

Look who's making the news...



Illawarra Diggers resident proves age is just a number at 106

"I haven't got an ache or a pain; I have no troubles. I've had good health all my life and no regrets."

On his 106th birthday, it's an astounding statement for Illawarra Diggers Aged & Community Care resident David Napper to make.

Then again, as he makes his way unaided by a walker to the dining room for a morning tea with his family and fellow residents, it's clear a lot about David is pretty remarkable.

Born at the end of World War One in the St George region of Sydney, David was one of seven boys, including his twin brother Arthur. "Those were difficult times. After the war we had three years of depression," he says.

Like so many of his peers, David's life was characterised by hard work. His father ran a produce business, supplying poultry and horse feed and backyard supplies such as seeds and fertilisers.

He and his brothers started pitching in from a young age. "We had vegetable gardens, fruit trees, lawns and whatnot, and all that needed tending to. You didn't sit around; everybody had a job to do."

"Of an early morning we'd go down to the stables and feed the horses, take the rugs off. In a large family you have to do your share of work."

It wasn't all toil, however. David recalls a happy childhood playing cricket, flying kites and riding billy carts. "I enjoyed school, including the one-and-a-half-hour ride each way from Rockdale to Bexley, changing trains three times," he says.

When he was old enough, he worked in his father's shop until he reached driving age and was able to

make deliveries. "It was a different world then – there were no cars on the roads, no aeroplanes. Deliveries were still made by horse and cart," he says.

"I'd load deliveries up at the railway sidings and cart them about. I did a lot of heavy work at the city wharves ... I think all that was really good for me."

When World War Two began, David and his brothers were called up. He served in the Australian Army for four years.

"I didn't like that too much, either. I got out of it alright, though. My twin brother went to New Guinea. It was a compulsory call-up. Poor food, poor weather conditions and the rest of it ... When he came back he wasn't too good. He passed on many years ago," he says.

"I am not in favour of war. I don't think it proves anything. We've had them for generations and it's never served any purpose."

Upon his return David went back to the industry he knew and remained in produce all his life.

As motor vehicles became more mainstream, however, the business evolved and diversified into other lines, such as food. David moved on to managing a staff of six at a store in Brighton Le Sands for his father's business.

During this time, he met the love of his life, Edna, whom he called Peggy. The pair married in 1948, which was followed by more than five decades of marital bliss and two children.

After Peggy passed away, David grew tired of living on his own and at age 100, his son Kevin, an Illawarra local, found him a place at Illawarra Diggers Aged & Community Care.

David, a regular participant in the Diggers' many exercise opportunities, credits his longevity to a life that's always been characterised by physical activity.

"Exercise. It gives you an appetite and strengthens your whole body. Yes, I think it's essential to work in some way your whole life," he says.

"I don't drink or smoke, either. My youngest brother took up smoking when he joined the Air Force and continued when he came out of service.

Once your lungs are damaged there's absolutely nothing they can do for you. So all you have is excruciating pain and your life's a misery. He was the first to pass away ... He didn't want a funeral; he wanted his ashes taken up in an aircraft and scattered in the air. So that's how it was."

Diggers Lifestyle Manager Vikki Wilesmith says David is warm and friendly to everyone, though quick to vilify smoking and espouse the virtues of exercise and moderation in life.

"He's a very humble man and a true gentleman," she says. "We get close to all our residents here and when David does leave us, he will leave a very big hole, greatly missed by staff and residents alike."



remembrance day

LEST WE FORGET

NOVEMBER TWENTY TWENTY FOUR EDITION

"Honouring the Past, Inspiring the Future". Our photographer Sylvia Liber captured the bridging of generations when 101-year-old resident Harry Harley met Mitch from the 26U Wollongong Cadet Unit at this year's Remembrance Day Service.



CEO's Message

Hello to all our residents, staff, families and casual readers of this lovely little bulletin.

I was very disappointed not to be able to attend our Remembrance Day service this year for the first time. I was overseas in a country where Remembrance Day was just not a "thing". But that did not stop me stopping at 11am to mentally share in the service I knew was going on here at Illawarra Diggers as well as many other locations across Australia and New Zealand.

I have seen all the photos of the day and many of them are shared here with you in this publication. My thanks to our team of staff for all the work that goes into this short but significant service each year. Remembrance Day is first and foremost a day to remember those who have served our country in military service, especially those who have sacrificed their lives in so doing. At our home, we also

remember those who have served their families and their communities throughout their lives in both small and big ways. At the service on 11 November, the names of all our residents who have passed away in the last 12 months were read out so that we may continue to remember those who became part of our Illawarra Diggers family – lest we forget.

