What is the essence of good leadership?**

*Look, Listen, Learn and Lead. Allow the cobblers to do the cobbling..*

**2. What do you think is the greatest challenge facing veterans today?**

*The lack of understanding of what you do/did by the general community.*

**3. Are you a member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch?**

*Yes*

**4. How do you stay involved with the Cairns RSL sub branch?**

*I wasn't quick enough to look busy and became the treasurer of the Sub Branch. It is a great role with lots of challenges. I enjoy working with the team to implement the best management systems and practices for the organisation.*

**5. What do you think is the biggest opportunity for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch in the future?**

*Our ability to connect to the ex-service and service community and be relevant to all of our members.*

**6. Who is your hero / mentor?**

*Wylie Coyote – Because it doesn't matter how many times he misses the Road Runner – he keeps on having a go.*

**7. What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?**

*Find a Mentor that has transitioned before you. There will be set backs, but you need to take these as lessons and use the set backs to your advantage. Work through them with your Mentor.*



**8. How do you define a winner?**

*From Hot Chocolates Song – Everyone's a winner, baby, that's the truth.*

**9. Of the three services which is the best and why?**

*Royal Australian Navy. Your home goes with you, so you don't have to carry your belongings, either on your back or to the Porter at the hotel. Plus the Navy has the best Shore Establishment location and the best Port visits.*

**10. What song best describes your military service?**

*Bob Dylan – Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right, Here I am, Stuck in the middle with you*

## VOLUNTEER NEWS

➤ The Sub Branch board directors passed a resolution to pay for First Aid training for any volunteers who wish to participate. This training was suggested by Russell Hayes as valuable for groups such as Day Club should an incident occur. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity and complete your First Aid training please contact the office to register your interest.

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➤ Some of our volunteers feel they are a part of a very sociable group and make lifelong friends. Other volunteers feel like the Lone Ranger making hospital visits and working away on projects at home. The board wants to thank volunteers but also make them feel more connected. At each General Meeting the board will provide drinks and nibbles for volunteers to catch up and share the projects they are working on. This will allow volunteers to get to know each other and share valuable tips and advice. The next General Meeting is on May 25th so if you are a volunteer mark it in a diary – the drinks are on us. If you would like to join in why not volunteer to help out at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch today.



➤ Volunteer Adrian Pearson is working hard on writing policies and procedures for the Sub Branch. A part of his role is designing the Volunteer Induction Handbook for volunteers and Directors. The handbook will cover every aspect of being a volunteer at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch including different roles available, a brief history of the Sub Branch and office administration resources available. If you have any suggestions for what should be in the handbook please email the office at [subbranch@cairnsrcsl.com.au](mailto:subbranch@cairnsrcsl.com.au)



➤ As 2017 kicked off we had a number of new volunteers join the ranks at the Sub Branch. Each volunteer brought a special skill to the table and will allow us to take the organisation to a new professional standard. Some of the skills that are now in our midst are coaches, solicitors, corporate governance experts and really tall people who can change light bulbs with ease. If you would like to find out more about being a volunteer call 07 4051 5254 and ask to speak to Lara.

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# VOLUNTEER XMAS PARTY





# SIT-REP









## THE ART OF WAR

Board member Katherine Young has devised a novel way of supporting current and ex defence personnel who are pursuing a career or hobby in art by displaying their works throughout the Cairns RSL.

The Art of War will give serving and ex ADF members an opportunity to have their creative works displayed and promoted, giving the public an opportunity to view the creative works and even purchase them.

The first artist showcased will be Jason Westcott from JJW Imagery. Jason is an ex Navy member who has always had a passion for photography. His images range from portraiture, landscape, commercial and real estate. The unveiling of Jason's work coincided with International Women's Day Breakfast on March 8th.

Artists have been scheduled for each month up until August 2017. There is a broad range of

artists including several photographers, sketch artists, poets and sculptors.

April will include the very talented high speed photographer Leon Dafonte Fernandez. Leon is a current serving member of the Navy and has sold a lot of his work throughout Europe. He is known for his high speed coloured water droplet photography which is very unique. He will also present a range of his other photographs showing his diversity and skill for different subject matters.

