



# Pittwater RSL sub-Branch ANZAC Day Dawn Service Special Edition Newsletter

Thursday 25 April 2024



## ANZAC Day Dawn Service

Deborah Carter, President, Pittwater RSL sub-Branch  
Leigh Arnold, Pittwater RSL Club President; Jason Manning, Pittwater RSL Club CEO  
Rory Amon MP, Member for Pittwater; The Hon. Bronwyn Bishop AO  
Alyn Rubie representing Dr Sophie Scamps MP  
Insp. Vanessa Robinson, Northern Beaches Police Area Command  
Karina Page representing Mayor Sue Heins, Michael Gencher, Bianca Crvelin, Northern Beaches Council  
Peter Thomas, Pittwater Men's Bowls Club President  
Sue Brandenburg, President Pittwater Women's Bowls Club  
Kylie Adams-Collier, representing Rabaul and Montevideo Maru Association  
Livia and Odette Burns, representing children of current serving members  
Chief Superintendent Cameron Edgar, ASM FACP, NSW Ambulance, Aeromedical Operations  
Pastor Michael Hubbard, The Link Church  
Catafalque Party and Members of 7 Bty 9 Regt

Jeff Brown, Parade Commander  
SQN LDR Dr Anna Williams,  
Vocalist

SGT Jack Snowden, Guard Commander  
Ben and Jason Riley, Pipers  
Sub-LT Zamri Burns, Commemorative Address

Schools: Mater Maria Catholic College, Mona Vale Public, Narrabeen North Public,  
St Luke's Grammar Bayview Campus, Sacred Heart Catholic, Pittwater High

Surf Life Saving Clubs: Mona Vale, Warriewood and North Narrabeen

Mona Vale Fire Station;

Pittwater RSL Football Club, Warringah Rats Rugby Club,  
Northern Beaches Hot Rods and Bayview Sea Scouts

## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024



### President Deborah Carter's Opening Address

#### I will now recite The Prologue

On this day, above all days, we recall those who, in the great tragedy of war, gave their lives for Australia and for the freedom of mankind; who still sleep amid the ridges of Gallipoli and the terraced hills of Palestine; in the lovely cemeteries of France or the shimmering haze of the Libyan desert; amid the mounts and olive groves of Greece and the Middle East; the jungles of Malaya, New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, in rugged Korea and the battlefields of Vietnam; in the mountains and barren fields of Afghanistan and Iraq; amid loving friends in our mother country and our own land, and in unknown resting places in every continent and every sea.

We remember those who have since fallen by our side in the wars in which we have been engaged – in the air and on the sea and land, and all our loyal friends among the people of New Guinea and elsewhere. We think of every man, woman and child who, in those crucial years, died so that the lights of freedom and humanity might continue to shine.

This year's theme for ANZAC Day is "Discover the stories of Veterans in your local community". I would like to share a "snap shot" of some of the veterans at Pittwater RSL sub-Branch.

I was a Nursing Officer in the RAAF serving at RAAF Richmond and No. 3 Hospital and outpatients. Set up the health promotions unit for 22 Squadron, 1986-1993.

**Bob Wood**, our Treasurer, was called up for National Service within Australia from 1966-1968. He then transferred to the CMF.

**Leigh Arnold**, Pittwater RSL Club President, joined the regular Army under National service 1973-1976, with six months operational service in Singapore in 1973.

**Darren Crabb**, Pittwater RSL Club Vice President, spent 15 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a fighter pilot. He transferred to the RAAF in 1996 flying FA-18 Hornets with 77 Squadron. Darren is now a corporate pilot flying the Gulfstream G650.

