



# War Veterans Village (Narrabeen) RSL Sub-Branch

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER 2014

Editor Doug Smyth – email [rslsubbranch@rsllifecare.org.au](mailto:rslsubbranch@rsllifecare.org.au) or mail to PO Box 56, Narrabeen, NSW 2101

**“Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose”**

## The President's Message



### Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Service

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August I attended the Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial service held in Saint Matthews Anglican Church, Manly. The service was transferred from the Manly Corso to the church due to the inclement weather. At short notice the Manly Council relocated the service to the church and was instrumental in ensuring that the morning was a huge success.

The service was planned and conducted by the National Servicemen's Association of Australia accompanied by local music students. A very moving service followed by morning tea in the Council Chambers.



Angels



With the growing numbers of ladies in our sub-Branch, I floated the idea of a Ladies Group some weeks ago to gauge if there was any interest in forming such a Group. Ladies who could assist the Committee with organizing functions, fund raising and other activities for the sub-Branch. The response was positive and we held our first informal meeting last week. It was decided to call the Ladies Group “Angels”. The Angels are Suellyn Main, Carolyn Smyth, Shirley McLaren and Anne Doggett. A formal announcement will be made at our next meeting on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014. This meeting is a week later than our scheduled meeting.



**Remembrance Day**  
11am, 11 November 2014

Our Angels, will this year, be organizing the Poppy sales for Remembrance Day. This is one of the major fundraising activities for our sub-Branch. I look forward to your support with the selling of the poppies. More information to follow.

President - George Main

## A Poem - by Pam Ayres

I have a little Satnav, It sits there in my car  
A Satnav is a driver's friend, it tells you where you are.  
I have a little Satnav, I've had it all my life  
It's better than the normal ones, my Satnav is my wife.  
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive  
“It's sixty k's an hour”, it says, “you're doing sixty five”  
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake  
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.  
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green  
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.  
It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear  
And taking into account, it specifies my gear.  
I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device  
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.  
It fills me up with counseling, each journey's pretty fraught  
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?  
Ah well you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed  
It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!  
Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff.  
I only wish that now and then, I could turn the buggler off.

## Chaplain's Corner



Free Coffee

Why not have a half way stop on your walk around the village?  
Please drop in for a free no obligation coffee in your chaplain's office.  
Where? The Northern Amenities.  
When? Whenever the door is open.  
I look forward to seeing you.

Bob Durbin  
Chaplain  
0458 005 280

## Laughter is great Medicine



Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. Mark Twain

Our feature article in July was on the sinking of the Japanese transport ship *Montevideo Maru* on the 1 July 1942 by *USS Sturgeon*. The following is the Commanders log.

### USS Sturgeon (SS-187) 1936 -1945



Operating out of Freemantle, Australia, the USS Sturgeon was on patrol west of the Philippines when she spotted an unescorted Japanese freighter. The patrol report completed by Lieutenant Commander W.L. Wright is one of the few concrete pieces of evidence known about the incident. The report follows:

*30 June 1942: Patrolling northwest of Bojeador as before. Dive at dawn, surfaced at dusk.*

*At 2216 sighted a darkened ship to southwest. At first, due to bearing on which sighted, believed him to be on northerly course, but after a few minutes observation it was evident he was on a westerly course, and going at high speed. He quite evidently had stood out of Babuyan Channel, headed for Hainan. Put on all engines and worked up to full power, proceeding to westward in an attempt to get ahead of him. For an hour and a half we couldn't make a nickel. This fellow was really going, making at least 17 knots, and probably a bit more, as he appeared to be zig-zagging. At this time it looked a bit hopeless, but determined to hang on in the hope he would slow or change course toward us. His range at this time was estimated at around 18,000 yards. Sure enough, about mid night he slowed to about 12 knots. After that it was easy*

*1 July 1942: Proceeding to intercept target as before. Altered course to gain position ahead of him, and dove at 0146. When he got in periscope range, it could be seen that he was larger than first believed, also that his course was a little to the left of west, leaving us some 5,000 yards off the track. Was able to close some 1,000 yards of this, and then turned to fire stern tubes as only three tubes available forward, and at this range and with large target four torpedo spread desirable. Aft tubes had 70D/ heads, while heads forward were small ones.*

*At 0225 fired four torpedo spread, range 4,000 yards, from after tubes. At 0229 heard and observed explosion about 75-100 ft. abaft stack. At 0240 observed ship sink stern first. 0250 surfaced, proceeded to eastward, completing battery charge. Ship believed to be Rio de Janeiro Maru, or very similar type, although it is possible it was a larger ship, he was a big one.*

Continued in next column >>>

### Continued

A few lights were observed on deck just after the explosion, but there was apparently no power available, and his bow was well up in the air in six minutes. Dive at dawn. No further contacts.

Unfortunately Wright could not know that the ship was the *Montevideo Maru* and that she was packed with Australian Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees from New Britain. It is believed that 1056 Australian captives died plus over 70 Japanese naval personnel. It is now considered to be the worst maritime disaster to befall Australia.

Japanese silence over the incident was to exacerbate the disaster and continues to cause controversy to this day. The facts only became known at the end of the war, when a list of Australians captured at Rabaul was discovered. Only then did the Japanese admit they had been on the *Montevideo Maru*, whose loss had been recorded by the Japanese in 1942.

Stories that some Japanese had escaped the sinking, even possibly a few of the Australian prisoners, have continued to circulate.

### Dates to Remember

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September, Committee Meeting  
11.00am (Amy Taylor Room- Gallipoli Centre)

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September, General Meeting  
9.30am (Montgomery Centre)

Guest Speaker: Pauline James. Deputy State President, RSL CCWA (Central Council of Women's Auxiliary) "Lest we Forget" Centenary Quilt. (Pauline will have the Quilt with her).

### PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE

(From the second Thursday in the Month to the third Thursday of in the month - this month only)

### Advance dates to remember:

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October, Committee Meeting  
11.00am (Amy Taylor Room- Gallipoli Centre)

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October, General Meeting  
9.30am (Montgomery Centre)

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November - Remembrance Day  
Service in Village. Details in November Newsletter.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December - Sub-Branch  
Christmas Function. The Lone Pine, Gallipoli.

Take an envelope from the back meeting reception desk and return the completed envelope with your payment at the October meeting. Cost \$50.00 per head.

### Membership

Life Member	= 2
Life Subscribers	=16
Service Members	=54
Associate Members (belonging to other sub-Branches	=49
Affiliate Members	=20
Our strength at 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2014	Total=141

We will be welcoming new members, Frank Newall, Ian Galloway, Bill McIntosh and Suellyn Main, at our September General Meeting.

We have five prospective members with Service records being obtained. These are Ron Kenny, John Taylor, Dennis Turner and Bob Wigley