

WATT'S HAPPENINGS

JOURNAL OF THE UNITED SERVICE CLUB
NEWCASTLE



Since 1927

**FEATURES Issue 12
WINTER 2022**

**Board election results
ANZAC Day photos
Life Members**

**Bar
Lounge
Club Museum
Snooker & Darts**



2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ernie Thirkell

Vice President: MAJ Simon Macks (Ret)

Hon. Secretary: WO2 Jason Gladys (Ret)

Hon. Assistant Secretary: Andrew Hill

Hon. Treasurer: Joel N. Griffiths BCom CA

Director: CAP Lyn Van Homrigh (Ret)

Director: Phil Screen

Director: David Thomas

Director: James Wallace

2021-2022 PATRONS

BRIG Derek Sharp (Ret) OBE

MAJ Roland MILLBANK (Ret)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To Members of the United Service Club, Newcastle

On your behalf I would like to thank our retiring Director WO2 Brett Hodgetts for his valuable contribution and to welcome to the board our first female club member, CAPT. Lyn Van Homrigh (Ret).

Thank you for electing me for a second term to serve you as Club President. I appreciate the trust and overwhelming support that you, our Club Members have once again granted to me. I will continue to listen to and address your concerns, and ensure transparency.

Thanks to Doug Connor who, apart from his offer to record oral histories of our members, repeatedly suggested that our history committee contact his sister Kim, a research student at Stanford University.

Through Kim, contact was established with a number of people of influence in military history. We invited her and historical archaeologist and professor of Museum and Heritage Studies, James Flexner, to review our collection. James confirmed the opinion of our consultant on military museum management, Bill Storer that ours is a significant collection, and offered his assistance.

Ernie Thirkell



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SECRETARY'S MEMO 'WATT'S HAPPENINGS'

On behalf of the board of directors and members, I welcome the eleven new members who have joined the United Service Club, Newcastle since March this year.

The commemoration of Anzac Day was again a hugely successful event.

Thanks to the generosity of the Stronach group, we offered a complimentary breakfast to veterans and serving ADF personnel in recognition of our thanks for their service.

Participants from the dawn service streamed through the front door, greeted by our volunteers. Some of these spent the following two hours assisting with delivery of the amazing number of one hundred and fifty breakfasts catered in our small kitchen by Lynch's Hub.



We were pleased to welcome families. It was gratifying to see how many of the children coming from the dawn service were proudly wearing a parent or grandparent's miniatures or ribbons.

I thank volunteers Jim Callaghan, Christine Hoslin, Mark Jordan, David Knott, Ivy-Rose Laidler, Chris O'Brian and Gloria Thirkell. Huge thanks also to your Directors for their help setting up on the Saturday, their help on the day & also cleaning up after the event.

Jason Gladys

Right: Vice President Simon once again laid the USC's wreath at the Anzac Day service in Civic Park.



Left: New director Lyn for the second year joined President Ernie in laying the club wreath at the dawn service

XMAS IN JULY BOOK NOW



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Christopher Breen
Amanda Douglas
Travis Fennell
Troy Greenwood
Geoffrey Isbister
Susanne Jordan
Tim Lyons
Russel Macey
Simon Marc
Anna Smart
Aaron Wattam

THEY JOINED IN THE 1900's

Dr Peter Henry AO.

Past Club Patron, Peter Hendry, 102 years old at the time of his passing, was a USC member for 63 years. He was only 37 when he joined in 1952.

In 1940, Peter enlisted in the AIF and in 1941 was deployed to Malaya. He served with the Second, 10th Field Ambulance in Singapore, where he was captured by the Japanese.

Following surrender in 1942, he spent three and a half years as a Japanese prisoner of war, spending much of one year on the Burma-Thailand Railway as a Medical Officer, marching the line for some 300 kilometres to Three Pagoda Pass.

In 1983 he was presented with one of the most prestigious awards in World Health, by the Crown Prince of Japan. According to a Newcastle Herald report, he delivered a memorable speech that began: *'I thank our hosts for their generous welcome. Your hospitality has certainly improved since I was last a guest of Japan.'*

During an ABC interview he said that classical music takes him *'Back to a bamboo hut in Changi around the table with the best mates I ever made.'* *In Changi we played our records on a gramophone using a hand made bamboo stylus.'*

Peter received numerous awards including, in 1985 the Order of Australia for services to his Country, Medicine, Education and to his Community

In an interview for our 50th Anniversary, Dr Hendry recalled enjoying a couple of drinks at the United Service Club after he finished work as a Specialist at the Royal Newcastle Hospital.



