

Southport RSL Sub Branch Newsletter

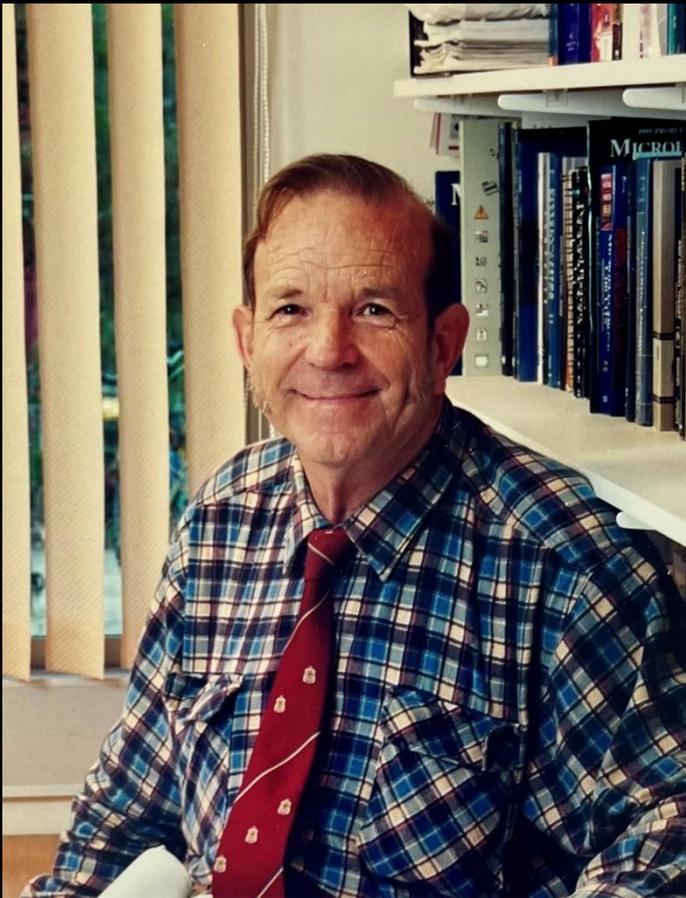
Volume 12 Issue 1

February 2026



Vale Claude Vivian Palmer

16 September 1934 - 23 February 2026



It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of our very esteemed colleague Claude Palmer. Claude served the Sub Branch as a Director and probably more importantly as a Level 3 Advocate and Mentor for more than twenty years. There are many veterans who owe Claude a debt of gratitude and we will miss him greatly.

A Note from the Editor

John Riebeling

You will have noticed in the last few newsletters a lateness of when they got to you in terms of giving notice of our meetings. The reason for this delay has been primarily the delay in getting both the President's and Secretary's input. I should point out here, that these two inputs are copies of the reports that are presented at our Quarterly General Meeting.

With this in mind, it seems logical to send the newsletter **after** the meetings. This way, any additions to the presented input from the President and the Secretary that may have changed during the meeting, would be able to be included in the Newsletter.

So, the Newsletter will now be sent out following the General Meeting.

AGM Report

The AGM was held at the Southport Bowls Club at 1030 hrs on 22 February. It is disappointing to have barely have a quorum. We are well aware that the great majority of our members are very well advanced in years and may not be able to attend such meetings but there are many who are physically able to attend. If we continue to have difficulty getting quorums for our general meetings, especially the AGM, then the Sub Branch does not have a very bright future.

And it is not just the poor attendance at meetings that is causing concern. Twice a year we ask for volunteers to man our tables at the shopping centres to sell not only the badges, but to promote the Sub Branch itself.



Members at the 2026 AGM



The Board

The President's Report

As I reflect on my first year as President, I can say it has been an eventful and rewarding experience. Over the past 12 months, the Sub Branch has faced both challenges and successes, and I am proud of the way we have come together as a community.

Last year's ANZAC Day presented some unexpected challenges. The weather was unpredictable, impacting our plans for the day. Despite these difficulties, we were able to hold the Dawn Service, which was very well attended. Unfortunately, after the service concluded, a severe storm made it necessary for all key organizers to make the difficult decision to cancel the scheduled nine o'clock service. This decision was made in the best interest of everyone's safety.

