

90th Anniversary REMEMBRANCE DAY 2008 REPORT:

Thursday the 6th November 2008, 8.30am the Burleigh Heads RSL Sub-Branch launched the Red Poppy appeal for Remembrance Day. Jeannie McKenzie, RSL member and Women's Auxiliary Secretary organized the volunteer roster with the aid of Auxiliary President Ruth Connelly with the support of Junior Vice President Les McKenzie, their driver and general dogs body. This year the appeal went very well, with selling on Thursday, Friday, Monday and Tuesday morning, mostly the weather stayed fine, which of course always help bring out the crowds. The ladies of the Auxiliary and Members who assisted should be congratulated for a job well done! The funds raised goes to the Burleigh Heads RSL Sub-Branch, for the welfare support of the members and is most appreciated and needed.

Tuesday, 11th November 2008, Remembrance Day the morning weather report was, intermittent showers. Well it rained mostly early morning until about 10am and then started to ease off. The Memorial Park had been groomed, lawns moved that morning and everything looked spectacular, thanks to our council gardener, Peter! The Chairs and Marquee arrived about 9.15am and the sound technician arrived soon after, so all was going well. The clouds kept rolling by with some short showers and the decision was made about 10.30am to keep the troops under cover in case of rain. The Flag party were consulted and their decision was to continue with the flag bearers parade, irrespective of the weather. Thank you to Snr Vice President, Bob McNamara, Australian Flag, Vern Williams, British Flag, Committee man, Ron Mansfield, New Zealand Flag and Jan Kollen, United States of America.

133 Army Cadet Unit under the leadership of 2Lt Peter Fleming arrived at 10am to conduct some revision and practice for the mounting of catafalque guard. Their decision after discussion was to remain on parade on the cenotaph irrespective of the weather. They conducted their parade with professional excellence, and showed that there are young people who are conscientious in what they do. The cadets on parade at Burleigh were thanked for their contribution which enhanced the service.

10.50am the Commemoration service commenced with the mounting of the catafalque party and the flag bearers standing to! The veterans, the children, the public were welcomed, approximately 300 to 400 were in attendance, there may have been more as they were spread out all over the park under trees for shelter. Honorary Padre Fr Pat Molony was thanked for his attendance. The Roll call was made of the twenty Members who passed away since the last years Remembrance service and during the Roll Call the heavens opened up, it was only a short spell and with some assistance from Les McKenzie and Fr Pat with a couple of umbrellas, we survived and by 11am the rain had cleared with that the Last Post was played followed by the minute silence, etc.

It was pleasing to see students from two of our local schools represented at the service, Burleigh Heads State Primary School, class 4G with teacher Lorraine Gammon, Carol Browne deputy Head and school captains and Miami High School students under the leadership of teacher Mr Robert Kelly. We had a lovely young lady from Miami

High, Angie Wetini come up to read the poem ""In Flanders Fields", thank you Angie! The words of the poem are very moving and they always touch my heart to think of so many young lives being lost in wars. The main address was given by me and Harry Nesbitt, OAM ex-POW was called upon to read the Ex-POW prayer as he had done in previous years, but unfortunately due to an eye condition he was unable to read, he remained on the cenotaph, and the prayer was read by me on his behalf and that of all the EX-POW.

The 90th Anniversary Remembrance Day was the first time that four anthems were played at the conclusion of the service at the Burleigh Heads RSL Commemoration service, they were, the US anthem "the star Spangled Banner", the "Royal Anthem", New Zealand and Australian anthem.

The service ended 11.25am, Veterans, ex-Service, Cadets and family adjourned to the Burleigh Heads Bowls Club for a "90th Anniversary Remembrance Day luncheon" courtesy of a grant received from the Department of Veteran Affairs for the specific purpose of remembering fallen comrades, family or friends on the 90th Anniversary of (Armistice Day) REMEMBRANCE DAY 2008. A great few hours of comradeship and friendship was had by all! "Lest We Forget"

Yours in service
Chris Keating

Christopher Keating, C dec
President
Burleigh Heads RSL Sub-Branch