



Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc.

2023 Annual Report



VETERANS SUPPORT

COMMEMORATION

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

INTRODUCTION



Mildura RSL's Mission Statement

The mission of the RSL is to support the well being and betterment of our members- serving and ex-serving men and women of the ADF, our allies and their families- with provision of welfare and commemorative services and, where appropriate, contribute to worthy needs within the broader community.



Mildura RSL's Vision Statement

The Mildura RSL will strive to provide a first class facility showing a high standard of service and veteran support. We recognise our role in the education of the public, especially young people, on the sacrifices made by those who have served their country. We aim to promote a living community spirit and uphold the values of respect for each other and support of your mates.

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LIFE MEMBERS

† 1960	N.J. NOYCE
† 1963	E.C. VANDENBERG
† 1966	J.W. O'BRIEN
† 1966	W.H. WYNNE
† 1968	J.D. RICHARDS
† 1970	A. THOMSON
† 1978	S.G THOMPSON
† 1989	J.V. CALNAN
† 1992	E.P. GREEN
† 1993	H.A. BAXTER
† 1996	L.J. FRASER
+ 1997	A.B. BOX
† 1997	W.H. DUFF
† 1997	E.A. GRIFFITHS
† 1998	A.K. KENNEWELL
† 1999	R.C. STANDISH
† 1999	R. SHARPE
2000	K.J. BARCLAY
† 2003	S.J. PORKER
† 2003	K.G. DUTTON
† 2004	L.S. ANDRISKE
† 2005	R. HAYNES
† 2006	M.S. WHITING
2007	J.F SEARLE
2010	K. MUSTEY
† 2011	A. WILSON J.P
† 2017	K.M. WRIGHT
2018	P. MCDERMOTT
2022	J. BRANIFF

PAST PRESIDENTS

† 1919-20	G.I. PICTON
† 1921	L. LEVY
† 1922-23	N.F WELLINGTON
† 1924	R. EGGE
† 1925-30	DR H.H. MCWILLIAMS
† 1931-33	W.B.HOARE
† 1934-35	L.W MANSELL
† 1936-37	T.J. HOLMES
† 1938	H.M HARRISON
† 1939-40	T.J. HOLMES
† 1941-44	A. BAILLIE
† 1945	F.J. RANSOM
† 1946-47	A.J. RICE
† 1948-49	C.D. CAMERON
† 1950-54	H.E. DICKINSON
† 1955-56	N.J. NOYCE
† 1957	S.C. MILLS
† 1958	K. BARNES
† 1959	J.P. FARMER
† 1960	T.J.CHAMBERS
† 1961	L. WELLS
† 1962	DR C. BOWMAN
† 1963-64	A. THOMSON
† 1965	C. O'NEILL
† 1966	C.H. BIRD
† 1967-68	A. THOMSON
† 1969 70	F.T. GILSHENAN
† 1971-72	J.W. O'BRIEN
† 1973-74	S.G.THOMPSON
† 1975-76	W. DUFF
† 1977-79	E.P GREEN
† 1980-81	W. DUFF
† 1982-84	P. DALTON
† 1985-86	L.J. FRASER
† 1987	P. DALTON
† 1988-89	F.C RUSSEL
1990-91	R.N.MCCALMAN
† 1992	F.C. RUSSELL
† 1992-93	S.J. PORKER
† 1994-96	E.A. GRIFFITHS
† 1997-02	K.G. DUTTON
2003-04	K.J. BARCLAY
† 2005-10	A.J. WILSON
† 2011-16	A.J. OUCHIRENKO
† 2016-21	G.A. PEARSE

COMMITTEE 2023



PAUL McDERMOTT
PRESIDENT

Paul served 9 years in the RAN Air Branch performing meteorology and navigational tasks. On two occasions Paul served on HMAS Hobart (Gun Ship) in Vietnam. He returned to Mildura in 1975 where he worked in media for over 30 years.



GARY PEARSE
VICE PRESIDENT

Currently serving with the Victorian Police Force and has done since 1973. He served 16 years in the Royal Australian Infantry–Reserve units. (Sadly Gary passed away on the 12th of December 2023)



SCOTT RICHARDS
SECRETARY

Scott served in the Army for more than six years with 3RAR and deployed to Afghanistan in 2017. Originally from Mildura, Scott and his family moved back to the district in 2021.



JOHN BRANIFF
TREASURER

The majority of John's 9 years of Military service was spent with the SAS Regiment. After discharge John progressed through various roles. He came to Mildura in 1991 as the CEO of the Citrus Marketing Board.



ROBERT BIRNIE
COMMITTEE

Robert has served over 10 years in the Army, with the majority of his time spent in the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. He has completed numerous tours of Iraq and Timor Leste.



BRAD McGLASHAN
COMMITTEE

Brad served 6 years in the Army and was deployed to East Timor in 2002. Brad stood for the committee with commitment to help bring younger veterans into the RSL and to help with their transition into civilian life.



CHRIS MERLIN
COMMITTEE

Chris is a successful sole business owner and long time member of the Mildura RSL. He is a family member of local World War I and II soldier settlers.



COLIN HAMENCE
COMMITTEE

Colin is the son, brother and nephew of returned servicemen whom served in New Guinea, Vietnam and the Middle East. He is a long time member and supporter of the Mildura RSL.



JOSH FRASER
COMMITTEE

Josh is a local veteran whom served in the Australian Army for eight years from 2011 to 2019 as a Paratrooper. Josh was deployed on operations to the Middle East in 2014.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

2023 has seen a revitalised Mildura RSL Sub Branch with a remarkable new appearance. This year we have seen outstanding results with an overall solid financial performance, please read the treasurer's report for further details.

