



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President's Report 2021

In opening my report for last year, I noted that our activities had been necessarily curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on our state and nation. I was not conscious then that I would be obliged to begin this year's report with similar sentiments. The effects on us have not been exactly the same but there have been limits on our activities which have left us feeling rather short-changed in the matter of camaraderie through personal contact. One response to this has been to return to the underlying basis of our existence as a 'virtual' or online club and conduct some events online. This has met with some success, and we will do more of this in the future.

Events

On 11th November 2020, we conducted our Annual General Meeting on Zoom (a new word now all too familiar to us all). The committee was re-elected, and we looked forward with uncertain optimism to the possibility of a return to some measure of normality in 2021. Sadly, that was not to be, at least not for long.

We were able to have an in-person commemoration of ANZAC Day on 25th April 2021. It was a very successful function at the RACV Club at which an encouragingly large number of members were able to meet with comrades, old and new, and commemorate our most important annual occasion. Rather than have a guest speaker we called on our own resources and four members gave brief presentations relating to their family connections to war service. The feedback on the day was very positive and we will consider doing a similar thing next year.

After that day, the COVID cloud closed down again, and we were not able to meet physically again during the year. We decided to grasp the nettle and make a virtue of necessity. We organised a speaker to make a presentation to the club via Zoom (that word again) on 16th August. Mr Brent Taylor, a good friend of the Club, had just completed a book about FM Blamey in which he examines aspects of leadership; this made for a very interesting presentation which attracted substantial interest and a large audience. This may well become the pattern for many Club activities in the future.

Our collaboration with other like-minded groups has always been an important part of our way of working. We have good relations, and a lot of overlapping membership, with Royal United Service Institute, Military History and Heritage Victoria, Defence Reserves Association, the Royal Australian Artillery Association and The Spirit of Australia Foundation. These relationships have been as quiescent as our own events during this year, but we are confident that as we move on into the future, we will be able to re-ignite these relationships for our benefit and theirs.

Membership

We have a membership database of 759 (LY 748) members. Of these 391 (LY 337) have supplied us with an email address and to that extent are regarded as active members. A

creditable 52% of these members read and/or reply to email communications. We are always grateful to members who reach out to people they know who may be interested in our program; please do not leave recruitment to the committee.

The RACV Club

We continue to be grateful to the RACV Club which provides us with excellent facilities and service. We could not find a better host for our functions when we go off-line and meet in the real world.

Governance

The club is well served by an executive and a broader committee which have met as required during the year. I thank all of them for their efforts and commitment.

LTCOL Michael Buckridge
President