The Art of War is a great way to showcase these members artistic works, providing more exposure to the general public and giving them an opportunity to show that, beneath the Defence uniforms are talented multi-dimensional people who have not only served our country but have a creative flare as well.

If you have an artistic flare and are keen to be participate in the Art of War please feel free to contact the Cairns RSL Sub Branch.





## ARTIST PROFILE

### *Jason Westcott*

The first Artist in our series of The Art of War, who will display their works at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch is Jason Westcott. Jason was born in Papua New Guinea and he has 6 brothers and sisters. In 1996 Jason joined the Royal Australian Navy and was medically discharged in 2015. During his service Jason participated in Operation Sumatra Assist and Solomons 2 deployment.

On Boxing Day in 2004, Banda Aceh was hit with a tsunami causing devastation and loss of life to civilians and Defence employees. Jason was serving on HMAS Kanimbla at the time and was deployed to assist in the clean-up operation in early January 2005. Along with several other members of HMAS Kanimbla, Jason was honoured to meet the Prime Minister John Howard. The crew enjoyed a sit down luncheon

with the PM as a thank you for their efforts after their clean-up operation.

Jason first developed an interest in photography at the age of 5 and remains an avid photographer to this day. Based in Cairns, Jason's successful business JJW Imagery specialises in landscapes, portraiture, commercial and real estate photography. Jason's works will be hung in the Sub Branch throughout all of March free for members of the public to admire.

Jason's main piece of work will show a solemn landscape after the tsunami at Banda Aceh. Jason was serving in the Navy at the time and was there to assist with the clean-up. The large piece will show the absolute devastation of Banda Aceh and those working in the clean-up.





## BOARD NEWS

➤ The President, Vice President and staff recently participated in Media training through Daniel Pycroft Studio Productions. As the world turns more and more to the internet to source their news, it is essential that our team understand the best way to share our story and leverage the media. With practice writing press releases, speaking to a camera and learning what is good and bad on social media such as Facebook, the team is ready to responsibly share our story.

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➤ The Board currently has a vacant position available. In the 2017 – 2018 Business Plan, the Board identified that it would be good to have a Director with a background in education to connect with school and the youth of the Cairns region. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else please contact the office.

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➤ The 2017 AGM is scheduled for April 2nd and now is the time to nominate your preferred directors. For a nomination form or to submit your proxy please contact the Sub Branch office on 07 4051 5254.

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➤ Treasurer Ben Hemphill and Directors Katherine Young and Peter Hayton will be taking part in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Course in Cairns hosted by the Bendigo Community Bank. The AICD is a well respected course known throughout Australia for teaching Directors the best practice for board governance and management.

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## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

➤ Membership renewals were sent out at the end of 2016 with many members choosing to convert their annual membership to a life time subscription saving money and the hassle of renewing every year. If you have not received your membership renewal as yet or are willing to update your contact details to include an email address please contact the office on 07 4051 5254.

➤ The Sub Branch staff have been looking for new ways to add value to your membership. Besides producing a Sit Rep magazine every 3 months, ideas have included discounts for members at a variety of businesses in Cairns, member only events, discounts for members to attend major events and employment services such as resume writing, job interview practice and sourcing employment opportunities for members.



## CLUB RENOVATION UPDATE

### Club Works close to completion

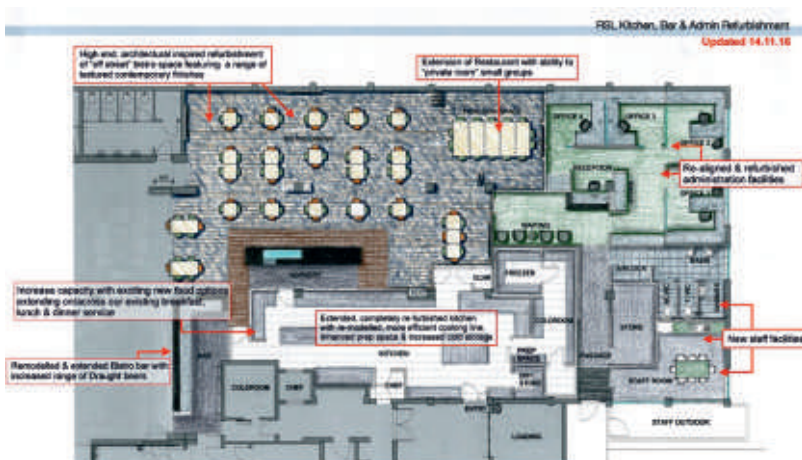
As regular visitors to the Club will be well aware, the Club is close to completion of its most recent refurbishment of Administration, Kitchen and Bistro remodelling and refurbishment.