In the months following ANZAC Day, we focused on organizing our storage lockers and office space. During this period, I had the opportunity to attend the State AGM in Brisbane. The event saw strong participation, with over 90 Sub Branches represented out of a total of 113 in Queensland. The AGM covered a wide range of topics, with a central focus on our path forward. I left the meeting with valuable new contacts and fresh ideas to bring back to our Sub Branch.

Our Christmas in July event was a resounding success, drawing an impressive turnout. The food was outstanding, thanks to the efforts of Jon and Julie in the kitchen, as well as the dedicated staff from the Bowls Club.

Additional highlights for me throughout the year included the Presidents and Life Members lunch at Mermaid Beach Tavern. We were also honoured by visits from HMAS Diamantina and, a few weeks later, HMAS Yarra to the Gold Coast. The 80th Anniversary of the end of World War II was commemorated at Parliament House in Brisbane. Remembrance Day was another significant occasion, once again marked by strong attendance from our community.

Our monthly morning teas and Blue Shirt Fridays continue to enjoy strong participation from both members and friends. These regular gatherings have become important opportunities for everyone to connect, share experiences, and support one another. The enthusiasm and turnout at these events highlight the sense of community within our Sub Branch and help to foster lasting relationships among those involved.

Our Thursday night twilight bowls event continues to grow in popularity, with as many as 50 participants enjoying games under the lights each week. This event, proudly sponsored by the Sub Branch, offers members and friends the chance to unwind and enjoy a couple of hours of friendly competition followed by a meal, all for just \$15. We encourage everyone to join us for a fun and social evening—it's a wonderful way to connect with others and be part of our vibrant community.

In recent months, the future of Naval Park has become a pressing issue. As part of The Spit redevelopment, there is a proposal to relocate the Memorial by approximately 20 meters. However, the State Government has insisted that permission be obtained from the local RSL

Sub Branch before proceeding with any plans. After meeting with the contracted planning company and consulting with the Board, we agreed to grant permission in principle. Nevertheless, we have made it clear that any final plans must receive our approval before moving forward.

Reflecting on the last year, both the Board and the VSC office have been incredibly busy. Many of the efforts that support our members happen quietly behind the scenes. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to everyone involved, including the Bowls Club, for their continued support.

Last but not least, it is with great sadness that we say goodbye to Claude Palmer, who is stepping down due to health reasons. Claude has been an outstanding member of the Sub Branch for decades, working tirelessly as both the lead in the VSC office and as a member of the Board. Countless veterans owe him a debt of gratitude for his unwavering commitment to their welfare and his determination to ensure that they and their families receive the entitlements they deserve. Claude has always prioritized supporting veterans and holding the Department of Veterans' Affairs accountable. On behalf of everyone, I want to thank Claude for his many years of dedicated service—it is now time for him to focus on his own well-being. He will be greatly missed.

In closing, I am pleased to report that the Southport Sub Branch is in excellent shape, and I am looking forward to the year ahead with optimism and enthusiasm.

Duty First

Craig Thomas

President

The Secretary's Report

It is my privilege to present the Secretary's Report for the 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Southport RSL Sub Branch.

The past year has been one of significant transition and growth for our Sub Branch. With a new Board led by President Craig Thomas, there have been many learning opportunities and challenges. These challenges have been met with determination, cooperation, and commitment, resulting in positive outcomes for the organisation.

It is with great regret that our long-serving Board Member and Advocate, Claude Palmer, was required to stand down from his Board duties and his role at the Veterans Support Centre due to ill health. Claude's dedication and service to our members and the wider veteran community have been greatly valued, and we sincerely thank him for his many years of commitment.

During the year, we welcomed 18 new members, with one member transferring out. Overall, our membership numbers have remained stable. I would like to remind all members of the importance of keeping their contact details up to date. If you change your address, phone number, or email address, please advise the Sub Branch as soon as possible.

It is also important that the Sub Branch is informed if a member has passed away or is experiencing serious ill health. This enables us to maintain our records but more importantly provide appropriate support, guidance, and assistance to members and their families when required.

