



CESSNOCK



RSL SUB-BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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HANDY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Department of Honours and Awards	1800 11 321
ANZAC HOUSE	(02)9264 8188
RSL Defence Care	(02)80880388
Department of Veteran Affairs	1800 555 254
Home Care (Cessnock)	(02)40304706
Cessnock Council Community Services	49907247
DVA Home Care Services	1300 550 450
Royal District Nursing Service	1300 665 444
HACC Community Care Access Point	1300 731 556
Hearing Services Australia	131 797
National Hearing Care Cessnock	(02)9091 8613
Cessnock Police	(02)49910199
Cessnock City Council	(02)49934100
VVCS- Counselling Service	1800 011 046
Cessnock Hospital	4991 0555
Cessnock Taxi Service	4990 1111
EMERGENCY SERVICES	000
RSL Hall	4991 4141

SUB-BRANCH NEWS

In accordance with [Board Communiqué 04/20](#) issued on 1 May 2020, the Annual State Congress due to take place in October has now been postponed until early December. The new dates for congress are:

- Sunday, 6 December: meet and greet
- Monday, 7 December: presentations, reports and awards
- Tuesday, 8 December: Annual General Meeting

The congress venue will remain NEX, Newcastle Exhibition and Convention Centre, 309 King Street, Newcastle.

Appendix C item 2 of the RLS NSW Constitution requires all motions for the AGM to be submitted 10 weeks prior to Tuesday, 8 December (i.e. close of business Monday, 28 September 2020). Members wishing to submit motions should familiarise themselves with the content of Appendix C.

RSL NSW is continuing to monitor the evolving health environment and advice from government around restrictions on public gatherings. At this stage there is still the potential for these pandemic restrictions to impact how, or if, we can conduct the meeting. As such, we would urge delegates thinking of attending congress to ensure they have the option to change or cancel accommodation and/or transportation bookings without penalty.

We are currently planning on presenting congress in a format that would be recognisable to most delegates and more information will be released to sub-Branches as the situation becomes clearer.

Sub-Branch Meetings

Unless restrictions are re-imposed it is the intention of the Sub-Branch Executive that regular Sub-Branch meetings will recommence on and from 4 August 2020 at 6.30pm Social distancing will be in place within the hall.

Members Lunch 15th July

Our second Members Event for the year is our lunch at the Caledonia Hotel at 12 Midday on Wednesday 15 July. Members and guests more than welcome.



RSL NSW NEWS

DVA National Consultation Framework Review and Survey

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is asking veterans and their families to provide their views on how the ex-service community is consulted and engaged, and how this can be improved.

DVA's National Consultation Framework has been in place since 2009 and is reviewed every three years in consultation with the ex-service community.

As part of this review process, DVA is inviting veterans and their families to participate in a survey. This survey focuses on the effectiveness of current mechanisms for consultation between DVA and the ex-serving community, as well as ways to improve them for the future.

THE PRICE OF LIBERTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE.

RSL National News

No news from RSL National this issue

HUNTER VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATES

Subject: Meeting notes HVDC - 21 JUN 20

Ladies & Gents, please see attached meeting notes from telecon meeting held on 21 JUN 20 for HVDC. Due to the lack of subbranch's phoning in for the meeting, we did not achieve a *quorum*. Therefore, the meeting was recorded by notes rather than minutes. Please be advised, as of this date, the Hunter-ValleyDC@rslnsw.org.au will be the primary email contact for the HVDC. The other email address, HVCD@maitlandrsl.com.au, will be monitored periodically but will not be used as primary email contact. As of 01 JAN 21, this email address will no longer be used.

On that note, Subbranch's are encouraged to register with RSL NSW to obtain their subbranch@rslnsw.org.au address. If you do, or already have one, please let me know. This will enable me to remove personal email addresses from distribution list.

Any questions, please let me know. Some motions that were to be dealt with at the meeting will be circulated for yes/no due to not reaching a *quorum*. These will be forwarded separately.

Regards,

Timothy Seymour

Secretary

Hunter Valley District Council Of RSL Subbranches

See Page 7 for meeting notes

OUR SUB-BRANCH SPONSORS

The Businesses/Individuals on these pages are the sponsor supporters of our Sub-Branch. Their continued support is very important to the continued successful operation of our Sub-Branch. Please support them as they support us.



Bryce Gibson

Selling Principal
0422 227 668

Since starting in Real estate at the tender age of 16, Bryce has dedicated his whole real estate career to helping his many clients and customers achieve their real estate dreams.

