



THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA  
(NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH INCORPORATED)  
*"The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance"*

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## Combined Services RSL sub-Branch

Postal Address: G. P.O. Box 4321 Sydney NSW 2001

Office: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. 5 – 7 Barrack Street Sydney NSW 2000

Email: Combined-ServicesSB@rslnsw.org.au

Telephone: (02) 9287 6465

## **MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER**

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON**  
**THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 AT 11.00 AM**  
**ON LEVEL 2, 5-7 BARRACK STREET, SYDNEY**  
(Lunch and refreshments will be served afterwards  
for those who pre-book with Kimberly Metra on 02 9287 6465  
no later than Monday 24 March)

**OUR GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE WO1 SCOTT CASE, FORMER RSM.**

Scott is a new sub-Branch member so he will be introducing himself and speaking about his experiences and some challenges our modern Army faces.

### **OUR PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2024**

The Annual General Meeting this month is not an election meeting. Elections occur every three years and the next Annual General Meeting in March 2026 will be the election one. All Committee positions become vacant at that Meeting and are up for election or re-election. However, I won't be standing for another term as President, as I believe there should be someone suitable to succeed me.

2024 proved a great year for the sub-Branch. Our Pre ANZAC Commemoration Service was held at the Cenotaph with the Burwood Pipes and Drums and with Bishop Grant Dibden, Anglican Bishop to the Australian Defence Force presiding over the Service. After the Service we marched back to the Barracks and had a light supper in the restaurant accompanied by some Scottish renditions from the Band.

On ANZAC Day itself the Barracks Club opened from 5.00 am and provided coffee and egg and bacon rolls (complimentary for sub-Branch members and friends).

During the year we had guest speakers at our various General Meetings. At our May Meeting we had Deborah Shepherd, President of Burwood RSL sub-Branch and a clinical psychologist at the National Centre for Veterans Healthcare. At our 4<sup>th</sup> July Meeting we had Ben Johnson, one of our committee members and formerly a Technical Sergeant in the USAF providing his experiences with the USAF. And at our November Meeting we had our Chaplain, the Reverend Andrew Nixon, providing a presentation on the role of chaplains and wellbeing including spiritual wellbeing in the Defence Forces. Also, at the November Meeting we had Mic Whitty provide a presentation on his campaign to visit every

Commonwealth Wargraves Cemetery throughout the world...and on an old French post bike!

Unfortunately, we were to have Keith Payne VC, AM to speak in March at our AGM but his doctor forbid his travel from his Queensland home due to health considerations. However, we had a very good video of his gaining of the Victoria Cross provided courtesy of the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

During the year we also had joint visit activities with the Masonic RSL sub-Branch. These included a visit to the Lancers' Museum at Parramatta, a visit to the Holocaust Museum, and an overnight visit to Singleton to visit the Infantry Museum and the Infantry Centre Open Day the following morning. We are planning more successful outings for 2025!

During the year Robert Lawrence stepped down as Secretary/Treasurer and Nikhita Sahay (formerly from North Bondi) was elected to the position. She is doing quite well in that position. Kim, our Business Support Manager, continues to manage the office very efficiently and has improved our reception services during business hours very effectively. Many thanks go to Carl Dumbrell who has assisted Kim with coaching and guidance on accounting software and financial management and reporting during 2024.

Geoffrey Graham has undertaken the role of reviewing building maintenance, and many thanks to Garry Snow and John O'Leary, building engineers who have provided pro bono services in examining the building structure and building operations, such as the air-conditioning, which Geoffrey is presently arranging repairs and replacement of critical parts.

Also, during the year City of Sydney RSL sub-Branch decided to become a Chapter of our sub-Branch (effectively a sub-Branch of a sub-Branch) as they did not have enough active members to form a normal sub-Branch committee. Consequently, they meet, as a Chapter, every second month in our building and we will be advertising their meetings. As Chapter members they are also now members of our sub-Branch, and also other Members of our sub-Branch are welcome to attend their meetings.

This year we have donated \$20,000 to the Veterans Support Fund with RSL NSW. We also donated \$5,000 to AVCAT (Australian Veterans' Childrens Assistance Fund). Robyn Richardson, Scholarships Manager and Taryn McCarthy, an AVCAT supported Scholar provided a compelling presentation at our General Meeting last month.

And we donated \$5,000 to Wounded Heroes Australia. Their President, Martin Shaw, flew down from Brisbane and did a presentation at our President's lunch in September. Their organization is opening up a 24 hour hotline across the nation for veterans in distress over personal and financial issues. And finally, we have donated another \$5,000 for 2025 to the Veterans' Community Business Chamber (VCBC), co managed by Peter Liston, one of our Committee members. VCBC provides support and communications with veterans seeking to establish, or establishing, their own business.