Our Sub Branch exists because of you, our members. Our primary role is to support, represent, and care for you. Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our presence and engagement within both the veteran community and the wider local community. The RSL continues to evolve, and these changes reflect a more inclusive, supportive, and community-focused organisation.

We are actively working to move away from outdated perceptions and to highlight the important role we play in advocacy, welfare, and community support.

To promote member wellbeing and social connection, the Sub Branch has introduced and continued several initiatives, including:

- Monthly morning teas held on the third Wednesday of each month
- An end-of-year Christmas function
- A mid-year social gathering
- Blue Shirt Friday
- Planning for combined bus trips and outings with neighbouring Sub Branches

These activities aim to support social interaction, mental wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging among our members.

However, these initiatives are only successful through your participation and involvement. Your continued support ensures that our Sub Branch remains active, relevant, and responsive to members' needs.

We welcome all suggestions and feedback from members. As I have stated before, you are the Sub Branch. The Board has been elected to guide the organisation and act in the best interests of its members, and we value your input in shaping our future direction.

Over the past year, Sub Branch Board members have attended a number of mandatory training courses and professional development seminars, including sessions on changes to Blue Card requirements and the ESO Forum. We were also pleased to receive visits from State and District staff, who attended several of our functions and provided valuable support and guidance.

Our Veterans Morning Teas were well attended throughout the year, with a range of guest speakers presenting valuable information on health matters and end-of-life planning, including wills and powers of attorney.

We gratefully received several donations of memorabilia, which have been placed on display in our cabinets. While progress has been made, there remains considerable work to be done in cataloguing items currently held in storage and on display.

The Veterans Support Centre office continues to operate effectively, with Mark Anderson taking over from Claude Palmer. The office is managing new claims and providing ongoing advice and support to veterans and their families.

I also attended the District Secretary's Workshop, where several important issues were discussed, particularly in relation to recruiting and retaining members. These challenges are shared across all Sub Branches in our District, and District staff continue to assist in addressing and resolving these matters.

During the year, a number of our members received well-deserved recognition for their long-standing involvement in the RSL, with 30-year and 50-year service certificates awarded.

In closing, I would like to thank the Board, volunteers, and members for their dedication and support throughout the year. Together, we continue to strengthen our Sub Branch and

ensure it remains a place of respect, care, and service for all members.

Michael Burg
Secretary



This will be the last Newsletter before ANZAC Day this year and, as usual, we are in desperate need of volunteers to man our tables at Australia Fair and Southport Park to sell our badges to the public.

We do not go through the exercise of sell badges just for the purpose of raising money, while this is an important part of the exercise. We see the exercise as being a valuable way of exposing the Sub Branch to the public and informing them of the work we do.

So, if you can spare a few hours to man the tables, please contact our secretary on:

0484 280 750

A Veteran's Tale

Corporal AT Dean

2/3 Ordinance 22nd Brigade, 8th Division AIF

Part 4

The Japanese had landed in the north of Malaya. One and Eight Squadrons of the RAAF took off and went to an airdrome at Kota Bahru. In no time they were chased out of there and slowly chased right out of Malaya and were at Palembang in the Dutch East Indies on their way home to Australia. They were caught on the ground by the Jap air force and wiped out and all crew were later taken prisoners and taken back to Singapore. I met a lot of them later but never ever heard any more of Merv Curran(?)

Referring to the Japanese landing in the north of Malaya at Kota Bahru, one RAAF member name of Alex Kelly from Victoria was on loan to the Dutch Air Force as a navigator — air gunner

and was sent with a Dutch pilot to do a recce of the Jap landing and were chased by Jap Zeros. Alec told me this much later when the Japs sent him back to join us in prison camp in Singapore. They were flying in a "Vildebeest" single-engine biplane bomber of WW1 vintage, which went into a dive at 200ft. Alex decided to use his parachute and that was just the moment the pilot decided to flatten out and go home. Alex never knew whether he made it or not. Alex was the first POW taken by the Japs.



Vildebeest Mk.III's of 100 Squadron refuelling at Singapore, 1942.

