

ANZAC DAY REPORTS – 2017

BRISBANE (provided by SEQ Branch President Terry Erbs)

In cool fine weather the traditional Dawn Service was held at 20th STA Regiment's memorial wall in Gallipoli Barracks. Several hundred past & serving members with family and friends heard in reverent silence the Regiment's padre read the lesson, and it wasn't the 23 psalm Russ! Maj Russ Hamsey is still in the Middle East on his final deployment. The CO Lt Col Peter Grant gave a moving speech then wreathes were laid, including the LSTAA wreath by Terry Erbs and the 131 Bty wreath by Ian Board.

At the most solemn and very poignant moment of the service, as the Last Post was sounded in the pre-dawn light, the native bird's started their early morning chorus –a very Australian Dawn Service!



Top Terry Erbs & Ian Board

Bottom LTCOL Peter Grant & MAJ Geoff Meekan

After the service the Menz club was opened for drinks, and for those seeking something non-alcoholic the club made great coffee with their newly purchased commercial grade coffee machine! Out in the Checkley Annex, a noisy [challenging for those of us with poor hearing!!] & happy crowd enjoyed a hearty breakfast before heading into Brisbane for the Anzac Day march. Many thanks to Andrew Wallace for again organising the LSTAA banner and "volunteer" carriers. The banner was again successfully used as our rallying point in George St. [note - next year the March route/assembly point will change due to major construction in the area]. The march officially started at 10am, but we started gathering from 9.30am before finally commencing the march at 11am – the time was well spent catching up with mates.



Rob Torrissi, Terry Erbs, David Dodds, T.C.White, Phil Sheedy John Bristow



Sgt Andrew Wallace, WO1 Kym Fox, WO1 Sean Voss and Gnr Matika Harvey [background- banner carrier]

Like last year our position in the march kept changing but we finally stepped off in position “47” – the 131 Bty. Vehicle “tac” number- how’s that for a coincidence! Led by Lt Col Phil Swinsburg [Rtd] and Lt Col Peter Grant CO 20th STA Regiment, the group was headed by 7 Viet Nam veterans and followed by nearly 70 younger serving and retired veterans of 20th STA Regiment. The ABC TV commentary team had done their homework, having read the supplied summary of Locating and gave us good coverage about our history, service and specialised artillery skills.





After the traditional group photo on the steps of the GPO, it was a short quick walk to the Stock Exchange Hotel to enjoy the customary few refreshing drinks with mates, family & friends.



Phil Swinsburg, MAJ Brin & MAJ Gledhill

BDR Clint Hodgetts (RT'D), WO2 Phil Grieve & WO1 Sean Voss.

As usual, many drinks were enjoyed, stories retold and mates exchanged news. It was very enjoyable day and I believe everyone got home safely, although serving members had to work the next day! Numbers were down a little from last year, with a number marching in Sydney & Canberra this year. Notable local absences' included Steve Hall, Pete Ravalje, Graham Williams, Lionel Outten, Joe Losiak and Derek Hinde, maybe next year fellas.

COFFS HARBOUR (provided by Immediate Past President Allan Harrison RFD)

The Weather Gods were on our side or perhaps our Association Padre, Coffs resident Rev Dr Graham Whelan OAM, DD, PhD had inside influence.

It was a perfect day beginning with the Traditional Dawn Service presided over by Graham.

A small but keen group of former Locators gave the old Association banner its annual airing.



Pictured before the march, L-R Dave Auld and Jim Hogno (131 Bty) Charles Brewer (133 Bty) and Allan Harrison (130 and 133 Btys) flanked by banner bearers supplied by 27th Aust Army Cadet Unit

A feature of the Coffs march and main service was a flypast of choppers from 725 Sqn RAN. The Sqn was given Freedom of the City of Coffs Harbour in the “adopt a city” program in 2016 and was well represented in the 2017 march.

The Squadron is equipped with the latest Sikorsky MH-60R Seahawk “Romeo” Naval Combat helicopters.



BALLARAT (provided by Ross Baker ex 131 Bty)

Ross had travelled to Ballarat this ANZAC Day to visit the honour wall which contains the name of his second cousin who was shot and killed while escaping from Stalag 8 in WW2. Thanks Ross and Lynn for some beautiful pics:



Field of Poppies



Memorial Walk and Honour Wall

SYDNEY (Provided by Jim Bushel and Association President Joe Kaplun OAM CMC)

Here's the post-march photo showing President Joe Kaplun (3rd from right) with the Sydney push. Joe led the LSTA detachment in the March. (Ed: I know some of the faces but not all. Assistance appreciated to allan@harrisonsolution.com.au)



Melbourne (Provided by John Dellaca with photos by Annette Bayford)

John reports “We wound up with 7 locators from 131 Vietnam on a really miserable wet day In Melbourne. Nevertheless it was great to see, Damian McManus back after several years of illness.”



L to R: John Dellaca Al Adam Damian McManus John Bayford and Mitch Millar at the Melbourne FUP



Melbourne Locators on the march in Swanston St