Bryce is the Selling Principal of LJ Hooker Cessnock and leads an experienced, skilled and dedicated team to ensure your level of service is second to none.

Bryce has many qualifications including being a Licensed Real Estate Agent, a Licensed Stock & Station Agent, a Licensed Business Agent, a Licensed Strata Managing Agent and Licensed Auctioneer, Certified Practising Valuer.

 **LJ Hooker**

SOMETHING TO LIGHTEN YOUR DAY

My neighbor got a pre-declined credit card in the mail. CEO's are now playing miniature golf. Exxon-Mobil laid off 25 Congressmen. I saw a Mormon with only one wife. McDonald's is selling the 1/4 ounce. Angelina Jolie adopted a child from America. Parents in Beverly Hills fired their nannies and learned their children's names. A truckload of Americans was caught sneaking into Mexico. A picture is now only worth 200 words. When Bill and Hillary travel together, they now have to share a room. The Treasure Island casino in Las Vegas is now managed by Somali pirates. And, finally... I was so depressed last night thinking about the economy, wars, jobs, my savings, Social Security, retirement funds, etc., I called the Suicide Hotline. I got a call center in Afghanistan, and when I told them I was suicidal, they got all excited, and asked if I could drive a truck.



Paddy and Mick were walking along a street in London. Paddy looked in one of the shop windows and saw a sign that caught his eye. The sign read.....

"Suits £5.00 each, Shirts £3.00 each, Trousers £4.50 per pair".

Paddy said to his pal "Mick look at these prices!

We could buy a whole lot of those and when we get back to Ireland we could make a fortune.

Now when we go in you stay quiet, okay? Let me do all da talking 'cause if they hear our accents, they might think we're thicko's from

Ireland and try to screw us.

I'll put on me best English accent."

"Roight y'are Paddy, I'll keep me mout shut, so I will. You do all da business" said Mick.

They go in and Paddy said in a posh voice "Hello my good man. I'll take 50 suits at £5.00 each, 100 shirts at £3.00 each and 50 pairs of trousers at £4.50 each.

And oy'll back up me truck ready to load 'em on, so I will."

The owner of the shop said quietly "You're from Ireland, aren't you?"

"Well yes" said a surprised Paddy. "What gave it away?"

The owner replied "This is a dry-cleaners."

I'm giving up drinking for a month.

Sorry, bad punctuation.

I'm giving up. Drinking for a month.

General meeting notes 21JUN20 Via TELECON

Chair: President HVDC Mr Brian Boughton, CSC, OAM

Meeting opened: 10:09 hrs

Welcome: All

Apologies: Dungog Subbranch

Maitland Subbranch

Greg Cole Muswellbrook

Merriwa Subbranch

Sub-Branches in attendance:

- East Maitland. Stephen Grimmer
- Muswellbrook. Tim Seymour
- Kurri Kurri. Roger Quarry
- Aberdeen. Doug McLeod
- Branxton. Brian Furner
- East Gresford. Graham Hudson
- **President:** Brian Boughton, CSC, OAM
- **Treasurer:** Cath Harvey

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: President HVDC:

- As we did not have a *quorum* for meeting, motions will be circulated by email for approval/disapproval from Subbranch's.
- The meeting recognises the passing of Geoffrey Bevan of Greta Subbranch. Our condolences are offered to Adrienne Bevan. Adrienne was offered condolences by the President after Geoffrey's passing.

Guest Speaker: Nil

Minutes of last meeting: Emailed with agenda.

Matters arising from minutes:

SOP on board elections.

- Raised by HVDC president. Nil correspondence so far from Subbranch's re this SOP. Subbranch's encouraged to revisit and provide feedback.

ACTION: Secretary. Circulate again to Subbranch's for feedback.

East Maitland Subbranch.

- Raised re letter to RSLNSW in response to member subsidisation. At this point RSLNSW CEO has not acknowledged receipt of that letter it is his duty to respond.

Correspondence: IN:

191229 - Letter via email - East Maitland Subbranch - To RSLNSW Board re decision concerning membership subsidisation.

As above.

200420 - Letter to HVDC - re Don Rowe from Singleton Subbranch:

Matter is finalised and time to move on post Don Rowe in RSLNSW.

200225 - Letter to HVDC via email - Invitation Brian Boughton HVDC Anzac Day 2020 at Maitland from Maitland Subbranch

200000 - Letter to RSLNSW via email - Cessnock Subbranch. Formal Request re Legal Action Band Cessnock Pipes and Drums.