Another RAAF pilot I forgot to mention earlier was a Jack Kirramont, a flight lieutenant, I was at Sembawang on Anzac Day before the war and there was a Brewster Buffalo Fighter plane in the air and he was up and down the establishment doing a lot of tricks like along the hanger roof with one wing down the gable and the reverse on the way back. I asked Mery Curran who he was and he told me and I said he is not long for this place. When we became prisoners, I ran into a lot of the RAAF boys and asked what did happen to Jack Kirramont and nobody knew. I learned after I got home in 1945 that he was a Wing Commander in charge of the 77 Squadron. He recently died at Buderim

In the middle of January 1942, we went into action as second line to English troops on the islands. The Japs had pushed all Allied troops from Malayan—Thailand border in a matter of weeks — right back to Singapore Island. First thing I saw in an English print Japanese newspaper sometime after we were taken prisoner the Jap was running a sporting event — a marathon run from the border of Malaya

and the record was held by the British and Allied Troops in such & such a time.

The last week of the war five of us were detailed to man a roadblock in Nassim(?) Road behind the Botanical Gardens in the Tanglin area (I must tell you of my visit to the Tanglin in peace time later). About two days before we were taken, an Indian soldier came down the road. We stopped him and questioned him (No speak English) so we let him continue down through our lines. About an hour later we were under a nice lot of mortar shells. We then of course (realised) the so-called Indian soldier was not as he claimed. There was a lot of rifle and machine gun fire and we lost two of us five. People talk about remorse, so just imagine how we felt. We had a job to do. We failed. Then of course you go on what we should have done, how stupid we were to be fooled so easy — it goes on and on.

Nothing more happened and then on Sunday 15th February 1942 the sirens gave a short and long blast at 8.30pm and we knew it was over. The three of us, Bill Ross, George Croft and Arthur Dean, sat down in the gutter and said what do we do now, and George Croft said, I know, and he brought our full bottle of Johnny Walker whisky out of his pack and the three of us knocked it off and lay down in the gutter and slept. We had had no food for three days and no sleep for more than that so you can guess the state we were in. We were found the next morning by people from our own company. Regarding the mortar attack — it was very professional. They used 4" mortars and a new one to us, a 2" which we never knew about till after it was over. The 2" they fired off their thigh and the 4" just the way our four-inch worked and they covered every inch of ground. Lucky for us there was a lot of big trees around to give us a little bit of shelter but there was a lot of branches and leaves and of course the noise was something you would not believe.

I forgot to mention a couple of items regarding the RAAF. I was speaking to one of the crew of the last Lockheed Hudson aircraft out of Kota Bahru in the far north when Japs landed. It was just on dusk and the Jap was firing from the perimeter fence they had the last 32 air force men on board and as they took off, he said you could see the rifle fire and the trees coming up fast. They made it but that type of aircraft never had so much weight to take off with before or since. The other item was I was over at

Sembawang one weekend and there was a competition on between RAF & RAAF to see who could do the fastest bomb up and take off. The Poms did their run and the Aussies were doing theirs and too keen when the aircraft started to just lift, they dropped it back on the tarmac and the under cart collapsed. There was mayhem for a while, very disappointing for the RAAF.

ESTATE PLANNING

Prepared by Claude Palmer

Preparation

Prior to embarkation for Vietnam in the 1960's, a typical Will and Power of Attorney were both one large sheet of paper. The Law has "evolved" to the point where that is no longer the case. Currently, it is advisable that we have a valid Will, Power of Attorney (PoA), and Advance Health Directive (AHD)-each of which now typically, 12 or more A4 pages. To avoid Family stress at the time of a Loved one's demise, it is also recommended that we all consider organ and/or body donation for medical research, and funeral/memorial service preferences in more detail than in the relevant Will paragraph. All this is a pain in the proverbial, but such preparation can save time and Family stress when the inevitable occurs.

