

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

December 2025 Edition



1 Commerce Ave, Armadale, WA 6112
PO Box 697, Armadale, WA 6992

Ph: (08) 9497 1972

email: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

Website: www.armadalersl.com.au

Social media: [Facebook](#)

General Meetings:

Second Sunday of the month at 1100hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armadale Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Mike Fairweather
Vice President	Mr Bob Giles
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Keith Northcott
Membership Officer	Secretary
Committee	Mr Geoff Scott
Committee	Ms Fiona Boyle
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

At the Armadale RSL Sub-Branch:

Monday:

by appointment only

Thursday:

between 0900 - 1400hrs

Weekday Contact Details:

Mobile: 0407 449 150

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for December

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	7 th	Social Committee Meeting	1100
Tuesday	9 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	15 th	General Meeting	1100

REMEMBRANCE DAY, 2025





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Members,

Thanks to everyone including Keith and Rob who assisted in making our Remembrance Day a success.

The Grant money that we applied for has now come through to replace carpet in the hall.

We are aiming to make this happen late February or early March. It is possible that we may have to close for a day or so to allow the work to be completed but I'll keep you all informed.

We haven't yet seen the artwork for the Mural out the back but at this time it's planned to be completed before mid-December.

Thanks to our Vice President Bob Giles for running the November General Meeting when I was unable to attend.

That's all from me for now,

Mike Fairweather

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch

Ph: (08) 9497 1972. M: 0403 980 290

1 Commerce Avenue Armadale WA 6112 | PO Box 697 Armadale WA 6992

e-mail: president@armadalersl.com.au

**Instead of presents
this year, I will happily
be giving everyone
my opinion. Get
excited.** 📺 😂



Tillie about to liven up an otherwise boring afternoon at the old folks home.



Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

The Poppy Appeal went relatively smoothly with the following people donating their time: Brad, Kane, Blake, Carol, Stormy, Graeme, Cheryl, Irene, Fiona, Maralyn, Steve, Lois, Mick, Geoff, Keith, Bob and Nita. Thank you all so very much, your help is very much appreciated.

Lisa will be opening the kitchen will on the 2nd Sunday of each month commencing in January. The cost is \$20 and no bookings will be taken, so it will be pay on the day.

The Veterans Facilities Fund Grant is now open. This is for Sub-Branches specifically to upgrade their facilities. Based on an RSLWA Building Inspection Report from 2021 we are currently flat-out obtaining quotes for various repairs, upgrades and the like. The limit is \$200,000 and it must be submitted prior to 20th December which makes it a very tight time line.

I don't know whether to make a salad or ask him what happened! 😊



There is also another Grant available for Veterans welfare and I am investigating if we can apply for some funding from there.

Thanks to everyone who patronised, assisted and managed the Sub-Branch over the past year.

I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Best regards as always,

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

Membership Update

As at 30th November, 2025:

Service Members:	140
Affiliate Members:	42
Social Members:	<u>90</u>
Total:	<u>272</u>

Renewals are due on 31st December, and forms are on the Notice Board, or alternatively there is one towards the end of this Furphy.

Carol King

Tel: 9497 1972

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au





December Service Members:

Caunce	Mr	Bernard	08/12	Edhouse	Mr	Jason	20/12
Errington	Mrs	Deborah	01/12	Legg	Mr	James	01/12
Lucas	Mr	Alan	21/12	McNeill	Mr	Peter	17/12
Parry	Mr	Edward	05/12	Tryde	Mr	Geoff	04/12
Van Opijnen	Mr	Terry	10/12				

December Affiliate Members:

Cowie	Mrs	Sandra	13/12	Whitehead	Mrs	Jacki	13/12
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December Social Members:

Brokas	Mr	Peter	06/12	Cowie	Mr	Eric	28/12
Evans	Mr	Matthew	09/12	Hayward	Mr	Josh	19/12
Hodges	Mrs	Michelle	07/12	Kent	Mr	David	11/12
Mashinkila	Miss	Samantha	19/12	Pegler	Mr	Peter	09/12

If there are any errors or anyone has been missed off the list, please advise

The Secretary (Interim Membership Officer)

These members may collect a free drink of their choice during the month

We hope you have a very special Birthday

Armadale Women's Emergency Corps

Armadale Women's Emergency Corps [AWEC] was formed in response to the worsening situation during World War Two.

