

PRESIDENT'S PEN



cumberlandrsl.com.au

SYDNEY CITY TOUR

ANZAC & TINGIRA MEMORIALS



In early September, members of RSL NSW Cumberland participated in commemorative ceremonies at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney and the Tingira Memorial, Rose Bay.

At both ceremonies, members learned a great deal of military history and had the opportunity to honour those who have served in the defence forces of Australia.

The group was welcomed to the Anzac Memorial by Jim Grey. There was opportunity then for members to inspect the fine permanent three-service museum and the temporary exhibition to commemorate the centenary of the establishment of the Royal Australian Navy.

The group was introduced to the library and research centre maintained inside the new wing of Anzac Memorial by the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies NSW.

The institute was originally established way back in colonial times to educate military officers in defence matters.

A daily remembrance ceremony is held at 11am inside the Anzac Memorial. Attention is directed to the 150,000 stars in the dome of the memorial, one for each person from New South Wales who enlisted in the First World War (1914-1918).

After lunch the Cumberland group gathered at the Tingira Memorial, Rose Bay. HMAS Tingira was the first Australian naval training vessel. It was anchored in Rose Bay from 1912 to 1927. 1,500 boys who trained on the Tingira served in the British fleet during the Great War.

In our commemoration we noted that five boys from the Tingira were lost at sea during the war and their names are recorded on the Plymouth Naval Memorial in the United Kingdom. One of those lost was Boy 2nd class John McPherson, aged just 14.



“ A welcome change is coming... Thinking outside the square ”



CUMBERLAND

COMMITTEE

President **James Batkin**
Vice President **Ron Inglis**
Treasurer **Mehmet Evin**
Secretary **Mark Lee**

Committee **Ross Baker**
Committee **Paul Hughes**
Committee **Chris Hurley**
OAM
Committee **Alice O'Connor**

Trustee **Allan Chapple**
Trustee **Paul Hughes**
Trustee **Avanua Kupu**

RSL AUXILIARY

Co ordinator **Ann Batkin**
Assistant **Alice Walsh**

GRANVILLE CHAPTER

Co ordinator **Alice O'Connor**

RSL NSW CUMBERLAND

Email
**secretary@
cumberlandrslsb.com.au**

Secretary
0432 - 475 744

Australia Post
**PO BOX 434
Auburn. NSW. 1835**

Auburn Office
**1-5 Harrow Road
Appointment Only**

Auxiliary
**Ann Batkin
0407 - 009 724**

PRESIDENT'S DESK

New Broom to sweep the decks ...

I urge all service members to exercise their right to vote in the present elections for President and RSL NSW Board directors. The persons elected to office will lead for the next three years and will take responsibility for our organisation at a critical time.

Our RSL has a proud history but recent decades have been ones of decline and controversy. The Bergin Inquiry led to a new constitution and election of our leaders directly by the members. If you don't vote then you can scarcely complain when leaders make decisions you don't like. Don't delay. Voting closes on Monday 9 October 2023.

Service members now have the responsibility to put in place leaders who are committed to reform the RSL and its sub-Branches. The writing has long been on the wall. Without a new culture and organisation, the RSL and its sub-Branches will continue its slow slide to extinction. We need a new broom to sweep the decks.

Details on each of the candidates are contained in the latest issue of Reveille magazine. It is pleasing to see so many highly qualified, middle aged and younger persons standing for election.

For too long we considered service in the forces and service in the RSL as important qualifications. Candidates steeped in the old traditions of the RSL will be an obstacle to reform.

We need people with skills in management and people who are financially and business literate. We need people with a vision for a new RSL. I am disappointed that among all the candidates, only one mentioned the Strategic Plan - the road map to reform and revitalise the RSL.

As in Parliament, so in the RSL, we need more women in executive positions. It is pleasing to see three highly qualified women standing for positions as directors of RSL NSW.

I urge all service members to study the candidate information and exercise their vote in this important election.