#### Vietnam Veterans who saw Active/Operational duty:

**Gary Everitt**, Army, an engineer on small boats, The Clive Steele.

**John Cicolini** (my brother-in-law) Royal Australian Navy; HMAS Vendetta

**Ray Cicolini** was in the RAAF during Vietnam, RAAF 35 SQN (in Southern Vietnam)

**Graham Keats**, Army

**Theo Chere**, Army and Tunnel Rat

**Denis DeSilva**, RAN, HMAS Perth

**Bernie O'Neill** was a medic in the United States Navy who supported the United States Marine Corp. Bernie was awarded a Purple Heart;

**Stan Juracich**, USMC. Bronze Star and Purple Heart;

**Terry Jones**, Sub-Branch Vice President, was with 9RAR and was ready to deploy to Vietnam, when Gough Whitlam became PM and ceased any further personnel to be deployed;

**Brian Leary** a volunteer was a steward with Qantas, and was on the first plane to be deployed to Vietnam carrying troops and armaments;

**Gerry Faramus**, Army, was sent to PNG;

**John Chambers** served as a sub-Mariner in the Navy.

#### Current serving members:

**Sub/LT Zamri Burns**, our key note speaker. I will explain more in his introduction;

**SQN/LDR Dr Anna Williams**, our soprano, is a Military historian;

**FLT/LT Frances Watkins**, joined the RAAF as a pharmacist, and now works as a Logistic Officer.

#### Members of the 7 Battery, 9 Regiment:

**SGT Shane Fender**, Border Protection and Peace Keeping in the Solomon Islands;

**SGT Ross Wagland**, Border Protection and Peace Keeping in Timor Leste;

**SGT Jack Snowden** Border Protection and Fire and Flood Assist.

**Bombardier Joe Chase Berry**, Border Protection and Peace Keeping;

**Bombardier Matt Hill**, Border Protection and Peace Keeping.

All our Catafalque party members, including **Jeff Brown**, Parade Commander, have worked in Fire and Flood Assist.

Kiwi **Kerry Poha** served with the New Zealand Army.

**LT/Colonel Ollie Ford** recently retired from the British Army. He is in America attending the wedding of his Mentee through the TAPS.ORG association.

#### WW2 Veterans:

**Brian Sargeson** is our youngest WW2 Veteran at 93 years of age, Brian joined the Navy towards the end of WW2 as a Naval Cadet when he was just 15 years of age. The Royal Navy.

**Sub/LT Neale 'Brian' Heal** is 98 years old and served on a mine sweeper. The Royal Navy.

Our oldest Veteran is **Gwen Sneesby**, nee Forster. Gwen will celebrate her 100th birthday on 17 June 2024.

Gwen was a WRAN and worked at the Degaussing Station at Bradleys Head. Gwen was on leave the night the Midget sub bombed the HMAS Kuttabul. See page 7.

Finally, Affiliate Member, **Beryl Clarke**, nee Byron, was a school girl at Mona Vale Public School during WW2. Her older sister was in the AWAS and her 4 brothers all were deployed overseas Two were POW's of the Japanese, one a Rat of Tobruk and one a 16 year old lad on the Kokoda Track. Miraculously, all 4 boys survived the war and returned home.

## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024

### Conclusion

Anzac Day is not just about WW1, the War to end all Wars, but is a remembrance of all campaigns in theatres of war, and sadly many wars have followed.

In my view, the war that changed Australia was WW2 because the enemy was close on our doorstep and the Brisbane Line was proposed. With the fear of occupation of the Japanese, the Government decided that the Japanese could live North of Brisbane, and the Australians could live South of Brisbane.

I pay tribute to our WW2 veterans, the young men of the Militia of Kokoda, Templeton's Crossing, the Battle Milne Bay, Gona-Buna which broke the back of the Japanese from further aspirations to take Australia.

I also pay tribute to the 7th Division on returning from the Middle East who assisted with this triumph.

Anzac Day is not just a day we remember our Anzacs, but we salute all veterans who have put on the uniform, in particular, our current serving members and reservists, who have kept us safe during fire assist, Covid safe, floods and border control. Thanks to our Kiwi cousins.

May we and our successors prove worthy of their sacrifice. **Lest We Forget**



**Sub-Lieutenant Zamri Burns** is a New Zealand born Naval Officer with a proud Australian Indigenous heritage.

Zamri gave an excellent address.

