

Newsletter

December 2025



RSL

Mount Barker
Sub Branch

Merry
Christmas

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun,
And in the morning,
We will remember them.



Presidential Ponderings

As we close out 2025, December offers that familiar blend of reflection and anticipation. It's a moment to look back with gratitude and to appreciate the community that continues to strengthen our Mount Barker RSL Sub-Branch.

Our Sub-Branch has once again shown what can be achieved when dedicated people work toward a shared mission. From commemorations to quiet acts of support behind the scenes, our members, volunteers, and supporters have carried the spirit of service with them every step of the way. Whether you've given a full day, an hour, or simply stood in silence with us—thank you.

While the festive season brings joy for many, it can also be challenging for some in our veteran community. As families gather and celebrations fill the calendar, we remember those who feel the season more sharply—the empty chairs, the memories of mates no longer with us, and the quiet moments that remind us of service, sacrifice, and the journey home.

I'd also like to acknowledge our committee for their dedication throughout the year. Your efforts—big and small—keep us active, relevant, and welcoming. Looking ahead to 2026, we remain focused on the future of our commemorative spaces, continued welfare support, and deeper engagement with younger veterans. We'll keep working closely with Council and our community to honour service in meaningful ways.

On behalf of the Mount Barker RSL, I wish you all a safe, peaceful, and Merry Christmas, and a positive start to the New Year. May 2026 bring good health, good company, and good purpose..

Inside this issue

Presidential Ponderings.....	1
Secretaries Scribbles	2
Treasurer's Tidbits.....	2
Christmas Recipes	3
Christmas in the Services	4
Timings—Christmas Season	5
Friday Dinner Menu	6
Bingo.....	7
Colouring-In	8
Christmas Raffle	9
Important Dates.....	10
Rolling into the New Year	10
Our Supporters	11 –13
Significant Dates	14

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LEST WE FORGET

Secretary's Scribbles

December is always a busy month, but it's also a chance to pause and appreciate the efforts—large and small—that keep our doors open and our activities running smoothly.

This past year has seen steady progress across our sub-branch and the teamwork behind the scenes has been excellent. A special thank-you goes to those who regularly respond to emails, attend planning sessions, and offer a hand when needed—your reliability makes a world of difference.

As we move toward 2026, we'll be focusing on tightening up our administrative processes, improving communication between committees and members, and continuing to support work around future commemorative spaces. Clear, consistent communication will remain a priority, so please keep an eye on your inboxes and newsletters for updates.

The festive season can be a busy and sometimes difficult time for our veteran community. If you know someone who may be doing it tough, please reach out—or let us know privately if support is needed. We're here to help.

Wishing everyone a safe, restful, and enjoyable Christmas and New Year. Thank you for your continued commitment to our Sub-Branch.

"It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air!"

~ W.T. Ellis



Treasurer's Tidbits

As we reach the end of 2025, it's been encouraging to see the Sub-Branch's finances remain steady and well-managed. While costs continue to rise—especially utilities and event expenses—we've been able to meet our commitments thanks to careful budgeting, solid fundraising efforts, and the continued generosity of our community.

Our recent commemorations and activities were delivered within budget, and I want to thank everyone who supported raffles, donated goods, or helped behind the scenes. These contributions, however small they may seem, play a real role in sustaining the services and events we provide throughout the year.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to focus on responsible spending and building reserves that allow the Sub-Branch to support welfare initiatives, future commemorative projects, and ongoing operational needs. Transparency remains a priority, so if any member ever has questions about our finances or processes, please feel free to ask—I'm always happy to explain where every dollar goes.

As we move into the festive season, I encourage everyone to take care, stay connected, and enjoy the break. Thank you for your ongoing support and trust; it truly helps keep the Sub-Branch on solid footing as we head into a new year.

Lest We Forget.

How does Santa's Treasurer value Santa's sleigh?

The Net Present Value

What do Treasurers suffer from that ordinary people don't?

Depreciation



Christmas Recipes

Trench-Style Christmas Fruit Cake (Modernised)

Inspired by the improvised “trencher’s cakes” made by Australian troops in WWI and WWII. During both World Wars, Aussie troops often received homemade fruit cakes from home—dense, long-lasting cakes that survived the long sea trip to the front. Many were baked without eggs or butter due to rationing, yet they were treasured treats at Christmas. Modern Version (tastes much better!)

Ingredients

- 1 kg mixed dried fruit
- 1 cup orange juice or cold tea (troops often used tea)
- 250 g butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp baking powder

Method

Soak dried fruit overnight in orange juice or tea. Cream butter and sugar; add eggs one at a time. Fold in flour, spices, and soaked fruit. Bake in a lined tin at 150°C for 2–2.5 hours. Cool completely before slicing. A perfect nod to the parcels once sent across the world to brighten a digger’s Christmas.