Date required. ACTION: Secretary obtain date from original email.

200411 - Email to HVDC - Objection of Maitland Subbranch - Maitland's opposition to state branch's proposal to defer the RSL directors' elections.

Email noted.

Note RSL NSW circulars, newsletters, & updates are emailed when received.

Correspondence: OUT:

200403L1 - Greta Cenotaph Grant support letter.

Explained by President.

200424L2 - Letter to Singleton Subbranch re Don Rowe.

As discussed.

Matters arising from Correspondence:

NIL.

Reports: Nil

Financial report: Due to Covid 19 travel restrictions full hand over only complete as of 19JUN20. Verbal report presented, nil movement on finance since March 20 meeting.

DISCUSSION: Full report to be provided next meeting. Have HVDC secretary as signatory on internet banking. This will have to be circulated by email due to low numbers at meeting for approval/disapproval by Subbranch's.

The East Maitland RSL sub-Branch seeks the consideration and endorsement of the Hunter Valley District Council for the listed motions to State Congress

1. That appendix b – membership, of the RSLNSW constitution be amended as follows: (AS PER ATTACHED DOCUMENT) **Further discussion from Stephen Grimmer. This motion fixes inconsistencies in RLSNSW and RSL National, i.e conflict RSLNSW service member must be 18 RSL National must be 17**
2. That RSLNSW constitution be amended as follows: a. sub-sub-paragraph 8.7 (b) be amended to read: ... (AS PER ATTACHED DOCUMENT) **Sect in constitution that differs what's in the appendix, committee should give a valid reason why constitution is changed. Changes wording from resolution, should be proposition that is used to put up a motion, resolution is the decision. Tidies this up a bit for members to put up a motion so it must be given reason for not allowing.**

These motions to be circulated by email for approval/disapproval by Subbranch's.

General business:

1. Secretary: What information do you want emailed out to respective email accounts of Subbranch's.

Matter discussed.

Consensus that Subbranch's can decide what they will read or not, general information to be continued to be circulated by Secretary. If Subbranch's do not have a rslnsw.org.au email address, then they should apply for one.

HVDC will utilise the Hunter-ValleyDC@rslnsw.org.au as primary email address henceforth. Currently HVDC monitors two email addresses. With HVDC@maitlandrsl.com.au. email address will be monitored but will be discontinued from 01JAN21.

ACTION: SECRETARY. Email to all Subbranch's to encourage to get rslnsw.org.au email address and to notify of transition phase over to Hunter-ValleyDC@rslnsw.org.au

2. East Maitland: State Congress which is scheduled for 6 - 8 December 20 clashes with our HVDC proposed meeting on 06 DEC 20.

Matter discussed: Resolved two courses of action (COA) to be circulated to Subbranch's.

COA 1. Hold meeting in morning at 1000 hrs at Cessnock on 06DEC20 then delegates can attend Newcastle at 1600 hrs.

COA2. Bring forward meeting to 29NOV20.

ACTION: SECRETARY. Circulate both COA's to Subbranch's via email for support for COA 1 or 2.

3. Maitland: At our meeting today the proposed change to the Lifecare constitution so that Defence Care can be injected into the Lifecare organisation is totally opposed to by the Maitland subbranch and we ask that our decision be recorded by HVDC.

Matter discussed. Email noted.

4. Branxton: Branxton to Greta Cycleway receives nearly \$2 million in funding

Brian Furner - Additional \$600000 has been provided by Cessnock Council, committee needs to find additional \$.5 ml for the memorial aspect. Brian Furner has been approached to be RSL rep on the board for memorial aspect.

ACTION: Secretary. Forward to Subbranch's to approve/disapprove Brian Furner as RSL Rep on Greta Cycleway Committee.

5. East Gresford: 2018 award of national service medal.

Graham Hudson stated this has been approved & endorsed by both RSLNSW & RSL national. As it is approved RSL National can now lobby minsters for the medal.

ACTION: East Gresford: East Gresford encouraged to write RSL National to be kept informed of progress.

6. Greta KOWACZ letter:

Explained by President. Noted discussed at meeting.

ACTION: Secretary reply to Greta Subbranch.

THE ODE: ` For the fallen `

MEETING CLOSED: 11:09 Hrs

NEXT MEETING: 1000 hrs 20 SEP 20 Dungog RSL

B. Boughton CSC, OAM

President.

T. Seymour

Honorary Secretary.

