

# CRONULLA RSL SUB-BRANCH

## February Newsletter 2024



**Welcome to February 2024 members!**

**It is so wonderful to see so many friendly faces back at our General Meeting.**

**If you have visited our office in the last month or so you would have noticed our Hon. Secretary Matt Coady learning the ropes of daily operations. It has been wonderful to have an assistant to get through the workload and catch up on administrative tasks, not to mention laughing constantly at Matt's battle with the keyboard and mouse. Those fat fingers just won't do as they are told!**

**February always means the beginnings of enquiries, bookings, meetings and planning of ANZAC Day. This time around the Cronulla RSL Memorial Club will be more involved leading up to our service with Natalie Hawkins the Community Projects Manager assisting. We all know I like to time having COVID perfectly! Having Natalie on hand means smooth sailing just in case.**

**I hope you are all enjoying the adventures of our newest member, Hardcore Hank! If you are planning a holiday or an adventure and want to take him along, please feel free to come and pick him up. I will have his bags packed!**

**See you all at our next General Meeting!**

**Kristy Nichols**

**Office Manager**



# War Animal Day

On 24th February, the Cronulla RSL held the War Animal Day Commemoration Service.

Members of our sub branch were in attendance as we reflected upon the immeasurable contributions and sacrifices made by animals in times of conflict & peace.

Junior Vice President Paul Batman was given the honour of MC with Hon. Secretary Matt Coady laying a wreath on behalf of the Cronulla RSL Sub Branch, and General Committee Paul Zaat reciting his new poem "Companions of War & Peace"

We thank all members, family and friends who attended this special day.



# Long Hai Day Commemoration

**On Wednesday 28th February 2 members of our sub branch Paul Zaat and David Kitt along with other former members of 8RAR attended a service in Boronia Park Epping to commemorate Operation Hammersley also known as the Battle of the Long Hai.**

**The operation took place over the period 10th February – 9th March 1970, against eventual enemy force of battalion strength Viet Cong. During the battle, much support was given to 8RAR by various supporting arms. They include ground and naval artillery, armoured regiment, Australia and US air support (including B52 Bombers), calvary regiment and engineers.**

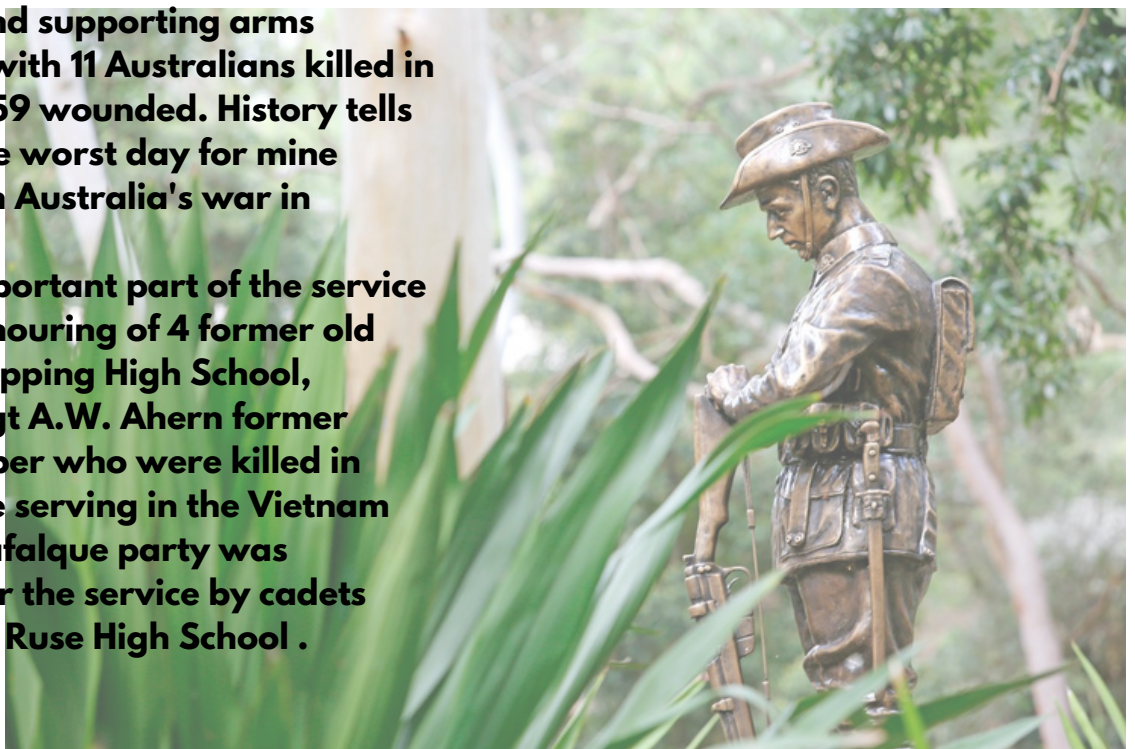
**The significance of this date 28th February is that although some casualties had occurred earlier in the operation (15th – 26th February), this day was the blackest in relation to Battalion and supporting arms casualties, with 11 Australians killed in action and 59 wounded. History tells us it was the worst day for mine casualties in Australia's war in Vietnam.**

