



WATT'S HAPPENINGS

Issue 8

*94th Anniversary
Winter Edition 2021*

**JOURNAL OF THE UNITED SERVICE CLUB
NEWCASTLE**





<https://www.facebook.com/USCNewcastle/unitedserviceclub.wildapricot.org/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, your regular patronage has resulted in two months of solid trading.

Members and guests frequently comment on our lack of poker machines as being a contributing factor to our friendly and intimate atmosphere.

Function bookings are steady, indicating that now would be a good time for you to book your Christmas party. Our Christmas tree will also be available for those booking a Christmas in July.

On ANZAC Day for the first time we flew both the Australian & New Zealand flags. The club was 'buzzing' with activity from breakfast after the dawn service right through until late. It was gratifying to have so many people choosing to spend their special day at our Club.

It is important to acknowledge the fact that without the generosity of our volunteers who consistently give their time and effort, it would be impossible to facilitate these functions and events. Their assistance is essential for setting up and then later, restoring things to normal.

You are encouraged to like and follow the Club's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/uscnewcastle> for quicker updates with 'Watts Happening' on a daily basis. We can also 'tag' members (should you wish) in photos to be displayed and you can 'check in' to say that you have visited the Club.

There have been a number of other major changes and improvements within your club since my last report. Most of them can still be called a 'work in progress'.

The term of the City of Newcastle RSL Sub-Branch lease on our dining room has expired and they are in the process of relocating to other premises.

2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ernie Thirkell
 Vice President: MAJ Simon Macks (Retd)
 Hon. Secretary: WO2 Jason Gladys (Retd)
 Hon. Assistant Secretary: Andrew Hill
 Hon. Treasurer: Mr. Joel N. Griffiths BCom CA
 Director: WO2 Brett Hodgetts
 Director: Phil Screen
 Director: David Thomas
 Director: James Wallace

2021-2022 PATRONS

BRIG Derek Sharp (Ret) OBE
 MAJ Roland MILLBANK (Ret)

At this stage we still don't have a functioning dining room so in the interim, you are encouraged to continue the great option of ordering takeaway so you can remain in the Club enjoying the atmosphere.

This journal, originally bi-monthly, is now a quarterly publication.

Our new electronic touch screen till system. "EPOS - NOW", gives more flexibility with pricing and stock control as well as the ability to offer Members Discounts at the bar.

Undoubtedly the most important event in the USC calendar for many years has been the '1920's Gatsby Theme Cocktail Party' in celebration of our 94th anniversary.

With this doubling as a fund-raising event there has been overwhelming response from the wider community in support. Even more so since the wonderful news footage aired on NBN.

I am pleased to report that thanks to extremely generous donors and supportive bidders, we raised funds exceeding our hopes and expectations. (Details p3 & lift-out souvenir.)

2021 Watt's Doing Now

Apart from the full stocktake of club assets, the focus has been on the little maintenance jobs which you don't notice - unless they are left undone.

Right Andrew Hill (Asst. Secretary) & Ross Proctor. Furniture relocation! One of those little jobs.



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Welcome New Members April & May

George Burke Marcus Dwyer
 Leanne Barnett William Willis
 Suzanne Martin James Swain
 Nathan Law Janet Rowan
 Nathan Hannah Lee Rowan

Funds raised will go a long way toward actioning results of continuing Investigations regarding upgrading our building compliance, safety and maintenance.

Ernie Thirkell

JOHN VAN HOMRIGH
 USC Member for 25 years

John joined the USC Newcastle on 19-02-1996, when the "Old Boys" lunches were a mainstay and drawcard. It was in the heyday of business long lunches as an accepted part of the culture.



Above: John with Rev Cannon Garry Dodd at the NCYC.

These were under the stewardship of William Parkhill who brought in everything and set it up.



Left: Mid 1990's. John Von Homrigh, S. Scanlan and Bill Abbott

Below: April 2008. John with Jeff Robinson & Vic Giles celebrating having collectively served 25 years as Directors

Eventually John took over the lunch duties from him until other arrangements could be made. By 2005 things were back on track.



With a new board, the lunches consisted of a home cooked meal and the requisite beer or wine at a reasonable price. Unfortunately, old boys become older, liquor laws changed and the lunches faded out.

