



Newsletter of the  
**Toowong RSL Sub-Branch**  
*The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance*



Est. 1919

December 2020

Dear Members,

Welcome to the final newsletter of 2020. With Christmas now passed, we look forward to ringing in the new year and hopefully a much better 2021 with the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The past three months has again been a busy one with the progression of incorporation of the sub-branch, a number of services conducted and fundraising activities undertaken. A special presentation was made following the QGM earlier this month to our WWII veterans of a commemorative medallion and certificate by Julian Simmonds MP.

Finally, congratulations to President George Hulse OAM for receiving the Brigadier General CH Foott CB, CMG Award which is for outstanding and significant support or service to the Corps of Royal Australian Engineers.

**Stephen Thornton, Hon. Secretary**



*Julian Simmonds MP presenting Ethel Hemming with the WWII commemorative medallion and certificate, with President George Hulse OAM*

## President's Report

The activities conducted by the sub-branch since the previous Don-R include:

### **Voluntary/Fund-Raising**

- Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings Warehouse at Oxley on 25 October 2020 was a successful event albeit a hailstorm truncated the time available to continue. Almost \$600.00 raised. A further sausage sizzle at Bunnings Oxley on 29 November raised almost \$700.00. The sub-branch is very grateful to our volunteers who stepped-up and donated their Sunday to the fund-raising activities.



- Mr George Vaivarins at the Regatta Hotel selling Regatta Hotel merchandise that was donated to the RSL at no cost to the sub-branch. George (with a small hand from other committee members) has raised \$8,719-34 to date and still counting;
- Mr Vince Atley continues to contribute a vigorous pursuit of fund-raising donations from a variety of sources.
- Financial assistance to a Vietnam veteran who is in extreme housing circumstances.

### **Representational**

- Assisted the RSL State Branch with promotion of the RSL on 8 October where two of our WWII veterans were interviewed by the Courier-Mail and RSL media. Both appeared in the C-M on 10 November 2020 **(see p.11 for newspaper clipping)**;
- Conducted a Membership and Network Team (RSL State HQ) meeting in the sub-branch office on 19 November. Discussed the way forward for the RSL in general terms.
- Attended the farewell function for the RSM of QUR on 10 December 2020.

### **Commemorative**

- The sub-branch conducted four services on 11 November 2020 which included a Remembrance Day service at the Shrine in the Toowong Cemetery followed by a memorial service at the grave of Major Charles Heaphy VC in the Toowong Cemetery, then our Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph and finally, the official opening of our discovery trail information panels adjacent to the Cenotaph. Channel 9 recorded the event and ran it in the news that evening;
- The sub-branch believes that we are the first to have brought together the descendants of the first Victoria Cross awarded to a New Zealander as well as the first Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian in the one place. They are Mr Bruce Woodhouse (great grand-nephew of Major Charles Heaphy VC) and Mr Jon Howse (grandson of Sir Neville Howse VC, KCB, KCMG) **(see p.7 for photo)**.

### **Management/Financial and Legal**

- Conducted management committee meetings in October, November and December 2020;
- Ensured that our financial statements were subjected to audit. They have been successfully scrutinised, the sub-branch is able to meet all its debts and we are in a good position financially. The person who has

been instrumental in this success is our Treasurer, Mr Vince Atley;

- Our application for Incorporation of the sub-branch together with the Constitution has been submitted to the Qld Office of Fair Trading;
- Mr Mike Muirhead, representing the Toowong sub-branch continues to attend RSL SED management meetings as our Delegate;
- We continue to face some uncertainty in respect of COVID-19 restrictions for ANZAC Day 2021. Details to follow;
- Our next AGM is scheduled for 21 March 2021 – details to be confirmed.

### **A Bit of History – Official Opening of Toowong Park in 1918**

102 years ago, Toowong Park, now known as Toowong Memorial Park, was officially opened. The cenotaph would be erected just four years later in 1922.

The local paper at the time, The Telegraph, carried this article on 9 September 1918.

#### **Toowong Park.**

#### **OFFICIAL OPENING.**

*Quite a large crowd congregated at Toowong Park on Saturday afternoon, when the formal opening ceremony was performed by the Hon. E. H. Macartney, M.L.A. The opportunity was taken by relatives to plant some 350 palms or trees to perpetuate the memory of those who have enlisted from the district. These figures do not represent the total enlistments, and as further notifications reach the Toowong Town Council, commemorative trees will be planted accordingly.*

*The Toowong park has its frontage on Sylvan road, and comprises 22 odd acres. The park was purchased about three years ago for, roughly, £8,000. The main avenue*

now is planted with Norfolk Island pines, and also there is an avenue of palms. The park is encircled with such beautiful trees as weeping figs, jacaranda, Poinciana, Moreton Bay chestnuts, and also with palms. The council has taken the whole financial burden involved on its shoulders, although liberal subscriptions have been received.