**Another important part of the service was the honouring of 4 former old boys from Epping High School, including Sgt A.W. Ahern former 8RAR member who were killed in action while serving in the Vietnam War. A catafalque party was provided for the service by cadets from James Ruse High School .**

**After the service Paul and David along with over 60 guests attended a luncheon at the nearby Epping Club. During the luncheon Paul had the honour of reading two of his poems that he had written during the past year – A Soldiers Brush with War & Peace as well as Companions of War & Peace, which was also read out as part of War Animal Day.**

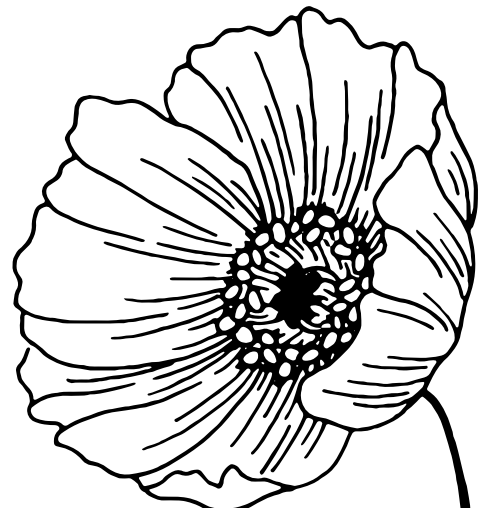
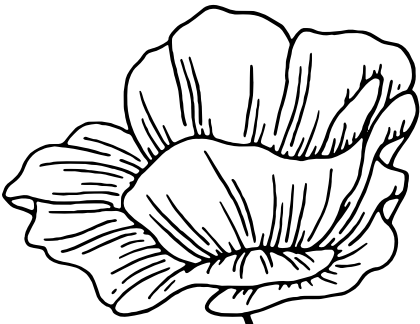
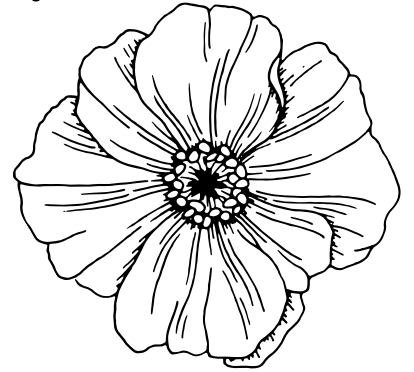
**Both poems are set to be published in the upcoming 8RAR magazine later in the year.**

**For all those in attendance it was a day to remember those of our mates who paid the supreme sacrifice and a toast given to each of the 18 soldiers killed in action during 8RAR tour of duty in Vietnam and the 2 soldiers who died while servicing with the Battalion during the Malaysian Uprising. May they rest in peace. Lest we forget.**





*Lest we forget*



# Companions of War and Peace

In 1914 the outback they roamed  
The mustering of cattle a long way from home  
The drover his horses and the dogs on hand  
Working the country over a vast dry land

Then the call went out far and wide  
Stockman requested to put mustering aside  
The "Whalers" and working dogs requested as one  
Service to their country was there to be done

The spirit of duty was there from the start  
As the "Animals of War" would play their part  
In a war so distant their journey would be long  
To the deserts of Egypt and the Fields of the Somme