The results and success of our Sub Branch is a reflection of the General Manager, and staff's dedication to making the Mildura RSL a success. We have been privileged with the recruitment of younger Veterans' prepared to join the General Committee. They have been prepared to accept the challenges put before them, making our Sub Branch to be one of Victoria's most successful.

We have made a very large financial donation to the 'V' Centre which is located near the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. These funds went towards supporting the fit-out of the centre and in turn helping those Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Anzac Day service's witnessed an overwhelming return of the general public. Our special guest speaker Major Robert (Scott) Bailey presented a wonderful speech relating to his service in the Army.

We had a wonderful turnout including students from St. Joseph's Secondary College at the Nichols Point War Graves to commemorate and remember those brave men who lost their lives during training World War Two. This event highlights Mildura's strong RAAF history.

Remembrance Day Commemoration celebrated with a strong crowd. We had the pleasure of students from Mildura South Primary School. Their presence was created by the overwhelming support starting back in August, when Committee members Scott Richards and Brad McGlashan attended the school every day at lunch time to walk around their oval completing a total of a one hundred km pilgrimage to our Kokoda troops. In closing the audience had the pleasure of hearing one of Sunraysia's talented young vocalist Mariah Pain, sing the National Anthem beautifully.

Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration service was well supported with a large turnout and to enhance the morning we introduced a guest speaker, Veteran

Bernie Livingston, who spoke of his experiences in Vietnam and singer Gary Klippel who gave us his rendition of "I was only 19". To complete the day Hazel Symonds sang the National Anthem.

Over the last four years the Veteran's Centre managed by Paul Mensch has increased it's profile by offering more than pension/welfare assistance. Paul has become more open to different DVA/RSL Vic programs that raise awareness for the veteran community. These programs include health week and RSL Active, all of which are free to eligible veterans, and partners designed to enhance veterans' health and wellbeing. The Veteran's Centre article by Paul is in the Manager of Veteran's Services Report.

The sale of poppies and other merchandise throughout the year has seen the generosity of the community in support of all RSL Sub Branches. I'd like to thank our tireless volunteers who assist on these occasions, without their support sales would not be successful.

In conclusion I wish to publicly acknowledge our past committee members who are no longer with us. Earlier this year we lost Robert Bird, who gave his time and energy to the Mildura RSL without question. We then had to contend with Gary Pearse passing away, he left us in December. Gary was heavily involved with the RSL, joining our committee in 2008. He was our President for five years and vice President for four, in all it's an extraordinary length of time to voluntarily give our Sub Branch.

May all members have a wonderful 2024, your patronage is appreciated. I'd like to thank staff for their assistance with the running of our RSL. To outgoing Committee members, your dedication and commitment has been well received whilst serving the Mildura RSL Sub Branch.

Paul McDermott

President



TREASURERS REPORT

The 2023 trading year has again resulted in a very strong overall profit of \$1,411,063. Welfare and Charitable expenditure is now divided between Veteran and Community activities.

Major renovation work since July has had a negative impact on gaming revenue through the latter part of the year. However it is pleasing to see that Bar and Bistro sales have consistently performed above budget.

Renovation costs as at the end of the year amounted to \$2,988,988. Further costs will be incurred in the first quarter of 2024 to complete the renovations. However, the good news is that the Sub Branch has not needed to borrow funds due to its strong position with term deposits accumulated over recent years.

As of December 31, 2023, term deposits were \$3,700,000. It is anticipated that at the completion of the building renovations, term deposits will be \$3,000,000.

The December financial results were somewhat reduced due to a \$100,000 donation to Vasey RSL Care. This is a contribution to the establishment of a facility to be known as the 'V' Centre Veteran Empowerment Program. This is scheduled to open in February 2024, providing accommodation and support for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It will provide 16 apartments and 3

smaller suites with kitchen/dining areas, main sitting area and a multi purpose room including some gym equipment.

The donation is in line with our policy to support the veteran community as strongly as possible.

Our Balance sheet continues to grow from strength to strength with net equity of \$7.7 million as at 31st December 2023.

This will be my final report as Treasurer as I will not be standing for Committee in 2024. I need to thank Kim Archibald for his support over the years and also Leigh Blenheim for his comprehensive financial reports each month.

John Braniff

Treasurer



VOLUNTEERS, GETTING THE JOB DONE



- Funerals
- Pensions and Welfare
- RAAF Air Museum
- Anzac appeal
- Memorabilia
- Mildura RSL Day Club
- Poppy Appeal
- Commemoration
- Hospital Visitations

The hard working volunteers of the Mildura RSL Sub Branch continued to get the job done in 2023.

Our volunteers are crucial to the ongoing success of the Mildura RSL and their hard work should never be underestimated.

In 2023, there were 2179 volunteer hours performed by our members. This contribution is worth \$103,485.

GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

As members would be aware, the building renovations began in July 2023.

As is the case with most renovations, members have had reduced access to some areas of the Sub Branch including the front entrance, main lounge, function room, and toilet facilities. This has of course reduced sales in that 6 month period. The building works should be completed prior to Anzac Day 2024. Given the interruption of the building works, the overall profit of \$1,411,063 as detailed in the Treasurer's report was most pleasing. From a management perspective, it is always a challenge to grow revenue and keep expenditure in check. New electricity pricing applicable from December 2023 will result in a 28% increase in power costs.

Although the dark days of covid restrictions are now a few years behind us, it is still proving difficult to procure new staff as is the case in the hospitality industry the world over. There were periods in 2023 where reduced staff numbers did make it difficult to operate on some days. To that end, I want to thank all staff who did extra shifts to ensure we could offer a standard of service the members are accustomed to.