With regards to the future of our Barrack Street building, some of you may remember that a directive was passed at the May 2023 General Meeting that the approved course of action was for a detailed feasibility study of a proposal by one of three developers for the redevelopment of the building into a multi high rise, the study to be initially managed by the Trustees. The study has been deferred up to recently as it initially involved other potential groups being involved, including RSL NSW, Legacy Australia and City Tattersalls. And circumstances changed with them. This redevelopment proposal is still being reviewed by our Trustees with possible alternate support from others as partners in the arrangement. And in the meantime, we have had an offer for the purchase of the building which the Committee has rejected.

Rest assured our priority is absolute risk mitigation and continuing sustainability of the sub-Branch. There have been a number of building redevelopments in recent times which have incurred unexpected financial losses. We do not intend to be one of those. Consequently, I proposed a resolution that was passed unanimously at our last Committee Meeting that the property is to be maintained in operational condition for a continuing period of ten years. This places a continuing responsibility on Geoffrey Graham's role regarding building maintenance.

Our Trustees have been doing a very good job screening proposals as they come through and this resolution does not prevent them from doing that job; nor does it stop us from considering a very good proposition if it comes our way. However, I believe that the CBD is still in a social activity downturn from post COVID, and we need to sustain the operational effectiveness of the building.

In regard to our tenants, City Tattersalls Club, they are now into the fourth year of their 5 year lease. They do have a further five year option. Currently, City Tattersalls is looking for a partner club to support their Castlereagh sub club arrangements as well. In the meantime, they have been complying with the Barracks RSL ethos and have assisted us with our commemorations and catering for our meetings and activities. The staff has been very friendly and supportive for our needs.

Finally, many thanks to members of the Committee who have given their support during 2024.

Warm regards, Ron Hack PRESIDENT

## PRE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION



The Combined Services RSL sub-Branch is conducting a Pre ANZAC Day Commemoration Service in the early evening on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Sydney Cenotaph in Martin Place. Visitors are welcome.

This is an opportunity for many to commemorate the service of our Defence Forces at our Cenotaph in Sydney. Whether you work in the City, or maybe will not be in the City on ANZAC Day itself, or simply would like to attend a Commemoration at the Sydney Cenotaph, **you are welcome to attend.**

Participants form up in Barrack Street at 6.20 pm and we have a short march to the Cenotaph led by the **Burwood RSL Pipes and Drums**. Medals may be worn.

After a short service led by our own Chaplain, the Reverend Andrew Nixon, and including placing of wreaths, we march back to Barrack Street.

Afterwards light supper, refreshments and camaraderie which will be held in the Barrack Street Restaurant.

Further enquiries and bookings for the light supper: Kim Metra 02 9287 6465.

## THE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING

At the February General Meeting last month, we had the pleasure of Robyn Richardson, Scholarships Manager for AVCAT (Australian Veterans' Childrens Trust) attending to outline AVCAT's role in providing tertiary scholarships for veterans' children and grandchildren.



She brought along one of the scholarship students, Taryn McCarthy, who is supported through a Legacy sponsorship. She is currently in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Science/Arts degree (Creative Writing) at the University of New South Wales. Taryn spoke of her personal challenges in a veteran's family environment.  
(Robyn, Taryn, and Ron pictured)

### VALE: Graeme Francis Virtue

We have been recently notified that Graeme, a member of Combined Services RSL sub-Branch, passed away on 13 November 2024.

Graeme enlisted on 24 April 1967 and was discharged on 31 August 1972. He served as a Craftsman with 1 Base Workshop, then HQ 2 Division, and then HQ 5 Task Force. He gained the Australian Defence Medal and the National Service 1951-1972 Medal.

Graeme first joined Mosman RSL sub-Branch on 23 November 1999 and then transferred to Combined Services on 10 June 2014. During that time, he has lived in Yokohama, Japan, Sydney, North Mackay, Queensland and back in Japan again, residing in Shizuoka.

Graeme..... REST IN PEACE.



## VALE: JAMES FOX

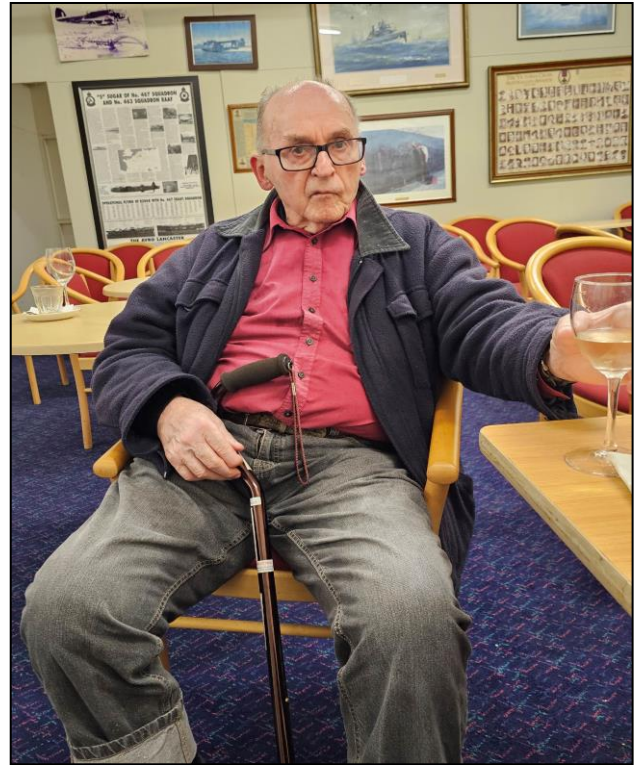
**By: Ron Hack**

Jimmy's original name was Jakob Fuchs but later in life he changed it to James Fox.