The work being undertaken by Bryant Constructions represent the last piece of the puzzle effectively closing out the final stage of a complete renovation of the ground floor trading areas and back of house. The work follows on from the Sports Bar, Tab, Gaming and Café completed early 2013, and the outdoor dining works of 2015.

Catering trade has grown dramatically since the 2013 renovation on the back of great support from Cairns locals in particular. The improvements in amenities, the ideal location and traditional club value has seen the clubs membership grow from 3500 in 2012 to just under 10000 at the end of 2016.

There were a number of key objectives the works were targeting, these included,

- Complete refurbishment of kitchen space and equipment with a view to creating greater efficiencies to improve the clubs capacity to adapt and deliver successful food service outcomes for the foreseeable future. The kitchen has been completely gutted with new cool rooms, extraction and cooking line returned, delivering more space and the promise of greater functionality and capacity.
- Refurbish Bistro Bar with a view to increasing product offering, improving aesthetic appeal and bring the space both visually and practically in line with other service points throughout the club. The bar has been completely removed and rebuilt from the ground up including a new beer system, countertops and refrigeration



#### KEY TIME FRAMES:

Stage 1 - Administration works Nov./Dec. 2016  
Stage 2 - Kitchen/Bistro Bar Jan./Feb. 2017  
Stage 3 - Bistro early March 2017

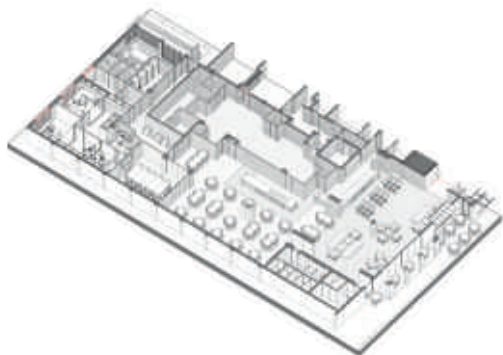
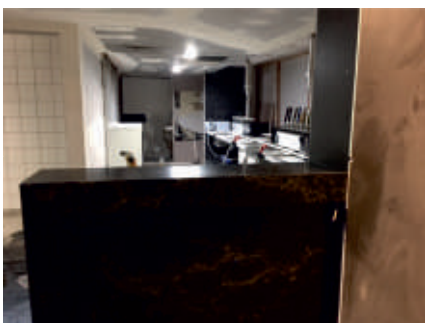
#### BISTRO OPERATIONS:

Bistro open throughout work period  
Normal trade - November/December 2016  
Lunch & Dinner only - January/February 2017  
Normal trade - March 2017 onwards

- Improve the aesthetic appeal of the western space of the restaurant and bistro servery. High end wall finishes and cabinetry along with new carpet will tie into the granite servery and stone feature walls to create a unique and opulent space.
- Creation of functional meeting or private room space off the restaurant to cater to intimate small party events otherwise too small for upstairs function spaces.
- Remodel and re-align admin and staff facilities to comfortably house the clubs administration facility and provide staff with modern comfortable and compliant amenities.

Regular visitors to the club will be aware that the works have been underway since early November with the Kitchen and Bistro Bar out of service from early January. It is envisaged the project should be close to wrapped up and the club back to full service by the time this edition goes to print.

Members will be treated to a significantly broader food offering with the club moving effectively to full all day food trading across new breakfast, brunch, lunch, tapas and dinner menus from 7am daily. The facility promises to maintain for Cairns RSL Members the traditional fair and value that has made the Club so popular but at the same time present something completely unique for the Esplanade market.



## VOLUNTEER PHIL WATSON CELEBRATED HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY IN STYLE AT THE SUB BRANCH.



## FND UPDATE

Far Northern District (FND) is a branch established by State Branch with geographical boundaries and responsibilities assigned to it by the State Branch

FND boundaries extend from Cardwell to Weipa, this area contains 20 Sub Branches of various sizes.