In July 2023 the Victorian state government announced it would be introducing new measures to restrict money laundering and further protect problem gamblers. One of the new initiatives will be the introduction of mandatory pre-commitment on gaming machines. The new requirement will inevitably have a negative impact on gaming revenue. It is most likely the introduction of the reforms will be late 2025. It is imperative the Mildura RSL is well placed to ensure it can remain financially stable if revenue declines.

It is anticipated that the Sub Branch will have \$4M in cash reserves by the end of 2025, that combined with a recently refurbished facility, puts the Mildura RSL in good stead to get through the difficulties of the new regulations.

The Mildura RSL's commitment to supporting veterans and their families remains our priority.

I must say that I am extremely proud to be part of an RSL that does exactly that. A recent donation of \$100,000 to the Vasey RSL Care V Center is an example of the

good we do in supporting veterans and their families.

The new large screens in the foyer area are being used to honour our local veterans, the layout of the images has been very well received by members. It is another way of ensuring our veterans are honoured and remembered.

I would like to sincerely thank Mark Turlan, the Assistant Manager for his support during the year.

A thank you also to Leigh Blenheim, Alana Ashelford and Tammie Doering for their excellent admin work.

I want to commend all staff for their commitment to the Mildura RSL during 2023.

I thank the President Paul McDermott and the committee for their ongoing support during 2023.

Kim Archibald

General Manager



Kim Archibald at the ANZAC Day–War Grave Service

MANAGER OF VETERANS SERVICES REPORT

The Mildura RSL Veterans Centre has seen a very busy and productive 2023.

More than 130 veterans and their families have come to the Veterans Centre during 2023 to seek help with DVA claims and welfare. It is great to see that word is spreading that the Mildura RSL has support available and that veterans and their families are comfortable accessing that support.

My primary role is to support veterans and their families with pensions and welfare support, but I also am now involved in the administration of the Mildura RSL's Retirement Village which consists of 20 units, and conducting RSL Funerals. Other responsibilities include overseeing the operation of the Mildura RSL's RAAF Air Museum, the coordination of appeals, coordinating RSL Active events and the administration of Commemoration Services.

In 2023, the Mildura RSL conducted Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Vietnam Veterans Day and the Bombing of Darwin Day ceremonies. On top of that, the Sub Branch was also involved in a national event, the Vietnam Veterans Vigil. You can read more about this on page 15 of this report.

The RSL Active events throughout 2023 were very well attended and enjoyed by veterans and their families alike. I would like to thank Brad and Bree McGlashan for their tireless support to make these events happen.

Last year, The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide tabled its interim report. One recommendation, to increase DVA staff by 500 employees, has started to take effect.

The time taken to process claims has started to decrease considerably in recent months and I am hopeful that it will continue to drop as DVA work through the massive backlog of claims.

I would like to thank President Paul McDermott, Manager Kim Archibald and the entire committee for their continued support. It is their dedication to the support of veterans and their families that make my job possible.

I am committed to helping all veterans and their families on our community and my door is always open.

I can be found weekdays at the Mildura RSL Veterans Services office in the RSL carpark and can be contacted on 0409 049 290 or email paulmensch@mildurarsl.com.au

Paul Mensch

*Mildura RSL
Manager of Veterans
Services*



ANZAC DAY AND REMEMBRANCE DAY 2023



Anzac Appeal Raised **27,695.77**

Poppy Appeal Raised **\$19,534.61**

RSL ANGLING CLUB

The Mildura RSL Angling Club have enjoyed a successful 2023. After years of Covid, flood and low rivers, 2023 finally delivered conditions that were great for fishing on the Murray.

The club had numerous successful fishing trips throughout the year with an average of 10 members attending each trip.

Fundraising has continued and in 2023 the club not only donated money to OzFish Sunraysia to help with the construction of fish hotels, they rolled up their sleeves and helped with the construction of the structures.

These structures provide shelter and safety for native fish and placed in areas along the river where they are most needed.

Club President, Gary Hodson said that the club had decided not to purchase fingerlings in 2023 to increase fish stocks due to high number of Carp in the river who would eat the baby fish.

If you're interested in joining the Angling club, or wanting more information contact Gary on 0419 123 915



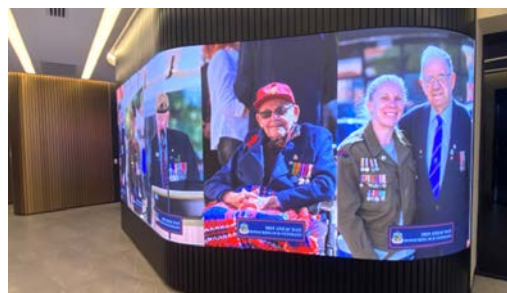
Gary Deale From OzFish Sunraysia along with Angling club members Bob Van Blanken and Wayne Coghill constructing a fish hotel.

A NEW LOOK FOR THE MILDURA RSL

The last half of 2023 and early 2024, saw the Mildura RSL Sub Branch undertake major renovations throughout the foyer administration area, main lounge area and function room.

Digital honour boards, new display cabinets for memorabilia items and large screens are a major feature of the administration area along with modern lighting and designs.

The renovations enhance and modernise the Sub Branch and will enable the display of much more memorabilia in a digital format for many years to come.



WALKING OFF THE WAR WITHIN

While the overall attendance was slightly lower this year, most of the participants were returning attendees who wanted to surpass their previous achievements. On October 14th, we saw more than 500 individuals join forces for our mental health awareness walk. Many others also came to show their support. Even though the total number of participants decreased, we saw a significant increase in those who successfully completed the challenging 20-kilometer distance. This shows the determination and commitment of our attendees to push themselves and grow personally.

The Walking Off The War Within committee wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Mildura RSL for their unwavering support throughout the event. Your financial contributions, providing a great meeting space, promoting the event to your members and community, and your gracious hospitality at the end was invaluable to its success.