It was during John's tenure as a Director of the USC that his daughter Lyn, a serving ADF Officer became the first female member of the club.

John during WW11

Despite his father being an Army WW1 Veteran, at 6 years old John joined the Air Force Cadets in Brisbane.

As soon as he was eligible, John enlisted in the RAAF with his date of enlistment and attestation recorded as 19 Nov 1943. John was first posted to 3 ITS (Initial Training School) at Kingaroy. His introduction to flying Tiger Moths occurred with 5 EFTS (Elementary Flying School) at Narromine.

Along with half of his training group, John graduated from Flying School as a Flight Sergeant Pilot. They were a little disgruntled because the graduates from the next course were sent to Canada for further training and returned as Pilot Officers.



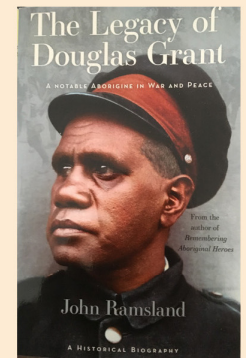
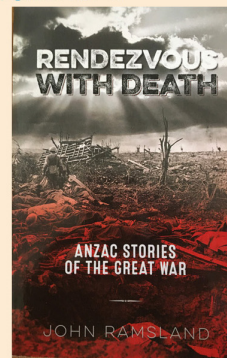
Left: John's Paybook is a treasured memento of his time in the RAAF.

John trained to fly Tiger Moths at Narromine and continued his training elsewhere in the Avro Anson twin engine fighter trainer.

This aircraft featured a retractable undercarriage which wasn't operated by casually flicking a switch. In the 'Annie', the hand-crank had to be turned an arm-breaking 140 times to lift the heavy wheels.

John's goal was to become a Beaufighter pilot, but the war ended before he had the opportunity to finish his training. He loved flying and loved his time as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force. It has been his passion throughout his life.

BOOK LAUNCH
RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH
 Author John Ramsland



Above: John Ramsland and the covers of his two latest books to be launched at the USC.

Both of these remarkable volumes are available for purchase from the USC Bar.



Right: Keen USC members and regular patrons, Dr Richard (Dick) Lees and his wife Margaret, checking out their book purchase.

UPCOMING

2021
 Royal Australian Air
 Force Centenary

July 19
 Battle of
 Fromelles

June 23
 UN International Widows
 Day

July 21
 Reserve Forces Day

JULY 27
 Korean War Day

Getting to Know You

Interviewing USC member Chris Lehneis

How did you find out about our Club?

'When I came to Australia, Jim Janke, a US Boeing employee told me this is where I needed to go to meet people.



He was right and I have been a member for the six years since.

And I love to have a beer with Patrick 'cause Patrick's my mate!

We always have a good time at the USC but the most fun was crashing a private party.



If our Bar Manager Catherine is around, it's probably safer to talk about how much fun it was pulling the walls apart in the bar! I got a 'thank you' card for doing that. Go figure.'

Left: Working Bee May 2020



Above: Good nights with The Salami Brothers too.



Left: Santa 'always made an appearance at the Christmas in July.



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Above: 18 December 2020 Much warmer here than it is back home in the States.

USC does functions & can arrange catering

The kitchen is available for functions:

- * in-house caterer;
- * cater for yourself;
- * order in.



ANZAC DAY

On behalf of our members:

Club President Ernie Thirkell laid a wreath at Christ Church Cathedral on Wednesday 21 April. This was at a dedication service for the War-widows Lawn, refurbished by The City of Newcastle RSL Sub-branch..



Above: Fort Scratchley Dawn Service
Lyn Van Homrigh (first female member) and Ernie Thirkell, USC President, laid a wreath.

Simon Macks, USC Vice President laid a wreath on behalf of the Club at the ANZAC Day Civic Park

ANZAC DAY AT THE USC



Lynch's Hub is our preferred catering partner for USC functions.

Support your club by holding your next function or event with us.

Request menu or grazing platter options from the bar manager or direct from Lynch's Hub on (02) 4925 2926



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

ANZAC DAY

- * For generous donation to veteran welfare on the day, Garth Eather 'Meerea Park wines' & Lee and Janet Rowan, 'Lee Rowan Landscaping'.
- * Jason Gladys who built & installed the sign-in desk at the base of the stairs.
- * A much needed New Zealand Flag - Fudge & Alan McCully.