The Head Office is located at 134 Grafton Street Cairns. The District has a full time Secretary whose duties include providing support to all the Sub Branches and members in the District .In addition the office provides services such as advocacy, pensions and welfare.

FND holds monthly meetings for all Sub Branches to discuss activities across a broad spectrum to ensure the Military family is being catered for with regard to welfare.

The District provides financial support to Sub Branches for welfare as well as providing an annual amount of \$2000 to each of the eight Cadet Unit throughout the District.

The District will be conducting their 2017 Annual General Meeting on 7/8/9 April at Mission Beach.





## STAFF PROFILE

### Cameron Vonarx

#### ***Welcome to the Sub Branch team Cameron.***

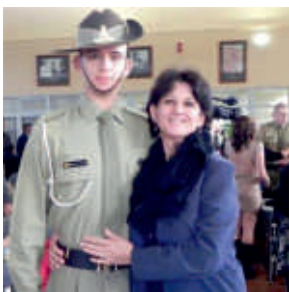
Cameron Vonarx grew up across the road from the Jungle Training wing in Tully, QLD. He first started work at the age of 13 on the farm his father worked at and continued to work there on and off until he finished school. Cameron began an apprenticeship as a chef but quit so that he could sign up to the Army.

He completed his basic training and IET's prior the end of 2014 and was posted to the 8th/12th Regiment, 103 BTY in Darwin. Serving as a gun number he went to various exercises in

Kangaroo Flats Training Area, Mount Bundy Training Area, Cultana Training Area and Majura Range.

After 3 years in the ADF Cameron decided to discharge with compassionate reasons to join his family in Cairns. At the end of February Cameron joined the team in the Sub Branch as an office assistant through the Youth Boost Back to Work program.

Please make Cameron feel welcome and say hello when you come in to visit next time.





## 10 QUESTIONS WITH CAMERON VONARX

1. **What is the essence of good leadership?** *To be level headed, to be able to take a step back and assess the situation prior to making a decision and executing it.*
2. **Who did you serve with?** *Army*
3. **What was your role in the Military?** *Artilleryman – provide support to people at the front.*
4. **What do you now?** *Administration at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch*
5. **How will you know you have been a success in 12 months time in your current role?** *If I am carrying out this new role as efficiently and proficiently as I carried out my last role in the Army.*
6. **Are you a member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch?** *Yes*
7. **What is your best advice to someone who has just left the service?** *Keep in contact, don't become an enigma and join the Cairns RSL Sub Branch.*
8. **Why did you enlist?** *Enlisting felt like a pathway that I needed to take before commencing the next stage of my life.*
9. **What was the highlight of your military career?** *The highlight of my career was when I earned command of my own gun detachment.*
10. **What is your philosophy or value that you hold dearest in life?** *Loyalty*

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE - MARK RIX

Mark Rix has been in the Navy for 14 years seeing a number of deployments around the world. With a wife and 2 young children, Mark knows personally the challenges faced by military personnel. Mark has successfully navigated the DVA system and has completed the AARTS programme culminating in singing a solid Metallica cover on stage in front of hundreds of people.

An active sportsman, Mark gives back through his coaching particularly with sporting teams. In 2016 he coached the Cerberus Football club to a premiership win and the RANFA women's National team to numerous victories. The support that a sports coach gives is just as applicable when you are transitioning from active service to a civilian life. How to stay motivated? How to set goals? How to plan and implement a strategy? How to communicate effectively? How to surround yourself with a team of people who want to see you win?

Mark is now volunteering his time through the Cairns RSL Sub Branch to coach and support our members. A session with Mark is completely free and completely confidential. You can come in and bounce ideas off him, vent about what is bothering you or make some plans to get where you want to be. If you would like to book an appointment with Mark please call the office on 07 4051 5254.





## LEGACY WORD

By Patrina Strike

I would love to thank everyone who has supported me and all the money that was donated to me mainly by Regionals RSL's and Cairns Legacy, for my trip over to the Western Front battlefields in Europe. Pozieres for me was not just about the experience, but more the learning of how legacy all started and learning about all lives that were lost over there. They weren't just lives they were people like you and me, young and old, they had hopes and dream and families.