HISTORICAL FEATURE

(Downloaded from Wikipedia)

The **Battle of Binh Ba** (6–8 June 1969), also known as Operation Hammer, was a battle during the [Vietnam War](#). The action occurred when [Australian Army](#) troops from the [5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment](#) (5 RAR) fought a combined communist force of [North Vietnamese Army](#) and [Viet Cong](#), including a company from the [33 NVA Regiment](#) and elements of the Viet Cong [D440 Provincial Mobile Battalion](#), in the village of [Binh Ba](#), 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) north of [Nui Dat](#) in [Phuoc Tuy Province](#). The battle was unusual in Australian combat experience in Vietnam as it involved fierce close-quarter house-to-house fighting, although the majority of enemy killed was through heavy artillery and air-bombardment. In response to communist attempts to capture Binh Ba the Australians assaulted the village with infantry, armour and helicopter gunships, routing the Viet Cong and largely destroying the village itself. Such battles were not the norm in Phuoc Tuy, however, and the heavy losses suffered by the communists forced them to temporarily leave the province. Although the Australians did encounter communist Main Force units in the years to come, the battle marked the end of such large-scale clashes, and ranks as one of the major Australian victories of the war.

Prelude^{[[edit](#)]}

Situated north of the [1st Australian Task Force](#) (1 ATF) base at Nui Dat on the western side of Route 2, the village of Binh Ba had a population of around 3,000 people—mainly farmers and rubber plantation workers.^[2] Tidy and rectangular in shape, and mainly constructed of solid brick and tile, Binh Ba was well known to the Australians.^[3] Indeed, during 5 RAR's first tour in Vietnam a [rifle company](#) and a mortar section had been briefly stationed within the village itself.^[4] This strategy proved to be a deterrent to the Viet Cong tax collectors and assassination squads taking control of the village.^[5] The drain on the finite resources of the small Australian force proved to be too much however, and the village was later left to the protection of [South Vietnamese Regional Forces](#).^[4]

In an attempt to demonstrate that they could move freely within the province, a combined communist force including a company from the [33rd NVA Regiment](#), elements of the Viet Cong D440 Provincial Mobile Battalion, the Binh Ba and Ngai Giao Guerrilla Squad and the Chau Duc District Company had occupied Binh Ba on the evening of 5–6 June 1969.^{[6][7][[Note 1](#)]} In response, [Army of the Republic of Vietnam](#) (ARVN) forces were sent from Duc Thanh the following morning. Initial intelligence suggested that a group of about [platoon](#) strength had infiltrated the village.^[6] Meanwhile, during a separate operation [6 RAR](#) had also been engaged in a heavy contact several kilometres north of the task force base and at 08:00 on 6 June, an Australian [Centurion tank](#) and an [armoured recovery vehicle](#) moving through Binh Ba to assist 6 RAR were fired upon. A [rocket propelled grenade](#) (RPG) struck the Centurion penetrating the turret, and causing damage to the tank and severe injuries to one of the crewman. The district commander subsequently asked 1 ATF for assistance in clearing Binh Ba.^[9]

Battle^{[[edit](#)]}

The 1 ATF Ready Reaction Force under the command of Major Murray Blake consisted of an understrength D Company 5 RAR (of just 65 men), a troop of Centurion tanks from the [1st Armoured Regiment](#) and a troop of [M-113 armoured personnel carriers](#) from the [3rd Cavalry Regiment](#) and subsequently reacted to the incident. In direct support was [105th Battery, Royal Australian Artillery](#).^{[10][11]} Meanwhile, elements of the 1st Battalion 33 NVA Regiment took up defensive positions within the village and prepared to fight to the death. By 10:30 the Australians approached Binh Ba from the south, and were engaged by a volley of RPG fire from a row of houses.^[7] After clearing evacuating much of the town's population, D Company assaulted the village from east to west following preparation from [helicopter gunships](#) of [No. 9 Squadron RAAF](#). South Vietnamese Regional Force troops were deployed into blocking positions. Four tanks led the assault, with the infantry remaining mounted in the APCs following behind.^[10]

The Australians reached the edge of the village at 11:20, coming under light fire. Initially the tanks were effective for close action, however by the time the marketplace had been reached in the centre of the town concealed RPG-7s had caused external damage to two Centurions, whilst another was

penetrated. Within an hour, three of the four tanks used in the initial assault were disabled through damage and crew casualties. It became clear that the initial assessments of communist strength had been inaccurate, and was probably closer to a battalion than a platoon. In addition helicopters overhead reported another large enemy force of up to 60 moving to the south and west. Blake subsequently decided swing the attack left, in order to clear the southern edge of the town before moving out to western side of Binh Ba. As the Australian armour moved through the rubber trees they clashed with a company forming up to counterattack, inflicting heavy casualties on the communists in the process.^[10]



VC dead and destroyed buildings in Binh Ba during the battle.