On Saturday a patriotically draped platform was erected outside the entrance gates. On this were seated the Mayor of Toowong (Ald. A. H. Richer), Mr. and Mrs. Macartney; Mrs. T. J. Ryan, Ald. C. Patterson, and the town clerk, also hon. secretary of the park movement (Mr. A. T. Fraser). During the afternoon refreshments were dispensed by ladies forming the Toowong branch of the Red Cross Society. The No. 1 District Military Band contributed selections.

Ald. Richer, in a brief address, said that the occasion was a red-letter day in the history of Toowong. The area which that, day they were opening as a park, for many years had been dormant. While it was with a degree of pleasure they had gathered together that afternoon, it, of course was to be regretted that the occasion should arise that they should be planting trees to the memory of the boys who had gone to fight for our liberty and freedom. (Applause.) The trees would stand as a monument to the great number who had enlisted from Toowong. The time would come, he hoped, when visitors to Brisbane would not have completed their sight seeing without paying a visit to the Toowong Park.

The Hon. E. H. Macartney, who was received with much enthusiasm, said that he deeply appreciated the honour which the Town Council had put on him in asking him to declare open the park. He would like to congratulate the Mayor and aldermen on the idea of conserving the park, which was ideally situated, to the honour of the men who had gone from Toowong to join in the battles of the Empire. (Applause.) He hoped that it would not be many years before the

park was a thing of beauty, and a popular resort for strangers, as suggested by the Mayor. Mr. Macartney touched on the war situation, and referred to the fact that the tide had turned in favour of the Allies. Who was to say, he asked, that what was taking place on the western front today, might not be the means of bringing the war to a speedy end. (Applause )

Senator M. Reid, in a short speech remarked that the iron gates at the entrance to the park were presented by Ald. Patterson, and originally were the gates to the lodge attached to the late Sir Thomas McIlwraith's property at Auchenflower. "Although," said Senator Reid, "the late Sir Thomas McIlwraith was a political, opponent of mine, I now, see that in some things he was right and, I was wrong." (Applause.)

Mr. Macartney, then performed the opening ceremony, after which the planted palms were systematically planted.

Source:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/175506352#>

## Finances

### **One Volunteer is Better Than Ten Pressed Men**

Our plan of action for 2020 included the need for fund-raising to keep our sub-branch finances healthy and happy which they are currently. This same effort will be maintained in 2021.



Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, we held a number of fundraising activities as previously detailed.

## Website

The sub-branch website is currently undergoing a 'makeover' which should be completed next month.

## Welfare Assistance

Occasionally we are contacted by sub-branch and non-branch service and ex-service men and women to assist with advocacy regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and other agencies. In these cases, we are able to direct them to the appropriate contact within the RSL. We assisted one person in the last quarter.



## Greenslopes Wellbeing Centre

Did you know RSL South Eastern District offers free services for veterans & families?

- Wellbeing support, visits & bereavement assistance
- Medical & allied health referrals
- PTSD & mental health support
- Advocacy & research for compensation & welfare
- Career transition assistance
- Financial literacy & crisis support
- Peer mentoring

Located at Greenslopes Private Hospital  
Tuesday–Thursday | 10am–2pm or by appointment

Email: [wellbeing@rslsouthqueensland.org](mailto:wellbeing@rslsouthqueensland.org)

Ph. (07) 3394 7235

Website: [www.rslsouthqueensland.com.au](http://www.rslsouthqueensland.com.au)

## Membership

Membership of the sub-branch continues to increase with four new service members joining since September.



Welcome to Terry Anderson, Christopher Elphinston, Jim Kidd and Keith Lamb.

Toowong sub-branch now has 91 service members and 24 non-service (social) members being a total of 115 members.

Every member of the sub-branch, both service and non-service members, should have been provided with a name tag to wear at functions. If you weren't provided with a name tag at the time you joined, or if you have misplaced it, please contact our Membership Officer Mike Muirhead for a new one (free of charge).

You can email the office or call Mike on 0419 703 334.

## Hospital and Home Visits

Due to COVID-19 visitor restrictions, our contact with members and other ex-service persons who were ill was restricted to telephone and electronic communications.



## DVA's Telephone Number

Please note that DVA's new number is 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) and is its primary access number for veterans and their families.

## Last Post

We regret to inform members that Dr. David Cilento passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November.