The Walking Off the War Within movement aims to challenge the stigma around mental health issues and encourage open conversations. By sharing personal experiences, providing information and support, and promoting mental health literacy, our goal is to empower all individuals to seek the help they need.

This event was inspired by Nathan Shanahan, an ex-service member and career firefighter, who walked from Mildura to Adelaide in April 2015. Nathan marched over 400km, carrying a heavy pack, to raise awareness about Post-Traumatic Stress Injury and Depression. His journey symbolised his own battle with mental illness and represented the struggle many individuals face.

None of this would have been possible without the generous and continuous support of the Mildura RSL. You were our primary sponsor, making an initial donation of \$5,000. In the past, these funds were used to purchase promotional materials like an inflatable arch and banners. This year, we focused on inclusivity, ensuring there were enjoyable activities for all participants. With the donated funds, we provided additional seating, live music, and family-friendly activities that were a huge success. These activities were offered free of charge, giving relief to families facing financial pressure.



The support of the Mildura RSL goes beyond monetary contributions. We truly believe that your commitment aligns with supporting the new generations of veterans and their families. You play a vital role in breaking down the stigma around mental illness and have undoubtedly saved lives through your support and unity.

We greatly appreciate the partnership between the Mildura RSL and Walking Off the War Within, and we hope to continue this significant collaboration in the future.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Mildura RSL for your unwavering support and dedication.

With Gratitude,

**Walking Off the War Within,
Mildura Committee**





MILDURA SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL KOKODA MARCH

Mildura South Primary School students have walked 100km in honour of Australia's Kokoda veterans. Students completed their first laps of the school on Monday, August 21st and continued walking every lunch time until November 10th.

The school's Kokoda Track Experience began in 2019, but was disrupted by COVID. Students are split into teams and have to complete tasks during their walk, such as putting up and packing down a tent, carrying a person on a stretcher and radioing in to homebase.

Mildura RSL committee members, Brad McGlashan and Scott Richards volunteered their time and walked along side the students every step of the way. They were there every lunch time to accompany the students, offer encouragement and to answer questions about their time in the army.

Each student was allocated a local soldier who served on Kokoda and learnt about their story and walked in their honour.

On the 10th of November the school held a service in honour of the local soldiers. This ceremony was

attended by most of the Mildura RSL committee and wreaths were laid. The names of each soldier were read out and each student walked up to the school's memorial and placed a cross in the garden for their assigned soldier.

The program is coordinated by School psychologist teacher, Maurie Milani. Mr Milani said that when the Mildura South Primary School started this program in 2019, they were told by RSL veterans that it was probably the first time their names had been read aloud since World War II.

Mr Milani said as far as he was aware, Mildura South was the only primary school that ran an experience like this and was one of only a few schools that had their own war memorial.

Mildura RSL President, Paul McDermott said that the students had done a fantastic job. "The ceremony was very moving and very well executed and the students show a great understanding of our local soldiers who served on Kokoda."





WALPEUP SILO ART TRIBUTE

The Mildura RSL made a significant contribution towards the realisation of the mural on a silo at Walpeup.

The project had been more than four years in the planning and was finally completed in June this year.

It is a poignant tribute to the Walpeup's Anzac history and was painted by renowned artist, Julian Clavijo.

The chosen art is a tribute to the local men and women from the area who went to war, including teenager Harold Thomas Bell.

He like many, enlisted for World War One under an alias, using his cousins last name, Wickham, to disguise his true age.

The teenager was shot in the leg during the Battle of Beersheba on October 31st, 1917 and died of his wounds the following day. He was 16 years and seven months old.

RSL President, Mr Paul McDermott, said that it was a worthy project that recognised the story of not only Harold Bell, but of many young men who left the district to go to war.

"It will allow visitors to Walpeup to pause and reflect on the sacrifice that was made by the men and women of the mallee." Mr McDermott said.

Walpeup is situated 30 kilometres west of Ouyen on the Mallee Highway.

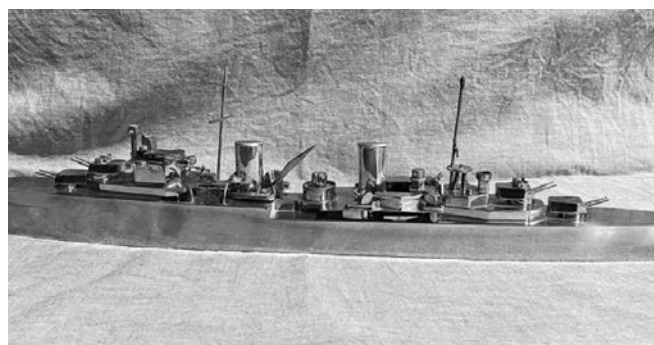
MILDURA RSL MEMORABILIA REPORT 2023

With major renovations taking place during the second half of 2023 much of our memorabilia collection has been off display. We are looking forward to having the collection back on display in the not-too-distant future. I'm pleased to say that there will be more cabinetry added in the snooker bar with the main aim to get all firearms and swords on display in one area. There are many rules and regulations that must be considered regarding the display of firearms.

We only received one donation of note last year from the family of the late David Jeffrey Steven.

David was born in Scotland in 1918 and emigrated to Australia with his family. Prior to enlisting into the Royal Australian Navy in October 1939 he was living in Mildura. On completing his training, he qualified as an Ordnance Artificer (gunnery maintenance). In October 1940 he was posted to HMAS Hobart.

David was to see a great deal of action in the two years he spent on this vessel. During this time, he made a model of the Hobart out of steel. This, along



with numerous photographs, ship plaques, uniform and other items are now part of the Mildura RSLs collection. I'm sure that on looking at the photograph of the model below you'll agree that David was a very talented young man.

As always, I'm more than happy to assist anyone with queries regarding research or medal entitlements.