James Batkin

JAMES BATKIN
President
RSL NSW Cumberland



VISION PLAN BELIEVE ACT

'One RSL - working together, delivering locally'

PRESIDENT'S PEN (PP) - All communication and correspondence for RSL NSW Cumberland is to be addressed to the Secretary, and sent by email or Australia Post. Correspondence in any other format (social media) will not be recognised or answered. PRESIDENTS PEN is published monthly by the Committee of RSL NSW Cumberland for members and friends of the sub-Branch. PRESIDENTS PEN is not for sale. PRESIDENTS PEN is published as a printed publication, Electronic PDF, website based, with circulation worldwide. Editor - Mark Lee, Secretary Copyright - RSL NSW Cumberland. The opinions and content published in PRESIDENTS PEN are those of the authors/contributors. RSL NSW Cumberland does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed.



The ROUSE Vice President - RON INGLIS

CO\$T of COMMEMORATIONS ...

Every Sunday afternoon, without fail, my great-grandmother would make her way to the local cemetery and place flowers on the graves of her parents. Now honouring your father and mother is important. It is one of the ten commandments, but I doubt if there are many people today who consider that honouring the memory of their parents requires a weekly pilgrimage.

We face the same dilemma today whenever we seek to honour those who have given their lives in the armed forces of Australia. We proclaim in unison *We Will Remember Them* and *Lest We Forget* but how often should we do this and what ceremonies and rituals are appropriate? How much money should we spend and what should be the nature of any permanent memorial?

These issues came to the fore recently when there was a proposal to restore a headstone in Rookwood Cemetery that named an Auburn Anzac who had perished in the First World War.

Private Jack Edward Swinfield was killed in action on his first and only day of battle, the ill-fated Battle of Fromelles, Australia's first major action on the Western Front. His body was never found so he has no known grave. Back in Australia, Swinfield's mother included her son's name on the gravestone of his father's grave, a practice not uncommon in the years following the Great War.

The gravestone in Rookwood Cemetery has greatly deteriorated and it was suggested that RSL Cumberland may wish to restore this tribute to Private John Swinfield in our 2024 commemoration program.

A visit to several monuments masons indicated that a complete restoration to original condition of this headstone would cost well in excess of \$5,000. Do you think such expenditure is justified? (Do not suggest a new headstone in a cheaper material. Heritage rules mean any restoration has to be to the original)

Bear in mind that Private Swinfield's name is already on the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux in France and on five memorials in Australia.

**Auburn War Memorial
Municipality of Auburn 1914-1919 Honour Roll
Auburn Public School First World War Honour Roll
Auburn Boys Public School Great War Photographic Honour Roll
Roll of Honour Australian War Memorial Canberra**

Another current issue concerns the Remembrance Day ceremony in Rookwood Cemetery being organised by the RSL Western Metropolitan District Council. The total cost of staging this event is around \$23,000. Is such expenditure really justified for an organisation dedicated to the welfare of veterans and their families?

NSW PARLIMENTARY TRIBUTE HANDSARD

WILLIAM "JIM" MACKIE

I acknowledge the passing of Mr William "Jim" Mackie, a former Navy Reserve member and long-time member of the local Cumberland RSL Sub-Branch.

Jim grew up in Auburn and attended St John's Primary School and Marist Brothers Auburn, now known as Trinity Catholic College. He was a glazier and lead lighter and did his apprenticeship with Tanner Middleton in Auburn, working across several glass companies throughout his career and also teaching the trade at Bankstown TAFE.

Jim's parents would not give him permission to join the navy at the age of 17, so he joined the Navy Reserve. He served for three years including service on the Cootamundra and the Warramunga. Jim was an active member of Granville RSL Sub-Branch for many years before his mates Russell Knight and Kell Campbell persuaded him to transfer to the Auburn, now Cumberland, sub-branch.

A parishioner at the Holy Family Catholic Church, East Granville, Jim also served time as P&C president when his children attended the local parish school.

I send my condolences to Jim's wife of 64 years, Denise, and his entire family and thank them for his wonderful service.

LYNDA VOLTZ MP
Member for Auburn



RSL LifeCare Veteran Services

rsllifecare.org.au/veteran-services

Brought to you by

RSL
LifeCare
VETERAN SERVICES

Supported by

 RSL
NSW

AROUND THE TRAPS ...



Cumberland Vice President Ron Inglis gives the history statement to touring members at the HMAS Tingira memorial, Rose Bay recently.