Above: 98 years old at the 86th AGM in 2013.

FOUNDATION MEMBERS 1927

Lieutenant Colonel B.B.Rodd

USC Founding Member No 31 of the 35 who formed the club in 1927, Brent Rodd went on to receive the honour of Life Membership in 1971. He passed away in 1976 aged 97.

Brent Rodd's Military Career

Brent served with the 15th Infantry prior to his enlistment with D Company 35th Battalion AIF.

Brent Burnell RODD was a married 37 year old Insurance-Manager from Newcastle when he received his Commission in the AIF (rank of Captain) on the 7th of March 1916.

He embarked (with the rank of Major) in the position of Company-Commander of "D" Company of the 35th BATTALION AIF (Newcastle's Own) on board the Troopship 'HMAT A24 Benalla' which departed Sydney on

the 1st of May 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth in England on the 9th of July that year.



MAJOR RODD RETURNED.

Major B. B. Rodd, who left here with "Newcastle's Own" Battalion, returned home on Wednesday night, after two and a half year's service abroad. He came to Newcastle by the Brisbane mail train, and was welcomed back by a large number of friends at the station, and at his residence in Terrace-street. Major Rodd is recovering from the effects of a rifle bullet wound in the right lung, which he received on April 4th, during counter-attack work at Villers Bretonneux.



Above: 93 year old Brent Rodd presented his sword to the USC in 1972.

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Once a hero Always a hero



ANZAC DAY AT THE UNITED SERVICE CLUB

Televised ANZAC broadcast

Gallipoli Map -Pencil drawn in the trenches

World Map of Australian conflicts

Display case of Gallipoli souvenirs

80th Anniversary ANZAC Tile

Sands of Gallipoli bronze figurine

Trench Telescope

Evacuation of Gallipoli poster

LEST WE FORGET

USC History Committee ANZAC Day 2022 promotional poster

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

USC Member, Analee Isbister

How did I find out about the club:-
After our small brewery and distillery was asked to sponsor Mako, a yacht at the NCYC, I was introduced to Simon Macks, a very passionate member of the club!



It was that introduction that then led me on my way to venturing up the red staircase of the Newcastle United Services Club to be welcomed by Cath.

Why did we join:-On entering the club, it was the ambiance and history that was so intriguing and comforting, I didn't want to leave. Yes the club is small compared to most, but you don't have to be a big club to make people feel welcome. I joined on my first visit with no hesitation.

*When are you likely to see us:-
 Well, lets see.... You will generally see both my husband, Geoff and I after we have sorted the five of eight children*



we have left living at home or after a long day brewing. It's then we sneak off to the club for a sneaky beer or bubbly and a game of pool... yes I know it's a snooker table. And playing a vinyl is a highlight that I now also want to copy at

Above: Candice, Analee, Geoff, Nicholas Pippa, Tessa, Liliana, Denby, Emerson, Hughen.

*What have been our favourite times:
 These have been not just the ones spent with all the amazing people that the club brings to the bar, but also the moments we get to share with friends & family being introduced to the club for the very first time.*

Below: With club visitors.




Sharing their surprise and excitement that such an amazing authentic place is right in the middle of Newcastle.



Analee Isbister, Geoffrey Isbister, Candice Affleck, Denby Affleck

Its a true credit to the members, volunteers and staff.

Analee and Geoff were major sponsors and supporters of the USC's 2021 'Party like Gatsby' fundraiser.



FUNCTIONS

A small wedding?



Above: The photoshoot was at USC for a wedding across the road.

- The only question is . . . your Caterers or ours.
- The service
 - The Wedding party photos
 - The Canapés for guests (while your photos happen)
 - The reception.

Ours is a great site for the whole magical event, or special parts of it.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY BOOK NOW




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

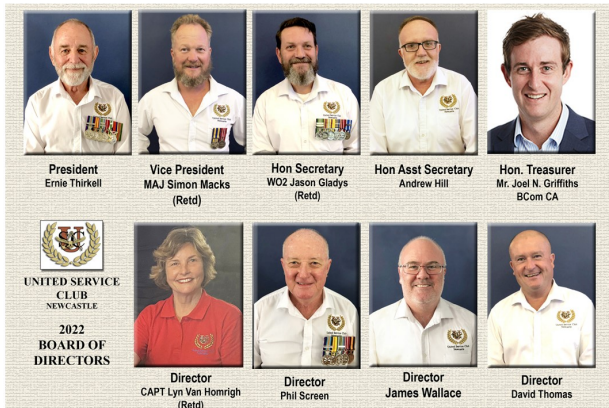
Support your club by holding your next function or event with us.