Stephan Hawkes

Curator of memorabilia Mildura RSL



VIETNAM VETERANS VIGIL

Services to remember two Sunraysia soldiers who were killed in the Vietnam War was held concurrently on Thursday, August 3, 2023.

They were part of a nationwide effort to hold coinciding vigils for fallen Vietnam War soldiers at every grave or commemorative plaque site at 11am.

The Mildura RSL hosted a vigil at the graveside of Ramon John Peter Deed at the Nichols Point Cemetery, while the Merbein RSL held one at the graveside of Noel Charles Pettitt at the Merbein cemetery.

The Mildura Service saw the veteran community come together to honour a fallen comrade.

Wreath's were laid by the Mildura RSL, Vietnam veterans and family of Raymon Deed.

August 3rd marked the 60th anniversary of the first Australian soldiers to arrive in Vietnam, and the 50th anniversary of the last soldiers to leave.

Mildura RSL's Manager of Veterans' services, Paul Mensch, said the synchronised ceremonies were something quite special.

"It's quite a poignant thing to have it synchronised and happen throughout the country at the same time," he said.

Ramon Deed was just 21 when he died of injuries in South Vietnam on May 10, 1967, from wounds received during mine laying operations the previous day.

Noel Pettitt was also 21 when he died of injuries in South Vietnam on November 27, 1967.

Merbein RSL president Brian Munro said the pair were among 523 Australian soldiers who never came home.

"He (Pettitt) was only 21 when he got killed over there, so he didn't get much of a chance for it," he said.

Mr Mensch said the commemoration effort came ahead of Vietnam Veterans Day on August 18, where a service was held at Mildura's Seventh Street Memorial at 12.30pm.

"The guys who served in Vietnam weren't treated that well when they got home," he said. "It's nice to see that they are getting the recognition they deserve, albeit a long time overdue."





MILDURA RSL RAAF AIR MUSEUM



A Business Case has been developed by the Mildura Council, the Mildura Airport, 2OTU Heritage Group and the Mildura RSL for a new World War Two Aviation Training & Kittyhawk Museum.

The business case will be used to source funding from State and Federal government grants and private investments. The museum will also showcase the five main aircraft flown at RAAF Mildura and will be a significant tourist attraction for the entire district.

The five aircraft will be static displays of the Kittyhawk, Boomerang, Wirraway, Spitfire and Mustang aircraft. Funding applications will be submitted in the near future.

The Sabre Jet restoration is nearing completion and will be a great drawcard for the existing museum as well as into the future when the new museum is completed.

ABOVE: Dareton Men's Shed member Neil McDonald working on a wing of the Sabre Jet. TOP LEFT: An artist's impression of the proposed World War Two Aviation Training & Kittyhawk Museum. BOTTOM LEFT: Aerial photograph of RAAF Base Mildura in 1942. It was the largest Air Base in the Southern Hemisphere.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

On Friday, August 18th, the Mildura RSL held a commemoration service in honour of Vietnam Veterans at the Seventh Street Memorial.

Veterans from around the district along with representatives from St. Joseph's College came together to remember the men and women who served in the Vietnam War.

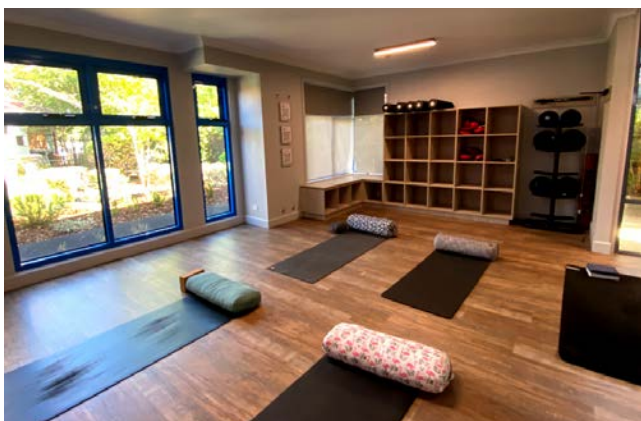
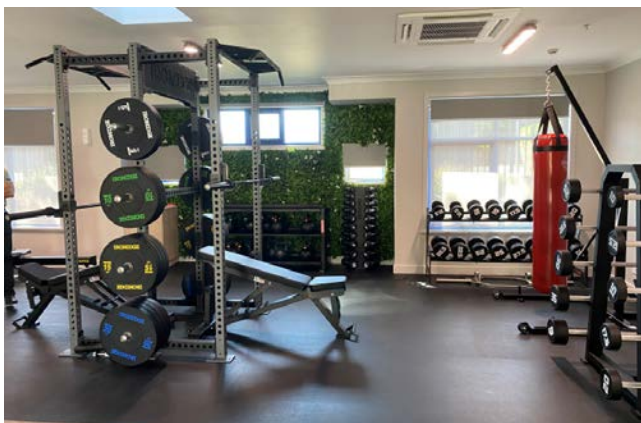
Guest speaker for the service was Vietnam Veteran, Bernard Livingston, who recounted his time in Vietnam working in transport.

St. Joseph's College student, Hazel Simmonds sang the National Anthem beautifully and Gary Klippel sang an acoustic version of "I Was Only Nineteen" during the wreath laying.

Pastor Josh Cole said a prayer of remembrance and as always, Don Mayne played fabulous renditions of The Last Post and Reveille.



THE MILDURA RSL DONATES \$100,000 TO THE “V” CENTRE



The “V” Centre, facilitated by Vasey RSL Care is a Veteran Empowerment Program and new facility that will support veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Vasey RSL Care General Manager of Veteran Services Chris Gray visited Mildura RSL Sub Branch General Manager Kim Archibald and committee members in late November to personally thank them for the tremendous support and to discuss how The “V” Centre will change the path of veterans’ lives.