Vietnam Veterans luncheon at Bankstown Sports Club. L:R, Valerie Lamb, David Manning, Chris Hurley, Greg Read, Violet Smith, Grant Smith and Peter O'Brien.



Patron of TS Australia, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, RSL NSW Cumberland President James Baskin and Rear Admiral Rachel Durbin at the recent commissioning of TS Australia naval cadet unit Lidcombe.



Cumberland President James Batkin and Vice President Ron Inglis, were guests of Thirlmere-Bargo-Picton RSL sub-Branch recently. The sub-Branch has a fine meeting hall with an excellent mini museum. In the grounds there is an artillery piece from the Second World War. Members of the Thirlmere sub-Branch accompanied James and Ron to the nearby RSL LifeCare Spur Ranch.



The RSL NSW LifeCare Spur program has continued to build on the success of the last few years, taking even more veterans through the program and building a group of passionate volunteers who care deeply for our horses, but also for helping veterans riding to recovery.

Six volunteers attended and competed in three cattle sorting events under the colours of Spur Ranch.

Over the last financial year, the team delivered 12 horse handling or riding courses and embarked on an incredible trek through the Snowy Mountains. Additionally, the team provided a mounted ceremonial lancer troop support on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day at Narrabeen and Picton.

The Spur team also hosted three contact days for RSL NSW sub-Branches attended by a total of 70 RSL members.

Their beloved pony, Apache, made two visits to RSL LifeCare residential aged care facilities and has been undergoing extensive training to deliver support to aged care clients of RSL NSW LifeCare.

RSL NSW LifeCare Veteran Services, will continue to assist and connect to veterans and their families to the services they need.

If you or someone you know requires assistance, please get in touch with the RSL LifeCare Veteran Services team.



Supplier & Supporter
RSL NSW CUMBERLAND

CUMBERLAND NUMBERS GAME

Snakes & Ladders ...

The NSW Department of Veterans Affairs recently published statistics drawn from the 2021 Census showing the 'Veteran Landscape' of each Local Government Area (LGA) in the state of New South Wales.

The Cumberland LGA is a large municipal area in western Sydney stretching all the way from Rookwood Cemetery out to Prospect Reservoir. It was formed in 2016 by the amalgamation of the old Auburn and Holroyd municipal councils.

The Cumberland LGA is home to 235,000 residents. Among these are just 1,017 veterans, men (around 90%) and women (10%) who had, at some time in the past, served in the Australian Defence Forces (ADF).

Cumberland has a very low proportion of veterans. Across Sydney Metropolitan veterans make up 1.1% of the population. In Cumberland the percentage is only 0.4% of the population. In other words, across Sydney there is one veteran for every 100 residents.

In Cumberland there is only one veteran for every 231 residents.

Cumberland also rates low in the number of serving ADF residents. Cumberland LGA is home to only 107 regular ADF members and 63 members of the Reserves.

Other statistics from the census published show that the Cumberland LGA has 230 Gold Card Holders, 235 White Card Holders, 407 Service Pensioners and 135 War Widows.

Across Sydney veterans are elderly. 70% are over 55 years of age, 13% are aged 85 and over.

At the time of the census there were four RSL sub-Branches based in the Cumberland LGA - Lidcombe, Cumberland (old Auburn), Granville and Merrylands. Granville sub-Branch was closed and members from there are now a chapter of Cumberland RSL sub-Branch.

Does the Cumberland LGA really need three RSL sub-Branches, that together hold over \$30 million in assets, for just 1,017 veterans?

2023 EVENTS

MEETING COMMITTEE

Monthly Status
Tuesday 17 Oct 6pm
Dooleys, Regents Park

MEETING AUXILIARY

Monthly Status
Wednesday 25 Oct 12 pm
Dooleys, Regents Park

COMMEMORATION REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

PUBLIC
**RSL NSW WMDC
EVENT**
Sunday 5 Nov 10.30 am
Rookwood cemetery

MEETING MEMBERS

Tuesday 21 Nov 4.30 pm
Dooleys, Lidcombe

SAVE THE DATE

CUMBERLAND CHRISTMAS DINNER

7pm Sunday 10 December 2023 - Dooleys Regents Park

Booking details in November issue President's Pen