He was born in Austria but immigrated to Australia after leaving school. His family was left behind in Austria and travelled together with his older brother.

Jimmy was remarkably bright undertaking several degrees at Macquarie University, and we understand he specialized in classics literature and language of German, Russian and English. He was even offered a lectureship position at the University! However, Jimmy became a public servant with the Department of Public Works and even worked in the Public Service past the normal retirement years as an adviser.

For his social life he became an active member of the Austrian Club Sydney. However, he remained unmarried and had no partners.



He was interested in military service and attempted to enlist in the Australian Regular Army in 1961 but was rejected owing to vision issues (short sightedness). But later he joined the Citizen Military Forces on 14 May 1964 and was rapidly promoted to Corporal with his educational qualifications. He was posted to Command and Staff Training Unit at Eastern Command.

He discharged on 23 August 1965.

Jimmy joined the RSL and Combined Services RSL sub-Branch on 27 November 2008. In June 2016 he was elected to the Committee and served on the Committee with a good record of attendance and support, retiring on 25 March 2021. As President at the time, he was missed on his retirement from the Committee.

Jimmy is survived only by his sister, residing in Austria and her family. Ian Burt, our Associate Member, was his Guardian and is his Power of Attorney over his estate. His funeral was held on 14 February and Ian presented an Eulogy of Jimmy's life and Ron Hack presented an Eulogy of his Military and RSL Service. Attending the Funeral were also Geoffrey Graham and Kimberly Metra.

JIMMY..... REST IN PEACE..... UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

There is a video of the funeral on YouTube, the link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHdNrQGQ0p4>

By: Ian Burt (Power of Attorney of James Fox)

Jakob Fuchs, born in Salzburg, Austria migrated to Australia on the Voskana liner with his brother Peter in 1958. At the age of twenty-four on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1962, he joined the Public Service and worked there for many years. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 1964 he became an Australian Citizen and following his application on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1964 he was accepted to join the army.

After leaving his military service, he at some time changed his name to James Fox, commonly known as Jimmy and after leaving his military service, he continued for many years working for the Public Works Department at the office on the corner of Bridge and Phillip Streets.

During that time, he received as many as ten certificates for course he did during his service and later came to the level of working with the Minister for Public works covering water distribution and sewage on the central coast and many other areas. This was the same place where my father worked.

Jimmy was a remarkably highly intelligent and a very respectful gentleman. During 1999 to 2006, he attended Macquarie University received four degrees, a Bachelor of Arts, 1999, Master of Arts 2003, Master of International Relations, 2003 and Master of Arts, 2006. He was also asked by the dean to become a lecturer at the university; however he declined the request.

I first met Jimmy around six to eight years ago, and after a while, when he had written off his car one morning, highly intoxicated, I decided to assist him as I have also done for one of another passed member, WDL Smith. I had no idea what he had achieved in his past until had to engage in the research of his background in preparation for his funeral.

Unfortunately, though Jimmy became a regular consume of alcohol. He had a Vitacall for emergencies and the Red Cross would call his home every morning to check on him. If the Red Cross were unable to contact with him, they would then call me to investigate. At the beginning of 2023, I asked him for his sister number in Austria and he said, "you don't need it, she doesn't speak English". I later asked him if he had a "WILL" and the answer was no. Finally, on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 after I had convinced him, he made a "WILL" with the Public Trustee.

Jakob Fusch (Jimmy) James Fox was born during WWII on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1940 on a Thursday evening at his parent's home; he celebrated his birthday this year when Lotte a 90 year old lady friend, took him to lunch. Sadly, Jimmy passed away on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January after a fall and suffering a broken neck and his only remaining sister Marianne Leitner is still living in Austria. The Police brought in the forensic squad and interviewed everyone involved including myself. Because of the circumstances that had occurred, I was unable to arrange his funeral until 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Because of the numerous of times, I had to pick James up of the floor, I printed a business card with the title "Floor Manager"

If you have time, I suggest you take the time and view his funeral on the YouTube link Ron has provided.

#### **EDITORIAL**

**Ron Hack, PRESIDENT**

**Nikhita Sahay, SECRETARY / TREASURER**

**Kimberly Metra, BUSINESS SUPPORT MANAGER**

**10 March 2025**