100 years after these battles I was privileged enough to walk the same footsteps as these hero's once did, I cannot imagine how they felt to watched friends die within and arms reach, to hear so much gun fire and being prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice. This really was a once of a life time experience, one where I got to share it with young legatee's who, like me, we all share a bond which made it more emotional.

Before I was allowed to go on this trip I had to research an essay on a soldier from the war, mine was Private Henry James Gibb of the 14th Battalion. He was, like most, unrecognised by his fellow countrymen today and served in 3 different conflicts, he was married and had three beautiful children, the oldest boy Harry enlisted in 1915 embarking to Pozieres in 1916. 8 months later Henry soon followed embarking to Pozieres himself, for what, I believe was to watch over his son. The 7th of June 1918 was a sad day for the Gibb's family, Henry was instantly killed in action by an artillery shell. Henry was known to be one of the oldest men to have fought on that battle field.

Once I completed my essay and was down in Sydney getting ready to fly to France I asked the Coordinators how and why they gave me Henry. Was there any special reason? They had said it was all randomly chosen. This made me feel like it was fate to go on this trip, Dear Henry made the ultimate sacrifice on the 7th June 1918 and 77 years later I was born on the exact same date. There was so many links between Henry and I and this was one of them.

There are so many reasons why this experience changed my view on life today but mostly that I'm more grateful to the men and women who have and

still do serve and what they do for our country. Being able to walk on battlefields and still see gun shells, to see photos of what towns and hills used to look like and what they do now, it looks like it never happened, to walking the trenches that these people used to crawl through mud, blood, sweat and tears. It really opens your eyes and makes you more aware. I am ever so grateful that I was given the chance to do this because what I felt over there I still do now, and I want to make sure the legacy of the men and women who sacrificed so much for us that their memory lives on and will never be forgotten I am one of many, I am a part of the future.

Thank you once again for everyone who has supported me, it means the world.



# THE CHARGE OF THE 4TH LIGHT HORSE BRIGADE AT BEERSHEBA

By Robyn Van-Dyk

The battle of Beersheba took place on 31 October 1917 as part of the wider British offensive collectively known as the third Battle of Gaza. The final phase of this all day battle was the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade. Commencing at dusk, members of the brigade stormed through the Turkish defences and seized the strategic town of Beersheba. The capture of Beersheba enabled British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza on 7 November and advance into Palestine.



*British and Turkish lines prior to Allenby's attack on Gaza October, 1917.*

The mounted troops spent the summer of 1917 after the second battle of Gaza in constant reconnaissance and in preparation for the offensive to come. The Turkish forces held the line from Gaza near the coast to Beersheba, about 46 kilometres to its south-east. The Allied forces held the line of the Wadi Ghuzzar from its mouth to El Gamly on the East. The positions were not continuous trench lines but rather a

succession of strong posts. Both sides kept their strength in front of the city of Gaza.



*Allenby, Chauvel, Chetwode & HRH The Duke of Connaught A02746A*

The newly arrived British commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, General Sir Edmund Allenby used plans prepared by Lieutenant General Sir Phillip Chetwode. The plan was to attack Beersheba by using mounted troops from the east whilst the infantry attacked Beersheba from the south west. The preparation also involved persuading the Turkish forces that the offensive would again be against Gaza. Chetwode was in command the 20th Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps was under Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel.



*Esani, Palestine. c.1916 Light Horsemen watering their horses H16048*

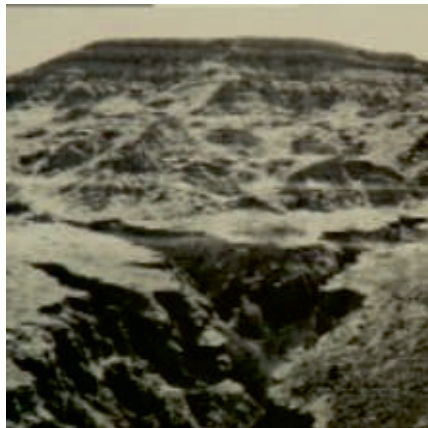
The greatest problem for Chauvel was to find sufficient water in the Beersheba area for his mounted troops. Information from reconnaissance revealed that there was none other than at Esani which was too far to the west to be of any use for a surprise attack. Chauvel, through studying the records of the Palestine Exploration Fund and after questioning local Arabs, knew that the larger ancient towns in the area to the south and south-west of Beersheba must have had existing water supplies. At Asluj the old wells were found and a fortnight's work put them into working order. This made the attack on Beersheba a feasible operation.