Above: Catherine Fidock-Jones and Kursty Ross.

- * Volunteer Bar Staff - Kursty Ross, Joseph Anderson & Patrick Halliday
- * Volunteers (Can Bar, Covid Marshalls, food orders etc): James Wallace, Ernie & Gloria Thirkell, Jason & Allison Gladys, Andrew Hill, David Thomas, Phil Screen, Kim & Mansell Laidler, Ivy-Rose Laidler, Anthony Frost, Patrick McLaughlin, David Knott, David Wood, David Butler, Nicky Brooks, Sam Gladys, Tony Kildery, Richard Leis.

Anniversary Cocktail Party Fund Raiser

OUR FUND-RAISING SPONSORS ARE LISTED IN THE LIFT-OUT BROCHURE INCLUDED IN THIS EDITION.

- * Thanks are due to the many people who made the event such an amazing success:
- * Those who purchased tickets; those who were unable to attend but donated the cost of a ticket; the individuals and organisations who provided raffle prizes and larger donations to be auctioned and; all those who participated in the fun of the raffle and auctions. Thank you again for 'digging deep in your pockets'.
- * Not least, those who donated their labour (volunteered), behind the scenes completing a myriad of tasks needed for the idea to materialise: organising sponsorship; decorating the club, preparing and serving food, making cocktails, picking up glasses, the list goes on.
- * This latter group includes: Club Directors Jason Gladys, Ernie Thirkell, Brett Hodgetts and Phil Screen; Bar Manager Catherine Fidock-Jones; Alison Gladys, Rhiannon Hardy, Amanda Parata, Gloria Thirkell, Blake Forrester, Greg Ross, Ivy-Rose Laidler and Ray Blackburn.

Our Social Media Guru

Jordan Faith from Newcastle Tech Support has made a huge difference in raising the profile of the Club.

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Left: Ray Blackburn, Jason Gladys & Ernie Thirkell. Ray volunteered at the sign-in desk for a few hours on the night of the Cocktail Party.

Right: Petro Gleeson with Russel and Kath Rawson

Our Historical Committee

For the many hours of unpaid work by our Museum Consultant: Bill Storer OAM and, Members of our Historical Committee, Janet Aisbett, Sur Britton, Vicki Hill and Gloria Thirkell. responsible for the



Above: Janet Aisbett & husband Greg



Above: Sue Britton

Contributions to displays/ Exhibits

Most recently these included: the RAAF Centenary, Battle of Kapyong, Battle of Coral, Boar War and, International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Our contributors for these exhibits have included: Andrew Hill (Asst. Secretary), Singleton Army Museum (Curator John Land), Harry Day, Albert (Shorty) Thirkell, Barry Twomey and Sean Martin.

Making yourself available when needed

Those members whose names appear regularly in this journal. There for the little things & the big. And of course those who contribute 'bums on seats', your regular patronage not only makes for fun times - it is vital to the survival of your club.



Above: Tim Leishman and Scott Mackenzie joined Matt Guyder (right) for an after work drink.



Historically Speaking

Janet Aisbet, Sue Britton, Vicki Hill, Gloria Thirkell - the USC Historical Committee

With 'Remembrance Day' last November the USC began the tradition of honoring national military days of commemoration. The wall to the left of the stairs to the games room has since that time been dedicated to that purpose, 'ADF Anniversaries'. The second display was for 'War Animal Remembrance Day' on 27th February 2021.

During March we displayed 5 newly purchased RAAF 100 year anniversary posters, each featuring a different plane. We had two separate displays in April. One on 24th for the 'Battle of Kapyong' (Korean War), the other for 'ANZAC Day'. For May 13th 'The Battle of Coral' (Vietnam), 29th 'UN Peacekeepers' and on the 30th, 'The Boer War'.

Our long-term goal is annual displays for the Calendar of Key Dates in Australian Military History.



Far left: Tony March placing a special poppy in remembrance on ANZAC Day.

Left: Battle of Coral, Vietnam Veterans in front of the USC display to mark the anniversary. Barry Twomey, Shorty Thirkell & Harry Day (each made contribution for the exhibit) and Barry Cartwright.