## Sub-Branch Committee & Contact Details

2020-21 Committee:

- George Hulse OAM - President
- Nigel Meadows - Senior Vice-President
- Ross Williamson RFD - Vice President
- Dr. Stephen Thornton - Hon. Secretary
- Vince Atley - Hon. Treasurer
- Mike Muirhead – Membership Officer
- Peter Gow
- Bruce Tindall
- Janelle Voysey

The office is located in the Western Districts Rugby Football Club (Wests Bulldogs) building in Sylvan Road Toowong.

Office: 7/65 Sylvan Road Toowong

Postal: PO Box 1564 Toowong DC 4066

Phone: 3870 1379

Email: [secretary@rsltoowong.org](mailto:secretary@rsltoowong.org)

Website: [www.rsltoowong.org](http://www.rsltoowong.org)



*Toowong Memorial Park*

Gravesite service for Major Charles Heaphy VC in the Toowong Cemetery, 11<sup>th</sup> November



*Toowong sub-branch members*



*Mr Bruce Woodhouse (great grand-nephew of Major Charles Heaphy VC) and Mr Jon Howse (grandson of Sir Neville Howse VC, KCB, KCMG)*

Remembrance Day service at Toowong Cenotaph, 11<sup>th</sup> November



*Committee member Peter Gow and George Hulse OAM*





Committee member Janelle Voysey (left), Cr. James Mackay and Cr. Peter Matic



*Hon. Treasurer Vince Atley*

# Remembering the

## THE BAND OF BROTHERS JOHN WILL NEVER FORGET

TOBIAS JURSS-LEWIS

THERE'S a weathered photo on John Cyril Briggs' desk of 11 men – seven flight crew, four ground staff – standing proudly by a huge black bomber plane.

John has looked at that photo every day for 75 years – he was the captain, they were his crew. "I was close with them all," he said.

"The whole crew, we were a band of brothers you might say."

"The Lucky Seven" they were called, and together they crewed a Lancaster bomber for Britain's Royal Air Force during World War II. John says he was the luckiest of them all – "in more ways than one". Why? "I suppose I gained out of it" – when so many others lost.

That was 75 years ago, before John moved countries, before he met his wife – a Queensland called Joyce – before they had children, and their children had children and so on.

"I'm a great-grandfather now," he told The Courier-Mail proudly. Over the years, between the "violent changes" of life, John never forgot to remember. "Every year that I could have I've made Anzac somewhere and Remembrance Day, I've been to all of them that I can remember."

John, who served as a pilot in the RAF between 1943 and 1946, shared his story at the Toowong RSL club ahead of Remembrance Day, to remind Queenslanders to "Remember to Remember". "We've got to remember that we don't need wars," John said. "But 'if we've got to have one, then we'll take them on', that's the attitude we had."

It's that courage that Queenslanders are being urged to remember, as the country fights a different kind of war against COVID-19. Like Anzac Day, Remembrance Day 2020 will be reshaped by social-distancing requirements with ceremonies held under COVIDSafe patronage and livestreamed online.

For some veterans, such as Australian Women's Army Service veteran Ethel Hemming – who worked in financial control in Brisbane during World War II – this will be the first Remembrance Day service they spend without their families.

"My grandson and great grandson usually come with me to the service, but we're only having such a small one this year," Ms Hemming said.

But there's not a doubt in her mind that on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, "they'll obviously still be thinking of me".

"That's very important."

Remembrance Day activities will take place right across Queensland, including the official Remembrance Day ceremony from the Shrine of Remembrance in Anzac Square at 10.15am on Wednesday.

This will be live-streamed via the RSL Queensland Facebook page.



John Briggs and Ethel Hemming at Toowong RSL Club, are ready for Remembrance Day; and (inset) John with the 1945 flight crew and ground crew. Main picture: Richard Walker

Toowong Sub-Branch WWII Veterans John Briggs and Ethel Hemming in the Courier Mail



*Julian Simmonds MP presenting Ethel Hemming with the WWII commemorative medallion and certificate, with President George Hulse OAM*



*Julian Simmonds MP presenting the grand daughter of WWII veteran William Evans with the commemorative medallion and certificate, with President George Hulse OAM*



*Attendees at the QGM on 13<sup>th</sup> December*



*Brian Venz RFD donating a few old uniforms to Graham Heslin, Commander 12ACU for the cadet museum*

## Dedication of the first three WWI panels of the ANZAC Discovery Trail



*The ANZAC Discovery Trail*





*First three panels were completed and installed in June - Gallipoli, The Western Front & Beersheba*



*Sub-branch membership officer Mike Muirhead, Michael Berkman MP, (unknown) and Paul Robertson*  
**A big thank you to sub-branch member Lily Zhu for taking these photos**