*A Light Horse unit digs to locate a water supply outlet at Asluj. H03769*

Various deceptions were employed to keep the enemy thinking the attack was going to be at Gaza including keeping the Infantry strength there until the last minute. Beersheba's defences were held by 1,000 Turkish riflemen, nine machine guns and two aircraft. The position was extended through a series of trenches and redoubts placed on commanding positions with good zones of fire; but on the east and south the trenches were not protected by barbed wire. The Turkish forces were relying on the forbidding open terrain as well as the

absence of water to defend Beersheba. Calculating that the attack was most likely to be upon Gaza they were also not prepared for a force such as Allenby's which was moving on 30 October.



*Rough terrain south of Beersheba - Nov 1917 H11639*

Chauvel's orders when he left Asluj early on the evening of the 30 October were for Major General Chaytor's ANZAC Mounted Division to close the Beersheba Road at Sakati (almost 10 kilometres north-east of the town) in order to prevent Turkish reinforcements from coming in and also to cut-off escape from the town. Once the road was secured, he was to storm Beersheba using Major General Hodgson's Australian Mounted Division. Allenby had insisted that Beersheba must be captured on the first day of operations. On the night of 30 October about 40,000 allied troops moved towards Beersheba, including most of Chetwode's 20th Corps and Chauvel's the Desert Mounted Corps, in a night march of over 40 kilometres.





*Light Horsemen advance on Beersheba. J06574*

Trekking since October 28 via Esani members of the 12th Light Horse Regiment arrived at Asluj on 30 October. Corporal Harold Gleeson mentions in his diary that he obtained no water

at Asluj and at 6pm on 30 October recorded moving on towards Beersheba, marching all night on a “very weary and dusty ride of 30 miles.” Private Hunter in his diary wrote “The dust was terrible. One could not see beyond his horses head. The horses braved the journey which was about 36 miles. Walked at my horses head for about 10 miles of flat country giving him a rest.” The horses were carrying heavy packs on average of about 120 kilograms and their riders knew that there was no water available until Beersheba fell into their hands. Private Keddle: “On this stunt we have been told we would have to live on what rations we had for a few days.”

On the morning of 31 October, Chetwode's three British divisions attacked the Turkish positions around Beersheba from the west and south supported by a sustained artillery bombardment of over 100 guns. By 1 pm they had driven the Turks from their defences to the west and south west of Beersheba, but the wells of the town were still in Turkish hands. The 4th



*4th LH Brigade horses resting prior to charging at Beersheba A01742*



# SIT-REP

Light Horse Brigade waited, scattered over a wide area as a precaution against bombing, to the south-east of the town. Private Hunter: "The Turks immediately started shelling us with heavies. Good cover and tact on our part prevented casualties". Their horses were unsaddled, watered and fed. William Grant was the Brigade's new commander following Brigadier General Meredith, who had been invalided home to Australia.

The wells of Beersheba were vital for the welfare of the Desert Mounted Corps' horses, many of whom had been without water for several days. Enemy resistance at Tel El Saba, three kilometres to the east of the town, had been stronger than expected and it took a stiff day of fighting for Chaytor's force to capture this strong redoubt protecting Beersheba's eastern flank. The fall of Tel El Saba at 3:15 pm meant that the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades were free to attack Beersheba from the East.



*4th LH Regiment moving into action at the battle of Beersheba A02789*

At 3:30 pm there was only a few hours of day light remaining and orders were issued for the final phase of the struggle, the occupation of Beersheba. Chauvel decided to put Grant's 4th Light Horse Brigade straight at the remaining trenches, from the south-east. Chauvel knew that he must take the town before dark in order to secure the wells for Allenby's large force. Private Keddie recorded: "We began to talk among ourselves saying Beersheba will be taken and us



*Trenches at Tel-es-Saba: objective of the NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade A00404*

not doing anything when about 5 o'clock our major came and said that Beersheba had not been captured but we were going in." Chauvel: "owing to the constant attacks from aeroplanes, which had devoted a good deal of attention to my own headquarters, it took some time to assemble them and push them off". General Grant gave the order personally to the 12th Light Horse Regiment: "men you're fighting for water. There's no water between this side of Beersheba and Esani. Use your bayonets as swords. I wish you the best of luck". The Light Horse were equipped with rifles and held their bayonets as swords, which would have been more suited to a cavalry style charge. Fortuitously their bayonet tips had been sharpened on the orders of Major General Hodgson, on 26 October.