The Mildura RSL Sub Branch has a commendable history of supporting vulnerable veterans, and this \$100,000 pledge highlights their commitment to making a tangible impact in the lives of those who have served our nation.

This teamwork between Vasey RSL Care and Mildura RSL demonstrates the power of organisations uniting for a common cause to assist those in need within the veteran community.

Mildura RSL General Manager Kim Archibald stressed the importance of investing in this program and emphasised that this is the first of its kind for the veteran community.

Kim added, “We are so excited to have the opportunity to be a part of championing this program: this is a vital part of our role as an RSL Sub Branch.”

Vasey RSL Care General Manager Veteran Services Chris Gray said, “We are sincerely appreciative of this generous donation from Mildura RSL Sub Branch. Their support is instrumental in advancing our mission to combat veteran homelessness. In the face of the current national housing crisis, it is heartening to see organisations like the Mildura RSL stepping up to make a real difference. We cannot thank them enough.”

Our veterans deserve the fundamental security of having a roof over their heads. Accommodation is a basic need, and we should spare no effort in ensuring that those who risked their lives for our freedom are provided for.

The donation of \$100,000 by the Mildura RSL was used to furnish and equip large sections of the “V” Centre, including the IT room and gymnasium, providing state of the art facilities for veterans in need. This is illustrated in these images.

VETERANS HEALTH WEEK



What a perfect way to spend the day, cruising along the Murray River from Mildura to Trentham Estate, being wined and dined along the way.

Each year in October, the Department of Veterans Affairs in conjunction with RSL Victoria promote Veterans Health Week.

More than 40 people took part in the cruise that was free to veterans and their families.

The Mildura RSL has always supported Veterans Health Week and was delighted to offer the cruise and winery tour, sampling some of our regions foods and wine.

The trip from Mildura to Trentham took just over 2 hours and included lunch on the way, and on arrival at Trentham Estate, participants took part in wine tasting (and purchasing) before reembaring for the trip home.

Everyone who took part had a great time, especially on the way home with a little singing and dancing taking place.

The Mildura RSL will plan another event for Veterans Health Week in 2024.

MILDURA RSL RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Pat and Lucie Haley have been residents at the Mildura RSL Retirement Village for just over 12 months and could not be happier.

The Mildura RSL Retirement Village provides quality independent living in a safe and peaceful setting for eligible veterans and widows.

Pat served with the Royal Marines for 6 years and was deployed to Burma in 1963.

Lucie served in the Australian Army for 17 years as a nurse discharging in 1997.

They both agree that life at the village is great and they regularly take part in social gatherings in the Archibald Centre.

The couple also take part in many of the RSL Active events and appreciate the lovely gardens at the village that are maintained by the Mildura RSL.

Lucie said that there is a real community feel around the village and everyone looks out for each other.



Pat and Lucie Haley

LIFE MEMBERS



Ken Mustey

Ken served in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967 and joined the Mildura RSL in 1989. During the 1970s Ken was a founding member of the Mildura Vietnam Veterans Association and played a pivotal role in having a memorial constructed to honour those locals who served in Vietnam, Korea and South East Asia.

For more than 25 years Ken was a member of the Mildura RSL's Honour Roll Steering Committee which oversaw the introduction of Honour Rolls into Henderson Park.



Ken Barclay

Ken served in the Army for 10 years including a deployment to Vietnam and Papua New Guinea.

Ken was instrumental in establishing the Sunraysia Regional Veterans Centre and has worked tirelessly for 20 years supporting veterans, widows and their dependants with pension and welfare support.

It would be fair to say Ken has helped improve the well being of some 1000 veterans. This is an exemplarity contribution to the Veteran Community.



John Searle

John was born in 1945 and joined the RSL on returning from active service in Vietnam in 1968.

In recent years John played a crucial role in the education of school children in the Mildura area in his role as the Mildura RSL's Education officer. He has been involved in supporting veterans through his volunteer work with the Sunraysia Regional Veterans Centre, but his real passion is getting younger people to understand and appreciate Australian Military history. John is extremely proud of the Mildura RSL and continues to offer his support in any way possible.



Paul McDermott

Paul served 9 years in the RAN including a deployment to Vietnam.

In 2001 Paul became a volunteer at the Sunraysia Regional Veterans Centre and in that capacity has been assisting veterans, serving members of the ADF, war widows and their dependants for over 18 Years.

Paul continues to support veterans with pensions and welfare advise and is the current Mildura RSL President.



John Braniff

John had a distinguished military career serving with 3RAR/ SAS Coy and SAS Regt. During his service John was deployed to Vietnam, Borneo, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

John joined the Mildura RSL Sub Branch in 2003 and was elected to the position of Treasurer in 2008 and still holds that position today, a tenure of 15 years.

Coming from a corporate background John has been the corner stone of the Mildura RSL committee. His astute manner has helped steer the Mildura RSL through many complex matters.

~ PAST PRESIDENT VALE ~

Gary Pearse 1953–2023

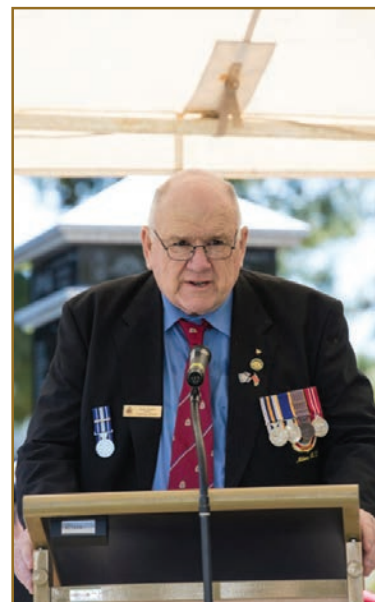
Gary joined the Citizen Military Forces on the 26th of April 1971, the day after Anzac Day. He was posted to 1 Independent Rifle Company where he remained until his discharge on 31st of March 1973.