As the nation continues the call to arms  
More men with their animals leave their farms  
Companions they are to the soldier known  
That bond of friendship borne from home

After weeks of training the soldiers depart  
With their animals of war their duty to start  
As the crowds gathered to wave goodbye  
The ships departed under a darkened sky

Over the vast oceans for the weeks ahead  
The soldiers and their companions to a war were led.  
Finally, to arrive on a hot desert sand  
The animals of war now in a foreign land

Courage abounds into the battles they ride.  
The Whalers in great numbers side by side  
Soldier in the saddle aware of his fate  
Fighting in the deserts and the fields of hate!

As the battles continued for year after year  
The loss of the brave became very clear.  
The soldier's companion a trusted friend.  
Support for his mate to the very end

With war finally over the losses are great  
The soldier, his horse and his best mate  
The ships again ready, with the soldier alone  
As only one companion is allowed to come home.

The animals of War for centuries have served.  
With bravery and loyalty and the love they deserved  
So, forget we must not for what they have done  
Their service to our nation was second to none.

"The loyalty of a companion, is trust in itself"

WRITTEN BY PAUL H ZAAT VIETNAM WAR VETERAN 1969-1970

# Zaat family legacy lives on!

On February 13th 2024 Paul and Shelley Zaat's grandson Cassidy became an Army boy!



**Congratulations Cassidy!**

## New Website sneak peak!

Veteran Support Services in Cro... x +

icosahedron-orb-zpw6.square.space.com/subbranch

RSL NSW Westpac RSL NSW Portal 104.9 Triple M Sydn... Squarespace — Log... OneDrive

### About

Established with a rich history dating back to 1921, we are a dedicated group of veterans and their supporters, united in our commitment to serving those who have served our nation. We provide essential support services to veterans and their families.

[Find out more](#)

### Services

We are dedicated to providing a comprehensive range of essential services and support to our esteemed veterans and their families. Through an extensive range of events, educational initiatives, and community outreach programs, we are committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging and camaraderie within the Cronulla community.

[Find out more](#)

### Membership

By becoming a member, you not only gain access to a supportive network of like-minded individuals but also play a crucial role in preserving the legacy of our veterans and actively participating in our community activities.

[Find out more](#)

*Coming Soon*

# CRONULLA RSL SUB-BRANCH EVENT CALENDAR 2024

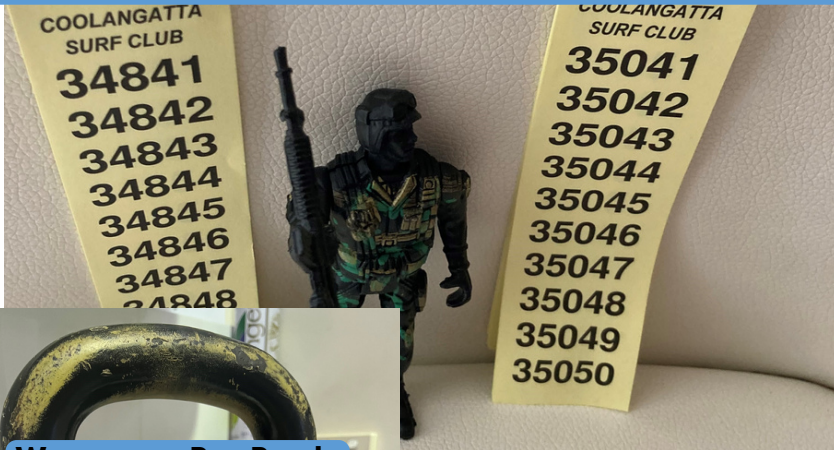


DATE	MEETING	TIME	VENUE
Monday 5th February	General Meeting	11:00am	Gerrale
Monday 11th March	AGM/ General Meeting	6:30pm	Gerrale
Monday 8th April	ANZAC Luncheon	11:00am	Soldiers Partners welcome
Thursday 25th April	ANZAC Day	5:30am	Cronulla Park
Monday 6th May	Night Chapter	6:45pm	Gerrale
Monday 3rd June	General Meeting	11:00am	Gerrale
Monday 1st July	Night Chapter Christmas in July	6:45pm	Soldiers Partners welcome
Monday 5th August	General Meeting	11:00am	Gerrale
Sunday 18th August	Vietnam Veterans' Day	11:30am	Monro Park/Gerrale
Monday 2nd September	Night Chapter	6:45pm	Gerrale
Monday 14th October	General Meeting	11:00am	Gerrale
Monday 4th November	Night Chapter	6:45pm	Gerrale
Monday 11th November	Remembrance Day	11:00am	Monro Park/Gerrale
Monday 2nd December	Christmas Luncheon	11:00am	Soldiers Partners welcome