*Beersheba Situation Map (pre-charge)*



*Brigadier General William Grant H00020*

Grant made the decision to order his light horsemen to charge cavalry-style, when they would normally have ridden close to an objective then dismounted to fight. Trooper Edward Dengate: "we got mounted, cantered about a quarter of a mile up a bit of a rise lined up along the brow of a hill paused a moment, and then went atem, the ground was none too smooth, which caused our line to get twisted a bit . . . Captain Davies let out a yell at the top of his voice . . . that started them all we spurred our horses . . . the bullets got thicker...three or four horses came down, others with no riders on kept going, the saddles splashed with blood, here and there a man running toward a dead horse for cover, the Turk's trenches were about fifty yards on my right, I could see the Turk's heads over the edge of the trenches squinting along their rifles, a lot of the fellows dismounted at that point thinking we were to take the trenches, but most of us kept straight on, where I was there was a clear track with trenches on the right and a redoubt on the left, some of the chaps jumped clear over the trenches in places, some fell into them, although about 150 men got through and raced for the town, they went up the street yelling like madmen." Captain Robey was at their head.



*Major Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, by George Lambert ART02753*

Captain Jack Davies followed Robey's men towards the town and shouted when three miles away: "Come on boys Beersheba first stop". Major Fetherstonhaugh's horse fell shot and was himself shot through the leg. The major put his horse out of its misery then got down behind his dead horse and fired his revolver until he ran out of ammunition. Fetherstonhaugh wrote to Davies congratulating him. In the letter he also mentioned his own injury: "I got a bullet through both thighs, it made a clean hole through the left but opened out a bit and made a large gash through the back of the right which will take a little while to fix up".

While the 4th Light Horse Regiment dismounted at the trenches and tackled their objective on foot many in the 12th Light Horse Regiment were able to get straight through and take the town, Keddie: "we were all at the gallop yelling like mad some had bayonets in their hand others their rifle then it was a full stretch gallop at the trenches . . . the last 200 yards or so was good going and those horses put on pace and next were jumping the trenches with the Turks underneath . . . when over the trenches we went straight for the town."



*Main street of Beersheba shortly after its capture P01668.005*

Sergeant Charles Doherty wrote that the horsemen who cleared all the trenches came up to an open plane which "was succeeded by small wadies and perpendicular gullies, surrounding which scores of sniper's nests or dugouts each were holding seven or eight men. After progressing another quarter of a mile, we turned to the right at an angle of 45 degrees to converge on Beersheba. The enemy's fire now came from the direction of the town and a large railway viaduct to the north. The limited number of entrances to the city temporarily checked us but those in front went straight up and through the narrow streets. Falling beams from fired buildings, exploding magazines and arsenals and various hidden snipers were unable to check our race through the two available streets that were wide enough for 2 to ride abreast." Private Keddie had a near miss: "I felt a bullet go past my ear and thought if that bullet had been a few more inches to one side" as did Trooper Dengate: "I suppose you heard about the capture of Beersheba by the 4th Brigade, well I was right in it, and came through safe, and with my skin intact, I got a bullet through the leg of my breeches, just above the knee, grazed my leg but didn't make it bleed."





*Locomotive & well at Beersheba, blown up by retreating Turkish forces P03463.001*

The success of the charge was in the shock value and sheer speed in which they took the town before it could be destroyed by a retreating Turkish force. Harry Langtip described Beersheba: "The town is small but has some very nice buildings with tiled roofs. The water scheme is grand. We got into the army stores and helped ourselves to grain for the horses & got bivy sheets and peg posts. We got all the Turkish stores, there was everything from a telephone to a pack saddle. We got lots of horses and bullocks. There was rifles and gear lying everywhere. The Turks left bombs and if you kicked one up it went. One Tommie got both his eyes blown out by a bottle. He just kicked it out of the way and it must have been full of explosives."

