



Far away from family and friends during his 12 month deployment to Vietnam for National Service, the RSL made a lasting and life-changing impression on Anthony Grice.

It all started when Anthony, along with other service men and women, appeared in a 1970 Christmas video message, which aired on television. At the time, his father was on a merchant ship in Victorian waters with limited reception. "All they could hear were the voices. After I'd spoken, the officers stood up and saluted my father."

Once the ship docked at Port Kembla, on the New South Wales coast, his father visited the local RSL where he was a member. "He happened to be talking to the manager and obviously the conversation came up about me. Every week thereafter, that RSL manager sent me half a dozen beers to Vietnam! That to me wasn't so much about the beer, it was about what the RSLs were doing for their members."



Settling back into civilian life had its challenges. The little-known world of mental health difficulties wreaked havoc on Anthony for a while. "PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) wasn't even thought of. I basically didn't know why I didn't like the environment I was in, questions I could never answer because I didn't know."

With support from his father, who had served in World War Two, Anthony sat down for a candid conversation. "I just said there's something wrong. No enjoyment, no nothing."

It led him to a 35 year career in the Merchant Navy, where he did as much for the RSL as he could, including fundraising for the ANZAC

and Poppy Appeals.

Never far from his mind was the vow he made to give back to veteran services once he retired. Anthony became a member at Frankston RSL in 2001 and a few years later joined the committee. The rest, as they say, is history. Many know him as the Welfare Officer – a role that he finds immensely rewarding and priceless in its help to others. "We took out an electric wheelchair to a war widow...the smile on her face, that did it for me, that was good enough."

During the challenging times of Coronavirus, Anthony's ingenuity paid off, finding ways to work around tight restrictions to continue the RSL's welfare work. "You had to think, how can I think outside the square to do things?"

And he certainly did. From leaving groceries at front doors, to assisting members from the RSL Hello Program in various ways. "The priority is that we are there to help."