# HARDCORE HANK GOES ON DEPLOYMENT!



Got to be in it to win it! Hardcore Hank in the raffles Coolangatta



Enjoying a cold one Rainbow Bay Bar



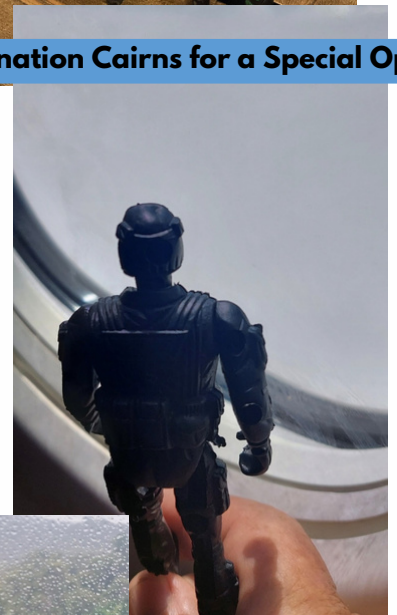
Warm up at Rep Ready



30,000 feet destination Cairns for a Special Op.



H.H camouflage, right before he was blown up and lost his leg



Slip Slop Slap! Novotel Cairns



H.H in action. Kuranda Cable Car over rain forest canopy looking splendid and fitting in with surroundings





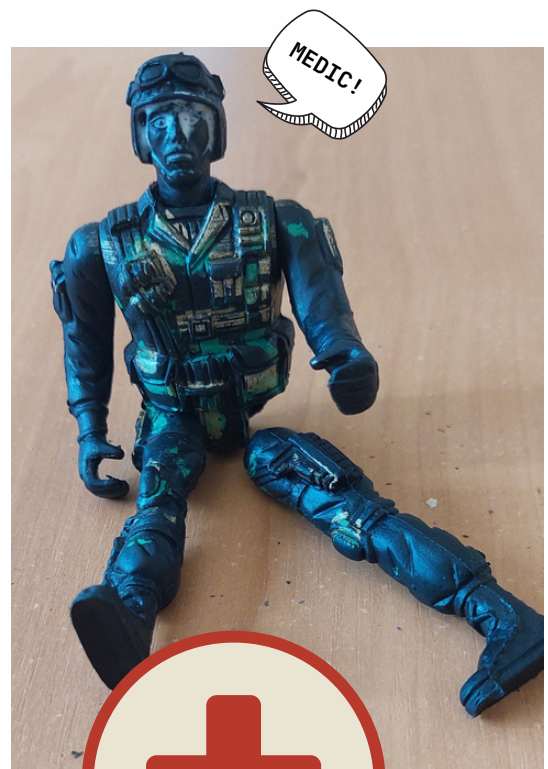
# Incident Report

It is my melancholy duty to inform you that whilst on a Secret black ops mission in Yungaburra Afghanistan Veterans Avenue of Honour , North Queensland, Hardcore Hank stepped on a mine, which blew his left leg right off.

He received triage immediately, but that confounded leg could not be reattached.

He is now known by his mates as "Hopalong Hank" the "Hard-core Hunk." Thankfully, there was no damage to his Crown Jewells and he will recover eventually.

Very sad.  
R. Shaw



# Medical Report

Admitted: St George Private  
Discharged: 13/03/24

Surgery on his left leg and it has now been re-attached. He will need his walking cane for some time.

He appears OK and is recovering well.

He will need some TLC before his next mission.

Super glue used on his leg, so needless to say, he is not as flexible as he was.

Alas, he will always have a stiff leg. He WILL BE eligible for the Para Olympics though, and his Surgeon says he should do well in a 3 legged race.