By 14:00 the Australians were bolstered by additional troops from B Company 5 RAR, under Major Rein Haring, which took up blocking positions to south and east. The Commanding Officer of 5 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel Colin Khan, now assumed command of the battle. With a fresh troop of tanks together with APC support, D Company conducted a second assault on the village, this time with the infantry leading. One tank and two M113s accompanied each platoon in close support.^[10] The lead platoon made contact with the enemy immediately and the advance was slow due to the need to clear every house. The communists occupying the houses fired on the Australians from the windows and doorways before withdrawing into tunnels as they passed. An Australian soldier—Private Wayne Teeling—was killed by a shot through the neck as his team approached the first line of houses. A tank fired one round of HE into the building occupied by the Viet Cong. The house exploded, and the clearing team assaulted immediately. Six dead were found in the ruins.^[12]

This type of action was typical all along D Company's assault line and every time the Australians received fire from a building, tank rounds were used to breach the walls and a small team of infantry would conduct room clearance until all resistance was quelled.^[10] During the fighting some of the VC had discarded their uniforms and weapons and attempted to mingle with the pockets of civilians that were unable to escape. The continued presence of civilians in the village required the Australians to expose themselves to extreme danger while trying to usher these groups to the rear of the battle zone. Others tried to flee the village, or hide in the small air raid bunkers attached to every house.^[13] The fighting continued all afternoon and only ended at last light. With Binh Ba still insecure, D Company and their armoured support subsequently occupied a defensive harbour for the night, exhausted by the fighting.^[10] Overnight B Company killed two VC trying to break out to the south.^[13]

At 06:00 on 7 June B Company intercepted a communist company attempting to enter the town, and after blocking the exit and entry routes—and again supported by armour—they forced them to withdraw. On the second day the clearing of the village continued. D Company, with a platoon from B Company attached, met sporadic resistance from a number of small groups still holed up in the village. To fully clear the village every bunker, house and any likely areas of concealment had to be searched. Later in the morning South Vietnamese forces in the northern hamlet of Duc Trung came under attack, and B Company and the Assault Pioneer Platoon were deployed to provide assistance.^[10] Indeed, most of the action now centred on Duc Trung, with a helicopter reporting a force of up to 80 communist troops moving between the buildings. With the pioneers blocking to the south a Regional Force reaction company cleared the village, however the VC had already left.^[14] By 13:00 heavy firing again broke out in Duc Trung, with the South Vietnamese rapidly overrun by over a hundred communists. Accurate artillery fire was effective in stabilising the situation, however, and B Company with a troop of tanks swept the hamlet.^[15] During the afternoon D Company continued to clear Binh Ba and further close-quarter fighting followed before the Australians withdrew to allow the

South Vietnamese to complete the clearance. By the evening the village was secure, and B and D Companies adopted blocking positions overnight.^[6]

Aftermath^[edit]



The battlefield at Binh Ba after the fighting.

Operation Hammer concluded by 09:00 on 8 June with one final sweep carried out that morning to ensure that Binh Ba was clear.^[6] By this time a large communist force had been defeated by the Australians, and the village practically destroyed.^[16] Indeed, Binh Ba was so badly damaged that many of the villagers whose homes were destroyed were subsequently resettled with the help of the [1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit](#).^{[15][17]} Despite efforts to clear the village of civilians before the battle, a large but unknown number of civilians had undoubtedly died during the fighting. This fact, coupled with the one-sided casualty count, later led to claims in the media of an Australian atrocity.^[18] One Australian had been killed and 10 wounded, while communist losses included at least 107 killed, six wounded and eight captured.^[1]

The battle was one of the major victories of the Australians in Vietnam and although they would occasionally encounter communist Main Force units in the future, it effectively marked the end of such large-scale clashes. Indeed, as a result of such heavy losses suffered at Binh Ba the North Vietnamese were temporarily forced to move out of Phuoc Tuy and into the adjoining province of Long Khanh.^[6] The [Royal Australian Regiment](#), the [3rd Cavalry Regiment](#) and 1st Armoured Regiment were subsequently awarded the [battle honour](#) 'Binh Ba', one of only five presented to Australian units during the war.^[19] It ranks as one of the major Australian victories of the war.^[6]

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