Check List

The following is a suggested Check List of Documents kept in the one Binder if possible:

- a. Will
- b. PoA
- c. AHD
- d. Registration as Organ Donor
- e. Body Donation for Medical Research (currently QUT) if appropriate
- f. Copy of any Real Estate Property Deeds
- g. Birth and Marriage Certificates
- h. Superannuation Non-Lapsing Beneficiary Document
- i. Copies of Insurance Policies, Home, Contents, and Vehicle
- j. Copies of Investments, Bank Statements, Shares, Assets
- k. Copies of recent Council Rate Notices, Phone/Internet, and Utilities Bills

- l. Copies of latest Statements of Comsuper, Centrelink and/or DVA Pensions
- m. Contact details for RSL, Professional, ESO, Social Associations
- n. Medicare and Health Insurance

Advice

Within ethical limits, your VSC can advise on some aspects, and provide JP Services. Legal advice, especially where complex Milsuper, DVA, or Residential Care Refundable Deposit matters may be involved, is offered by Mrs Jacqui Brauman, wife of an RAA WO1 (Retd) Afghanistan Veteran, of SPG Lawyers, on (07)5570 9374, at 1 Corporate Court, Bundall, 4217.

De Havilland Mosquito FB.VI LR364/SY-E, March 1944



When Britain's population were desperate for heroic figures to galvanise the nation towards victory in their greatest hour of need, they were fortunate enough to be able to count on men like RAF airman John Randall Daniel 'Bob' Braham. An accomplished twin engine fighter pilot, Braham would go on to believe that flying 'freelance' hunting sorties at the same time as the main RAF bomber formations over enemy occupied Europe might draw enemy nightfighters to them and away from RAF bombers, where the Luftwaffe's nocturnal hunters could be targeted by this proven nightfighter specialist and his powerful aircraft.

In this role, he is thought to have shot down at least four of the Luftwaffe's leading nightfighter aces, becoming the scourge of German defensive operations against Allied night raids. Britain's most decorated Fighter Command airman, 'Bob' Braham ended the war as the

most successful British pilot operating twin-engined aircraft, and was also a leading nightfighter ace, scoring 19 of his 30 aerial victories under the cover of night. He had 9 intruder victories whilst flying the de Havilland Mosquito to his name, and must have proved significant in saving the lives of many hundreds of Bomber Command airmen as a result of his actions.

The aircraft presented here is the de Havilland Mosquito he borrowed from RAF No.613 Squadron on 5th March 1944, the aircraft in which he scored his first Mosquito victory.

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Our new clinic is NOW open at 128 Brisbane Rd, Labrador. We have availability in our Veterans Wellness program for Physiotherapy, Exercise Physiology and Occupational Therapy.

Kind regards

Majella Nolan

M: 0417 140 701 P: 1300 630 204

W: www.hiya.health



“It took me three hours, but I finally discovered why you’re limping. You lost the heel off your shoe.”

Southport Bowls Club



HAPPY HOUR



Sundays
1pm-2pm
and 4pm-5pm

**SENIORS MEAL
SPECIALS AVAILABLE
EVERY FRIDAY,
SATURDAY & SUNDAY
FOR LUNCH 11:30AM-
2:30PM**

Friday Nights

- ~ Happy Hour 5-6pm
- ~ Live music from 6pm
- ~ Raffles at 7pm
- ~ Members Badge Draw 7:15pm



2026 General Meeting Dates

AGM	Sunday, 21 Feb 27
Quarterly General	Sunday, 24 May 26
Quarterly General	Sunday, 23 Aug 26
Quarterly General	Sunday, 22 Nov 26
All meetings commence at 10:30 am	



"You're looking a lot better today, Ralph."

When I get a headache, I take two aspirin and keep away from children just like the bottle says.



"It's hard to believe you've never put up wallpaper before."

One year, I decided to buy my mother-in-law a cemetery plot as a Christmas gift...

The next year, I didn't buy her a gift. When she asked me why, I replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!"

And that's how the fight started.

Position	Year of AGM		
	2025	2026	2027
President			
Deputy President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Director 1			
Director 2			
Director 3			
Director 4			
Director 5			
Director 6			

Current Board Members

- Craig Thomas **President**
- Ken Orr **Deputy President**
- Harold Hansen **Treasurer**
- Michael Burg **Secretary**
- vacant** **Director 1**
- John Riebeling **Director 2**
- Geoff Young **Director 3**
- Kevin Lloyd-Thomas **Director 4**
- Sandra Riebeling **Director 5**
- Heath Mason **Director 6**

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