*Merry
Christmas*

Bully Beef & Biscuit—Christmas Sliders

Inspired by the ubiquitous bully beef (tinned corned beef) and hard biscuits that fed Aussies at Gallipoli. At Gallipoli, Christmas lunch for the Australians in 1915 included tinned beef, biscuits, and a small ration of plum pudding. Here’s a tasty modern twist that’s ideal for a casual family BBQ.

Ingredients

- 2 tins good-quality corned beef
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp mustard
- 1 tbsp tomato relish or chutney
- Slider buns or small dinner rolls
- Lettuce, tomato, pickles (optional)

Method

Break up corned beef in a pan; add onion and cook until softened. Stir in Worcestershire sauce, mustard, and relish. Warm through and spoon onto toasted slider buns. Add lettuce or pickles if desired. A cheeky nod to a tough Christmas in 1915—only much more delicious.

Christmas in the Services:

Traditions, Triumphs & Tins of Plum Pudding

Christmas has never simply been a date on the calendar—it has been a reminder of home, of family, of mateship, and of the small comforts that become enormous treasures when you're far from those you love. As December rolls in, it's worth reflecting on how our Defence Force members, past and present, have marked the festive season in places and conditions most of us can barely imagine.

Christmas in the Trenches—WWI

Australian troops serving on the Western Front and in the Middle East did their best to create moments of cheer amid hardship. Makeshift Christmas trees appeared in dugouts, decorated with whatever scraps could be found. The Red Cross and Australian Comforts Fund sent parcels filled with socks, tobacco, postcards, and—most prized of all—tinned plum pudding. Many diggers wrote home describing how that simple treat transported them, even briefly, back to their mother's kitchen or a happier time. At Gallipoli, Christmas 1915 came just days after the last Australians had been evacuated from Anzac Cove. While it was a bittersweet moment, those who had survived often remembered it as a strange mixture of relief and sorrow. But even then, there were efforts to honour the day. Chaplains held small services, and troops shared what little they had, proving that even in wartime, the spirit of Christmas could not be extinguished.

Desert Heat and Jungle Rain—WWII

The setting changed but the traditions remained. Australian troops in North Africa sweltered through Christmas dinners of bully beef and hard biscuits, sometimes brightened by the arrival of Army-issue "Christmas rations." Many recall that Christmas puddings would arrive in dented tins, often warm from the desert sun—an unusual but welcome variation on the classic recipe. Meanwhile, in the jungles of New Guinea and the Pacific, troops battled monsoonal rain, disease, and isolation. Yet Christmas brought a brief pause. Units decorated huts with palm fronds, staged improvised concerts, and exchanged small handmade gifts. Even the simplest message from home—delivered weeks or months late—was cherished.

At Sea and in the Air

For those serving in the Navy, Christmas has always depended on where the ship happens to be. Crews have marked the day aboard everything from WWII corvettes to modern frigates patrolling the Persian Gulf. One long-standing tradition sees the youngest sailor on board take the role of "Captain for a Day," delivering a few light-hearted orders that inevitably include relaxed routines and an extra helping of dessert. In the RAAF, Christmas on deployment has been shaped by the pace of operations. Whether in the skies over Europe in WWII or supporting missions in the Middle East, aircrews would share a special meal when they could, band together with their squadron mates, and take a moment to call home. technology today is far better than a crackling radio line.

Modern Deployments, Same Spirit

Today, Australian service personnel deployed on peacekeeping and humanitarian missions continue these traditions. The ADF works hard to provide Christmas lunches, small care parcels, and opportunities for soldiers, sailors, and aviators to connect with family via video calls. Units still decorate their accommodation with whatever they can find—tinsel, lights, even cardboard trees made from ration boxes. But the heart of the day remains the same: coming together as a temporary family, focusing on mateship, and looking after those who may find the season difficult.

Why These Stories Matter

For those of us gathering comfortably at home this December, it's important to remember the thousands of Australians who have spent Christmas far from their families so that we might enjoy ours in peace and safety. The stories of Christmas in the Services remind us that even in hardship, the human spirit endures—through sharing, humour, resilience, and the simple act of looking out for one another.

As we celebrate this festive season, may we carry that same spirit of gratitude and generosity. And may we hold in our thoughts all who served, all who are serving, and all who cannot be home this Christmas.