Sergeant Charles Doherty: "The first party sent across to the large cement troughs had just finished when from the east came an unexpected fusillade of bullets. Through this assault made it appear that we had been cleverly ambushed, we retained control over the prisoners and secured what cover there was until further support arrived. Between 8 & 9:30 pm the 11LHR arrived and the 4th MG Squadron



*Watering horses from a large reservoir after Beersheba was captured P02041.012*

came in. Then a complete chain of outposts was established while the main body of prisoners, together with many scattered lots from the various redoubts were taken back to Brigade HQ."



*Motor ambulances waiting near the Beersheba town mosque P01668.004*

31 light horsemen were killed in the charge and 36 were wounded. Some originals from the Brigade who had enlisted in 1914 such as Edward Cleaver and Albert "Tibbie" Cotter, the famous Australian cricketer, were killed. The next morning Private Keddie rode over the ground to see if any of the horses could be found roaming but he recorded only seeing dead carcasses. Keddie: "We were sent looking for the horses whose riders were killed so we made for the other side of the town where several other light horse regiments were . . . met some friends in the first light horse and yarned for a while they asked me what it was like in the charge gave them a full account". At least 70 horses died. The Turkish defenders suffered many casualties and between 700 and 1,000 troops were captured.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade into Beersheba.

# VETERANS EXERCISE PROGRAM

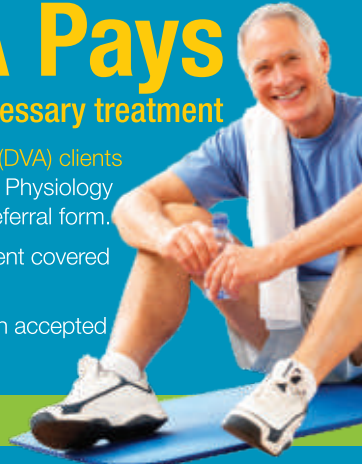
## DVA Pays

for the clinically necessary treatment

Entitled Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients may be referred for clinically necessary Exercise Physiology treatment by their General Practitioner on a valid D904 referral form.

**Gold Card Holders** are entitled to clinically necessary treatment covered by DVA's health care arrangements for all health conditions.

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Active Body Conditioning exercise programs provide fully funded exercise to eligible ex servicemen, women. DVA pays for the clinically necessary treatment. It involves a university qualified exercise specialist called an Exercise Physiologist to prescribe exercise on a one on one basis.

Clinics are based across Australia in gym and gym like facilities, we also have home visits available. If you have ever suffered from PTSD, Depression and Anxiety, Chronic Pain, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Arthritis, High Blood Pressure and Neurological Diseases just to name a few then our individually designed programs will assist.

We operate out of a fully functioning, air conditioned gym in the middle of Cairns. Make contact today to discuss your eligibility and to find out more about the services



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **Monthly Mess:** This lunch is held on the last Friday of every month from 12 noon to 3pm and we encourage everyone to attend. It is a great opportunity to meet new people and find out about support and services relevant to our members. We run a child minding service (free of charge) for the duration of the lunch. Cost per person is \$25. Book your tickets by calling 4051 5254 or email [subbranch@cairnsrsl.com.au](mailto:subbranch@cairnsrsl.com.au)
- **Dine with a Digger:** 24th April
- **ANZAC Day:** 25th April
- **Meeting Dates:**
  - The **AGM** Sunday 2nd April 10:00am Catalina Room
  - **General Meeting** will be held on the following dates:
    - Thursday 25th May 6:00pm Catalina Room
    - Thursday 24th August Catalina Room
    - Thursday 23rd November Catalina Room

## ANZAC DAY

**April 25th 2017**

4:30	Gunfire Breakfast at the RSL
5:30	DAWN SERVICE assembly at Cenotaph
5:50	Official Wreath Laying
7:00	Disperse to RSL for Breakfast
8:15	ECUMENICAL SERVICE commences at St Monica's Cathedral
9:15	Service ends
9:30	Assemble in Fogarty Park
10:00	SERVICES Parade – March steps off
10:20	March arrives in Munro Martin Park
10:30	Parade establishes formation on the park