Zamri is a Navy veteran of 20+ years serving predominantly as an underwater medicine clinician. He has multiple operational deployments to his name; both seagoing and land-based, with the most recent as the NCOIC to the U.S. special operations Command Surgeon in Afghanistan. This was in support of the US-led "Operation Freedom's Sentinel" which is part of the global war against terror.

Upon his return, he commenced full-time military-sponsored postgraduate medical training at the University of Sydney.

Zamri was awarded the prestigious U.S. Defense Meritorious Service Medal, which is normally issued only to American Service personnel.



Leigh Arnold, Alyn Rubie, Rory Amon MP,  
The Hon. Bronwyn Bishop AO



SQN LDR Dr Anna Williams  
Cameron Edgar ASM FACP



## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024



Josh Riley, Deborah Carter, Rory Amon MP, Ben Riley



Alyn Rubie, Inspector Vanessa Robinson



Karina Page, Bianca Crvelin, Michael Gencher



Thank you to Mayor Sue Heins for organising the ANZAC Banners that were placed in Mona Vale, and surrounding areas.

As far as we know, Mayor Heins was the first Mayor to arrange this.



## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024



Dr Harriet Channon



Mater Maria Catholic College, Mona Vale Public School



Pittwater High School



North Narrabeen Public School, St Luke's Grammar Bayview Campus



## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024



Ben and Josh Riley lead the sub-Branch members



Rory Amon MP, The Hon. Bronwyn Bishop AO



Warringah Rugby Club



John Roxburgh



Surf Clubs

Thank you to...

Pittwater RSL Club Ltd staff for their invaluable assistance.

Everyone who contributed to a successful ceremony.

The Northern Beaches local community for attending our ANZAC Day Dawn Service.

Images: Dale Cohen, Northern Beaches Advocate

## Gwenyth Sneesby - A Living Treasure



Gwen Sneesby and Deborah Carter, 18 April

Our oldest sub-Branch member, 'Living Treasure' 99-year-old World War II veteran Gwenyth Sneesby has been recognised for her service.

Ms Sneesby from Mona Vale, who turns 100 on 17 June this year, joined the Navy in December 1942 and served at the Degaussing Range at Bradleys Head, Mosman.

Degaussing is a 'stealth' technology that was developed for ships, which attempts to make the metal hull invisible to magnetically triggered mines. A degaussing range assesses the effectiveness of a ship's attempt to conceal its magnetic signature.

The Degaussing Range at Bradleys Head was set up by the United States Navy in 1942, and after a short period of operation, was handed over to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) in early 1943 for operation.

Ms Sneesby was one of four RAN officers and ten Women's Royal Australian Navy Service (WRANS) personnel to serve at the Degaussing Range at Bradleys Head, in a two-storey camouflaged structure that was built over the water.



The station was operated 24 hours a day during the war, and WRANS including Ms Sneesby, worked as clerks, signallers, and instrument operators.



Gwen was 'overwhelmed' and 'proud' to be recognised for her service during World War II.

*"I worked at the Degaussing Range which helped to repel the mines and stop them from blowing the ships up. There were ten girls that worked five days on and five days off."*

*"We had to walk to Bradleys Head from Spit Junction, through an army camp. There was no public transport to get there. We joined up for three years or the duration of the war, whichever was greater," said Ms Sneesby.*

Images: Gwen Sneesby and Dale Cohen.  
Words: Dale Cohen, Northern Beaches Advocate



Gwen and her family on ANZAC Day 2024



## ANZAC Day Dawn Service 2024

Deborah Carter attended many ANZAC Day Services...



Deborah with The Hon. Bronwyn Bishop AO and Bob Lunnon (NBDC)  
at Collaroy RSL sub-Branch Sunset Service, 25 April



Deborah with Tamara Sloper-Harding OAM and  
John Fairless, at Pittwater House School, 12 April



Deborah with Beryl Clarke, Gary and Sue Everitt  
at Mona Vale Public School, 10 April



Deborah with Neale 'Brian' Heal  
at Avalon RSL sub-Branch, 25 April