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



MEET THE BOARD

Congratulations to our new representatives, elected at the 95th Annual General Meeting of the United Service Club, Newcastle, 29th April 2022.



A little on the latest



Left: Recently donated WW1 travelling chest. (see p7) This will be brought out from archives only for special displays such as Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Battle for Australia and Fortress Newcastle.

Volunteers make a difference

Lounge - Bookcase. Elbow grease and cleaning products (thanks Bev & Sue), have removed years of grime from some of the furniture with the remainder targeted for attention over the next weeks. Definitely worth a look!



Games room - The bench seat, one of a pair located in the games room, is at least Vintage. We have no idea when the club acquired it, but given its appearance in a 1961 photo and that the USC turned 95 this year, it's possibly antique (100 years - made on/ before June 1922). See p7.



Above: 2021 - seat & carpet damaged, the latter disposed of revealing tiles in only slightly better condition.

Above: 2022- timely intervention has the seat looking better than it did in 1961. Can anyone help with the floor covering?

LIFE MEMBERS

Life Membership of the United Service Club, Newcastle is bestowed in recognition of exceptional, loyal and outstanding service and contribution to the Club over an extended period of time.

In the 20th Century between 1927 and 1998, twenty one Life Memberships were conferred.
In the 21st Century the six members receiving their Life Membership certificates are shown below.

Right: 2014 - Alan Scanlan, Past President Neil Watkins, Howard Williams, past President Rob Hemming.



Left: 2021 - Patron/ Past Secretary Roland Millbank with Past President Greg Tyler



Right: Passed at AGM 2022 - Editor 'Watt's Happenings' / Coordinator History Committee Gloria Thirkell with Secretary Jason Gladys.



Andrew Knight is a Partner at local Hunter law firm **Sparke Helmore** and is also a member of the USC.

He specialises in property law and estate planning and can help you with wills, trusts, powers of attorney and guardianships as well as assist you in preparing a comprehensive estate plan.

You can contact him on andrew.knight@sparke.com.au or call him on (02) 4924 7606

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WATT'S NOT TO ENJOY!



Above: Tash, Bianca, Sammy & Chelsea



Above: Analee Ibister supplied this photo of Chris, Janet, Candice, Jo, Jennelle, Adam and Ang.



Left: Andrew called in for a catch-up. Anna is learning the ropes to work behind the bar.



Above: Simon, Mick, Alex, Jonas, Adam

Below: Kelly, who wrote the USC 'Centenary of Anzac' book, & John, one of 'The Salami Brothers' who a few years ago performed here on Friday nights.



Below: a casual Friday evening in the bar.



Above: Birthday drinks

Left: Newly elected USC Director Lyn with Ange



Above: Alan & Peter, first t called in for a drink



Above: The Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party hold their monthly meeting at the USC.

THE FIVE SILVER FRAMES

Since December 2020 Members' military career & overseas deployment photos have been featured on quarterly rotation in the Bar. To date: Brett Hodges, Keith Brennan, Peter Green, Ernie Thirkell, Sean Martin, Jason Gladys and this quarter, Peter Sneesby



HISTORY COMMITTEE

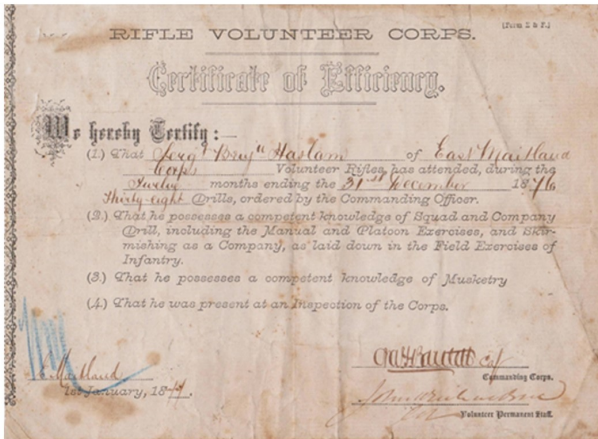
Janet Aisbett, Sue Britton, Gloria Thirkell

Current projects underway by the history committee & volunteer Bev Southern concentrate on the lounge: thorough cleaning of the furniture, rearranging displayed items and research for informative labelling.