Timings over the Christmas Season

Morning Tea and Chat:

Last one for 2025—17 December

First one for 2026—21 January

Friday Night Dinners:

Last one for 2025—19 December

First one for 2026—23 January

BBQ's (Aston Hills):

13 December 2025

17 January 2026

Opening Hours:

Generally there will be no set opening hours over the Christmas/New Year Season. That does not mean that there can't be an impromptu gathering or maintenance work being conducted.

Dinner Menu — December



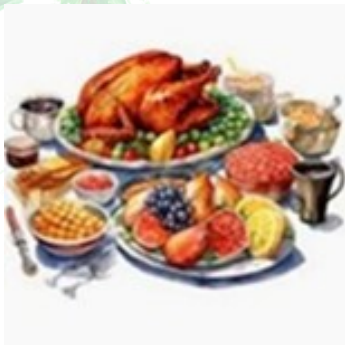
Friday 5th of December

- ✓ Chicken Parmy with Chips and Green Salad
- ✓ Bread and Butter Pudding



Friday 12th of December

- ✓ Crumbed Prawns with Asian Slaw and Chips
- ✓ Pavlova with Fruit and Cream



Friday 19st of December Special Christmas Dinner

\$40 per Person

- ✓ Shared Entrée Platters (provided by Ian)
- ✓ Roast Turkey, Ham, Roast Veggies, Greens, Cranberry Sauce and Gravy
- ✓ Plum Pudding with Custard and Cream

Note: Fruit Salad dessert alternative for people who don't want pudding.
Must be pre-ordered!



**Members are eligible for a FREE meal
during the month of their Birthday!**
(Not valid for 19 December 2025)

Cost is: \$22.00 for members
\$22.00 for under 18yrs

\$25.00 for non-members
\$17.00 for children under 12yrs

Bookings are essential. Either in person or call/text **0436 934 286.**
Bookings must be made by 12 noon on the Wednesday prior.

BINGO at the RSL



- ✓ Every **Tuesday** at the RSL, in the downstairs dining area.
(Note: Last session on 9 Dec 2025. Recommencing on 20 Jan 2026)
- ✓ Doors open at **12 midday**
- ✓ Eyes down at **1:00pm**
- ✓ 10 games plus a flyer game.
- ✓ Cash Prizes - Lucky Door Prize.
- ✓ We will always endeavour to have a snack available on the day at a very reasonable cost.
- ✓ Come along and bring your friends and neighbours for a fun afternoon.



WINNERS





Christmas 2025 Diggers Raffle

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1st Prize | Masport BBQ (valued at \$750)
(Donated by Harvey Norman Mt Barker) |
| 2nd Prize | \$500 Harvey Norman Gift Voucher
(Donated by Sushi Ito, Aston Hills) |
| 3rd Prize | \$396 Gift Box
(Donated by Nova Hair & Body, Mt Barker) |
| Other Prizes - | Spec Savers voucher
Bottles of Wine
Adelaide Crows Singlet (singed)
Perfume/Aftershaves
Books and Homewares
Various store vouchers
Hardware
Table Lamp
Queen Quilt Cover Set and Throw
Placemat Set
Johnny Walker Black Label Whiskey
Kim Bolton Port
10+ Gift Baskets valued between \$30—\$150 |

**\$10 a ticket
\$50 a book**

**Only 500 tickets
Drawn 19 Dec 25**

Important Dates!

2 December

- ✓ General Meeting and Annual General Meeting (6:30pm)

6 December

- ✓ Fundraising BBQ at Mount Barker Christmas Pageant (08:00am—1:30pm)

13 December

- ✓ Fundraising BBQ at Aston Hills (from 10:00am)

19 December

- ✓ Christmas Dinner and draw of Diggers Christmas Raffle.

24 December

- ✓ BBQ (Cook Only) for SA Potato Company (09:00am—Midday)
- ✓ Christmas Eve!

25 December

- ✓ Christmas Day! Enjoy your time with family and friends!

26 December

- ✓ Boxing Day! (Alms to the poor)

31 December

- ✓ New Years Eve

1 January

- ✓ New Years Day! Aaaaaaaanother year begins.....

We all get the exact same 365 days. The only difference is what we do with them!

- Hillary DePiano

Rolling Into the New Year (Ready or Not)

As December wraps up, many of us at the Sub-Branch are bravely preparing for that annual ritual: pretending we *totally* stuck to last year's resolutions. (Yes, Rod, we all remember the "no more sausage rolls" vow. Bold move. Short-lived.)

New Year's is that magical time when we confidently declare we'll get fitter, be more organised, or finally sort out the cupboard in the storeroom that's one loose box away from a Work Health & Safety incident. Realistically? We'll settle for making it through January without losing the TV remote or misplacing the raffle tickets again.

