



So often when people retire, it seems they only get busier. And for John and Lesley Glover, that is exactly what happened. From the hustle and bustle of Melbourne, retired RAAF Wing Commander, John and his wife Lesley moved to Echuca, in Victoria's north, for a slower pace. But it did not last long. "I'd rather be doing something, be it at home, with family or more so in the community, than sitting around waiting for the inevitable to happen," said Lesley.

A medical radiographer by profession, John spent 40 years as a Reservist, which saw him deployed to Malaysia and Bougainville. "Undoubtedly the biggest highlight was commanding the Air Force personnel on deployment on peacekeeping in Bougainville. It was an interesting experience as an Air Force member, and it was nice to make a difference."

John, a long-standing service member with the RSL, is now in his 20th year of membership. "It means I maintain links with my service friends and there's an atmosphere within the RSL that respects our mutual experience, and that enables me to use my experience and training to assist fellow members."

A city girl all her life until their move seven years ago, the RSL has given Lesley a sense of community and belonging as she settled into her new life.

Returning to his childhood hometown of Echuca, it was not long before John got the top job as the Rochester Sub-Branch President, which he held until handing over the reins earlier this year. Over the years, it has given John some very memorable moments, including being in the company of those who served long before he did. "Meeting the people who've established the traditions that we uphold today. People who have put their lives on the line and they've suffered because of it."

"These are things that people aren't prepared to talk about in public. They put them into an organisation like the RSL and are happy to chat because they may have had the same experiences," said Lesley.

John speaks proudly about his accomplishments during his time at the Rochester RSL. "I set up a campaign to get a World War One Memorial...and then in the research I identified all of the men and women from the area who were listed in World War One and we now have a permanent Honour Roll constructed outside."

He also played a pivotal part in establishing the annual Dawn Service, which sees about 500 people in attendance at the Rochester Cemetery.

For John and Lesley, mateship has seen them through some of the toughest times in their lives. Lesley was left, as she describes it, a weekend widow, with John often away for Reservist duties. "Even though I'm not a serving member, you talk to other wives and partners and we're all of the same thinking – if something untoward should happen, we would all be looking after one another."

As someone who has worn the uniform, John says real mateship equates to trust. "In simple terms, I can walk through the jungle with someone behind me with a loaded weapon and I don't have to look where that weapon is, but I know I'm safe."

Never far from John's thoughts is a saying by Scouts founder, Robert Baden-Powell: "As you go through life, leave nothing behind except your footprints and your thanks." And as John says, "I think I've left my footprints and it's my way of saying thank you."