This work continues alongside general research, preparing displays for ADF days of commemoration, documentation & accessioning.

RIFLE VOLUNTEER CORPS. Certificate of Efficiency

Awarded to Benjamin Haslam 31st December 1876.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION – researched by Kimberly Connor.

The Volunteer Rifles are a key example of the transition towards so-called responsible government starting in the 1850's. There is not much information or scholarship to be found on the regional corps like the East Maitland group.

The riflemen were, after 5 years 'continuous and efficient' service, eligible for land grants. Haslam received his shortly after this certificate was granted, so the certificate is an important example of the process of settlement of regional areas of NSW in the post-convict period.

This certificate is probably rare, if not unique. A number of museums including Sydney Living Museums (SLM) and Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) hold items related to the Volunteer Rifles but nearly all of them are for the Sydney Brigade. Maitland City Library has a muster roll for the West Maitland group, but this is the only item Kim found related to the East Maitland group.

FURTHER INFORMATION – by William Storer AM. The East Maitland Volunteers were officially known as the East Maitland & Morpeth Company of New South Wales Volunteer Rifles. The land grant scheme was started in 1867 but because volunteers were selling their land grants to the highest bidder, the scheme was discontinued shortly after Haslam received his grant.

BOARD PROPERTY MEMBER

David Thomas, Director

I wish to thank the following members for their recent support in terms of the club's property.

Paul Britton for, at his own expense, repairing one of the culturally significant antique /vintage bench chairs in the games room. Photos of this bench in 1961, 2013, 2020 & 2022 will be displayed near the repaired chair for a short time.

Club Director Lyn Van Homrigh and her brothers David & Andrew for donating the WW1 travelling chest used by their grandfather Colonel C.E. Wassell (see p5).

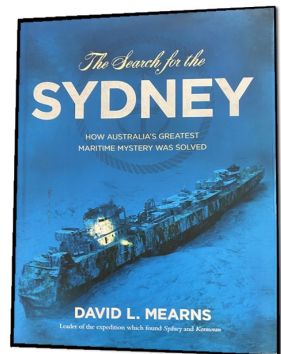
Club Member Greg Box for his continued support by means of gifts & loans to enhance exhibitions. He suggests the bronze figurine 'Leap of Faith' he gave earlier be used as a fundraiser. He has presented us with another, much larger version to replace it in our permanent collection.

Club Patron/Life Member/ Past Secretary, Roland Millbank who has 'on-gifted' an Anzac tile (displayed in the lounge), presented to an Australian guest of the committee at the official 80th Anzac Day Commemoration in Turkey.

Club President Ernie Thirkell for adding the book 'Search for the Sydney' to our collection's HMAS Sydney artefacts.

Club Members Ray Blackburn, for an exceptional addition to our Signals Branch artefacts.

Assistant Secretary Andrew Hill for the 3-D printed models of modern AIF vehicles.



Club member Gavin Fry for facilitating donation of WW1 letters by his wife Janine & her sister Amanda. Thanks ladies.

More next time about Andrew, Gavin & Ray's contributions.

ADF DAYS OF COMMEMORATION (Winter)

June 23
International
War Widows

July 19
Battle of Fromelles

July 27
Korean War

August 15
Victory in the Pacific

August 18
Vietnam Veterans

August 29
Legacy Badge

August 31
Malayan Emergency &
Indonesian Confrontation

Watt's Happenings at the USC ANZAC DAY 2022



Above: MAJ Chris Dunn, FLGOFF Harry O'Connor, LAC Alexander Jarmusl.



Above: Boris, Bruce, Kaos, Snow.



Above: Nathan, Past Sec Kurt, Nadyra & John.



Above: Grant, Brad, David & Paul. Novatones members who sang at the Dawn Service.



Above: Ella Cleare, Carmen Cleare, Mathew Hansen, Tratron Jomson, Callan Eato.



Above: The dining room was popular for breakfast & later for families with children.



Above: Pete, Past Sec Kurt, Geoff, Director Phil, Mansell, President Ernie.



Above: Damien, Shane, Simon and Harry.



Above: Michael, Jan, Mike, Geoff and Lee.



Above: Patron, Life Member, & Past Sec Roland with Past President Greg.



Above: Geoff, Mark.



Above: Jenny, Chopper, Eldo, Buddha, Sid, Barney, Grunter, Sec Jason, Tommy, Darce, Pete.

CONTACT US

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