We are now just a few days short of Summer and already we are experiencing some glorious warm weather. The central courtyard is heating up and it is a little disappointing that the new sun/rain cover we ordered several months ago to be installed across about 1/3rd of the main courtyard is still yet to be manufactured. Labour shortages affect many industries, which is quite frustrating. The order is still placed so we are crossing fingers for early in the new year.

Our kitchen renovation plans are also well underway and we expect to shut our main kitchen at the start of February for approximately 3 months while it is completely stripped back to subfloor level and fully refitted from the floor up. In that period we had considered getting meals supplied from offsite but have now decided to have a fully functional portable kitchen installed in the rear courtyard area for the period of the refit so as to be able to continue to cook our own meals and ensure our own quality.

Residents will also be pleased to know we have ordered a new bus which will be fully fitted out with the best seating and wheelchair access due for delivery in February. The new bus will have several extra seat capacity and a rear wheelchair lift. The team here are quite excited as our current bus is close to 20 years old.



I hope you all enjoy the start to Summer and the busy pre-Christmas season. The Lifestyle and Hospitality teams are all working hard in preparation for some special days to ensure the next month is special for all our residents. Monday is also the start of "wear your favourite Christmas shirts to work" period so we can expect some cool Christmas fashions from our staff and hopefully our residents.

Take Care

Peter



A Message from the Lifestyle Manager

Hello from the Lifestyle Team.

Many people attended Remembrance Day this year, including guests from the Corrimal RSL Subbranch and the Cadets from the

26U Wollongong. Thank you to Mr Robert Duggan, Mr Brian Cook and the Cadets for their participation in the service and laying of wreaths. Thank you to Tony Willis for coming on board as our Minister for the service. We look forward to many more services with you.

Unfortunately, this year Peter Whittall (CEO) was unavailable for the service and Chloe Darragh (Business Manager) stepped up to read the names of those residents who passed away in the past twelve months. Their names and pictures buried under the big tree in the Caringbah Garden, laying them to rest one final time.

The November Edition features some lovely photos of our veterans, fellow residents, Dignitaries and the young men and women from the Cadets 26U Wollongong. The photos, captured by Sylvia Liber, are a beautiful reflection of what Remembrance Day means to both generations.

Christmas is almost upon us and the next couple of weeks leading into December are going to be

very busy. There will be plenty of festivities to look forward to throughout the month, bus outings, concerts, school visits and, of course our Christmas parties.

Take care and remember Santa is watching. If you can't be good, be safe.

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Vikki and the Lifestyle Team.





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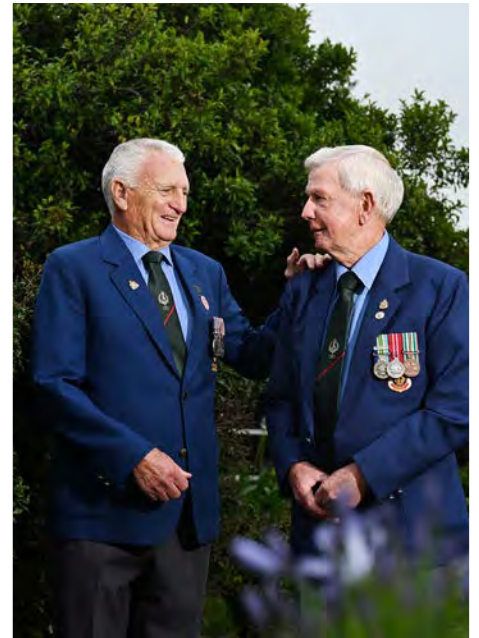
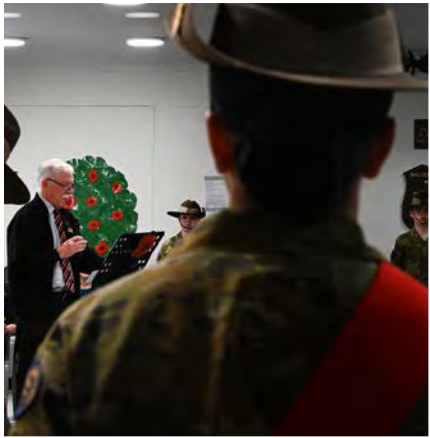




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