Gary rejoined the Army Reserve on the 31st of March 1980 and was posted to second Battalion the Royal Victoria Regiment. On the 1st of December 1983, Gary was assigned to Number three Recruit Training Unit where he worked as a rifleman and instructor.

On the 30th of June 1988, Gary was posted to the 8/7th Battalion Royal Victoria Regiment, where he remained until his discharge on the 5th of July 1995.

For his service, Gary was awarded the Reserve Force Medal and the Australian Defence Medal.

Gary was elected to the committee of the Mildura RSL in 2008 and served as Vice President from 2014 to 2016. He was elected President in 2017 and held the office until 2022. He was Vice President at the time of his passing.



PETER WHITTLE

Peter Whittle has led an extraordinary life that has seen him working at all four corners of the world in a variety of roles, all centred on saving lives.

He was born in 1942 in the village of Meols in Cheshire, England to parents Cyril and Doris Whittle. He attended the Royal Masonic School in Bushey just outside of London and only went home three times a year.

After he left school, Peter trained as a lighting technician for stage and television. He worked at a theatre where during the day he worked on the electrics getting everything ready for the show and in the evenings, he would operate the main stage spotlight at the back of the theatre.

Peter's mother was his father's second wife, his first wife had died of cancer, before which, they had a daughter named Joan, who was a theatre nurse in London.

Joan had met a man named John Hills who was an Australian Fighter Pilot and after the war they ended up running a sheep and cattle property in Western Australia.

Peter, who was almost 18 at this point, accepted an invitation to work on the property so he slumped down 10 pounds and took a ship to WA, along with a lot of other 10-pound poms.

Joan picked him up in Fremantle and took him out to the farm where he stayed for a couple of months. Life on the station wasn't really for him though and it wasn't long before he was in Perth where he started a job with TVW 7 as a lighting technician.

He eventually left channel 7 and looked for opportunities in the hospital environment which had always interested him.

Peter trained as a male nurse in Perth and after a period of time he took up a position in Exmouth working as a field medic for a company that was building the US Navy communication station at North West Cape.

He worked there for 2 years and was responsible for the welfare of more than 500 people. He returned to Perth and tried his hand at psychiatric nursing which he didn't enjoy at all.

It was then that Peter turned to the Australian Army and enlisted and was on a train east to eventually start his basic training at Kapooka. He excelled at basic training and was named Dux of the course which resulted in him having the choice of his own corps. He went for medical and was transferred to Healesville for training.

He also undertook theatre training in Brisbane before



getting the word that he was being shipped out for Vietnam. He arrived in Vung Tau and went straight to work tending the wounded.

The sirens would go off and it was all hands on deck, every available man, including the cooks would run down to the landing pad to standby to receive the incoming choppers. The wounded were taken out of the choppers into the triage bay to be checked by the RSM who removed any weapons.

It was par for the course on a daily basis to see men with limbs blown off from land mine explosions and bullet wounds that had ripped through tissue.

After 12 months he returned to Australia in 1970 but being in the theatre of war had a profound impact on him, which endures to this day. He was discharged in Melbourne and got a job at the Alfred hospital in the anaesthetic department, which was a bit mundane for his liking so he started work for St John Ambulance in Fitzroy.

Peter was one of the first responders when the Westgate Bridge collapsed in 1970 killing 35 workers.

Throughout his career, Peter has worked for Ambulance Victoria, BHP, Samsung and Daewoo. Always in the medical field. He has worked on oil rigs in Bass Strait, New Guinea, South Korea, Thailand, Algeria and Indonesia.

It was in Indonesia that he met Nia, they married 14 years ago and decided to make Mildura their home.

Peter believes that he would not have survived his PTSD if were not for Nia, she helps get through the bad times, she is his rock.



RSL ACTIVE

The Mildura RSL has been hosting RSL Active events throughout 2023, attracting veterans and their families from a wide variety of age groups bringing people together.

In April of 2023, a bus trip, taking in the RAAF War Graves, a bombing range and crash site from World War Two, a BBQ lunch finishing with a tour of the RAAF Museum saw more than forty people take part.

In May, a day at the Mildura Ten Pin Bowling saw a large turnout and in June we headed to the Mildura Driving Range .

A bus trip to the Millewa Pioneer Park in July was enjoyed by all and in August a family come and try day at Mildura Martial Arts saw kids and adults alike having a great time.

A Spring Picnic was held at JC Park in September where a BBQ Lunch was provided and included games and activities for the kids.

October saw our veterans and their families explore Woodsies Gem Shop, enjoying the display caves and magic maze. Lunch was also provided.

The final event of the year was a Xmas Party at Lake Cullulleraine hosted by Tranquil Water Caravan Park. A



BBQ Lunch and activities ensured that everyone had a great time.

The Mildura RSL is committed to continuing these events in 2024. Keep an eye out on our social media and inhouse screens for upcoming events.

As part of RSL Active, a weekly Pilates class is conducted free of charge to all veterans and their families. These classes are conducted at either JC Park or Reform You Pilates studio, 80 Shillidays Lane, depending on the weather. Check our Facebook page for updates.

During 2023, more than 400 veterans and their families have enjoyed an RSL Active event hosted by the Mildura RSL.