Still, there's plenty to look forward to in 2026—more laughs, more mateship, and hopefully fewer emails with the subject line "URGENT: please read." Here's to a fresh year, a clean slate, and resolutions that last... oh, at least a week.

Happy New Year from all of us at the RSL Mount Barker Sub-Branch!

Our Supporters!



Harvey Norman Mount Barker—(08) 8393 0800



Aston Hills Shopping Centre—0490 832 311

NOVA

HAIR & BODY

7 Walker Street, Mount Barker (08) 8391 2772



Mount Barker Central (08) 8391 3588



North to South Electrical—0437 777 385



Balhannah—(08) 8398 0009



Urban Cellars Mount Barker—(08) 8398 3084



Dutton Road, Mount Barker
(08) 8384 0368

Tim Adams

CLARE VALLEY

(08) 8842 2429

Our Supporters!



Aston Hills (08) 7092 6003



(08) 8393 6900



Richies Tavern —(08) 8398 4244



Mt Barker Newsagency
Mt Barker Central— (08) 8391 2901



Mt Barker Village — 0460 942 640



Mount Barker Central (08) 8393 6700



Aston Hills—0481 353 868



K&B Mitre 10—(08) 8391 0533

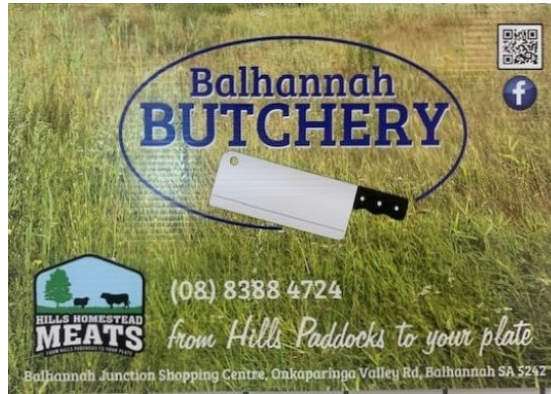


Mount Barker Road, Hahndorf (08) 8388 7272

Our Supporters!



www.mbfc.com.au



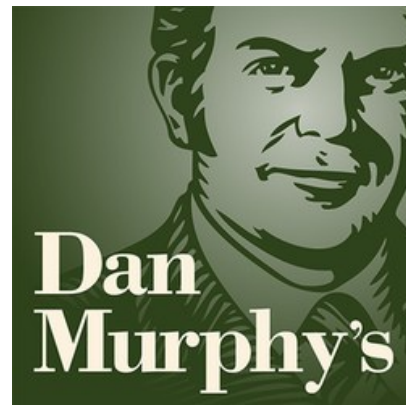
Aston Hills Shopping Centre—(08) 8388 4724



23 Gawler Street, Mt Barker
(08) 8391 2199



Mount Barker Central —0466 667 293



52-60 Hutchinson Street
1300 72 33 88



Mount Barker Central
(08) 8391 2417



Strand Bags—Mount Barker Central
(08) 8398 3377



Mount Barker
(08) 8396 2237



About the RSL

We are Australia's largest ex-service organisation, founded in 1916 to support veterans and their families. Initially focused on repatriation and medical services for WW1 veterans, the RSL's mission has evolved to address the changing needs of each generation of servicemen and women.

Core Functions:

- Veteran Welfare
- Advocacy
- Commemoration
- Support for Families
- Camaraderie
- Public Education

Membership

We are always looking to bring new members into our group! If you know anyone that may be interested in joining us, please pass them our contact details, or even just give them this newsletter.

No doubt, there are many Veterans out there in the community that have not thought about joining their local RSL. There are many more community members that we would like to invite into our ranks as well. They just need to be aware that we are here!

We are here to provide a place for the Veteran community and members of the community in general to mix, relax and enjoy some like-minded company.

Change of Contact Details

We don't want to lose contact with members. So please let the Secretary know if you change your address, phone or email details.

Significant Dates

General Meetings	Committee Meetings	Morning Tea and Chat
Monday—5 Jan 2026	Monday — 15 Dec 2025	Don't forget that the Sub-Branch hosts a Morning Tea every Wednesday morning at 10:00am. Light refreshments available for a small donation. This is open to everyone, so bring along a friend or neighbour!
Monday— 2 Feb 2026	Monday — 19 Jan 2026	
Monday— 2 Mar 2026	Monday—16 Mar 2026	

Significant Dates	Event	Remarks
7 December 1941	WWII	The end of the Siege of Tobruk
11 December 1952	Korean War	Operation FAUNA. 1st Battalion RAR, deployed to Korea
15-20 December 1915	WWI	Evacuation of ANZACs from Gallipoli
31 December 2014	Afghanistan	Conclusion of Operation Slipper in Afghanistan.