The five "Silver Frames"

On bi-monthly rotation, photos from our own members taken during their overseas deployments. Photos for the June/ July display were supplied by Sean Martin. However he supplied us with 185 wonderful photos, not 5!

The Stairwell Exhibit

This sudden bounty was well timed because we were preparing to commemorate the 29th May 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers', and now we had the necessary content! Luckily it was time to rotate the current Stairwell Exhibit, so we had the necessary space.

The Second Boer War 1899-1902

1st war in which Australia fought as a nation and; 1st war in which Australians fought alongside New Zealanders. 606 ADF were listed as killed or missing. The Day of commemoration, the last Sunday before 31 May, was not established until 2010. The Boer War Display is in the spot usually filled by the five 'Silver Frames'.

Mystery solved:

'Bill's Bell' resides on the bar, but current regulars had no idea of the reason for the bell or for it's name. Ann Bowen, visiting the Club recently, filled us in. We learned that her father Bill Parkhill used to ring it when the the "Old Boys" lunches were ready, back in the 1990's.



Above: Ann Bowen with her Dad's 'BILL'S BELL'.

In case you missed it
 Channel 9's wonderful coverage,
 13 May on the NBN nightly news:
www.nbnnews.com.au/2021/05/13/historic-club-seeking-to-revive-its-fortunes/

Below: May 2009, Howard Williams, RAAF Pilot WWII; John Van Homrigh (with Bill's Bell), RAAF Pilot WW1; Jeff Robinson, RAAF & RAF Spitfire Pilot; Laurie Tabart, Inspector of Schools; Jim Brown, RNAS Stringbag Observer; Jim Elliott, RAAF Padre.

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Contact Mark Ramsland, Mansell Laidler, James Wallace, and the team at Ramsland Laidler Solicitors for all your legal needs.

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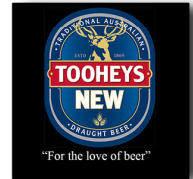
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Chambers on Watt
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Above: A '70s Dance Party hosted by Rene Smith

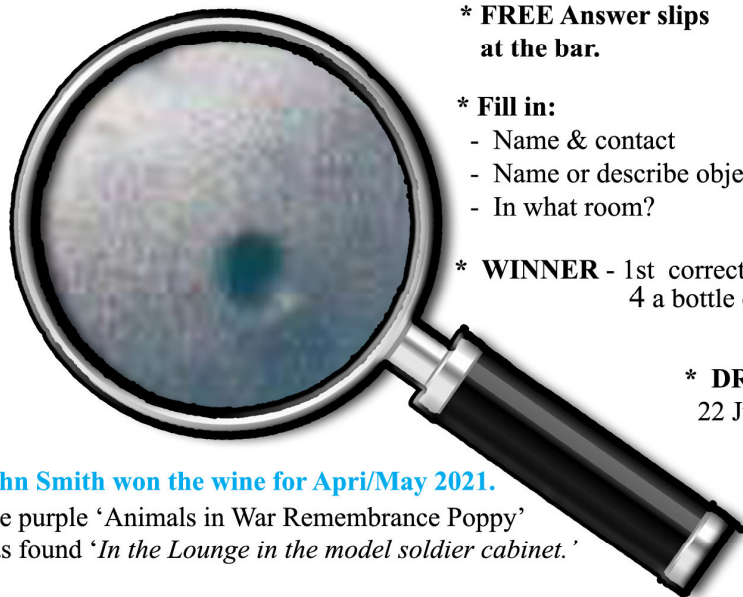
Below: catching up with mates on ANZAC Day



Above: 'Partying Gatsby style'!



It all happens at the USC EXPLORE YOUR CLUB



* **FREE** Answer slips
at the bar.

* **Fill in:**
- Name & contact
- Name or describe object
- In what room?

* **WINNER** - 1st correct answer
4 a bottle of wine.

* **DRAWN**
22 July 2021



Above: A quiet drink in the lounge.



Above: Catching up with friends in the bar.

John Smith won the wine for April/May 2021.

The purple 'Animals in War Remembrance Poppy'
was found 'In the Lounge in the model soldier cabinet.'

CONTACT US

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Mob: 0401 802 894

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functions@uscnewcastle.com.au
Secretary:
Jason Gladys
secretary@uscnewcastle.com.au

