

## **Redlands RSL, Cleveland (Sub-Branch) Commencing in 1919 and still going strong**

### **How did the Redlands RSL, Cleveland (Sub-Branch) begin?**

The formation of the Redlands RSL, Cleveland (Sub-Branch) is predominantly a story of the Redlands Returned Soldiers' Movement, and their association with the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' and Airmen's' Imperial League of Australia – RSSAILA.

Following the demobilisation of the Australian armed forces after World War I, the local Returned Soldiers' Movement established two sub-branches in the Redlands.

In 1919, one sub-branch was established at Redland Bay with H. Wiere as president and S. J. Outridge as honorary secretary.

One of the first actions by the Redlands Returned Soldiers' Movement was to erect a memorial to those who had fallen in the Great War.

H. Wiere and S. J. Outridge were responsible for the construction of the memorial stone/roll of honour at Redland Bay.

Following the unveiling of the Redland Bay Roll of Honour, a special Cleveland Shire Council meeting was held on October 22, 1919.

At this meeting a motion was carried to erect a memorial in the form of a broken column – which represents 'lives cut short' - on a triangle of land in front of the original Cleveland Post Office on the corner of Passage and North Streets.

The Cleveland Cenotaph war memorial was commissioned by the Cleveland Shire Council in 1919 and is today held in trust by the Redlands RSL, Cleveland. The monument was constructed by W. E. Parson for £95 and brown Helidon Freestone was used in its construction. The memorial was officially unveiled on August 14, 1920. An Honour Board was also completed at this time.

The second sub-branch was formed in Cleveland a few months later and was headed by C. L. Fox and H. C. Grigg.

At a meeting on February 21, 1920, the following officers were appointed: C. L. Fox (president), H. C. Grigg (secretary) and R. Turner (treasurer).

For a number of years there were no formal Returned Soldiers' Movement meetings.

The last recorded minutes of the first committee meeting that attempted to form the Redlands RSL Sub-Branch was December 17, 1920. Socially however, the 'Diggers' Annual Ball' accomplished a great deal in bringing Returned Servicemen together. At this time, these functions were organised by self-appointed committees and proceeds were distributed among special causes – mainly to the RSSAILA members who were experiencing hardship.

It is important to note that the observance of Anzac Day has been a special function of the Returned Soldiers' Movement. During April 1925, a group of dedicated men organised the first local Anzac Day ceremony, which in its simple and impressive form, has been faithfully repeated ever since. The 'Soldiers' Memorial' – as the local community often referred to it – quickly became the focal point for all Anzac Day services.

On May 11, 1925, approximately 40 Returned Servicemen attended a meeting in the Cleveland Masonic Hall.

This group of dedicated men, headed by C. C. Campbell, a South African and World War I veteran, conceived the idea of organising the Returned Serviceman of the district.

G. Wort convened this meeting at which was formed the Redlands Sub-Branch of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), later to be renamed the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA).

Foundation members were: C. C. Campbell (president), S. Moylan, J. C. Cuthbert and A. Were (vice-presidents), G. E. Wort (secretary) and H. Stockton (treasurer).

The ideal of commemorating the memory of fallen comrades was constantly at the forefront of the Redlands RSSAILA Sub-Branch.

It was decided therefore that the ideal of revering the memory of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice would take form of a memorial hall.

In February 1928, an architect, Mr Rowlands, was asked to draw detailed plans and specifications, and on April 12, 1928, Mr Harrod Wallis (a Gallipoli veteran who also served in France during World War I), was engaged to erect the building.

On August 5, 1928, the Redlands Memorial Hall was officially dedicated and opened by the then Prime Minister of Australia, The Right Honourable Stanley Melbourne Bruce P.C-C.H-M.C. The ceremony also being the first radio broadcast from within the Redland Shire.

The Redlands Sub-Branch was also instrumental in arranging the visit to the Redland Shire of H.R.H; the Duke of Gloucester, and the Memorial Hall was the venue of his civic reception.

Following the outbreak of World War II, the Redlands Sub-Branch was active in the formation of the RSSAILA Volunteer Defence Corps – VDC. To the Redlands Sub-Branch credit a deputation, from a massive meeting of members was reputedly the first sub-branch to ask the Queensland Branch president to organise this corps.

The Redlands memorial Hall became the centre-point for many forms of activities in the Redlands area. Each year the Diggers held their annual ball. It was also the venue for the Redlands Show Ball and home to many local charities. During World War II it was used extensively for fund-raising activities and on August 15, 1945, the Memorial Hall was the venue for end-of-war celebrations. At the end of 1945, the hall was used for a 'welcome home' party for returned service personnel.

In the late 1990s, the Old Memorial Hall – as it is referred by the local population – was relocated and replaced by the current Redlands RSL, Cleveland building.

On July 1, 2005, the Redlands RSL Sub-Branch absorbed the Redlands Services Club Ltd., becoming the Returned and Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch) Redlands RSL Sub-Branch Inc. ( REDLANDS RSL, CLEVELAND.)

This was a bold move that will ensure that the proud history and name of the Redlands RSL, Cleveland will endure for years to come.

2005 calendar highlights for the Redlands RSL, Cleveland consisted of a very successful Australia Day Street Party; memorable Anzac Day ceremonies that continue to attract ever increasing crowds; Victory in the Pacific celebrations, which included a victory dance in the Old Memorial Hall and a VP Luncheon for veterans, which was held in the Club; a plaque dedication ceremony for the World War II 'N' Class Destroyers in our Anzac Memorial Park; a well-attended Vietnam Veterans' Day service and a successful Remembrance Day ceremony.

2007 saw the opening of the long awaited Library and Museum located in the Veterans Community centre. Car parking was increased, and the Womens Auxiliary celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In February 2008 work has commenced on refurbishment of the club premises and extensions. February also saw the relocation and re dedication of the Redland Bay Cenotaph.

The Redlands RSL, Cleveland is a place of enjoyment and fellowship, where the Sub-Branch's original motto of "Honouring the Fallen by Serving the Living" is respectfully preserved and upheld.

The Redlands RSL, Cleveland remains ever committed to serving the interest of its members, veterans, the ex-service community and members of the Australian Defence Force.

We Will Remember Them...Lest We Forget.