It was operated by Armadale's sole police officer Denzel (Roy) Fletcher and his wife, Sheila.

The Corps consisted mainly of 16-20 year old young women but was also popular with married and older women as well.



Face charcoaling exercise by the AWEC members

Over its four years of existence more than 60 women joined AWEC, with many going on to serve in the Women's Armed Services.

Members were recruited from Armadale, Kelmscott, Byford, Gosnells and Bedfordale.



Group photograph of AWEC members

The women met regularly to be trained in skills that could be put to good use in event of the conflict extending to Australia such as first aid, firing guns, signalling by Morse code, ambulance work and elementary nursing.



Roadside repairs to trailer en-route to the camping exercise at Turtle Pool, Gleneagle

They were also involved in the Volunteer Air Observers Corps which was formed in July 1942.

The Corp also drilled in carrying out a range of support roles and worked in conjunction with the Volunteer Defence Corps [VDC] run by the RSL and Air Raid Precautions [ARP] wardens.

The presence of a dedicated band of well-trained women in the district proved useful.



AWEC members learning to fire a rifle

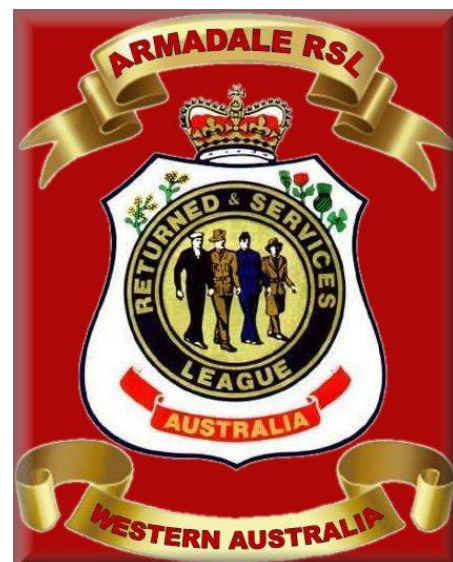
City of Armadale - Birtwistle Local Studies Library

Published: Wednesday, 7 September, 2022 - 11:47

Christmas Trading

Friday 26th December
Closed

Sunday 28th December
Open from 12 noon



Bar Manager's Report

G'day All,

Wholesale prices are increasing during January but I'll try to hold our prices down for as long as I can.

We've had a couple of good days during November as far as attendance goes, we can only hope the numbers keep increasing.

Cheers for now,

Stormy



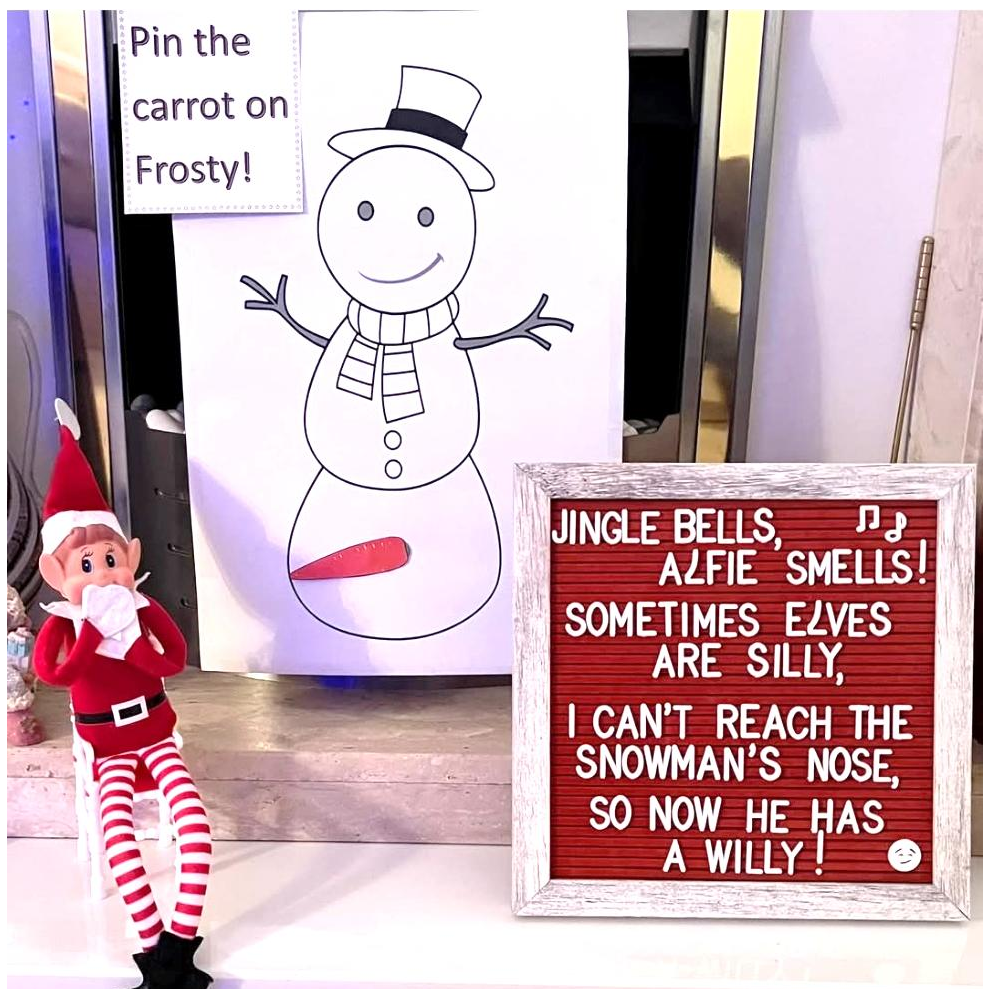
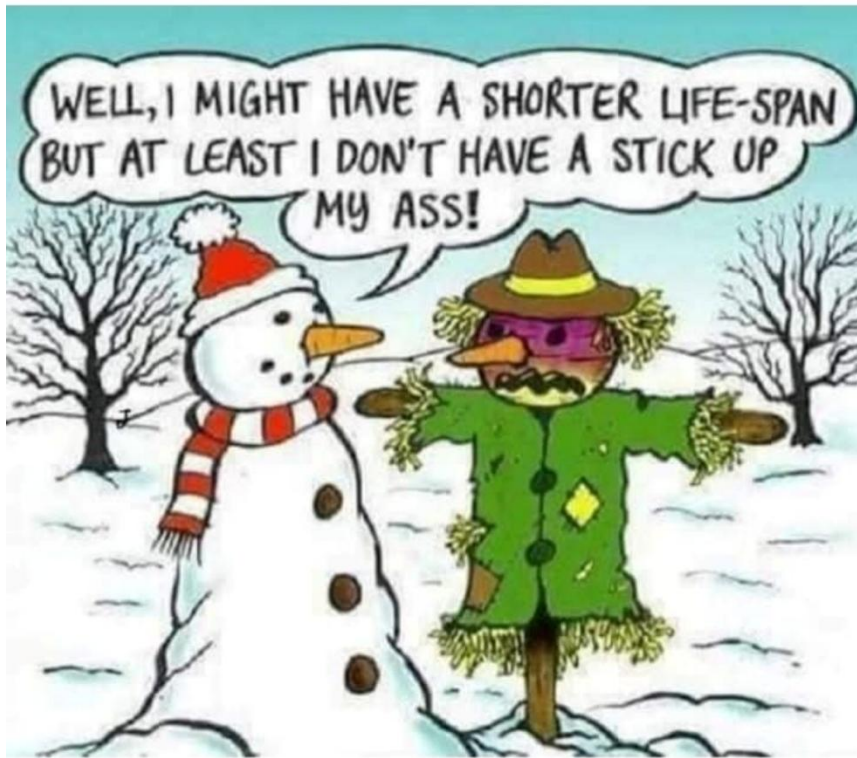


USS New Jersey

Bombarding enemy targets near Tuyho, on South Vietnam's central coast, during her last line period, late in March 1969



17th Australian Infantry Brigade digging trenches, Biet Jerja, June 1940.







Spring 1943 on the Eastern Front: A military informant runs through the muddy ditch - seconds between life and death"



British cavalry unit crossing a bridge over a communication trench, which some Australian signallers are going through, near Neuve Eglise (Nieuwkerke), 7 May 1917.





The Avro Lancaster, or 'Lanc', had a long, unobstructed ordnance bay which meant it could carry the largest ordnance used by the RAF.

It also had speed, ceiling, and lifting power that no other aircraft of the day could match.

Weighing 36,900 pounds empty, it was capable of taking off with an additional 33,100 pounds of fuel and ordnance; in other words, it could almost carry its own weight again.



A German soldier is grinding massive grenades for the 38 cm SK L/45 or "Langer Max" rapid-fire railway gun, approx. 1918

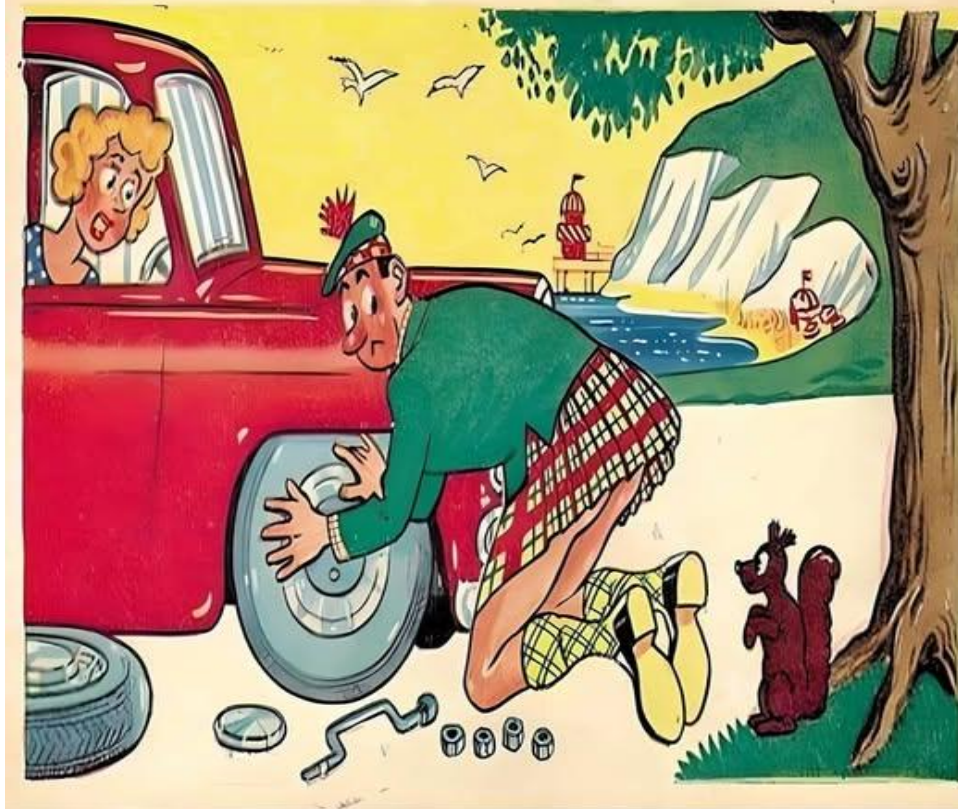
DEAR SANTA,
ALL I WANT
IS A FAT
BANK ACCOUNT
& A SKINNY BODY
PLEASE DON'T
MIX IT UP
AGAIN LIKE
LAST YEAR!

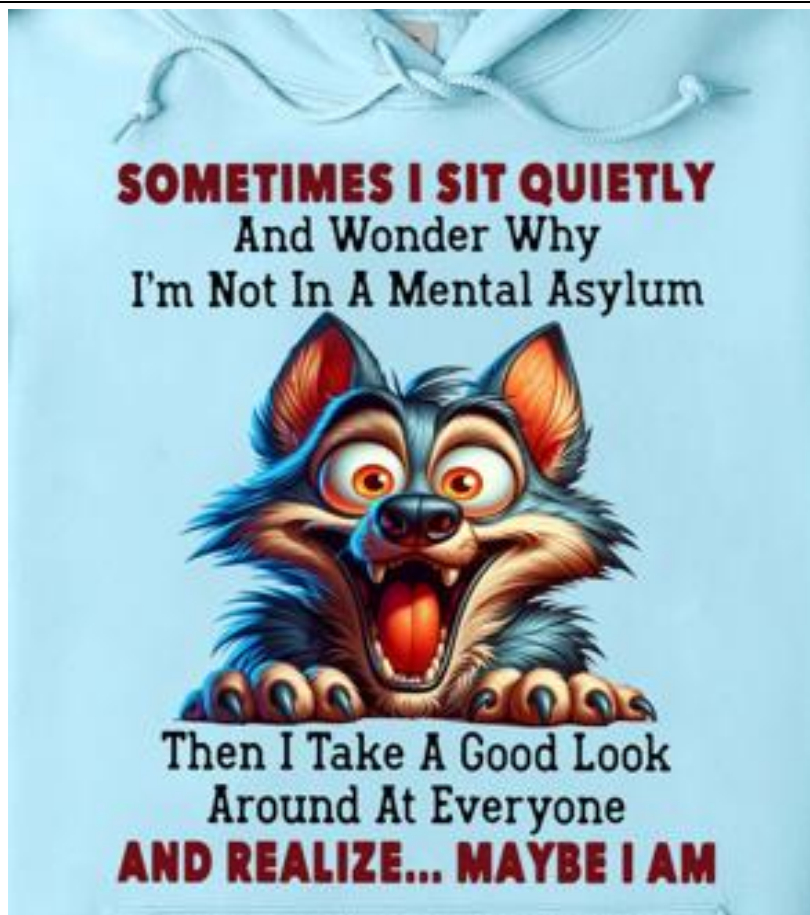
LOOK, FOR THE LAST TIME I'M
SORRY ABOUT ALL THE AIR FORCE JOKES AND
THAT WE HURT YOUR FEELINGS. BUT CAN WE
PLEASE HAVE SOME CLOSE AIR SUPPORT AS WE
ARE IN A TINY BIT OF A PICKLE DOWN
HERE, OVER...



Facebook: Military Humour, Nostalgia and Wit.

"MIND THAT SQUIRREL DOESN'T PINCH YOUR NUTS."





One of the last coal-powered
sheep .
Most sheep are all electric now.





1945: German soldiers in the hands of the 1. US Army - The final chapter of a lost army.

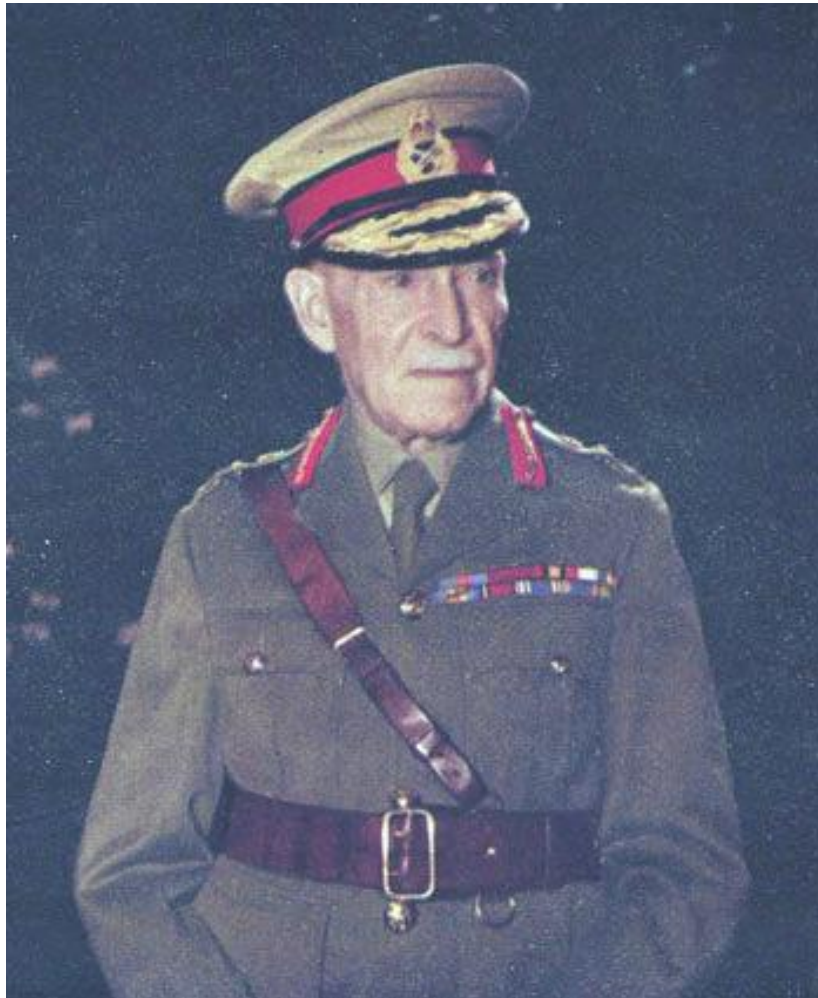


OCTOBER 21, 1944 | AACHEN | GERMANY

Colonel Gerhard Wilck, the German commander of Aachen is taken away in an U.S. Army jeep together with his officers as prisoners of war. Minutes before, he had surrendered unconditionally to Colonel John Thomas Corley of the 26th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division.

War Time Memories (VDC)

The Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) was an Australian part time volunteer military force of World War II modelled on the British Home Guard. The VDC was established in July 1940 by the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) and was initially composed of distinguished ex-servicemen who had served in World War I, but were too old for frontline service. General Harry Chauvel, who had retired in 1930, was recalled to duty in 1940 and was appointed Inspector General of the VDC. Chauvel held this position until his death in March 1945.



*INSPECTOR-IN-CHIEF, VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS, GENERAL SIR HARRY CHAUVEL.,
G.C.M.G., K.C.B.*



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS MARCHING BEFORE BEING ISSUED WITH UNIFORM

Originally the government only supplied some weapons, but from 1941 on, it supplied standard army uniforms and eventually took over the running of the organisation completely. The VDC was never well equipped, however. But by the time the war with Japan began it had a strength of 44,000. Some 5,000 men of the VDC were soon called up for full time service as coast watchers, airfield defence and security guards in order to free up younger men for combat use. Following the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Government expanded the VDC in February 1942. Membership was open to men aged between 18 and 60, including those working in reserved occupations. As a result the VDC reached a peak strength of almost 100,000 in 1942, with the VDC being responsible for collecting local intelligence and providing static defence of each unit's home area and key installations. They were also responsible of training for full scale guerrilla warfare if the Japanese invaded.

The VDC men wore green uniforms which included the familiar Aussie slouch hat. Some were armed with .303 rifle and Vickers or Lewis machine guns, while others had to improvise. In the absence of suitable equipment for training purposes, members of the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) took it upon themselves to fashion their own examples of mortars, machine guns, rifles and grenades.

Their efforts range from the crude and dangerous to the relatively sophisticated.

Unsurprisingly, a number of accidents were recorded among VDC member using homemade weapons during the war.

A ready-made base for the VDC were the Australian rifle clubs under the banner of the National Rifle Association, which was then associated with the Department of Defence.

Rifle club members were highly skilled rifle men, well versed in the handling of firearms and ready for the task involved.

Every Australian town of any significance has boasted at least one rifle club. In Western Australia alone there were 128 rifle clubs affiliated to the Western Australian Rifle Association, with a membership of about 12,000 rifle men.



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS PRACTISING THEIR MARKSMANSHIP



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS PHYSICAL EXERCISING



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS GUERRILLA TRAINING



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS MORTAR PRACTISE



VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS PRACTISING GRENADE THROWING

In 1941 Mr. Alan Harris, then the Forest Department official, was given task to survey the land area at the Darling Range escarpment and to choose well accessible but not too populated site, suitable for the purpose of the rifle range.

After considerable effort, the piece of land at Pickering Brook was selected as to be suitable. The future rifle range site was to be situated in the state forest close to the Pickering Brook townsite, running away from the settlement in the south-east direction. The Karragullen-Midland railway affectionately known as the Zigzag was passing selected land thus making it comfortably accessible to folks traveling from any direction. In all 96.4 hectares of state forest was put aside by the Western Australian government and leased to the Commonwealth.

In 1942 the Japanese invasion was imminent, so all schools were told to prepare air raid shelters for the children. Mrs. Richards, Headmistress of the Pickering Brook Primary School instructed the children on how to dig air raid shelter trenches in the school grounds. They also started practicing air raid drills



12th BATTALION JARRAH VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS PRACTISING AT CARINYAH

IT IS BELIEVED THIS IS ONLY ONE HALF OF THE ORIGINAL PHOTO TAKEN AT FOREST DEPARTMENT GROUNDS AT CARINYAH, BETWEEN 1943 - 1945. THE 12th BATTALION JARRAH VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORP CONSISTED OF: GEORGE ANDERSON, BERT BEARD, HAYLOR BROOKE, FRANK BROWN, FRED CUNNOLD, TED DAVEY, BILL ELLERY, NEIL FRETWELL, GEORGE GIBBS, ALEC LARSON, JOHN LITTLE, WALTER MANSELL, BILL McCORKILL, BERNARD McGARRY, KEITH McINNES, FRED McKAY, FREDERICK McKAY, LYN NEWMAN, ALEC NIVEN, JOHN PULLEN, TED SMAILES, SYD SMAILES, HORACE SMITH, TOM SULLIVAN & WALTER TEMBY

The Range was built under the supervision of Major Priestly to the Defence Department standards, mostly by members of the No. 2nd platoon, the 12th battalion of Volunteer Defence Corps also known as the “Jarrah Battalion”, consisting mainly of forestry workers employed by the nearby timber mills. Early in 1942 about 30 members of the battalion gave their free time to the cause and began construction of the rifle range.

For the next year and half, trees were felled, land cleared and fenced off, the target gallery dug up, stop butts and target frames constructed, the firing mounds established, poles for flags and the telephone line erected, access tracks laid down and a wooden hut with a fireplace built. In all it was a remarkable effort considering that most of the time only hand tools were used. The pick and shovel, the saw and axe left many members with blisters on their hands for weeks and months. A three metre deep, 2 metre wide and a 12 metre long pit for the target gallery was dug up with a pick and shovel.

It wasn't an easy task considering that the ground is very rocky. Big boulders were broken into smaller, more manageable pieces, with sledge hammers. The stop butt, a huge earth embankment catching the bullets was built with the help of a horse and scoop. Many members spent their own money to purchase things like wire, nails, tool sharpening etc., not bothering to claim the refund from Commonwealth, they just considering it to be their patriotic duty to help the country in its hour of need.



HORSE PULLING A DRAG SCOOP DURING CONSTRUCTION



ABOUT TO UNLOAD SCOOPFUL OF SOIL DURING CONSTRUCTION



VOLUNTEERS WORKING ON THE CONSTRUCTION



CLOSE-UP OF PLAQUE COMMEMORATING THE OPENING

Finally in the spring of 1943 the rifle range began to take shape, and the opening ceremony date was set for 31st October 1943. The Pickering Brook Rifle Range opening ceremony was a grand affair. Hundreds of people from all walks of life come to witness this occasion and to pay their thanks to all those volunteers involved in the construction of the rifle range. The Ladies put on an excellent picnic, and were probably glad to reclaim back their husbands, brothers and sons, whom they did not see very often for such a long period of time.

As a special thanks the Defence Department donated several kegs of beer which of course were emptied quite quickly by the appreciative mob.

After the opening day, the rifle range was put to use at once. The Defence department personnel briefed VDC members on the latest weapon technology. VD corps were getting instruction about the use of rifles, machine guns, pistols, handling of explosives etc. The proper of the rifle range was also used for VDC drill.

Records show that beside the members of the VDC, the regular army units were also stationed at the range during the second world war, namely the 25th Light Horse Brigade attachments which used the range for army drill and shooting practice.

On 14th August 1945 the war ended and the school children are given two days holidays as gazetted. VE Day is celebrated with much rejoicing.

After the war finished the Volunteer Defence Corps were no longer needed and in the later part of 1945 the Defence Department was instructed by the government to disband the VDC structure.

Members of the 2nd platoon were invited to a "Supper Party" in the Carilla Hall, Pickering Brook on 27th October 1945 to celebrate the end of VDC and the passing of an era. Commanding officer Major A. Harris thanked members of the 12th Battalion for their outstanding effort in the past few years and officially disbanded the VDC.

The Australia Service Medal 1939-1945 was instituted in 1949 to recognise the services of the Australian Armed Forces and the Australian Mercantile Marine during World War 11. It is made of nickel silver with the crowned effigy of King George VI on the obverse. The reverse has the Australian coat of arms, placed centrally, surrounded by the words 'AUSTRALIAN SERVICE MEDAL 1939-1945'.

Members of the VDC were awarded the Australian Service Medal for three years part time service. Some who served full time qualified for the War Medal. Some served in the Darwin Region and qualified for the Defence Medal.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM 2026

PLEASE LEAVE YOUR DETAILS AND PAYMENT IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND PLACE IN THE MEMBERSHIP BOX UNDER THE MAIN NOTICE BOARD.
IN MOST CASES YOUR RECEIPT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION THE SAME WEEK FROM THE BAR STAFF.

SERVICE MEMBERS PAY DIRECT TO STATE RSL UNLESS AGREED BY THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICER TO SEND IN BULK VIA THE SUB BRANCH.

AFFILIATE & SOCIAL MEMBERS PAY DIRECT TO THE SUB-BRANCH

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM to 31st December 2026

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ P/C _____

Contact No: Home _____ Mobile _____ Email: _____

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>AFFILIATE</u>	<u>SOCIAL</u>
\$40	\$40	\$20
Service No.	No. (If Known)	

=====

ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR CONTACT DETAILS SINCE LAST RENEWAL

NAME: _____

NEW DETAILS: _____

_____ PostCode: _____

Telephone: _____

Mobile: _____

E-Mail: _____



RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH

Your RSL