2023 VETERAN SUPPORT & COMMUNITY BENEFIT

*Financial Support—\$568,068

Veterans Support/Commemoration:

- Welfare/Pensions Office
- Vasey RSL Care V Centre
- Veterans & Family Welfare Grants
- RSL Vic.
- Walking Off The War Within
- Veteran Meals
- RSL Active
- Veterans & Widows Garden Maintenance
- Veterans & Widows Home Maintenance
- Memorial Maintenance

Community Support:

- RAAF Memorial & Museum
- Mildura RSL Angling Club
- Mildura District Brass Band
- Mildura Pipe Band
- Mildura Air Cadets
- Mildura Army Cadets
- Mildura Workers Bowls Club
- Mildura Bowls Club
- Mildura Legacy
- Sunassist
- Sunraysia Field and Game
- Jesse Medina MMA
- Sunraysia Men's Shed
- Mallee Living Histories project
- Mildura South Primary School
- Mildura RSL Day Club
- Merbein RSL Sub Branch
- Red Cliffs/Irymple RSL Sub Branch
- Robinvale RSL Sub Branch
- Walpeup Silo Art Honouring Veterans
- RSL Retirement Village
- Scholarships
- Sunraysia District Scouts



*As per the Audited Accounts for the:-

Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc. Welfare & Charitable
Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc. Welfare Agency Account
Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc. Patriotic Fund



- VALE -

The Mildura RSL recognises the passing
of the following service members during 2023.

Vivian Dickman
Isabella Brooks (nee
Henderson)
Thomas Richards
Kevin Telford
Lloyd Gebhart
Bradley James Giddings
Ralf Prideaux

Alfred Green
Robert McAllister
Murray Reid
Leonard McCoy
Bruce Wheatland
Nino Martino
Desmond Foley
Thomas Page

Raymon Miles
Dudley Nancarrow
Barry Adams
Sydney Knudsen
Gary Pearse
Geoffrey Clout
William Keane

Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc. extends its' deepest sympathy to the
families and loved ones of our departed comrades.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.

Lest We Forget

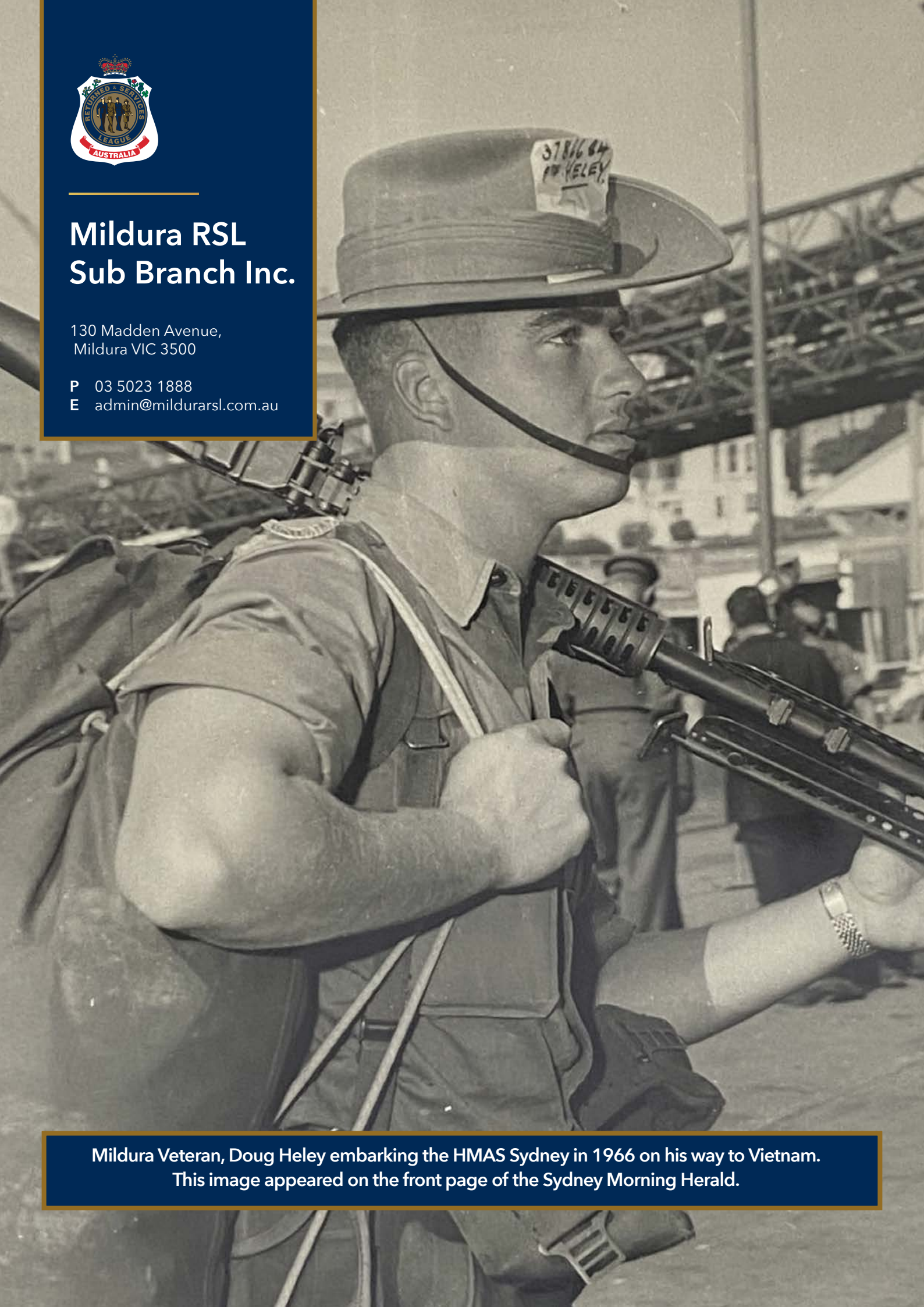


Mildura RSL Sub Branch Inc.

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Mildura Veteran, Doug Heley embarking the HMAS Sydney in 1966 on his way to Vietnam.
This image appeared on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald.