



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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## Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards winners announced

Australian Expedition Vehicles – a Townsville-based mechanical engineering business – was announced 2021 Outstanding Veterans' Employer of the Year by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, Andrew Gee, and the federal Member for Herbert, Phil Thompson OAM on 25 November 2021.



Managing Director of Australian Expedition Vehicles, Michael McMillan

The Outstanding Veterans' Employer of the Year is chosen from the winners of each of the Veterans' Employer of the Year categories, by an independent judging panel.

These awards acknowledge the diversity of organisations that employ and support veterans and their partners, as well as veterans who are making a significant contribution to the civilian workforce as either employees or entrepreneurs.

'Veterans have so much to offer the businesses of our country,' said Prime Minister Scott Morrison, when he spoke about the Award recipients.

Minister Gee said the awards highlight how veterans can make a difference to business.

Australian Expedition Vehicles design, build and deliver specialised military and civilian off-road vehicles and provide vehicle engineering, modification and maintenance support services. A worthy recipient of the accolade of Outstanding Veterans' Employer, it places a strong focus on providing employment opportunities to veterans experiencing difficulties, and supporting them within the boundaries of their rehabilitation.

Of particular note are this year's individual award winners, like Ben Davoren and Chris de Bono.

Ben, winner of the Veteran Employee of the Year Award, is commended for his contribution post-service as Training and Business Development Manager at

TacMed Australia. 'Ben deployed on combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and has shared his ADF knowledge and experience to train our first responders, positively impacting the lives of many,' said the Prime Minister.

Veteran Entrepreneur of the Year, Chris de Bono of Meru Foods established his miso-fermenting business in Tasmania and now services the Australian and international restaurant market.

Chris successfully used his skills gained during his 14 years in the Navy and the reserves to start an innovative food company,' Minister Gee said. 'He is an outstanding example of an entrepreneurial and dedicated individual who is leading the way in private business.'

For the full list of winners see pages 16-17.



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The making of five-time Paralympian Greg Smith

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50th anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and Battle of Nui Le

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## Another fantastic Veterans' Health Week

Despite some challenges with COVID-19 restrictions, the veteran community came together to put on some fantastic activities for Veterans' Health Week. This year's theme, *Get Moving*, encouraged everyone to engage in physical activity – one of the most important contributors to an individual's overall health and wellbeing.

With 730 events on the calendar, there was plenty on offer.

Two major events kicked off during Veterans' Health Week, which ran from 16 to 24 October. They included, including the Bravery Trek Challenge 2021 launched

by the Governor-General at Government House in Canberra.

The Trek encourages participants to walk, run or cycle 100 kilometres – representing 100 years of the Royal Australian Air Force.

The first of Swiss 8's BBQs were also held as part of their 'A BBQ to Remember' initiative to encourage people to come together and have conversations about mental health.

Some great images and stories were shared on social media from ex-service organisations and community groups.

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A wheelchair rugby event organised by Mates4Mates

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## FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Liz Cosson AM CSC  
Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

# 2021 – A year in review

As we approach the end of another year that has tested our resilience, our patience and our ability to adapt to ever-changing conditions and requirements, I think it is important to pause and acknowledge the size of the challenges and hardships we have faced.

For those who have struggled with the isolation of lockdown, you are not alone. The conditions under which we have lived this year, have tested us all. I want any of our veterans and any of their family members who have felt the stress of these conditions to know that there is support available for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We may feel the toll of this global pandemic for many years to come and safeguarding our health and wellbeing, and supporting those who need help the most, is our utmost priority.

Not only should we be caring for our own wellbeing, but let's ensure we all reach out and check on our friends and family. We may not know the toll this year has had on them until we ask.

Inspector-General of the ADF Afghanistan Inquiry, as well as the withdrawal from Afghanistan. I know watching the footage since the withdrawal has been difficult, I have found it confronting myself. It is important at times like these, to remember the contribution and the real difference our serving members and veterans have made on the ground during conflicts such as Afghanistan and be proud of them for their remarkable service to our country.

We have also seen the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran suicide commence hearings in November and December and we will see these continuing in the new year. This Royal Commission is an opportunity for our veteran community to come together to be part of the process to find solutions to help reduce the instances of these tragedies in our community. It may be very difficult for some of you to share your stories, but if you can, I strongly encourage you to make a submission and be involved in this critical process.



DVA Secretary Liz Cosson AM CSC and Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks AM on Remembrance Day 2021

*"What is the bravest thing you've ever said?" asked the boy. "Help," said the horse.*

– The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse

by Charlie Mackesy

This year the Defence and veteran communities have continued to witness the impact of the findings and the response to the

Throughout the changing requirements of 2021, our department has had to be fast and innovative to maintain our services

and support for veterans and their families and to mark significant dates of commemoration.

It's quite incredible how we've been able to utilise the virtual world to ensure we still marked important national events such as Anzac Day and to hold commemorative ceremonies for significant anniversaries such as the 50th Anniversary of Operation Overlord, including the Battle of Long Khanh, and the 50th anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and the Battle of Nui Le in the Vietnam War.

I was also honoured once again to be able to attend our national commemoration service at the Australian War Memorial on Remembrance Day this year. I continue to be struck by the significance of the day not only to veterans and their families but to all Australians.

Finally, as we head into the holiday period, I'd like to thank the veteran community, ex-service organisations and the staff of DVA for their tireless efforts to support our veterans and their families,

particularly under very challenging circumstances this year. The way our entire community continues to band together for the greater good of our serving and ex-serving members and their families continues to motivate and inspire me.

Wishing you all a very safe and peaceful holiday season and all the very best for a wonderful and prosperous 2022.

Liz

**For more regular news, visit [dva.gov.au/latest-news](https://dva.gov.au/latest-news) where you can also subscribe to receive *DVA e-news*, which we send out every two months.**



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**web:** [dva.gov.au](https://dva.gov.au)





## FROM THE MINISTER

The Hon Andrew Gee MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel

At the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month – our nation fell silent to observe Remembrance Day, and honour all those who have given their lives in the defence of Australia and the freedoms that we so often take for granted.

It was an incredibly moving experience to lay a wreath at the Stone of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial, and to pause to remember the more than 100,000 Australians who have given everything defending our country and our values.

The Memorial looks quite different at the moment as work continues on the \$500 million development project, which will ensure it remains at the heart of Australia's continuing story of service and sacrifice.

The original sandstone architecture and the sacred areas within the memorial will remain unchanged.

The role of our service personnel in peacekeeping operations and Afghanistan will rightly be a focus.

Australia's withdrawal from Afghanistan has been particularly difficult for many of our veterans, service personnel and their families.

As the situation was unfolding, I directed the Department of Veterans' Affairs to reach out to our Defence community as well their families to offer support.

I have also had the opportunity to personally meet with ex-service organisations and many who served in Afghanistan.

All who deployed to Afghanistan should be very proud of all they achieved there.

They dismantled terrorism networks, saved lives, improved medical services, built critical infrastructure, and helped a generation of women and girls access education and build careers.

Our nation will never forget their enormous contribution in making Australia, Afghanistan and the world, a safer and better place. And we will never forget the 41 Australians who died in that conflict.

The experience of our contemporary veterans highlights the critical importance of providing ongoing support for our veterans and their families.

This year, the Australian Government is investing \$11.7 billion in

funding to support around 336,000 ex-service personnel and their family members.

This includes more than \$40 million to establish Veteran Wellbeing Centres across Australia, which provide access to a range of support services, better targeted to the specific needs of veterans in local communities.

The Australian Government is also investing \$32 million this financial year alone in grant programs to help the many groups that provide complementary services to our veterans.

We have much to be proud of when it comes to recognising and supporting those who have served our nation, however we must always strive to do things better.

*"I am determined to address the high rates of suicide among the ADF and veteran community."*

There has been good work in recent years to improve the transition process from Defence to civilian life, including my department engaging earlier with Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, embedding Veteran Support Officers on 56 bases, and a tailored needs-based approach that includes the use of transition coaches.

We have provided \$17.7 million to establish a Joint Transition Authority (JTA) within the Department of Defence and I am keen to see it fast-tracked.

In the recent Budget, \$98.5 million was delivered for hundreds of new claims processing officers in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I don't want to see these officers dropped into an inefficient system, tangling themselves in red tape. That's why independent consultants McKinsey & Company have been brought in to improve the system and cut waiting times.

Veterans' legislation has long been cumbersome and confusing, and so I have instructed my department to create a roadmap to harmonise the three Acts dealing with compensation and rehabilitation. This



Minister Gee laying a wreath at the Australian War Memorial on Remembrance Day

is a long-term piece of work, but it is vitally important that it begins.

Some issues such as veteran incarceration and homelessness are on my agenda to address with the states and territories. All levels of government need to be working together to improve the care and treatment of veterans.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which has now commenced public hearings, will be a watershed moment for Australia.

We will hear many heartbreaking and tragic stories from veterans and those who have lost loved ones to suicide.

Difficult though these stories will be to hear, our nation must listen to them and must hear them.

Mistakes and failings must be acknowledged. Truth must be told. Action must be taken.

This is the moment.

Let me be clear, we will not wait for the Royal Commission to finish to get cracking on reforms.

I am determined to address the high rates of suicide among the ADF and veteran community.

And I am determined to deliver even better outcomes for veterans and their families.

Displayed with pride at the Australian War Memorial is a portrait of Australia's first Victoria Cross recipient, Sir Neville Howse.

He won his Victoria Cross during the Boer War, risking his own life to save the life of another.

Under heavy fire, his horse was shot from underneath him before he carried his wounded comrade to safety.

Besides being a soldier, he was also a surgeon and a statesman, serving in our Parliament as the federal Member for Calare. He also served as mayor of my home town of Orange.

In March of 1929, the *Western Champion* newspaper described Sir Neville as 'the best friend that the soldiers possess...with hundreds of soldiers who can thank him for the splendid way in which they have been treated'.

May the Parliament and the departments that support it always be guided by the example of Sir Neville.



## DVA services during the holiday season

DVA will continue to provide support to veterans and their families during the holiday season. However, please be aware that some services will be impacted from Christmas Day 2021 to Monday 3 January 2022 inclusive.

### Counselling, mental health support and crisis accommodation

The Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling line is available to support members of the current and ex-service community and their families 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Phone 1800 011 046 toll-free.

Safe Zone Support is an anonymous counselling line that's available 24/7 to support members of the current and ex-service community and their families. Phone 1800 142 072 toll-free.

If you require urgent assistance, please call 000. If you are unwell, please contact your local doctor or go to your nearest hospital.

Short-term crisis accommodation is available for eligible people. Please phone 1800 011 046 or visit [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au)

For further mental health information and support, visit [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au)

### Transport bookings for medical treatment

DVA staff will be available to process transport requests for medical treatment on 29, 30 and 31 December. Please call 1800 550 455.

The service will be closed on 25, 26, 27 and 28 December and 1, 2 and 3 January, resuming 4 January. If transport is required on these days and has not been pre-booked, you can pay for the travel and seek reimbursement when we re-open. Or, if you are an existing MyService user, you can make new transport bookings and review existing trips online.

For travel in an emergency always dial 000.

### Defence Service Homes Insurance

For enquiries, or help with a policy or insurance claim phone 1300 552 662 available 24 hours seven days a week.

For payments, phone 1300 304 989 for the cost of a local call.

### Hospital admissions

Doctors can admit DVA patients into hospital over the holiday period and request retrospective approval for the admission, where required, when DVA resumes full services.

### Pharmaceutical approvals

There will be no reduction in services across the Christmas/New Year period. Providers seeking prior approval for pharmaceuticals can call the Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre (VAPAC) 24 hours a day on 1800 552 580.

### Pension payments

Pension paydays are not affected over this period. So the last payment in 2021 will be on Thursday 30 December 2021. The first payment of the New Year will be Thursday 13 January 2022.

### Incapacity payments

The last Incapacity payment will take place on 23 December 2021. You may receive your Incapacity payment earlier on 20–21 December 2021. The next payment after this is due on 6 January 2022, although this may also be paid earlier on 4–5 January.

However, because of differing arrangements by various banks during the holiday period, which are beyond DVA's control, the precise day of the week you receive this payment may differ from usual. You may wish to make arrangements to ensure you have enough funds to cover any direct deposit payments.

### VAN offices, General Enquiries and Open Arms centres

As usual, DVA offices and shopfronts, and general enquiry services will be closed for the Christmas / New Year period from Saturday, 25 December 2021, reopening on Tuesday, 4 January 2022.

This includes DVA's General Enquiries phone line and email services, DVA's Veterans' Access Network (VAN) offices interview service and Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling centres (note that, as mentioned above, the Open Arms counselling phone line will remain open 24/7 throughout the holiday season).

## New functionality to access sensitive DVA emails

If you receive an email from DVA containing your personal information, it will be marked as '[SEC=OFFICIAL:SENSITIVE]'.

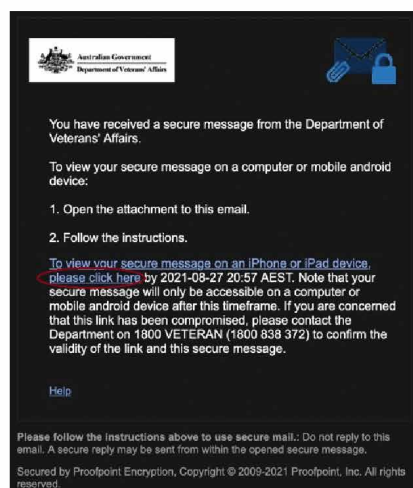
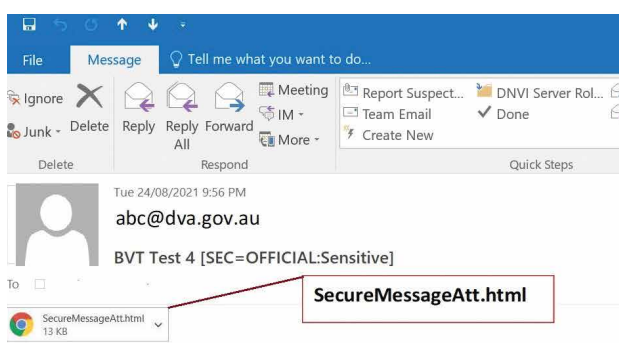
You can access these emails via one of the following two processes:

1. Open the attachment called 'SecureMessageAtt.html', if you are using a **computer** or **Android device**, or
2. Click on the 'click here' link, if you are using an **iPhone** or **iPad**.

**Note:** the link expires seven days after the email has been sent from DVA. If you wish to access the email after this period, you are able to do so via a computer or Android device. Alternatively, you may request the sender to email the link again by responding to the email.

If you are concerned that the link in the notification email has been compromised, please contact the department on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) to confirm the security and validity of the link.

For first time users of this secure service, you will be required to set up a secure email account



to access your sensitive email. To set this up, you will first be asked a number of questions to create this account. If you are having trouble setting up an account, please email [secure.services@dva.gov.au](mailto:secure.services@dva.gov.au) for assistance.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir

I can empathise with Phillip Daniel and his letter to the editor in the July 2021 edition.

I too joined the Australian Imperial Force at 18 in 1944 but did not make a posting to a war zone until late April in 1945. I was with my unit at two of the amphibious landings on Borneo – at Tarakan and Balikpapan.

When the war finished in August, I was a few weeks short of the six months needed to have been granted the 1939–45 Star.

As I was apparently not deemed to have been at the Second World War, I have not attended an Anzac Day march since 1948 as I have felt I didn't belong.

Best regards

Brian Winchcombe  
Dunsborough, WA

*If you have at any point served in the Navy, Army or Air Force, you are as entitled as anyone to feel immensely proud of your service, and to march on Anzac Day. All Australians owe you an enormous debt of gratitude.*

– DVA

# Two reports provide valuable insights into veteran suicide

The death of any Defence member or veteran is felt deeply across the entire Defence and veteran community.

Addressing this issue is a key priority for DVA and the Government and two recently released reports provide vital information to help us do that. They bring a focus to this critical issue, which is so important to our community.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) released its annual suicide monitoring report, outlining instances of suicide in the Defence and veteran community, and the Government released the final report of the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention.

Both reports were released on 29 September 2021 and provide crucial information that helps to deepen the understanding of instances of suicide in the veteran community and provides insights into how best to support those who need it most.

Importantly, these reports were released prior to the commencement of formal hearings by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and they provide up-to-date data and information for its consideration.

You can view both of these reports online:

- AIHW: [aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au) and search for 'Australian Defence Force'
- The interim National Commissioner's report is available from the homepage of her website: [nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au](http://nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au)

## Support

Help is available, including:

- free, lifetime mental health care for anyone with even a single day of continuous full-time service in the Australian Defence Force
- immediate financial assistance for those submitting mental health claims
- case management for those with complex needs.

Services that understand the military experience are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling offers free and confidential counselling to the veteran community on 1800 011 046
- Safe Zone is available for current and former ADF personnel on 1800 142 072. Calls to Safe Zone are confidential and not recorded.



# Anti-malarial medication support available for veterans

DVA is working with private health insurer Bupa to deliver a national health assessment program for veterans concerned about having taken the anti-malarial medications mefloquine and tafenoquine during service in the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

The program enables veterans to receive a comprehensive health assessment free of charge from a Bupa-contracted GP. The GPs delivering the health assessment have been selected on the grounds of their unique experience in providing medical care to veterans.

Veterans will receive a health support recommendations report at the end of the assessment, which forms the basis for clinical and diagnostic testing and appropriate pathways for ongoing treatment by the veteran's regular GP.

GPs are delivering health assessments in:

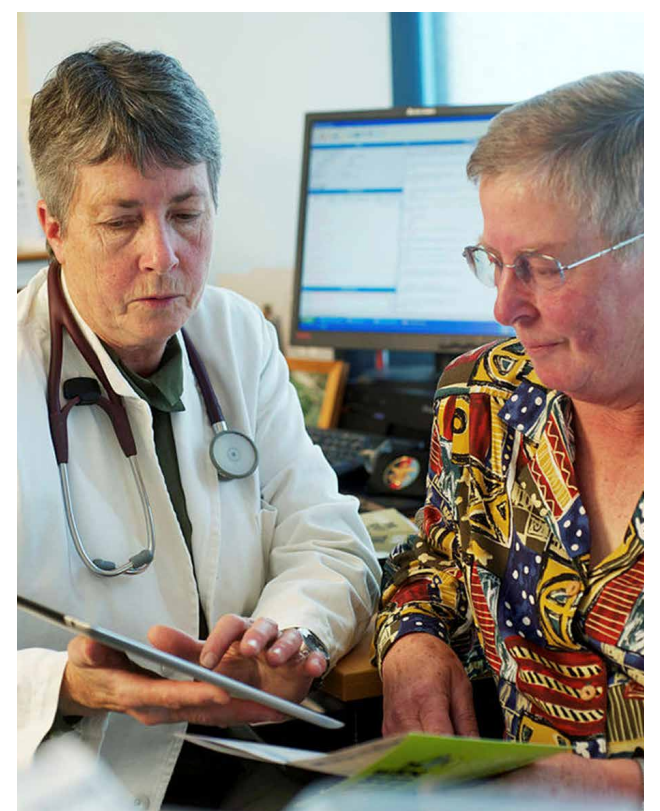
- Queensland (Brisbane, Ipswich and Townsville)
- Victoria (Dandenong and Mildura)

- Sydney
- ACT region
- Adelaide
- Fremantle
- Darwin.

Other locations will be added as the program expands. Telehealth appointments are also available.

DVA encourages any veterans, including current serving members of the ADF, who may be interested in receiving a health assessment to call DVA's 1800 MEFLOQUINE hotline (1800 633 567) or Bupa directly on 1800 612 798 to schedule an appointment.

Further information about the program, including how to get support and how to lodge a claim, is available on the DVA website ([dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au)) and search for 'mefloquine'.



# How you can support Afghan refugees and evacuees



Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is inviting serving and ex-serving personnel and their families to support Afghan refugees and evacuees arriving in Australia.

CRSA has established a Group Mentorship Program, which provides Australians with an opportunity to provide hands-on support to Afghan refugees.

If you've been affected by what's happening in Afghanistan, this may be a great way to help out.

You can either join an existing group (subject to location and availability), or form a new one with other veterans, friends, family and neighbours.

Lisa Button is the chief executive of CRSA, which has put together a network of communities

in Australia that want to sponsor refugees.

'It involves things like helping [refugees] find their first home to rent or helping people learn English, or help finding employment when they arrive in the country,' she says.

Ms Button said the organisation asks people to commit themselves to help for one year.

## What's involved

A mentor group comprises at least five individuals who live in the same geographic community and are keen to provide practical support to refugees. The groups complete an internationally-developed training course and undergo a basic application and screening process in preparation for providing

this support. Mentor groups are made up of friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues – basically any group of Australians who feel they have the capacity to give time each week to helping a refugee newcomer.

Group members should come from more than one family or household to ensure that the group can keep supporting their refugee mentee household should any one mentor move away or become unable to continue their mentoring work. Having a varied group of mentors will also provide your refugee mentee(s) with the benefits that come with being able to access a broader network of support, knowledge, experience and expertise.

Mentor Groups work with mentees to identify areas where support is needed, supplementing the support that is provided by any government-funded settlement services. Mentor groups use their own local knowledge, networks, expertise and experience to help refugees achieve their personal goals and successfully integrate into their new community.

The following are some of the things Mentor Groups provide support for:

- finding suitable employment
- securing suitable housing in a regional area with no migrant settlement services

- enrolling and better participation in education
- practising English
- learning to drive
- understanding how to get overseas qualifications recognised
- establishing a small business
- accessing local services
- making new friends.

## How to get involved

For more information, including how to apply, visit the Group Mentorship Program page of the CRSA website ([refugeesponsorship.org.au](http://refugeesponsorship.org.au)).

CRSA is running online public information sessions to give people a better understanding of the program and to find out if it's right for them.

The Australian Government is working to ensure that visa options continue to be available to Afghan nationals, both within Afghanistan and those displaced from their home country, through Australia's long-standing Humanitarian and Migration Programs. Those in Afghanistan, or who are Afghan nationals, who need to enquire about a visa or citizenship application, can contact the Department of Home Affairs on 02 6196 0196 or +61 2 6196 0196 or visit their website ([homeaffairs.gov.au](http://homeaffairs.gov.au)).

# Senate Inquiry into Afghanistan engagement

A Senate Inquiry into Australia's engagement in Afghanistan is being conducted.

The recent events in Afghanistan and Australia's subsequent withdrawal continues to be front of mind for many Australians, especially current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and their families and those who served in there.

The Senate Inquiry will look into a number of matters around Australia's support and engagement in Afghanistan over the last 20 years leading up to, and including, our

withdrawal from Afghanistan. The final report is expected to be delivered when Parliament resumes in early 2022.

To those who served in Afghanistan, please be assured that whatever the report contains, your service in Afghanistan on behalf of Australia is deeply valued. You did an incredibly important job, in the most difficult of circumstances, and you should be proud of your service.

If you need support, please get in touch with any of the services listed on the right.

	
1800 011 046	1800 142 072
	
1800 624 608	1800 628 036

## Support hotlines

Safe Zone Support – call 1800 142 072.

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling – call 1800 011 046.

Defence all-hours Support Line – call 1800 628 036.

Defence Family Helpline – call 1800 624 608.

For advice, claims and support services, call DVA on 1800 VETERAN.

# Pension rates indexation from 20 September 2021

Certain veterans' pensions were increased on 20 September 2021 based on the Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI). As pension rates are calculated on a daily basis, pensions paid on 23 September 2021 were paid partly at the old rate and partly at the new rate. The first full payment at the new rate was on 7 October 2021.

The maximum rate of single Service Pension has risen by \$14.80 to \$967.50 per fortnight and the maximum rate for couples has increased by \$11.20 to \$729.30 per fortnight (for each person).

The Special Rate of Disability Pension (TPI payment) has increased by \$23.20 to \$1,487.90 per fortnight. Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) has increased by \$12.90 to \$822.40 per fortnight and the 100 per cent General Rate of Disability Pension has increased by \$8.30 to \$529.10 per fortnight.

The pension paid to war widow(er)s has increased by \$15.30 to \$984.20 per fortnight, while the ceiling rate of the Income Support Supplement has risen to \$291.40 per fortnight.

Payments have also increased for benefits under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). The MRCA Wholly Dependent Partner payment has increased by \$7.65 to \$492.10 per fortnight.

The indexation factor used to index pensions in March and September can be based on either the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI) or Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE). For 20 September 2021, the indexation was driven by the PBLCI.

NEW PENSION RATES FROM 20 SEPTEMBER 2021			
SERVICE PENSION	Old rate (fortnightly)	New rate (fortnightly)	Increase (fortnightly)
Single person	\$952.70	\$967.50	\$14.80
Couples (each)	\$718.10	\$729.30	\$11.20
Single person – transitional	\$796.30	\$807.30	\$11.00
Couples (each) – transitional	\$642.40	\$651.20	\$8.80
WAR WIDOWS			
War widow(er)'s pension	\$968.90	\$984.20	\$15.30
Income support supplement (ceiling rate)	\$286.80	\$291.40	\$4.60
DISABILITY PENSION			
TPI (Special rate)	\$1,464.70	\$1,487.90	\$23.20
Intermediate rate	\$994.60	\$1,010.40	\$15.80
EDA	\$809.50	\$822.40	\$12.90
100 per cent	\$520.80	\$529.10	\$8.30
10 per cent	\$59.01	\$59.84	\$0.83
MRCA			
Wholly dependent partner payment	\$484.45	\$492.10	\$7.65
Special Rate Disability pension (SRDP)	\$732.35	\$743.95	\$11.60

*These are the maximum rates of payment and include any Energy Supplement payable.*

A full list of the new rates is available from the DVA website in the CLIK tool under the Quick links heading. For further information, contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or visit [dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au).



## New scheme for ex-ADF firefighters

In September this year, a new scheme was launched to support Australian Defence Force (ADF) firefighters who participated in fire training at Royal Australian Air Force Base Point Cook between 1 January 1957 and 31 December 1986.

The Scheme recognises the risks faced by this particular group of firefighters who, in the absence of adequate personal protective equipment, were potentially exposed to a wide range of hazardous substances during fire suppression training.

ADF firefighters who are eligible under the Scheme will have simplified access to compensation from DVA if they are diagnosed with any of a list of 31 specified conditions, including all cancers, without having to provide evidence that their condition is related to their service. Compensation for other conditions will be assessed using the standard claiming provisions that exist

under the Act that applies to the condition in question.

In addition, eligible veterans under the Scheme can automatically access:

- free medical screening for colorectal cancer and melanoma; and/or
- free health and lifestyle advice tailored to the individual through DVA's Heart Health Program for 12 months.

To apply under the Scheme, and/or to read the full list of conditions, visit the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) and search 'firefighter scheme' or go to [www.dva.gov.au/adf-firefighters-scheme](http://www.dva.gov.au/adf-firefighters-scheme).

# If in doubt, see your GP

The veteran community is about mates supporting mates, and while I wouldn't expect that you would necessarily think of your GP as your 'mate', I do hope you see them as a trusted guide to your health and our health system.

I have been a practising GP for more than 30 years and am constantly humbled by the trust people place in me, and am grateful for the bonds I form with my patients.

We recognise how central GPs are to the healthcare of veterans and their families, so we're improving how DVA interacts with GPs. As a first step, we have developed a dedicated general practitioner information page on the DVA website to help busy GPs find everything on one page. We are also working closely with GPs to improve their knowledge of veteran health issues and DVA services, through Primary Health Networks.

Nurses, doctors and pharmacists consistently top Australian and international polls on the most trusted of professions. I hope if you have been feeling any nervousness about getting vaccinated against COVID that you have been able to discuss this with your GP. Similarly, if you have seen something about possible cures or preventive strategies in relation to COVID, I would urge you to discuss these with your GP. Many of them don't work and may even be dangerous.

While vaccination remains your best protection against COVID, the development of safe and effective treatments is another element that will help us manage this pandemic.

Recently there have been some exciting developments in potential treatments for COVID. You may have read about one of these, Molnupiravir, which is currently being evaluated by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). This is a new antiviral medication that, unlike other current treatments, comes as a pill taken for five days like a course of antibiotics. A recent study in people with at least one risk factor for poor outcomes from COVID showed that if the pill was started

prescribing it to ensure it is only used for those infections for which it is proven safe and effective, such as Strongyloides or scabies. While Ivermectin did show an effect on the Coronavirus in the laboratory, this has not been supported in human trials. Importantly, the dose required to mimic the laboratory-based trials is significantly higher than we usually use and there have been hospital admissions resulting from people overdosing on the medication.

*"The NSW Poisons Hotline has recently raised concern about the increasing number of calls regarding home remedies that supposedly prevent or cure COVID".*

within five days of symptom onset, there was a 50% reduction in hospitalisation and / or death in those people treated. If this pill gets registered in Australia, it is highly likely it will be available via GPs. There are currently three treatments for COVID-19 provisionally registered by the TGA, however they need to be given by injection.

There are some medications that continue to be promoted in the public domain but that should only be used in clinical trials. The most publicised of these is probably the anti-parasite drug Ivermectin. Its recent misuse has resulted in the TGA placing restrictions on

Other medications that should only be used in the context of a clinical trial include the anti-malarial Chloroquine, the anti-parasite drug Nitazoxanide, and the combination of Ivermectin and the antibiotic Doxycycline. It is very important that you do not take these drugs to treat COVID. Medications that should also not be used to treat COVID include aspirin, the antibiotic Azithromycin and the anti-gout drug colchicine.

The NSW Poisons Hotline has recently raised concern about the increasing number of calls regarding home remedies that supposedly



**DR TRISH BATCHELOR**

Deputy Chief Health Officer

Department of Veterans' Affairs

prevent or cure COVID, many of which can be dangerous. These include inhaling hydrogen peroxide, gargling or swallowing antiseptics, bathing in bleach, spraying face masks with disinfectants and taking high-dose vitamins.

The best way to protect yourself against COVID remains vaccination and following the other public health recommendations. Please speak with your GP if you have any concerns. If you prefer to research yourself there are many great evidence-based resources available including:

- The Australian Academy of Science *The Science of Immunisation* booklet – [science.org.au](http://science.org.au)
- The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance – [ncirs.org.au](http://ncirs.org.au)
- The Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre – [mvec.mcri.edu.au](http://mvec.mcri.edu.au)

Until next time, stay well.

## Accessing your COVID vaccination certificate

By Dr Trish Batchelor, Deputy Chief Health Officer

### Booking your vaccination

The simplest way to check your eligibility and book a vaccination is through the Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccination page ([covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au](http://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au)).

### Getting your vaccination certificate

If you received your vaccination through your regular GP clinic, the simplest way is to ask them to **print a copy** for you.

Or you can phone the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

Call their dedicated Veteran and Defence Support Line on **1800 653 809, select Option 4** and the helpful hotline staff can mail you a copy of your certificate.

The AIR Veteran and Defence Support Line can also help you check if you already have a Medicare number. Many veterans do have a Medicare number but aren't aware of it, so it is worth checking.

**If you have a Medicare number,** you can access your digital COVID vaccine certificate through

myGov ([my.gov.au](http://my.gov.au)) and via the Express Plus Medicare app on your mobile phone. There are some easy-to-follow instructions available on the 'How to get proof of your COVID-19 vaccinations' page of the Services Australia website ([servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au)).

**If you are a DVA card holder and do not have a Medicare number,** you will need to access your My Health Record and link it to your myGov account. The Australian Digital Health Agency ([digitalhealth.gov.au](http://digitalhealth.gov.au)) has a help

line (1800 723 471 – 24 hours, seven days a week). They will verify your identity and give you an access code (also called an Identity Verification Code) to link your My Health Record and MyGov account. This way, you will be able to get a digital copy of your vaccination certificate via MyGov.

### Further information

See our 'COVID vaccination roll-out FAQ' page ([dva.gov.au/covid-faq](http://dva.gov.au/covid-faq)). However, if you have any specific concerns you should talk to your trusted GP.

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Top left: The Bravery Trek Challenge 2021; top right: a learn to surf activity run jointly by the Invictus Pathways Program and Invictus Australia; bottom: various activities organized by Mates4Mates

## Another fantastic Veterans' Health Week

*Continued from front page*

The Learn to Surf program, run jointly by the Invictus Pathways Program and Invictus Australia, saw a group of brave veterans zip up their wetsuits and head into the surf off Middleton Beach, South Australia.

Mates4Mates held activities across the country. For instance, its Northern Territory team held a fun day of activities for local veterans and their families with golf, archery, table tennis and group walks on offer.

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling partnered with

Invictus Australia and RSL Australia to hold a national Team Veteran Parkrun, encouraging veterans and their families everywhere to lace up their runners and hit the pavement.

DVA would like to thank all those in the veteran community who hosted an event as well as those

who attended an event. This year's theme, Get Moving, is an important one for our overall health and wellbeing, and it was fantastic to see so many smiling faces enjoying getting active and connecting with others. To read more about Veterans' Health Week, visit [www.dva.gov.au/vhw](http://www.dva.gov.au/vhw).

## A call for those looking for a life-changing life



Are you, or someone you know, considering a career change? Caring for the vulnerable in our community can be fulfilling and rewarding, and you can work with a diverse range of people.

Right now, the care and support sector is looking for Australians to work across aged care, disability and veterans' support.

Many people can apply, from students or young people looking for meaningful work, to professionals looking to transfer their skills into the sector, and people who bring lived experience to support a diverse range of people.

If you, or someone you know, would like to learn more about working in the sector, visit [www.careandsupportjobs.gov.au](http://www.careandsupportjobs.gov.au) to find out more. The website includes detailed information and a range of resources for people considering care and support work, as well as for potential employers.

## Support for the homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless

For veterans who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, there is support available.

You can contact Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling on 1800 011 046 for 24/7 support. They can provide short-term crisis accommodation if you need immediate housing because of a potential crisis. You can also speak to military-aware counsellors and peers who can help you get the support you need.

You can also call DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). Our support officers can check you are receiving all the DVA support you are eligible for. This can include:

- free, lifetime mental health care for anyone with even a single day of full-time Australian Defence Force (ADF) service

- healthcare for service-related injuries or conditions
- immediate financial support when submitting mental health claims
- assistance with transition from the ADF, and support to find civilian employment.

DVA is continuing to address risk factors associated with veteran homelessness and working with the homelessness sector to help it better understand veterans' needs and support pathways.

We encourage any veteran who needs help to reach out – support is available.

Information is also available on DVA's website: [dva.gov.au/homelessness-support](http://dva.gov.au/homelessness-support)

## The importance of being of service to others

Dr Martin Luther King Jr once said that life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'

The principle of 'service' is a core value of the Australian Defence Force – *the selflessness of character to place the security and interests of our nation and its people ahead of my own*. The Australian community has at its core a sense of community, a sense of having a go, and of looking after your mates.

Australians spend more than 700 million hours volunteering each year, according to Volunteering Australia. Contributing to the health and wellbeing of others is something that as Australians we are very good at. Look at the outpouring of goodwill and generosity during our current pandemic, the recent bushfires, floods, and any other disaster that has beset the nation, where we roll up our sleeves and help. We have also been there when others have experienced disasters, including our Pacific neighbours.

*"In these unprecedented times, it is even more important to remember that a little bit of kindness can go an awful long way."*

These acts of service to others, these acts of kindness, not only benefit the receiver, but also the giver. Giving our time willingly to help others has been found to improve health in a number of domains. It promotes belonging, boosts feel-good hormones such as serotonin, increases self-esteem and brings a sense of purpose, of making a difference, to our lives and the lives of others.

For those dealing with mental health challenges, volunteering has been found to help people feel more socially connected, creating healthier relationships and lessening social isolation, loneliness and depression. Research has also shown that volunteering may also lower stress and blood pressure and promote longevity.

There are many ways you can be of service within the veteran community. Here are some suggestions:

**Mentor Afghan refugees:** What has transpired in Afghanistan over recent months has shocked, angered and saddened many. For those who would like to assist, there is an organisation that would love your help. Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) is inviting serving and ex-serving personnel and their families to support Afghan refugees and evacuees arriving in Australia. The organisation is asking for volunteers to become mentors to assist newly arrived refugees to find a home, learn English, and/or find employment. CRSA is running online public information sessions to provide more information and answer questions people may have. For more information, including how to apply, visit the Group Mentorship Program page of the CRSA website ([refugeesponsorship.org.au](http://refugeesponsorship.org.au)).

**Legacy:** You can make a difference to the families who have experienced the loss or injury of a loved one in military service. There are many ways you can get involved, from fundraising to volunteering. These include becoming a community visitor, lending your expertise in areas such as IT, marketing or fundraising, being a friendly voice over the phone, or helping during Legacy week. Visit [www.legacy.com.au](http://www.legacy.com.au).

**Veterans' Health Week (VHW):** VHW takes place every year, in October, and is a great opportunity to get involved in a range of creative and fun activities within the veteran community. Each year focuses on a specific theme from social



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Senior Mental Health Adviser

Department of Veterans' Affairs

connection, physical activity, through to nutrition. Ex-service or community organisations with established links to the veteran community are eligible to apply for VHW funding or to register an event on the VHW website – including unfunded events. Activities include fitness events, trivia challenges, as well as gardening, cooking and woodworking workshops. Visit the VHW page of the DVA website ([www.dva.gov.au/vhw](http://www.dva.gov.au/vhw)).

**Men's Health Peer Education (MHPE) program:** The program operates nationally through a network of trained volunteers and aims to raise awareness about men's health issues in the veteran community.

The program supports and educates members of the veteran and ex-serving community and encourages men to be pro-active in their own health and wellbeing.

The program has been running for more than 20 years and is supported by DVA and the ex-serving community. Visit the MHPE page of the DVA website ([dva.gov.au/mhpe](http://dva.gov.au/mhpe)).

*"The broader Australian community has at its core a sense of community, a sense of having a go, and of looking after your mates."*

A list of ex-service organisations in Australia can be found on the DVA website ([dva.gov.au/eso](http://dva.gov.au/eso)). If you are interested in volunteering more generally, information can be found on the Volunteering Australia website ([www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)), which has fact sheets for volunteers.

It also links to Volunteer Resource Centres in each state and territory.

You can search for volunteer positions in your local area through the Go Volunteer website ([govolunteer.com.au](http://govolunteer.com.au)).

Importantly, ReachOut ([au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)) has information on ways to look after yourself while volunteering.

It can be very satisfying to feel that we have helped make someone's day or life a little better.

There is also satisfaction, or course, in being thanked for being of assistance. In these unprecedented times, it is even more important to remember that a little bit of kindness can go an awful long way.



# WIDOWS' NEWS

Please be aware that articles in Widows' News have been submitted and written by war widows' organisations. The articles do not necessarily represent the views of DVA. Such organisations are encouraged to submit stories for publication by emailing [vetaffairs@dva.gov.au](mailto:vetaffairs@dva.gov.au).

## Extending the hand of friendship across generations

It is the 1980s and according to the social standards at the time, a woman can no longer hold the title 'war widow' if you marry another. Hurt, dejected and angry you accept the judgement and move on.

Your devotion however remains to the cause, to supporting your community, remembering your first husband, and honouring your current. You devote the next 30 years of your life to that.

That story is based on the experiences of women who once saw Australian War Widows as a place where they belonged. My heart breaks for these widows. I cannot imagine the judgement they endured. I look back and realise just how far societal standards have come in such a short time.

As a child of the 80s I never experienced this firsthand, though I saw it play out on TV. I remain almost horrified to realise it wasn't make believe. In the 80s, women who worked outside the home were still looked down on, especially if they had children. Pregnancy was a barrier to work and career. University education opportunities for women were limited and you married once, for life.

Though Australian War Widows have a history of being a semi-rebellious organisation, sadly and not immune to the social standards.

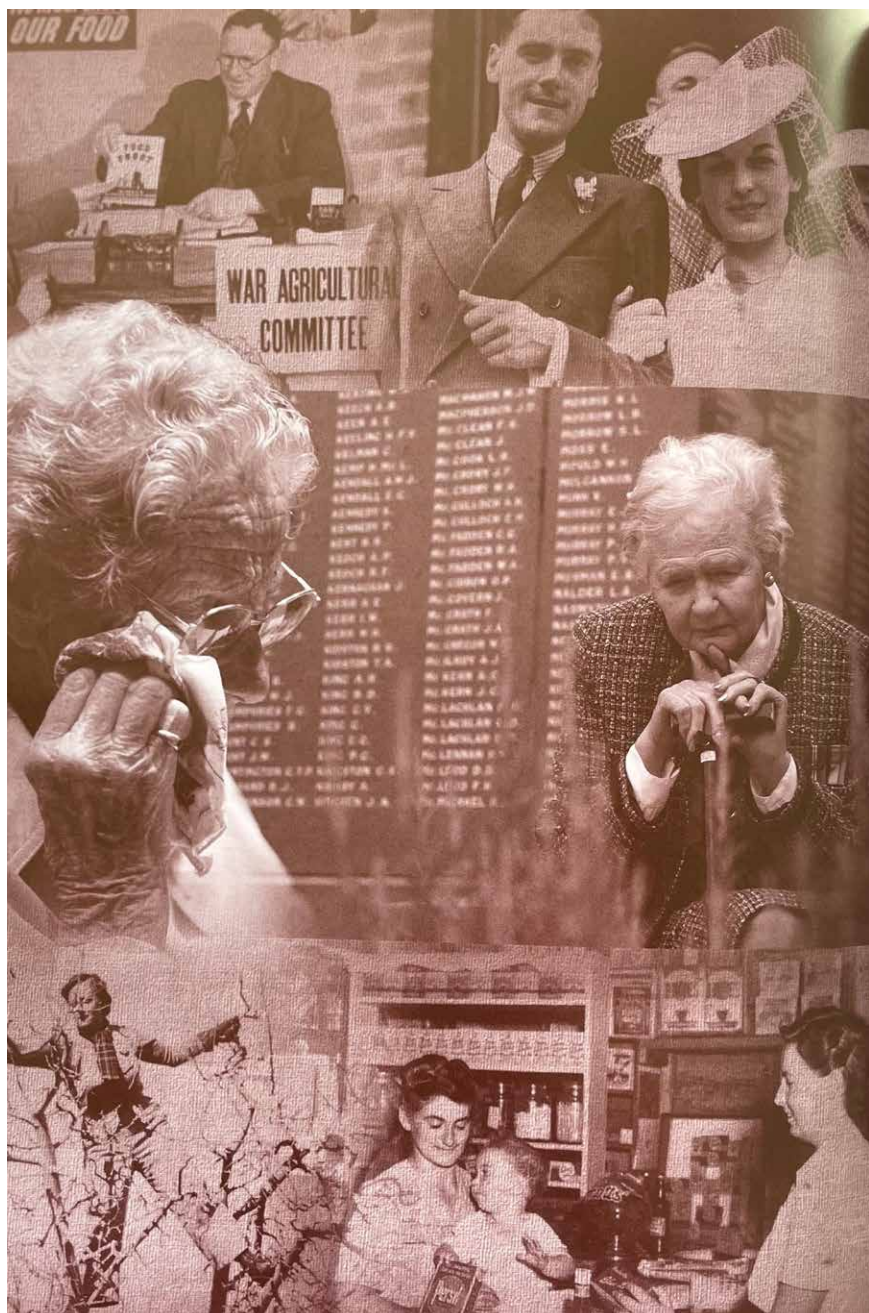
In the 80s, the Government made a policy decision to remove the War Widows pension from the widows who had remarried. As our membership at the time was tied to Government policy and definitions, the membership status of those women changed. Though the Government's policy decision was reversed, it turns out it wasn't as easy to amend the War Widows NSW Constitution. It didn't however stop the organisation

from trying and it was finally successful in the early 2000s. The changes then went further in 2020, opening the organisation up even further to all those with a connection to Defence service.

The changes made last year, and finalised this year, are a once in a generation change. We will modernise this organisation, rectify the misgivings of the past while reflecting current community standards.

Nearly 90% of the Australian War Widows NSW members voted for this change. They voted to extend the hand of friendship to those they let go of, to welcome new generations of women, to stand side by side with them, and build a stronger organisation.

They voted to realise the vision of Jessie Vasey OBE CBE, founder of Australian War Widows. Jessie never intended a fractured community of widows or women impacted by Defence Service. She never intended for us to replicate existing services and support. She intended to unite women around a cause close to their hearts, to care for and support them as only those who have walked similar journeys can.



I could not be prouder to be part of this organisation. Together with the Board and our team we lead a change that will reunite old friends, strengthen bonds, build bridges, and unite the silent majority.

You are not alone. Australian War Widows ([warwidowsnsw.com.au](http://warwidowsnsw.com.au)) is here for you now and tomorrow. We are stronger when we stand side by side together united by a common bond.

**Renee Wilson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Australian War Widows NSW**

## Queensland War Widows Pen Pal program

*By the Australian War Widows Queensland*

*The Australian War Widows Queensland Pen Pal Program aims to connect war widows from across Australia via letters or emails to enhance social connections, to support those who may be feeling isolated and to form ongoing friendships.*

Australian War Widows Queensland has operated a successful pen pal program since the COVID-19 pandemic began, connecting widows throughout the state.

Participants have said that receiving a letter from their pen pal has 'made their day so much better'.

We have one member who is almost 90 years old who has written to a widow in her 50s for over a year and a lovely bond has developed. Often older widows have so much

experience that younger widows can find so comforting.

To be part of this program, interested war widows can register and list their preferences such as:

- Letter or email
- Interests and hobbies
- Location of pen pal
- Age group

To register interest or to find out more contact the program coordinator Suzi Vincent on 0409 880 902 or [suzi@warwidowsqld.org.au](mailto:suzi@warwidowsqld.org.au).

Please be aware that articles in ESO News have been submitted and written by ex-service and related organisations. The articles do not necessarily represent the views of DVA. ESOs are welcome to submit stories for publication by emailing [vetaffairs@dva.gov.au](mailto:vetaffairs@dva.gov.au).

# RSL – A proud history, becoming even more relevant today

**By Major General Greg Melick AO RFD FANZCN SC (Retd)**  
**National President**  
**Returned & Services League of Australia**

The Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) is more than a century old, but the organisation continues to look to the future. It is seeking to assist new generations of veterans and their families and introducing contemporary programs and assistance in areas such as employment and mental health training.



With the modern-day pressures on veterans and service personnel, the RSL is perhaps even more relevant today than when it was established.

The RSL was founded in 1916 to address the lack of organised repatriation facilities and medical services available to those returning from service in the First World War. Many of these veterans returned to Australia with serious mental and physical disabilities and the RSL performed a vital role in securing ongoing support services and official recognition.

Today, these important aims remain a motivating force, but while honouring and respecting the past, the RSL continues to look forward. We are working hard to modernise our organisation to ensure that it is well-resourced and available to assist all veterans and their families. Our core mission has never changed but has continued to evolve to meet the needs of each generation of servicemen and women and their families, as well as the promotion of a secure, stable, and progressive Australia.

Current issues like the pending Royal Commission into and Defence and Veteran Suicide, the alleged war crimes in Afghanistan and the withdrawal from Afghanistan are being addressed and every possible assistance being provided.

The RSL is acutely aware that the situation

in Afghanistan is having a major impact on veterans of that conflict. They need to be assured that their effort and sacrifice is appreciated by Australia and was not in vain. The commitment, courage and contribution of those who served our nation in the conflict is well recognised by the RSL and its members.

The RSL's traditional roles of veteran welfare, advocacy and commemoration continue to be at the forefront, and new roles have been implemented and evolved in the areas of mental health and veteran employment. RSL Australia will be working with Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling over the next year to deliver Mental Health Literacy workshops across the country to the veteran community.

The RSL Veterans Employment Program is another new key initiative, to provide veterans and their families with services including resume development, counselling and employment placement assistance.

With a membership of about 150,000, supported by 3,700 Women's Auxiliary members, all managed through state branches and some 1,154 sub-branches, the RSL is the oldest, largest and most representative ex-service organisation in Australia.

Since its origins, the League has had a particular concern for the welfare of veterans, widows, and their

dependants. This includes practical support to those in need, the management of aged-care facilities, and programs and the promotion of commemorative activities.

The RSL plays an increasingly important role in providing the Australian Government, through the departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence, with a direct line of consultation with the veteran and serving communities in both the establishment and review of policies and practices impacting on our community.

In recent years, we have provided submissions to important reviews and inquiries on military superannuation, injury compensation and rehabilitation, disability pensions and recognition of families and members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) injured, wounded, or killed while serving.

Currently, we are preparing input to the review by the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal of unit recognition for ADF personnel who served in the Somalia conflict.

Our deep concern at the incidence of suicide, attempted suicide and the broader mental health issues confronting veterans is long-standing and well known. This is a very real and present problem that must be resolved.

For this reason, the RSL has been prominent in its representations to Government in the development of terms of reference for the forthcoming Royal Commission and will be presenting a detailed submission to hearings when they get underway. Our submission will represent the voices of all RSL members, veterans and their families and we are ready to provide all possible assistance during the operation of the Royal Commission.

We are also encouraging and will assist veterans to make individual submissions and representations to the Royal Commission, as well as providing access to mental health support, counselling, and further assistance both during and after the hearings.

The Royal Commission provides the opportunity to determine all the factors contributing to the poor mental health experience of veterans and the alarming incidence of suicide and attempted suicide. It provides a clear pathway for better outcomes for our veteran community in the future.

Importantly, through all our representations and activities, the RSL is apolitical, but we do work to help governments – state, territory and federal – meet their obligations, to veterans, Defence personnel and the broader Australian community.

Our state branches and National Office engage

with governments at all levels to enhance support and remove inequities for all veterans. Recognising there will always be limits on what is possible, we seek fairness and greater support for those in need.

We actively promote our policies on national issues, particularly the defence of Australia, conditions of service of serving members of the ADF and the development of a national defence infrastructure and defence industry.

The RSL has a strong and committed membership spread throughout the length and breadth of Australia. As an organisation, we work hard to ensure that our members' needs, and expectations are met and that we all share a strong sense of belonging and pride in our service and involvement in the RSL.

Over the last 100 years, the needs may have changed, our role and responsibilities grown and evolved, and our approach modernised and expanded, but our commitment to the veteran community is unbroken and our resolve to serve is now stronger than ever.

At its heart, the RSL is a service organisation. Our future remains in the hands of our committed members and the effective contribution we all make.

Lest we forget.

## New Brisbane memorial honours Afghanistan veterans



President and co-founder of 42 for 42 Sean Mulqueen with Defence Engagement Commissioner Stuart Smith AO DSC at the opening of the 42 for 42 Afghanistan War Memorial Garden

The 42 for 42 Afghanistan War Memorial Garden was officially opened in Brisbane on Saturday 16 October.

The memorial is designed to honour those Australians killed in action during the Afghanistan conflict, and those veterans who returned home and have lost their lives to depression, post-traumatic stress and other mental health issues.

Defence Engagement Commissioner Stuart Smith AO DSC said the Garden is a Brisbane touchpoint for our veteran community.

'It provides a space for reflection and commemoration of all who served in the Afghanistan conflict, but especially for the families of fallen Afghanistan veterans,' Commissioner Smith said.

'Here lies a marker for the 41 soldiers killed in action in Afghanistan and a 42nd marker for those who have died since their service.

'I want to commend the President of the non-profit organisation, 42 for 42, Mr Sean Mulqueen, and his indefatigable tribe of volunteers for their work in bringing to life this place of pride.'

The 42 for 42 Memorial and Remembrance Garden received a *Saluting Their Service* grant

from DVA to help with its development. The *Saluting Their Service* grants program helps to preserve Australia's wartime heritage by supporting a wide range of projects and activities that highlight the service and sacrifice of Australia's servicemen and women in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

42 for 42 is a non-profit organisation founded by Afghanistan veterans. It is dedicated to supporting the families of fallen Afghanistan veterans, as well as those who have returned from active duty in Afghanistan and their families.

For more information on the memorial, its location, or the 42 for 42 organisation, please visit the 42 for 42 website ([www.42for42.org.au](http://www.42for42.org.au)). More information about how you can access a Saluting Their Service grant can be found on the Community Grants Hub ([www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/saluting-service](http://www.communitygrants.gov.au/grants/saluting-service)).

If this article has brought up any issues for you, help is available. Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling provides 24/7 free confidential crisis support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families on 1800 011 046 or [openarms.gov.au](http://openarms.gov.au).

## Discount rates on North Queensland holidays for veterans

By Terry Walsh, Defence Holidays North Queensland

Defence Holidays North Queensland is a not-for-profit company owned by the soldiers of North Queensland since 1972. It has recently bought the Island Leisure Resort (pictured) located on Magnetic Island, North Queensland, which is a relaxing 20-minute ferry ride from Townsville.

Along with its sister property, Cocos at Trinity Beach north of Cairns, it is available for holidays at a much-reduced rate (30% discount) for all serving and ex-serving personnel and their families. Public servants and emergency services from all states can also enjoy the same discount.

Both resorts offer a relaxing atmosphere for families, and local shopping, restaurants, and

medical facilities are close by. Local tours and Barrier Reef day tours may be arranged on site.

Taxis, transit coaches and hire cars are available from Townsville airport to get you to the Magnetic Island ferry terminal. If you wish to catch the car ferry to Magnetic Island, tickets are available at a reduced rate if booked through the Defence Holidays office.

Hire cars are restricted on Magnetic Island; however, the local bus service should meet your needs.

Hire cars are available at the Cairns airport for those wishing to travel to Trinity Beach. Public transport is also available from the Cairns railway station.



For enquiries about both resorts or to make bookings, contact us on 07 4725 3842 or email [manager@defenceholidaysnq.com.au](mailto:manager@defenceholidaysnq.com.au). You can also visit the website: [defenceholidaysnq.com.au](http://defenceholidaysnq.com.au).

Please note any COVID-related travel restrictions that may apply at time of travel.



## Afghan refugees rolling up their sleeves for disaster relief

Four Afghan refugees were among the volunteers who took part in Disaster Relief Australia's clean-up in the Adelaide Hills after the Black Summer bushfires. Read the full story on [www.dva.gov.au/latest-news/afghans](http://www.dva.gov.au/latest-news/afghans).

## Military Brotherhood Military Motorcycle Club

By Gary Scott, Rockingham Sub-Branch

The Military Brotherhood Military Motorcycle Club (MBMMC) is for serving and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force, Commonwealth and Allied forces, their families, friends and their supporter base.

The MBMMC began in 2009. Its proud heritage lies in its initial membership with the Patriots Australia Motorcycle Club.

The MBMMC's mission is to provide camaraderie, mateship and firm support. The MBMMC was raised to provide essential support to ex-serving and serving veterans through a partnership with DVA, the RSL and other ex-service organisations.

The MBMMC has members who have been trained in providing welfare, pension and advocacy support for all veterans and are very dedicated to that purpose.

If you wish to join us as a Service Member, we do not have restrictions on the length of any service. You originally volunteered to serve your country (full-time or part-time), and that is good enough for us. If you are a current serving member, you are proving your worth each and every day.

If you wish to join us as a Sierra Squad Member (supporter), you will be warmly welcomed.

Please contact a sub-branch contact listed at our website ([www.mbmcc.org.au](http://www.mbmcc.org.au)).



Hobart Legacy fundraising in the streets, Legacy Week 2021

## Legacy Week a success despite lockdowns

Legacy commemorated one of the most important events on its calendar – Legacy Week from 30 August – 5 September. For the second year in a row, lockdowns affected Clubs in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. So we moved this major revenue stream completely online to keep local communities safe.

In a welcome change, Clubs in Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia were able to fundraise normally in the streets with assistance from Australian Defence Force personnel.

Legacy Australia Chairman, Legatee Rick Cranna said that although the cancellations in some states were unfortunate, he was extremely pleased with all Legacy Clubs and their ability to evolve and continue their services despite event cancellations and lockdowns.

‘It makes me proud as Chairman to reflect on the dedication of Legatees and volunteers,’ he

says. ‘Without their commitment and adaptability, Legacy’s work would simply not continue.’

For families like Heidi’s, Legacy Week allows time to reflect on how much Legacy has helped her family. Heidi is a Navy veteran and single mum to four boys under 13 – with two of her boys on the autism spectrum.

Legacy has helped Heidi and her boys by assisting with bills, school fees and uniforms and even speech therapy lessons. Legacy has also been able to provide the kids with a trampoline and specialised bikes so they can relax and have fun as a family. As a bonus, Heidi’s family has also found friendship and support with the Legacy volunteers and Legatees they interact with.

To find out more about Legacy, or volunteering opportunities in your community, visit [legacy.com.au](http://legacy.com.au).

## Defence Reserves Association National Conference

The 2021 Defence Reserves Association (DRA) National Conference, held on 14 August in Adelaide, generated considerable positive feedback, largely due to the relevance of its theme, quality of speakers, and the webinar format.

The theme, *If you want peace, prepare for war: the contingent role and tasks for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves*, enabled speakers to examine:

- what it is the Government would demand from the Reserves in preparing for war;
- how this would be achieved by the ADF;
- where, in terms of role and tasks, the Government and ADF might employ the Reserves; and
- when, in terms of the mobilisation process, would the Reserves likely be deployed.

The traditional conferences in previous years, where both speakers and participants attended in person, attracted 60–70 people. This year’s conference used a hybrid format where participants could either attend in person or access the live presentations as virtual attendees. As well as making life so much easier for the speakers, hundreds of people around Australia joined the webinar on the day and have since accessed the presentations on the DRA website.

Major General Paul Irving (Retd), the President of the DRA National Executive, explained that ‘the ability for attendees to ask questions of speakers, in real time, is a vital aspect of these conferences.’

All the presentations, including those from the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Defence, the Hon Brendan O’Connor MP, Shadow Minister for Defence, and senior Defence officers, have been loaded on the DRA website (<https://dra.org.au>).

The website also contains details about membership arrangements and how to contact the National Executive and state branches. The DRA is the only advocacy group specifically representing Defence Reservists.

## Soldier On veterans strike a chord

By Colin Greef, Soldier On, Canberra

The Canberra Soldier On Music Group has been going for about 6 years and has a small group who meet every Thursday for a few hours. The group meets to play music and have a chat and a brew. The opportunity for these veterans to keep in touch with each other and enjoy the pleasure music brings gave me the idea for a community project that could help others.

The aim of the project is to reach out to the local community in Canberra, asking them to donate guitars and ukuleles to Soldier On members who would then repair them if necessary before giving them to veterans and disadvantaged children.

I and fellow music group member and Navy veteran Mike Hogan have spent many hours on the road visiting schools around New South Wales, donating guitars to students who show an interest in music but due to financial constraints do not have a guitar of their own.

The response from school principals has been very positive and Soldier On is warmly welcomed into the schools to meet with the students. We meet with the staff and pupils and have a singalong with the children but also speak to them about talking to their teachers if they have any personal problems.

If you live in the Canberra area and would like to donate an instrument, or would like some advice about doing something similar in your area, please get in touch ([cagreef@gmail.com](mailto:cagreef@gmail.com)).



Bomaderry Public School children receiving the guitars. Soldier On members are in grey shirts – from left: Mike Hogan, Colin Greef and Debbie Dimmock.



VSO Team Leader South-East Queensland, Anthony Fuster (left) with Assistant Director ADF Support Section, Jason Johnson

## DVA's Veteran Support Officers assisting ADF personnel

DVA works in partnership with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to improve the support provided to all ADF members (permanent and reserve forces) during military service, and importantly, when navigating back into civilian life.

From mid-2019, DVA's Veteran Support Officers (VSOs) have been working across more than 56 ADF bases across Australia. VSOs are located permanently at major bases and routinely visit smaller ones.

Over the 2020-21 financial year, VSOs supported nearly 20,000 ADF member enquiries, delivered nearly 400 presentations, completed more than 3,500 stakeholder engagements, and helped nearly 5,500 members go online. VSOs are achieving this level of engagement through very strong working relationships with Defence Command, medical and transition support teams.

VSOs primarily support serving veterans through education, explaining how to engage with DVA and providing expert advice at the right time on the health and well-being services available from the department. In particular, VSOs can show ADF members how to use MyService to submit claims for initial liability, and can assist with understanding what evidence is needed to support a claim. Importantly, this VSO support is also available to ADF command, enabling informed decisions to best support their staff, which may also include working with ex-service organisations (ESOs).

VSO support is delivered in agreement with Defence senior leadership, using a tiered approach:

- Tier 1 is focused on education, enabling veterans to use DVA's MyService application to navigate their own DVA business at the time of their service injury.
- Tier 2 is guided assistance for members who may be medically downgraded or who have some complexities associated with their DVA business.
- Tier 3 is a DVA case-managed support service for transitioning ADF members with high needs or complex matters requiring additional technical expertise, coordination and/or a variety of support services.

A key component of the model is a strong working relationship with all levels of Defence, ESOs and other external advocacy groups.

Early engagement with DVA for all service-caused injuries is critical to improving the support options available. Don't wait until you're about to leave the ADF to become a client of DVA. The earlier you get in touch with us the better. And we don't mind why you're leaving, whether it's voluntarily, or through medical or administrative discharge.

If you, a family member or friend is serving in the ADF and are in need of assistance or advice about DVA, please email [vso@dva.gov.au](mailto:vso@dva.gov.au) and one of our friendly staff will be in touch to provide support.

## Get help setting up your own business

DVA is proud to be partnering with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE)'s New Business Assistance with NEIS (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme). This program provides support and training to eligible veterans and family members considering starting their own business.

The program has successfully helped more than 185,000 people start a new small business, including Bradley.

After serving in the Royal Australian Air Force as an avionics technician for six years, Bradley struggled with his mental health and felt lost. It took him some time to focus on what he wanted to do next and to identify the skills developed during his service that would be transferable to a civilian career.

Wanting to find a career that did not feel like a job, he decided he'd like to work with animals. Having treated his own dogs with hydrotherapy, he discovered there were no trained canine hydrotherapy professionals in his area with a dedicated rehabilitation centre.

Bradley connected with his local New Business Assistance with NEIS provider, who gave him the support and structure he needed to turn his dream into reality. Bradley's goal was to build a dedicated rehabilitation centre. His NEIS mentor Debra helped him to develop a business plan that had practical steps to achieve that goal.

'The simplicity of the program was what worked for me,' he says.

'My consultant was a veteran herself and so was able to speak in a language I understood and could compare military processes with business requirements.'

**Transitioning veterans, as well as family members of serving Australian Defence Force personnel, can access free support to explore self-employment. Find out more about Exploring Being My Own Boss Workshops and New Business Assistance with NEIS by visiting the DESE website ([www.desegov.au](http://www.desegov.au)).**



## From Commando to business success

By Courtney Snowden for Prince's Trust Australia

Alex Pryor has gone from Commando to entrepreneur, successfully launching two technology-based businesses within the construction industry.

Business has boomed during the COVID pandemic – a 30% increase almost overnight – with clients needing to 'see' worksites without physically visiting the sites.

Alex joined the Australian Army in 2004 and was posted to the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Sydney, which became the 2nd Commando Regiment.

He discharged in 2010 with half a dozen or so deployments under his belt. At that stage, the Global Financial Crisis was at its peak and Alex ended up working 15 jobs in 18 months before finding himself in the construction industry.

By 2018 he'd moved up the

civilian ranks – from apprentice carpenter to supervisor, foreman and project manager – when old service injuries caught up with him.

Alex read about Prince's Trust Australia.

'They had these single-day events,' he says. 'You know, a come and see what it's like on the dark side of start-up life. That was the catalyst really to go, okay, let's have a crack at it.'

That was the start of Priority Droneworks, where Mr Pryor used technologies he was familiar with from Defence – drones, scanners and sensors – to create 3D data for builders and designers.

You'll find the full story on the DVA website ([dva.gov.au/latest-news-veterans/commando-business-success](http://dva.gov.au/latest-news-veterans/commando-business-success)).

# TRANSITIONING WELL

## PRIME MINISTER'S VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AWARDS 2021

The winners of this year's Prime Minister's Veterans' Employment Awards were announced on 7 October 2021. This was followed by the announcement of Australian Expedition Vehicles as the Outstanding Veterans' Employer of the Year. Congratulations to all the 2021 winners and finalists.

This year's awards attracted 125 nominations from a diverse range of organisations in the private and public sectors. A testament that Australian businesses and government are recognising the value that veterans bring to the workforce.

### VETERAN EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Ben Davoren, TacMed Australia**



Joining TacMed Australia in 2015 as a foundation member of the team, Ben has progressed from a specialist training officer to a business development role. Ben works and collaborates with people who innovate to save lives.

Ben experienced post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health issues due to his service as a combat medic in Afghanistan.

He now sees both his positive and negative experiences from the military as a gift that provides him with the insights and real life experience to help others in the veteran community experiencing similar issues.

### VETERAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

**Chris de Bono, Meru Foods**



Chris joined the Navy straight out of high school. In 2006, at the age of 26, Chris began transitioning to civilian life. During this time, he undertook a number of reserve postings, including time at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

Chris's enthusiastic drive, passion and personal interest in the craft of fermenting, brewing and distilling have turned a hobby into a thriving business: Meru Foods, which he founded in 2017.

Chris drew on his Navy training and experience when founding his business, showing resilience, strong problem-solving skills and a dedication to succeed.

## Winners of the Prime Minister's



*Australian Expedition Vehicles – Michael Fry (veteran) and Michael McMillan, Managing Director*

### OUTSTANDING VETERANS' EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

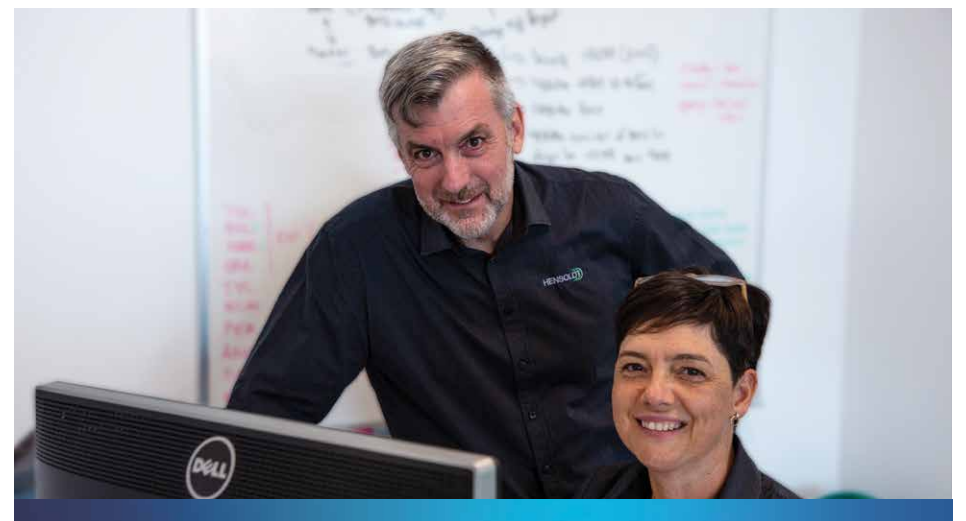
#### VETERANS' EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR – SMALL

#### **Australian Expedition Vehicles**

Australian Expedition Vehicles (AEV) is a veteran-owned organisation that designs, builds and delivers specialised military and civilian off-road vehicles, and provides vehicle engineering, modification and maintenance support services.

Veterans comprise about 50% of the AEV workforce. AEV places a strong focus on providing employment opportunities to veterans with physical and mental health needs.

Its veteran employees encompass a broad age group, recently employing a 50-year-old veteran as an apprentice. AEV has a tailored approach to the placement of transitioning veterans into a 'best-fit' position, acknowledging and working with their specific needs.



*HENSOLDT Australia – Jon Wachman, CEO and Managing Director and Dale Martin*

#### VETERANS' EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR – MEDIUM

#### **HENSOLDT Australia**

Established by veterans, HENSOLDT Australia is a technical solutions provider and engineering organisation specialising in the provision of products and services for the Defence, clean energy and commercial marine and space industries.

With more than 60% of its workforce made up of veterans, HENSOLDT Australia is demonstrating its commitment to veteran employment. 'Our veterans network is a powerful recruiting tool and we actively pursue future employees via this channel,' says Managing Director Jon Wachman. 'For our company, work-life balance, culture and team bonding are critical for our success.'

# TRANSITIONING WELL



*Karyn Hinder, Founder*

## EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

### Working Spirit

Working Spirit is a registered charity that supports and facilitates employment placements for veterans. It provides veterans with access to veteran-specific training, mentoring and coaching. It also provides access to facilitated networking events to connect veterans to business representatives and potential employers.

Working Spirit has recently implemented the delivery of resilience training to veterans and a Women's Veteran Employment Network, which focuses on assisting female veterans into employment pathways, networking and work experience opportunities.

Since 2016, it has placed more than 180 veterans in employment, 50 of whom are still employed in their original role.



## EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING PARTNER EMPLOYMENT

### Alison Bannister Career Coaching

Alison Bannister is a dedicated career coach, providing employment knowledge and training to ADF partners and women returning to the workforce or exploring business opportunities.

Over the last 12 months, Alison has supported more than 20 ADF partners to secure meaningful employment.

She instils confidence in each of her clients, guiding and encouraging them during each step of their unique process.

Alison makes it her business to understand the specific characteristics of being a partner to a serving member of the ADF.

# Veterans' Employment Awards



*BAE Systems Australia – Tia McGregor, Mathew Dudson and David Parsons (veterans)*

## VETERANS' EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR – LARGE

### BAE Systems Australia

BAE Systems Australia is a major Defence and security company with a workforce of more than 500 veterans.

BAE prides itself on its strong commitment to supporting veteran employment and has recently established a Veteran Advisory Committee with diverse veteran employee membership to explore and develop areas of support and interest to veterans, including the introduction of a veteran mentoring program.

BAE Systems is a Soldier On Platinum Pledge Partner, and partner with Right Management which provides transition services to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) – a further demonstration of its commitment to support the health, wellbeing and employment of veterans.



*Veteran Nigel Cowan, who now works for the NSW Telecommunications Authority*

## PUBLIC SECTOR EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORTING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT

### The NSW Government Veterans Employment Program

The NSW Government's Veterans Employment Program was founded in 2016. Since this time, the NSW Government has continued to champion and support veteran employment at a state, national and local level by continuing to raise awareness of the value of employing veterans. In the past three and a half years, more than 1,000 veterans have been employed in the NSW public sector as part of the program.

The NSW Government has developed a champion network across the NSW Public Service to communicate the value of hiring veterans. It also provides informal mentoring to veterans to help them gain insight and an understanding of government.

In addition, it has developed a Veterans Employment Workshop to aid veterans in understanding the NSW public sector job application process.

To see the announcements or for more information on the 2021 Award winners and finalists, visit the Awards website ([veteranemployment.gov.au/winners-finalists](https://veteranemployment.gov.au/winners-finalists)).

# A goal in mind

Army veteran Philip Armstrong overcame life-threatening blood poisoning and a hard transition to civilian life to become a determined advocate for counselling services.

Philip's interest in counselling began in 1993 when he was nearing the end of his 15-year career in the Army. He was on deployment at Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth when five soldiers were killed and several injured in a vehicle accident.

As Philip was a more experienced soldier, many of the younger soldiers came to him for support.

'When I got back home, I found out there was a certificate in welfare course at the local TAFE,' says Philip. 'I told my officer commanding that men were coming to me for support but I wasn't too sure what I was supposed to do for them. So he let me do the course and I became the battalion's unofficial counsellor.'

Philip left school at 15 so he undertook an education course as a means of getting promoted from corporal to sergeant. He surprised himself by topping the class. The Army then sponsored him to do a psychology degree at the University of New England.

A year into the course, Philip had a routine arthroscopy to help diagnose pain he was experiencing in his left knee. This resulted in a staphylococcus infection, which led to blood poisoning that nearly killed him. After three months in hospital and several operations on his knee he was told that he may be confined to a wheelchair and would probably never work again. He was also told that he would be medically discharged from the Army.

Philip had been in the Army Reserve since he was 17 and the

regular Army since he was 19. It came as a huge blow to be medically discharged at 36.

'The Army gave me a pay-out, but I wasn't properly advised about what to do with the money,' he says. 'This eventually led to bankruptcy and contributed to the breakdown of my marriage. I was terribly unprepared for discharge. So I did what a lot of people do - I turned to alcohol on top of my morphine dependency.'

The low point came when Philip found himself living in a seedy Brisbane boarding house along with many other people dependent on alcohol, drugs or both.

Then one day Philip decided he'd had enough. He began by ditching the morphine and deciding that he wasn't going to be defined by his leg injury. The key to his psychological and physical transformation was exercise with some counselling thrown in.

'Exercise was one thing that had been a constant in my life and something I was familiar with; it was an old friend.'

'I approached DVA, and they put me in touch with an exercise physiologist so I could exercise within my limits. I also joined a gym. Getting moving again made a big difference. I got off the grog, quit smoking, lost weight, improved my diet and felt my self-confidence return.'

Though pursuing his psychology degree had come to an end when he discharged, the Army provided Philip with further educational funding as part of his discharge package. He switched to counselling, which he found was more hands on. This started his ongoing journey into education and allowed him to practise much sooner.

He took a job in 2000 as the Members Liaison Officer for the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) - a peak registration body for counsellors and psychotherapists. He also began doing work with veteran groups, helping transitioning personnel assimilate back into civilian life.

Philip, who is now 63, has remained with the ACA ever since and in 2006 became its chief executive officer. It then had 3,000 financial members; now it has nearly 9,000.



Philip en route to Everest Base Camp to raise money for Buddy Up, November 2019

One thing he has noticed is that veterans make very good counsellors.

'You'll only survive and be promoted in the military if you know how to lead,' he says. 'Your people skills are going to be pretty strong, even if you don't realise it. A lot of veterans are also very motivated. Counselling comes naturally to a lot of them.'

One aspect of counselling that has always been important to Philip is improving its professionalism.

'It's all about accountability. We're working with the most vulnerable people in the community. For that reason, the mental health professions attract predators, including financial predators. So we have a responsibility to the public that when they see a registered counsellor, that counsellor has gone through a rigorous membership process.'

Through his company Optimise Potential, Philip runs training courses in clinical supervision in Australia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, mainland China, India, Singapore and China. He has also helped to make counselling services more accessible in Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

He is very conscious of how COVID, the Afghanistan withdrawal and other factors are affecting the veteran population. His advice: if you're struggling, see someone.

'Don't keep it in,' he says. 'Three things don't work: drinking, not talking and self-medicating. I can tell you that from personal experience. Yes, they'll numb you - but they'll affect your work, your relationships and you'll become dependent.'

'There's a lot in life that you can determine yourself. As I say, exercise is key. In that sense, you've got to put yourself first. If you can't look after yourself, you can't look after your family. Physical and mental health cannot be separated.'

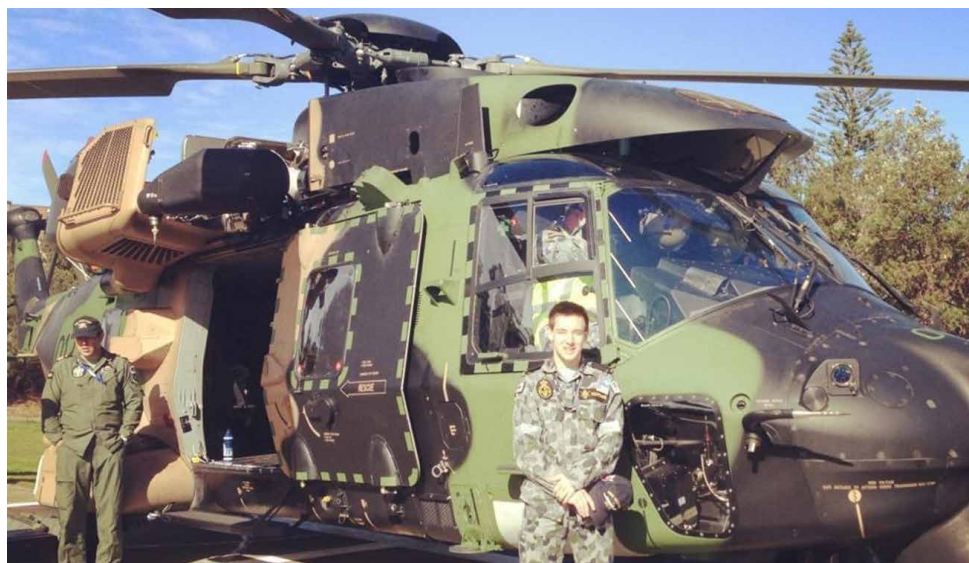
*If this has raised issues for you, please remember that Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling provides support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Free and confidential help is available 24/7. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546) or visit [www.OpenArms.gov.au](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)*



Philip aged 20, at (then) RAAF Butterworth, 1980

## #OurVeterans

The following are two profiles from DVA's Our Veterans project. See dozens more on the DVA website ([dva.gov.au/newsroom/meet-our-veterans](http://dva.gov.au/newsroom/meet-our-veterans))



Dean next to an MRH-90 Taipan helicopter at HMAS Watson, 2013



Dean with his father Mick on the Hamilton Island golf course

### Dean Marchini

'Ultimately, everything worked out for the best,' says veteran Dean Marchini as he reflects on his discharge from the Navy, which has now led him to heading up the regional sales and marketing department for one of Australia's best-known holiday destinations, Hamilton Island.

While serving, Dean was trained as an Electronic Warfare Sailor at HMAS Watson, the Navy's Radar Training School at Sydney's South Head. The role involved using a range of technology to identify and locate threats. He then shifted roles to help with the Junior Warfare Officers Application Course.

Dean was also posted to the guided-missile frigate HMAS Melbourne.

One of his highlights while serving was receiving HMAS Watson's Commanding Officer's Commendation in 2014.

While Dean's military career was cut short due to a pre-existing medical condition that he was not aware of before signing up to serve,

he has taken things in his stride since leaving in 2015 after around three years of service.

At the time, Dean said that discharge 'completely turned his life upside down' as he had planned a long career in the military. But with the help of transition agency Transciv, he was able to convert his Navy skills to a civilian role.

This saw him initially secure employment with some of Australia's biggest airlines, before making the decision to relocate to live and work on Hamilton Island.

Dean is proud of the life he has established on the Island, working hard to get promoted at Hamilton Island Enterprises and developing solid working relationships with most of the Island's workforce.

In his spare time, you'll see Dean on Whitehaven beach, setting a new personal best on the Island's running tracks or capturing stunning photography and drone footage (one of his favourite past times).

Thank you for your service, Dean.



Peter Nugent, Head of Capture and Delivery at AeroPM

### Peter Nugent

Peter Nugent, 'Nug' to his friends, left the Australian Defence Force for a number of reasons.

'Firstly, I love Adelaide and wanted to establish roots here,' he says. 'My family was very settled.'

'Secondly, I had been fortunate to do all of the best jobs as an engineer that Air Force had to offer and at 38 years of age, I decided it was a good time for a career move and to do something new.'

In his 20-year career with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Peter had a range of unique opportunities, from graduating National Test Pilot School in the United States, to sub-unit Command as Senior Engineering Officer at No. 10 Squadron, and even as a project manager for space-based capability.

After leaving the RAAF, Peter began working for AeroPM - the 2020 Prime Minister's Veteran Employer of the Year - which specialises in re-investing the fantastic skills of our veterans back into Defence acquisition. More than 80% of the company's workforce are veterans and many continue in a reserve capacity too.

Peter has the intriguing title of Head of Capture and Delivery, which he says, 'involves aiding those talented veterans either employed by AeroPM already or having successfully progressed through recruitment into exciting and challenging new roles befitting their qualifications, skills and experience'.



Peter on Anzac Day, Adelaide, 2019 with his daughter Emilia (left) and son Rory

For Peter, the biggest challenge was looking after his health during his transition. He found that participating in events like the March On campaign, organised by Soldier On, provided the benefit of extra exercise, which made him feel healthier and happier. AeroPM values the efforts of Soldier On too; they were the inaugural platinum sponsor of this not-for-profit agency.

In his new career, Peter is passionate about helping his fellow veterans find their feet in the civilian jobs market and he is one of the mentors selected for the Veteran SA Mentoring Program.

Thank you for your service, Peter.

## Peer support for career transition

**STUART SMITH AO DSC**

Defence Engagement Commissioner



Media coverage of the situation in Afghanistan, including some confronting images, have reminded me of the importance of us all looking out for one another. During our time in service, we knew the difference we were making to the lives of people in the nations in which we served, and we were proud to look out for our mates and others who assisted us.

It's equally important to look after each other during the transition from service to civilian life, and I encourage all Defence personnel, veterans, and their families to become familiar with the range of peer support programs available through DVA, Defence and other agencies.

My recent engagement activities have provided me with a detailed understanding of the current programs supporting Defence career transition. I believe that the ingredient that makes transition support programs most effective is peer support. My view is based on witnessing Defence personnel being mentored by Open Arms Community and Peer Advisors, and DVA Veteran

Support Officers (VSOs). By offering their lived experience and coaching Defence personnel along the transition pathway, these mentors are continuing the Defence value of 'Respect'.

During the last year, knowing that a significant percentage of Defence personnel conduct their transition in the South East Queensland region, I have conducted regular meetings with the Community and Peer Team located in Brisbane. The Peer Advisors in this team are young Army, Navy and Air Force veterans with operational experience from Somalia, Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan. They draw on their experience of Australian Defence Force (ADF) service and mental

health recovery, working in collaboration with clinicians to support Defence personnel undergoing medical separation. They walk beside these personnel at critical stages of the transition pathway, such as medical reviews and interviews, and connect them with other transition support programs. Their Stepping Out workshop for instance is very popular. It is designed to help members plan their successful transition.

Established as a pilot in Townsville in 2017, the Open Arms Community and Peer program now has 46 Peers operating from 13 locations across Australia.

For those Defence personnel who require assistance



Commissioner Smith with Student Veterans Services Coordinator Aaron Cornwall at the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane Campus.

in navigating their transition with DVA, VSOs provide a second layer of lived experience support. Operating at 56 Defence bases across Australia, they connect recruit trainees to the DVA MyService portal and support Defence personnel in registering DVA claims during transition.

*"I encourage all Defence personnel, veterans and their families to take advantage of opportunities where 'mates help mates'."*

A VSO has accompanied each of my Defence base visits, and shared my roundtable discussions with commanders, managers and personnel undergoing transition. I have been impressed by how connected these VSOs are with base commanders, and trusted by Defence personnel. This was especially evident during my visits to RAAF Amberley in Brisbane and Robertson Barracks in Darwin where the VSO was recognised by all ranks. I assess that this is due to the fact that they have recent experience in career transition and display a genuine desire to help their mates.

Examples of veterans helping veterans through peer support can be found beyond the DVA/Defence environment. I have observed this when visiting the Student Veterans Services (SVS) at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). The SVS is part of an ACU commitment to supporting current and

ex-serving ADF personnel to engage in tertiary education on a pathway to future employment. They have created a Student Veteran Support Program (SVSP) to help student veterans adjust to academic life, develop effective study skills and connect with other student veterans.

Since starting these services in 2019, the student veteran population at the ACU has grown from 22 to 138. Critical to this support is the appointment of an SVS Coordinator, with lived military and tertiary study experience, to mentor student veterans and act as an interface with university staff. My recent engagement with veteran Aaron Cornwall, the SVS Coordinator at the ACU Brisbane campus, highlighted to me the effectiveness of this mentoring program.

Research studies in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States over the last decade have highlighted the benefits of veteran peer support programs. Such benefits are being realised in Australia through Open Arms Peers, VSOs and student veteran support coordinators. I encourage all Defence personnel, veterans and their families to take advantage of these opportunities where 'mates help mates'.



From left: Jesse Forbes (Veteran Peer), David Lauw (Peer Team Leader), Commissioner Smith, Nicci Korff (Family Peer), Jessica Holmes (Veteran Peer) at the Open Arms Spring Hill Office in Brisbane.

## Breaking the barriers to community support

**COMMISSIONER GWEN CHERNE**

Veteran Family Advocate



Over recent times, we have been inundated with challenging news stories and hard truths, from the Inspector-General of the ADF Afghanistan Inquiry report to the fall of Afghanistan and two reports on Defence and veteran suicides, on top of COVID and lockdowns.

The reality is we are a resilient community, but one that is questioning the blood, sweat and tears we shed over the past two decades in Afghanistan and what it was worth. We have been forced to take a hard look at what has caused veterans and veteran families to experience shame, disappointment, betrayal, moral trauma, moral injury, bullying and abuse, grief and loss. Many are questioning the years spent overseas, marriage breakdowns, and missing out on childhoods, weddings and birthdays. I for one am proud of my time in Afghanistan, my husband's service there, and what we did accomplish, but I know the toll it took on our family and many of those we love.

As we reflect on all of this and turn our attention to potential pressures in the region, new strategic partnerships and the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, we are left asking what is all this going to mean for veterans and veteran families? We know the Royal Commission will review the important recommendations from the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention's report, dig deep and find more solutions. We already know the reasons leading to suicide can be complex and that it's not just a mental health issue. We also know that there are things that can be done to help prevent it and better support those vulnerable or at risk now.

I have been exploring some of these things, including support for the bereaved, Defence and veteran youth and children, carers, parents and victim survivors of family and domestic violence (FDV).

The 2021 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Defence and veteran suicide monitoring report states there were more than 1,200 suicides in the Defence and veteran community from 2001 to 2019. And that's just those who served since 1985. Research suggests for each suicide there are 135 people directly impacted by the death. I believe this number could be much higher for the tight-knit serving and ex-serving community. This means there are at least 165,000 individuals who have been directly affected by a Defence or veteran suicide. Many of those continue to need our support. Disturbingly, children of parents who die by suicide are three to four times more likely to attempt or die by suicide. We have much work to do to protect those directly affected and ensure they are supported to heal and thrive.

I am working with DVA, Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, and others to support the co-design and co-implementation of these

types of programs for veterans and veteran families in Australia. I also have been advocating for all ex-service organisations (ESOs) to include parents in their services – especially bereaved parents.

We know many Vietnam veterans experienced moral trauma, moral injury and post-traumatic stress among a host of other things. We now know this is not unique to Vietnam veterans, and our Afghanistan veterans and others are experiencing similar things. If the Australian Institute of Family Studies Vietnam Veterans Family Study showed us anything, it is that service impacts veteran families, including the next generation. Understanding and communicating to government the current and enduring intergenerational impacts of service on families has been an important priority for me over the course of the last few years, and will continue to be.

My work with the National Mental Health Commission CEO Christine Morgan ensures the Commission is aware of the unique experiences of veterans and veteran families and the barriers to care for our specific community. I am pleased that the Commission has launched the first National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This is an important step in recognising the need to better support youth and children's mental health in Australia.

In 2018, the DVA and Department of Defence Family Wellbeing Study found that FDV occurred in ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) families at a similar rate to the general Australian population. The latest numbers show that one in four Australian women and one in 16 men have experienced domestic violence, and the majority of these cases occur in their home. That means someone you know has likely experienced FDV. Survivors of FDV can be from any background, gender or age group, including children, adults and the elderly. It is important we understand that any member of a veteran family (including a veteran themselves) can be the FDV victim survivor just as they can be a perpetrator of FDV.

Over the course of the last year, I undertook a nationwide consultation to build awareness of the supports and services available to veterans and veteran families, listen to their voices and explore their experiences and issues, including the unique challenges of veteran life. I heard from families across the country about the effect of Defence service and systems on FDV experiences. I spoke to families who are experiencing violence and also families who are working hard to break

the cycle of violence for the next generation. They also told me the unique nature of service is an added barrier for both men and women to access support services and protection from violence, and is not well understood outside the veteran community. This consultation made it very clear that FDV is a highly complex issue and that it is not just the victims who require support. If we want to make real, generational, change, we must find ways to protect and support victims, while keeping perpetrators accountable, connected and responsible for stopping their violent behaviour.

From my lived-experience as a Defence wife for nearly a decade, a victim survivor of FDV from my father and intimate partner violence (IPV) from my partner, and as an advocate for veterans and veteran families, I know first-hand that families are fearful and reluctant to report FDV and IPV or pursue interventions. I also know perpetrators are fearful of seeking help and support for themselves.

Their stories confirm the challenging and complicated circumstances veterans and veteran families face in accessing support and services in response to violence. ESOs all over Australia have shared with me that family violence is one of the many concerns they have when working with veterans and veteran families and these stories are not uncommon.

As a delegate at the National Summit on Women's Safety (the Summit), I actively advocated for veterans and veteran families to be considered a cohort in their own right in the next National Plan. A number of individuals with lived-experience as well as ESOs got behind this effort and also made submissions to the Summit. It was amazing to see the community come together over such an important issue.

We still have a lot of work to do in the area of stigma, especially when it comes to issues of FDV. I know it is hard to put up a hand and say, 'I am not always in control of my anger' or 'I need support to ensure I don't continue the cycle', but until we start talking about it more, too many will continue to suffer in silence.

The Open Arms veteran and family lived-experience peer workers have made an enormous difference for our communities in providing support and pathways to care. Many families who have been reluctant to engage with any support services now have a better understanding of what is available, what clinical services actually look like and are better connected with the support they need. DVA's veteran and family Wellbeing Centres will also provide new entry points and avenues to support for both current and former serving families who were not sure how to connect previously. I admit, some days I feel overwhelmed by all there is to do, but I keep getting up every day and working hard to push for change. Ever the optimist, I find hope in much of what I see.

If this article raises issues for you, please contact:

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, which offers free and confidential counselling to the veteran community on 1800 011 046

Safe Zone is available for current and former ADF personnel on 1800 142 072. Calls to Safe Zone are confidential and not recorded.

## If you don't feel safe at home, help is here

Veterans and their families deserve to feel safe at all times and to live free of fear of violence or abuse.

Family and domestic violence can include any behaviour that is violent, threatening, coercive, controlling or intended to cause the family or a household member to be fearful. It can happen to anyone.

It is often hidden from the view or knowledge of others. Cases of family and domestic violence are known to increase during stressful times like the COVID-19 pandemic as reported by the Australian Institute of Criminology in 2020 (see: [aic.gov.au/publications/sb/sb28](http://aic.gov.au/publications/sb/sb28)).

Even during COVID-19-related restrictions, you can leave your home to escape violence or abuse.

Help is here.

If you are affected by family and domestic violence, or know someone who is, you can access confidential counselling, financial support and crisis accommodation

through Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling.

For support:

- Call **triple zero (000)** if you are in immediate danger.
- **1800RESPECT** is available 24/7 for national family violence and sexual assault counselling. It's a free and confidential service. Call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) or visit [1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au).
- **MensLine** is the national telephone and online support, information and referrals service for men with family and relationship concerns. Call 1300 78 99 78 or visit [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au).

- **Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling** provides crisis support to veterans and their families. Call 1800 011 046 or visit [openarms.gov.au/get-support/crisis-accommodation](http://openarms.gov.au/get-support/crisis-accommodation). This service is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **More support for veterans and veteran families** is available on the DVA website, including resources and the DVA Family and Domestic Violence Strategy 2020–25. Visit [www.dva.gov.au/family-and-domestic-violence-strategy](http://www.dva.gov.au/family-and-domestic-violence-strategy)

## Research shows how mental health training can change lives

*A report from the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation*

Families see firsthand the severe consequences of mental health issues on veterans in our community. A recent study from the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) has revealed 12 hours of mental health first aid (MHFA) training for family members can be helpful for supporting veterans with mental health concerns.

In 2018, GMRF launched the Mental Health First Aid Study, sponsored by Medibank's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, to look at what family members can do to help veterans in immediate need. The study was published in early 2021 with positive and insightful key findings.

Some veterans may not feel comfortable asking for help. This leaves family members such as parents, partners or even children potentially isolated when supporting their loved one with mental health difficulties. Over time, the isolation and shame can become emotionally exhausting and lead to high rates of depression and anxiety in family members. The stressors that come with providing emotional support to veterans with mental health conditions are unique and adequate training for family members is currently limited.

The GMRF study evaluated how specifically family members may better support veterans with mental health conditions using MHFA training. The study was conducted with more than 50 participants from veteran households attending

MHFA training sessions run by an Accredited MHFA practitioner.

Standard MHFA training involves sharing information on common mental health conditions including depression, anxiety and substance abuse. The course focuses on providing real-world skills through a five-step action plan. The 12-hour course includes practice sessions where participants are taught how to apply these steps in a range of different situations. As with physical first aid, MHFA is designed to provide immediate care until professional help can be accessed.

Overall, the study showed significant increases in MHFA knowledge among family members and an increase in their confidence to provide assistance. In addition, 90% of participants who were followed up reported being able to support their veteran family member and believed the support made a positive impact. Others responded that they felt prepared and confident to deal with someone suffering from a mental health problem. This outcome clearly shows the value of



MHFA program for veterans and their families. Many attendees stated that they would recommend this program to other people in similar situations.

GMRF research shows by using well-informed MHFA training, the support received at early stages of distress can hopefully give veterans with mental health conditions the help they need.

If you or someone you know would like to take MHFA course, Open Arms – Veterans & Families

Counselling, in partnership with the RSL, runs frequent sessions around Australia. Visit the Open Arms website for more information.

If you would like to learn more about GMRF or would like to support our research efforts, please visit our website at [www.gallipoliresearch.com.au](http://www.gallipoliresearch.com.au)

If you are in need of assistance, call:

- **Open Arms** 24 hour 365 day hotline on 1800 011 046
- **Lifeline** 13 11 14

## Mates supporting mates

BY DON SPINKS AM  
REPATRIATION COMMISSIONER

The last two years have been very challenging for all Australians, including the Defence and veteran community. It is important we take the time to be there for those who may need our support. A simple, effective and practical way you can provide support is by regularly checking in with each other. This simple principle of 'mates supporting mates' is a great practice that I encourage you to embrace and support each other's wellbeing.

Ex-service organisations (ESOs) continue to be vital throughout this time, providing much-needed support day in, day out to our veterans and their families.

ESOs began more than a century ago as a safe place for veterans, offering somewhere to gather and keep mateship alive post demobilisation. Although the work of a lot of ESOs has expanded, providing essential advocacy and welfare services, I still believe ESOs are a living, breathing example of mateship and mates supporting mates.

If you or someone you know is struggling, joining such an organisation can be a really good way to reconnect with the veteran community and build support networks.

Earlier this year, and in between COVID lockdowns, I visited the South Coast of New South Wales with Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) to observe their work with bushfire recovery. As its name suggests, DRA provides support to communities that have been impacted by natural disasters. Its volunteers are mainly veterans, but it includes first-responders and other volunteers.

In the Bega Valley area, the 2019-20 fires were devastating, and caused loss of life and widespread damage of property in the region. This included the deaths of four people, large numbers of livestock and wildlife, and the destruction of more than 460 houses and 1,000 or so other structures. Two years on, these communities are still recovering.

The Strike Teams I joined rebuilt fences, removed debris and helped with small civil works. The experience was immensely rewarding and the teams were grateful for the sense of community and mateship it provided them during that difficult year.

The community were also endlessly thankful. Along had come a group of veterans and civilians who gave them a hand and helped fix up their property. It just took some of the pressure off in what was a stressful time already.

This is just one example of the outstanding work that our ESOs do, but it happens every day and often goes unnoticed. Our ESOs and community organisations always have something going on,



Above and below: helping out Disaster Relief Australia on the NSW South Coast in March 2021.

they are always helping in some way and you don't have to rebuild fences to get involved.

There are hundreds of such organisations across Australia, all with different focuses and goals. My advice is to shop around until you find one that resonates with you. I'm also a Lions Club member and have found a great sense of mateship through both volunteering to support the community, and simply being involved in recreation activities.

*"It is important we take the time to be there for those who may need our support."*

I'd like to finish by thanking our ESOs for the work they do. They make a difference to so many lives in the veteran community. I'd also like to thank veterans for continuing to reach out to their mates and their families throughout these challenging times. Checking in with one another is really important because life can be difficult at times.

I'd encourage everyone to keep this up as the year draws to a close and we enter the festive period. That way we'll be able to continue supporting each other regardless of the challenges we might encounter in 2022.

Remember you can't care for others unless you take care of yourself first. If you need to talk but don't want to disclose your details, please call Safe Zone, which offers an anonymous counselling service for Australian Defence Force personnel, veterans and their families. It's free and available 24/7 on 1800 142 072. Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling also provides a range of self-help resources and wellbeing tools at [www.openarms.gov.au](http://www.openarms.gov.au) or call 1800 011 046. Help is only a phone call away.



# In service to their nation

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the start of post Second World War National Service, which saw more than 290,000 young men called up in two schemes.

On 8 September 2010, around 2,500 former National Servicemen (or Nashos) marched down Anzac Parade in Canberra and gathered outside the Australian War Memorial. The occasion was the opening of the National Service Memorial – an elegant water feature made from bronze, sandstone and granite inscribed with the simple words: ‘Dedicated to all Australian National Servicemen and in memory of those who died’.

It was the culmination of years of effort by members of the Nasho community, in particular the National Servicemen’s Association of Australia (NSAA) and the affiliated Officer Training Unit Association (OTU Association).

For many, the creation of the memorial was an important recognition of their service, whether on deployment overseas or, as was more often the case, within Australia. It showed that their service mattered.

Australia had compulsory training in the Citizens Military Forces (CMF) at various times between 1910 and 1945. Since the Second World War, it has had two very different National Service schemes.

The first took place from 1951 to 1959. A total of 227,000 men went through the scheme.

In the second scheme, which took place from 1965 to 1972, men aged 20 years were subject to a ballot, drawn twice a year. A total of 63,735 were called up. Of these, 15,381 served in Vietnam and another 150 in Borneo. Tragically, more than 200 were killed in Vietnam, and two

in Borneo. More than 1,200 were wounded and many others have suffered from the consequences of their service.

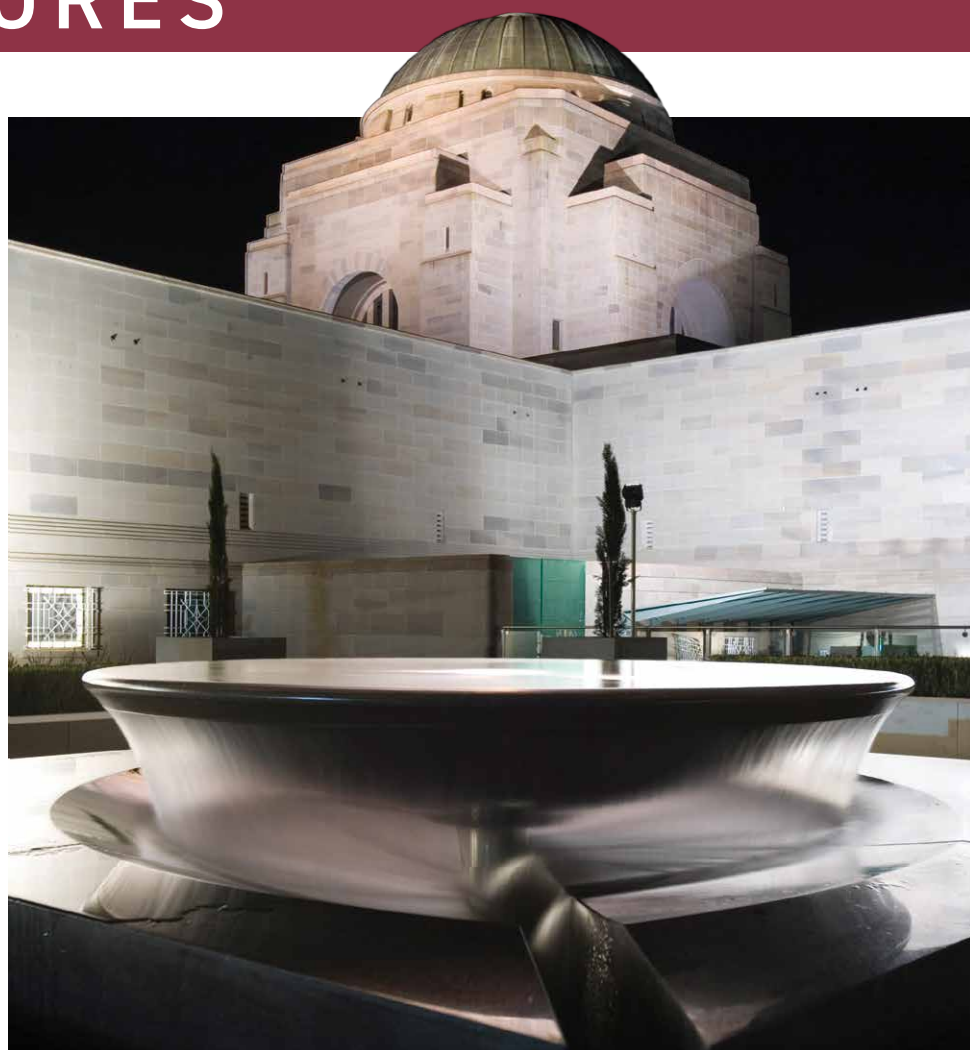
‘The two eras were very different,’ says Noel Moulder, National Secretary of the NSAA. ‘The first was accepted as a way of life. Mothers and fathers were very proud. The second scheme became a massive objectionable thing.’

In 1987, the late Barry Vicary, a National Serviceman called up in 1965, founded the NSAA in Toowoomba, Queensland. He wanted better support for Vietnam-era National Servicemen as well as a medal recognising National Service.

In this, the NSAA has been successful. In 2001, the Australian Government recognised the contribution of National Servicemen to Australia’s defence preparedness with the award of the Anniversary of National Service 1951–1972 Medal. Shortly after, National Servicemen became eligible to receive the Australian Defence Medal.

More recently, the Association has established the National Service Scholarship Foundation, which offers scholarships and grants to advance the professional education, research projects, and skills of medical, dental, nursing, and allied health professionals.

National Servicemen are now entitled to the DVA White Card, which enables them to access free mental health treatment for life without having to link their condition to service and assists with treatment of other verifiable conditions caused by military service.



*National Service Memorial, Canberra*

‘This recognition is very important as they served well and faithfully,’ says Ron Brandy, President of the NSAA. ‘A sense that we were now nationally recognised for the service we gave.’

Daryl Bristowe found it a struggle being accepted within the Army. He was called up in 1970 and served in Vietnam as a mortarman with the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, and took part in Operation Ivanhoe.

‘We were trying to prove we were the equal of the regular troops so we went in harder,’ he says.

Not that he minded serving in Vietnam. Many Nashos were given the choice of going to Vietnam and he elected to deploy, partly for the

extra pay but mostly because he felt it was his turn.

His main memory of Vietnam was the camaraderie. ‘My Mum baked a fruitcake every week which arrived at 3pm Thursdays,’ he chuckles. ‘Do you know how hard it is to divide

a cake into 36 slices using an M16 bayonet with all of your mates staring over your shoulder?’

A week or so into recruit training, Nashos in the second scheme were selected to apply for officer training. Of those who applied, only around a third were chosen and of those only two thirds made it through the intensive five-month course at the Scheyville Officer Training Unit (OTU) west of Sydney. Scheyville was a compressed version of the year-long course at the Officer Cadet School, Portsea in Victoria. It was designed to produce the second lieutenants the Army needed in a hurry.

The OTU Association’s Chairman Frank Miller, a chemical engineering student at the time, was not happy about being called up in 1965. But he describes his training at Scheyville as a huge asset.

‘It was a pressure-cooker type of situation,’ he says. ‘But now I realise more and more what a huge help it’s been for me. It gave you a greater understanding of what you’re capable of. It taught leadership and discipline – knowing how a leader should present to other people, and how to get the very best out of them.’

‘So many Scheyvillians achieved so much in their careers,’ he says.

‘I wonder if I’d have gone as far if it weren’t for Scheyville and the military.’

He says the main aims of the OTU Association are to promote fellowship among its members, to preserve the history of Scheyville

*Continued on page 25*



*Opening of the National Service Memorial, 8 September 2010*

# Defence Sheds: where everyone is equal under one roof

Defence Sheds are based on the principles of the well-known Men's Sheds and offer both mateship and a range of services to support the mental health and overall wellbeing of Australian Defence Force (ADF) members, veterans, first responders, and their families.

'We cater for everyone,' says National President Rod Wicks. 'You walk through our door and you're one of us, we will offer assistance, or direct you to someone who can.'

The first Defence Shed was established eight years ago in Port Adelaide with the motto 'Everyone is equal under one roof' and now has almost 2,000, follows on its Facebook page.

'It's taken an amazing amount of work and dedication to take Defence Sheds from a vision to a reality,' says Chairperson of the Port Adelaide Defence Shed, Frances Bagrowski.

'The mateship, banter and social connection the Shed provided greatly improved my husband's mental health. It was enough to convince me that I wanted to be as involved as I could.'

'The benefits I have seen the Shed have on those involved has been amazing. I feel honoured that I'm trusted and able to assist. I've seen improvements in confidence, independence, social connection, but also purpose.'

The Shed has a huge variety of activities available, including: kayaking, bike riding, woodworking, fundraisers, first aid courses, soup days, SecondBite initiatives (assisting vulnerable members with food security) and projects with the local council and conservation groups.

The Shed also receives regular visits from Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling peer support workers. Peers draw on their own lived experiences from the military and mental health service system to provide insight and support to veterans with complex care needs.

In addition, the Shed is registered with the Advocacy Training and Development Program



(ATDP) for advocacy services, as well as the South Australian Veteran Wellbeing Centre and the Jamie Larcombe Centre - Veterans Mental Health Precinct.

'These connections allow us to link members with professional support services that we are not able to provide. We also have strong connections with the Partners of Veterans Association, so we can also offer support to families.'

In February, Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks AM took the opportunity to visit the William Kibby VC Veterans Shed ([www.veterans-shed.org](http://www.veterans-shed.org)) in Glenelg North. The Kibby Shed isn't part of the Defence Sheds network but operates along similar lines.

'The Shed provides wellbeing and mateship by creating an environment for veterans where concerns, past trauma and health and welfare issues can be discussed with other veterans who have been through similar life experiences,' says Commissioner Spinks.

Currently, there are Defence Sheds located in South Australia and New South Wales, with smaller, less structured coffee catch-ups across Australia.

The Wagga Wagga Defence Shed in the Riverina area of New South Wales opened in 2019 and also provides a range of support services to the veteran community.

'Getting together with like-minded people is so important,' says Secretary Jason Frost. 'We hold a range of regular group activities throughout the

year, including fishing days, coffee mornings and barbecues. These activities are family friendly and all ADF members, veterans, first responders and their families in the area are welcome.'

The Sheds also provide members with skills-based workshops and coordinate a variety of certified TAFE courses throughout the year where members can gain valuable skills to boost employment prospects or their capabilities in an area of interest.

Anyone looking to get involved or provide support is encouraged to contact:

- The Port Adelaide Defence Shed at: [admin@defenceshedportadelaide.org.au](mailto:admin@defenceshedportadelaide.org.au) or phone 0427 607 933 or on Facebook ([facebook.com/defenceshed](https://facebook.com/defenceshed)).
- The Wagga Wagga Defence Shed at: [dswww.secretary@defenceshedwagga.com.au](mailto:dswww.secretary@defenceshedwagga.com.au) or on Facebook ([facebook.com/defenceshedwagga](https://facebook.com/defenceshedwagga)).
- There are also coffee catch-ups in Merriwa NSW, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. Defence Sheds is currently working with Wounded Heroes to establish a Defence Shed in Warcol, Queensland and has received interest from locations in Victoria.
- For more information, and to keep up to date with upcoming locations join the Defence Shed Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/www.defenceshed.com.au](https://www.facebook.com/groups/www.defenceshed.com.au).

*Continued on from page 24*

and the memory of the eight who made the ultimate sacrifice.

It also seeks to promote leadership skills in Australian youth.

'We support bodies in the different states that develop leadership in young people. Our prime effort over more than three decades has been sponsoring 16 to 17 year-old men and women to attend the annual Lord Somers and Power House camps in Victoria.

'I am also very keen on getting Nashos who did not serve overseas signed up for a DVA White Card,' he says. 'They may not think they're entitled but it is terribly important. It covers mental illness and, furthermore, opens the door to DVA.'

Of the 1,881 who passed out of Scheyville, 328 served in Vietnam. One of these was Brian Cooper, Deputy Chairman and former Chairman of the OTU Association. He also sings the praises of Scheyville.

'If you were of that ilk, it could bring the best out of you,' he says. 'It gave you the ability to be cool under stress, multi-task, and keep the big picture in mind.'

He found Vietnam and Army life generally suited him, so he continued to serve for another 20 years, retiring as a lieutenant colonel before enjoying a successful career in executive recruitment.

National Service Day, 14 February, marks the date the first Nasho entered into a training

camp in 1951. So this year marks the 70th anniversary of the start of post Second World War National Service. COVID-19 curtailed a planned commemorative service at the Australian War Memorial to recognise this important date. However, the NSAA and OTU Association plan to commemorate the 70th anniversary as well as the 50th anniversary of the end of the second National Service scheme in 1972.

*This is an abridged version of the full article, which you can find on the DVA website ([www.dva.gov.au/latest-news/nashos](http://www.dva.gov.au/latest-news/nashos))*

# Come back

## The making of a five-time Paralympian



Greg on his way to winning gold in the 800-metre T52 at the 2000 Sydney Paralympics. Photo courtesy Australian Paralympic Committee.

When a car crash cut short his promising military career, Greg Smith drew on his Army training to become a Paralympic gold medallist.

In 1987, Trooper Greg Smith, a 19-year-old tank driver with the Army's 1st Armoured Regiment, fell asleep at the wheel while driving home to Ballarat. The car crash that followed left him paralysed from the neck down.

'It was very, very tough,' he says from Buninyong, his home near Ballarat. 'I had my whole life ahead of me. I loved my life in the Army. I felt very positive about the things I was doing there. And all of that suddenly went out the window.'

'Back then, when I was medically discharged, there were no avenues to be re-employed, or to remain working for the Army. My job was going to end. I still struggle with that today. I feel guilty that I didn't finish my career in the Army – I signed up to put my life in the service of my country, and I wasn't able to fulfil that commitment.'

'When I think back now, I probably should have got some mental health support, but it just wasn't really on people's radar back then.'

Greg says it took him about 10 years to get over the psychological impact of his disability, and even now he struggles sometimes. He's the father

of three young boys who are very active, and there are times when having to use a wheelchair for his everyday mobility means he can't participate as much as he'd like to. He can move his arms but his hands have very limited function.

What's helped him along the way has been the support of his family and friends.

'After the accident, my mother never gave up on me,' he says. 'She made it clear that she was there for me, but didn't fuss over me or treat me as fragile. She let me pick myself up. Same with my friends. They treated me exactly the same as they always had.'

*"There were massive learnings in the short time I was in the Army, such as how to challenge myself and have a go at things, and tough things out."*

There were two other factors that helped with Greg's recovery. He'd only been in the Army for 18 months, but that had been enough to instil in him a commitment to overcoming challenges and the self-discipline to do so.

The other factor was sport. Greg had always been really into it as a kid, and during his rehabilitation another patient lent him a racing wheelchair. He took part in his first racing event a year after his accident.

'Sport gave me something to motivate me. It gave me another challenge. That was what the Army had given me: daily challenges. My whole life now revolved around sport, and distracted me from sitting around feeling miserable for myself.'

Greg basically trained seven days a week for four years, and in 1992 went to Barcelona and competed in his first Paralympics, where he won two bronze medals and one silver (in the 4 x 100m relay, the 4 x 400m relay and the marathon respectively).

At the 1996 games in Atlanta, he won a silver in the men's 5,000-metre T52. Then at the Sydney Games in 2000 he won three gold medals (in the men's 800-metre T52, men's 1,500-metre T52 and men's 5,000-metre T52 events).

'Winning gold at Sydney was an incredible feeling. Not winning gold at Barcelona was probably



The ceremony where Greg was announced as 2012 Australian Flag Bearer for the Australian Paralympic Team. Courtesy Australian Paralympic Committee.

good in a way. It reminded me that just because you don't reach your goals immediately, doesn't mean you give up. I just kept going for it. It ended up taking 12 years for me to win gold.

'At Sydney, I was fortunate that it was on home turf. Friends and families could come and watch. So the win was not just for myself but for my family who supported me all through the journey.'

After the Sydney Games, Greg felt he had achieved all he wanted to in wheelchair racing, so switched to wheelchair rugby. One of the benefits of this was the camaraderie that he had missed since his Army days. His team – the Australian Steelers – won silver at the 2008 Beijing Games, and at the 2012 London Games they were the first Australian Paralympic rugby team ever to win gold. He was also the flag-bearer at the opening ceremony for the Australian team.

Greg has retired from competitive rugby and now works for Paralympics Australia as the strength and conditioning coach with the Steelers. To do this he has drawn partly on the skills he acquired as a fitness instructor in the Army.

Though he went with the team to Rio in 2016, he decided not to travel to Tokyo, partly because of COVID but also because his absence would have impacted on his young family. Not being in Tokyo was hard for him, though he monitored the team remotely and supported them any way he could.

In 2001, Greg was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

'The whole routine and discipline side of the Army was a massive part of my sporting career and even my life now. I try to be the best person I can be, and to have the discipline and commitment required to make that happen – character traits that I hope I can instil in my kids.'



Trooper Smith driving a Leopard A1 tank.

# COMMEMORATIONS



Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks AM laid a wreath at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial to mark the anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and the Battle of Nui Le.



Two armoured personnel carriers of 1 Troop, A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, ready to move from a tactical position during Operation Ivanhoe. Pictured is Trooper Denis Kimble Thompson.

## 50th anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and the Battle of Nui Le

Veterans, their families and members of the wider community paused on 20 September to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Operation Ivanhoe and the Battle of Nui Le, the last major Australian offensive of the Vietnam War.

Significant anniversaries such as this one are traditionally marked with a national commemorative service in Canberra, but due to the COVID restrictions the anniversary was marked in a unique way.

Veterans across the country watched an online commemorative service, organised by the ABC and DVA. Those speaking in the service were able to participate from their homes, with DVA arranging online videos to ensure all elements of the service were included.

The commemorative address was delivered by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC, who paid tribute to those who served in Operation Ivanhoe, and all those who served in the Vietnam War.

‘While it has been 50 years since Australians fought their last major battles in Vietnam, our appreciation, respect and pride in those who served in that conflict has not diminished,’ said His Excellency.

‘To all watching today who served in Vietnam, know that we will continue to remember and value the contribution you made in the service of our nation.

‘To all who served on Operation Ivanhoe and in the Battle of Nui Le, be proud of your service. You built on the Anzac legacy, and in doing so helped shape the generation

of servicemen and women who followed.’

Operation Ivanhoe was the last offensive operation of Australia’s war in Vietnam, and the The Battle of Nui Le, fought during Ivanhoe on 21 September 1971, was the last major battle fought by Australian forces in Vietnam.

Operation Ivanhoe was a search-and-destroy sweep of the area south of the Courtenay rubber plantation involving infantry, armoured personnel carriers, artillery and engineers, along with air support.

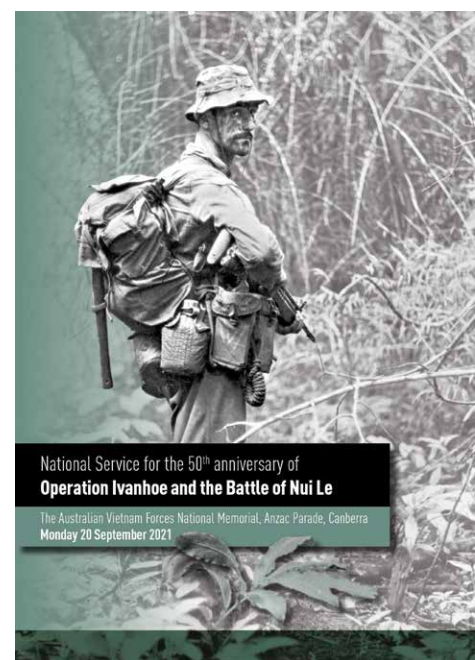
Tragically, six Australians lost their lives in Operation Ivanhoe, with 29 Australians and one New Zealander wounded. At least five Australians received decorations for their role in Operation Ivanhoe

with a further three Mentioned in Despatches.

While a full service was not possible, ACT Health granted special permission for Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks AM to lay a wreath at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial to mark the anniversary.

Other events in areas of the country not experiencing COVID lockdowns also took place, including the dedication of a garden of remembrance in St Lucia, Brisbane, to honour those who fought in Operation Ivanhoe.

A commemorative coin was released by the Royal Australian Mint (RAM) to mark the occasion of the anniversary, and is available online from the RAM shop, [www.ramint.gov.au](http://www.ramint.gov.au)



The cover of the Order of Service for the National Service

Those who missed the National Commemorative Service on 20 September can watch it on the ABC streaming service iView ([iview.abc.net.au](http://iview.abc.net.au)) until 19 December, and DVA’s YouTube channel, DVA TV ([youtube.com/dvatvaus](http://youtube.com/dvatvaus)).

The Order of Service is also available to download from the DVA website ([dva.gov.au/operationivanhoe](http://dva.gov.au/operationivanhoe)).



Commemorative coin issued by the Royal Australian Mint

If this article raises issues for you, please contact:

Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, which offers free and confidential counselling to the veteran community on 1800 011 046

Safe Zone is available for current and former ADF personnel on 1800 142 072. Calls to Safe Zone are confidential and not recorded.

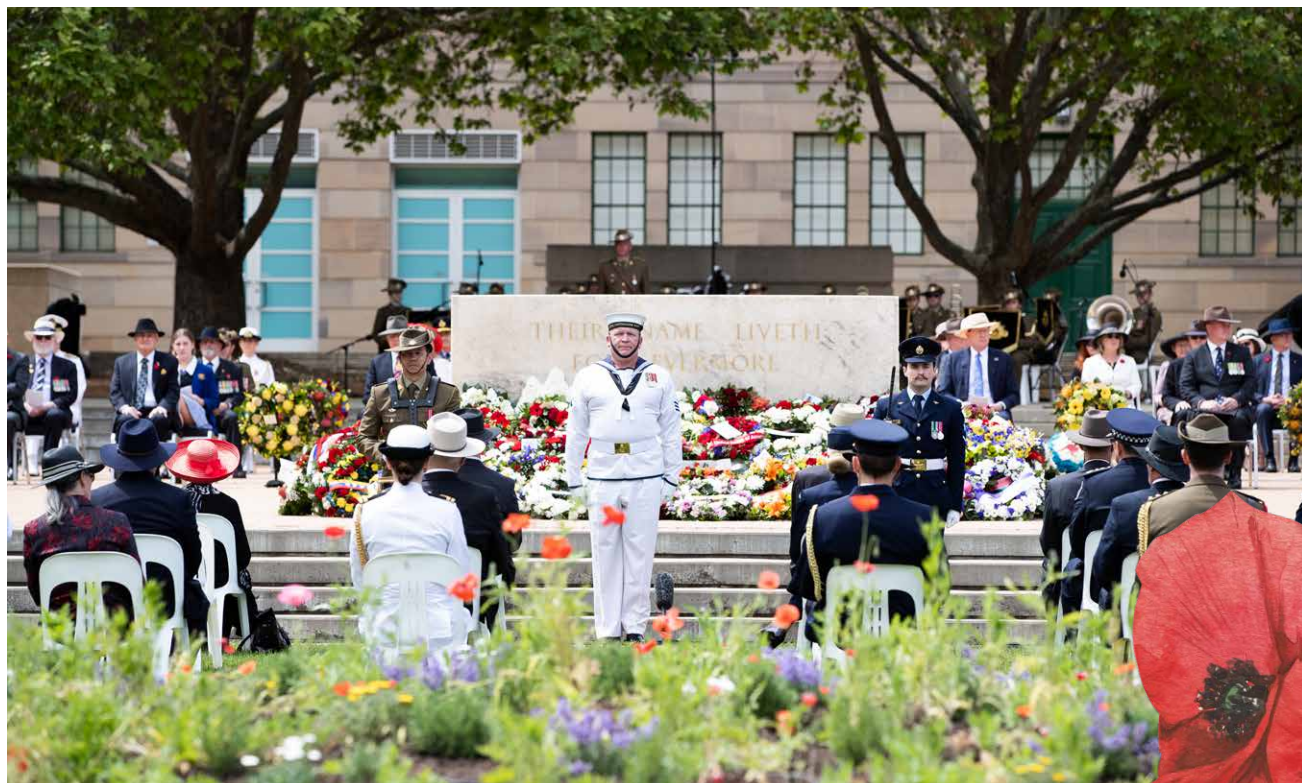
## Honouring the fallen

Australians across the nation marked Remembrance Day this year in a variety of ways, as COVID-19 restrictions led to smaller services and at-home commemorations in some states and territories.

While the restrictions may have changed the way in which we observed this important day, they can never detract from our dedication to honouring more than 102,000 Australian men and women who have given their lives in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

At the Australian War Memorial, a small service took place in the Western Courtyard, attended by about 500 people.

The service was streamed across Australia by the ABC on television, radio and online, and through DVA's Facebook page ([facebook.com/DVAAus](https://facebook.com/DVAAus)). For those wishing to view the service, it is available on ABC iView ([iview.abc.net.au](https://iview.abc.net.au)).



*Remembrance Day at the Australian War Memorial*

This Remembrance Day marked the 103rd anniversary of the Armistice that ended the fighting in the First World War. By the end of that conflict more than 60,000 Australians had given their lives in service of their country. As a nation in 1918, we made a commitment to always

remember the fallen, and we continue this tradition today, honouring all those who were lost in that war, and all the wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations since.

*Lest we forget.*

## Sir John Monash Centre adapts to a COVID world



Drawing on an incredible archive of objects, images and documents, the Sir John Monash Centre (SJMC), near Villers-Bretonneux in France, tells the story of Australia's involvement on the Western Front battlefields during the First World War.

With travel restrictions in place in France since 2020, the SJMC has had to adapt and offer a digital alternative to a site visit.

'As many of you are missing not being able to visit the Sir John Monash Centre, we want to bring the Centre to you,' explains Rebecca Doyle, Director of the SJMC.

Providing an online alternative comes easily to the SMJC as digital content occupies a central place at the Centre.

The SJMC has released a series of short videos available on DVA's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/user/DVAAus](https://www.youtube.com/user/DVAAus)). The videos begin with the reasons for Australia's involvement in the First World War. We then get an insight into the life of the soldiers during one of northern France's coldest winters on record. In another video, we enter the daily life of the Australian troops behind the front.

The series concludes with the end of war, and a portrait of General Sir John Monash, who led the Australian Corps with outstanding success on the Western Front in 1918.

Also available on DVA's YouTube channel is an online conference on Australian Olympians who served during the First World War, presented by British battlefield historian Pete Smith and hosted by the SJMC.

If you want to know more about the involvement of Australians on the Western Front during the First World War, watch these videos and follow the SJMC on social networks. SJMC regularly shares interesting stories from the Western Front illustrated with nicely selected archive material.

The Centre's website is: <https://sjmc.gov.au>.

### Australian National Memorial

The Australian National Memorial commemorates all Australians who fought on the Western Front in the First World War.

From a nation with a population of less than five million when war was declared, 415,000 Australians enlisted to fight. Of those, more than 295,000 Australians served on the Western Front and 46,000 of them never came home.

It was also here, three years after the Gallipoli landings, on the night of 24-25 April 1918, that British and Australians reclaimed the village of Villers-Bretonneux.

The second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux saw the Allies' first decisive push back during the Spring Offensive. It was followed by the 93-minute victory on 4 July 1918 at Le Hamel, under the command of Sir John Monash. Monash's innovative combined arms tactics were repeated on a larger scale on 8 August in the Battle of Amiens, which led to the end of the war.

The memorial lists the battle honours of the 1st Australian Imperial Force and the names of nearly 11,000 Australians who died in France and have no known grave.

The SJMC is located behind the memorial.



*Inside the Sir John Monash Centre*

# COMMEMORATIONS

## Hellfire Pass and Sandakan during COVID

Our commitment to remembrance never ends. Despite the global pandemic and travel restrictions, our overseas teams and their local communities are ensuring that commemoration and recognition continues.

### Hellfire Pass Interpretive Centre and Memorial Walking Trail, Thailand

During the Second World War, after the fall of Malaya, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies in February 1942, more than 22,000 Australians were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

Some 13,000 Australians, along with 47,000 other Allied troops and 200,000 Asian labourers, were sent to work under brutal conditions on the construction of a new railway, stretching 415 kilometres from Thailand to Burma (now Myanmar).

At least 12,000 POWs and an estimated 90,000 labourers died during the construction – memorialised as ‘*a life for every sleeper*’. Among the casualties were 2,815 Australians.

Despite a lack of international visitors, the team at Hellfire Pass continue to tell our Australian story with care and dedication. They also observed Australians’ service and sacrifice with the laying of a commemorative wreath on Anzac Day.



*Wreath-laying at the memorial on the Hellfire Pass Memorial Walking Trail, Anzac Day, 2021*

### Sandakan Memorial Park, Sabah Province, Malaysia

Sandakan remains one of the worst atrocities committed against Australians in war. On 15 August each year, for Sandakan Memorial Day, we commemorate the more than 2,400 Australian and British POWs who lost their lives and the estimated 16 per cent of Sabah’s civilian population who died during Japanese occupying during the Second World War.

In 2021, despite the pandemic, our team at Sandakan Memorial Park continued to honour the memory and sacrifice of those lost during this tragic chapter. Anzac Day was observed with the laying of a commemorative wreath.

*For the full story, see [dva.gov.au/Sandakan-HPIC](https://dva.gov.au/Sandakan-HPIC).*



*The memorial obelisk at Sandakan*



*The crew of HMAS Sydney line the decks as the cruiser passes by the Sydney Harbour Bridge prior to docking at Circular Quay on 10 February 1941.*

## 80th anniversary of the sinking of the HMAS Sydney

On 19 November, we paused to remember the single greatest loss of life in Australian naval history with the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the HMAS Sydney.

The tragic loss of the *Sydney* and all 645 members of her crew after clashing with the German Raider *Kormoran* off the West Australian coast in 1941 was a tremendous blow to the people of Australia.

It was compounded by the almost 70-year mystery of her final resting place. She was finally found in 2008, 2,468 metres below the

surface and 20 kilometres from the wreck of the *Kormoran*.

On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the sinking in 2001, the National HMAS *Sydney* Memorial in Geraldton was opened overlooking the Indian Ocean.

The memorial includes a domed roof of silver gulls, representing the souls of the 645 men who lost their lives and a bronze figure of a woman, representing the families of all those who failed to return.

## Applications for commemorative projects close 8 February 2022

The *Saluting Their Service* Commemorative Grants Program offers funding to assist local communities in honouring the service and sacrifice of Australia’s service personnel. The Australian Government has committed an additional \$10 million of funding to the Program over four financial years. This brings the total amount of funding in 2021–22 to \$3.5 million.

The upcoming 50th anniversary of Australia’s withdrawal from the Vietnam War in 2023 presents a unique opportunity for communities around Australia to conduct projects and activities that commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans. Organisations

are welcome to apply for funding for projects that commemorate this significant anniversary.

Applications are also welcome for projects relating to other wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Types of eligible projects can include:

- updating or restoring your local memorial;
- commissioning an honour board to recognise local service personnel;
- conducting an exhibition of military memorabilia or other unique military-related items; or
- involving local school students in an educational project.

The current batch of applications closes on 8 February 2022.

There are two categories of grants available:

1. **Saluting Their Service – Community Grants:** Grants to a maximum of \$10,000 for local, community-based projects and activities
2. **Saluting Their Service – Major Grants:** Grants from \$10,001 to \$150,000 for major commemorative projects that are significant from a national, state, territory, or regional perspective.

For more information, visit the Community Grants Hub ([communitygrants.gov.au](https://communitygrants.gov.au)) or GrantConnect ([grants.gov.au](https://grants.gov.au)).



# NOTICEBOARD

## NAVY

### Calling all D-Day Associations

I am Assistant Hon Sec of the Harwich & Dovercourt Sailing Club based in Harwich, Essex, UK. Our club is based onboard LBK6, the last surviving floating Landing Barge Kitchen from the D-Day landings. Unfortunately the barge has been damaged by water and we are looking for donations towards repairs. The LBK6 is a special part of history and deserved to be conserved.  
**Contact:** Violet Phillips  
☎ 00 44 (0) 7867 506322  
🌐 [www.hdsc.org.uk](http://www.hdsc.org.uk)

### The Dandenong Naval Association

The Association is starting up a support group for ex-RAN personnel and partners. First Friday of the month at 10:30 am. Held at Noble Park RSL, 1128 Heatherton Rd Noble Park, Victoria.  
**Contact:** Gordon Murray OAM, President NAA Dandenong  
✉ [gordonmurray44@icloud.com](mailto:gordonmurray44@icloud.com).

### Fleet Air Arm – Op Bursa recognition

In October 2020, the Governor-General approved the award of the Australian Service Medal with clasp Counter Terrorism/Special Recovery, to personnel of HC723, HU816 and HS817 Squadrons, who participated in Operation Bursa in Bass Strait in the 1980s. Those people who believe they may qualify, please visit the website below for eligibility criteria and the application procedure.  
**Contact:** Op Bursa Recognition Team  
✉ [Op.Bursa@defence.gov.au](mailto:Op.Bursa@defence.gov.au)  
🌐 [faaaa.asn.au/operation-bursa-recognition](http://faaaa.asn.au/operation-bursa-recognition)

### Members of Rankin Division who joined the RAN on 12/09/1963

Seeking CPOMTP Dolly Gray, CPO John Butler, CPOMTH Harry Brown and WO Pedro Petrass, CPOMTH Clay Goodwin and CPOMTH Tom Piper. We all served together in 1974 and 1975.  
**Contact:** ExCPOMTH Geoff Vollmer  
☎ 02 4472 6548  
✉ 34A Broomfield Crescent, Longbeach NSW 2536

## ARMY

### Seeking information about WRAAC Rosemary Johnson/Johnstone

Period of service between 1967 and 1974. At the time quartered at WRAAC School, Georges Heights, Middle Head. Postings RAEME workshop unit and other offices within the Sydney area. Held the rank of Corporal approx 1968 to 1974. Enlisted in South Australia, from the Loxton area.  
**Contact:** Shaneen Voss  
☎ 0487 633 081  
✉ [purdie176@gmail.com](mailto:purdie176@gmail.com)

### Seeking past members of the RAAMC and Health Service

### Corps to join the RAAMC and Health Service Corps Association

Membership of the National Association will automatically give you membership of your local State Association. There are no fees and the aim of all branches is to provide a conduit for ex-members to keep in touch, reunions, social functions, etc.  
**Contact:** Paul Terawskyj, National President  
☎ 0411 247 874  
✉ [wycombe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wycombe@bigpond.net.au)  
🌐 [raamc.org.au](http://raamc.org.au)

### Seeking Wally Neeson

Wally served in SVN with 9RAR.  
**Contact:** John Torpey  
☎ 0417 326 066  
✉ [jtorpey@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jtorpey@bigpond.net.au)

### Seeking R G (Bob) Nicolls

18 platoon B Company Kapooka 1973.  
**Contact:** David Watts  
☎ 0418 340 209  
✉ [dave77watts@gmail.com](mailto:dave77watts@gmail.com)

### Seeking Peter Smith

Peter did his National Service training at Singleton for the 10th intake 1967–1969 as did I. I believe he came from the Lismore or Tenterfield area before being conscripted. After training we both went to Engineers.  
**Contact:** Ron Woods  
☎ 07 4728 3970  
✉ [Joanw000@telstra.com](mailto:Joanw000@telstra.com)

### Seeking Douglas (Doug) Horton

Vietnam Veteran, 1974, LCPL at the time, 5/7 RAR Delta Company, 12 Platoon. Hoping to catch up with him.  
**Contact:** Trevor Wharton  
48 Hayton Park Bvd  
Cranbourne West VIC 3977  
☎ 0418 468 709  
✉ [trekkers53@gmail.com](mailto:trekkers53@gmail.com)

### 404 Transport

Seeking the old CO of 404 Transport in the 70s. He was a captain and now may be a major at Victoria Barracks. I am looking for my kukra; one from Sgt Netra and the other from the company.  
**Contact:** Alan McIntyre  
☎ 0497 930 393

### Seeking Terence Scott, No 38649

Served in Vietnam 1967 in 7RAR. Lived in West Preston, Victoria and went to school at Marist Bros, Preston. Born in 1947 and may have passed away in 1971.  
**Contact:** Rino Frigo  
☎ 03 9436 8935

### Seeking Nasho Slavko Staveski

Slavko was in Vietnam in the late 60s/early 70s. My late husband, Bohdan Storok and I visited him back in the 1980s. I would like to catch up with him if possible.  
**Contact:** Irene Storok  
✉ 739 Hannam Vale Road  
Stewarts River NSW 2443

### Return to Wewak 1970 booklet

I just want to express my thanks to all those who made contact. The response was overwhelming and I really appreciated the interesting conversations.  
**Contact:** Valerie O'Grady  
☎ 07 5499 6353

### Grant W Jones

Seeking to contact 39047 WO1 Grant W Jones RAEME ex DTS PNGDF. Please call to discuss news related to our travels in 1980.  
**Contact:** Clive Dutton  
☎ 0414 830 068

### Lord Howe Island Airstrip Construction 1974

Detachment 1FER, Feb–Sep 1974, Exercise Kentia Palm. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the completion of the civilian airstrip, constructed by Army with RAN support, we are seeking names of those RAE, RAEME, RASIGS, RASVY, RAAOC, AACC, and RAN (LCH Crews) who were there. We have 20 names so far, but believe around 120 were involved over the three rotations.  
**Contact:** Gary Barker  
☎ 0409 446 475;  
✉ [gary.barker3@bigpond.com](mailto:gary.barker3@bigpond.com) or Ron Byron  
☎ 07 3294 0409;  
✉ [rc.byron@bigpond.com](mailto:rc.byron@bigpond.com)

### Horse Shoe July 1968

I am seeking any members of either 4RAR Charlie Company or 9 Platoon Charlie Company 4RAR that remember the incident involving Shane O'Connor at the checkpoint/MG pit below the Horse Shoe in July 1968. The main focus of my research is the RAAF Airfield Defence Guards attached to 4RAR during this event.  
**Contact:** Dr Sean Carwardine  
☎ 0400 703 565  
✉ [carbs99@bigpond.com](mailto:carbs99@bigpond.com)

### Seeking contact with Capt S Anderson

ATO at 311 Supply Coy Ammo Pl Wirlinga 1988–89. Believed to have joined the SA Police after leaving the Army.  
**Contact:** James Trevaskis  
☎ 0427 797 717  
✉ [jamitrav@hotmail.com](mailto:jamitrav@hotmail.com)

### Seeking David YATES

Dave served in 5 RAR in Vietnam 1969 with D Coy 12 Platoon, was WIA and repatriated home. I am wanting to reunite with him as we served together prior to him going overseas.  
**Contact:** Norm Tregenza  
✉ [nbslmt@icloud.com](mailto:nbslmt@icloud.com)

### B Coy 2 RAR/NZ (First Tour 1967/68)

Seeking all members and families of B Coy who have not yet purchased a copy of Manoeuvres Mates Memories (in particular any men who were transferred into B Coy from D Coy when 2RAR became 2RAR/NZ). This quality book features the recollections and stories of many of the 216 men who served in Bravo Coy, before,

during and after 2 RAR/NZ's first tour to South Vietnam.  
**Contact:** Geoff Brewer (B Coy CHQ)  
☎ 0401 149 188  
✉ [geoffbrewer@hotmail.com](mailto:geoffbrewer@hotmail.com)

### 2/3 Australian Machine Gun Battalion WWII

Seeking to make contact with descendants and relatives of former members of the Battalion.  
**Contact:** Stan Hannaford  
☎ 0437 770 912  
✉ [shannaford8@bigpond.com](mailto:shannaford8@bigpond.com)

## AIR FORCE

### 5 Airfield Construction Squadron

Seeking family of the following who served with my late uncle, Irvine Leslie Davies, in the Squadron in BCOF, Iwakuni, Japan 1946–47: 'Lofty' Collier, 'Lofty' (Eric) Graham, Bill Scarce, 'Speed' Anderson, Max Boodberry, Toby Flint, 'Butch' Scarborough, 'Pedro' Sproules, 'K O' Ogden, Bert O'Brien, 'Red' Shelton. I have information and photos.  
**Contact:** Boyd Trevithick  
☎ 0409 740 892  
✉ [boydtrevithick@gmail.com](mailto:boydtrevithick@gmail.com)  
PO Box 385, Byron Bay, NSW, 2481.

### RAF Canberra WT333

Seeking memories or photos of RAF Canberra WT333 on her first arrival at RAAF Edinburgh in June 1966 from 2ATU or Maintenance Squadron personnel at that time.  
**Contact:** John Grant  
✉ [johndgrant@optusnet.com.au](mailto:johndgrant@optusnet.com.au)

### Keith Oscar Jacka, 60220

Born in Hawthorne, Victoria on 29 June 1909. I have a pith helmet used by Keith during his service and I would like to return it to his family.  
**Contact:** Graham Hymus  
☎ 0427 321 339  
✉ [gd68@bigpond.com](mailto:gd68@bigpond.com)

### Seeking members of Recruit Course 1212 1 RTU April 1973

We are compiling names of interested graduates of 1RTU Course 1212 for a proposed reunion in 2023 (date TBC).  
**Contact:** Neil Barradeen or Wayne Woods  
☎ 0457 635 964 or 0409 114 431  
✉ [barra1603@bigpond.com](mailto:barra1603@bigpond.com)

### 467 Squadron RAAF by Chris Ward

The full history of 467 Squadron in WWII. Detailed accounts of the operations and photographs tell the moving story of young men who went to war in the air. It is essential reading for those who had family members in the Squadron as well as those who have a general interest in Australian military history. Available from Amazon.com.au.  
**Contact:** Simon Hepworth  
✉ [bombercommandbooks@gmail.com](mailto:bombercommandbooks@gmail.com)

### Seeking hat and beret

My son completed a gap year in OFFCDT 2010, Officer training

school. I wish to replace his formal dress uniform hat and beret. I have misplaced them both. They have sentimental value.  
**Contact:** Linda  
✉ [theahrensfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:theahrensfamily@hotmail.com)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### NAVY/ARMY/AIR FORCE Vanuatu Veterans

Personnel who were members of, or attached to, PNGDF KUMUL FORCE, VANUATU September 1980. I am compiling a list of Vanuatu veterans.  
**Contact:** Clive Dutton  
☎ 0414 830 068  
✉ [duttoncv@tpg.com.au](mailto:duttoncv@tpg.com.au)

### Green Door Pathways

Are you a veteran who has worked in intelligence or security, or associated operational management areas and are keen to utilise your skills post-transition? Green Door is a consulting company managed by veterans who might be able to assist you. A current security clearance is highly regarded.  
**Contact:** ☎ 1300 311 605  
✉ [pathways@greendoor.com.au](mailto:pathways@greendoor.com.au)  
🌐 [www.greendoor.com.au](http://www.greendoor.com.au)

### Melbourne Western Region TPI Social Club Inc.

Are you an ADF TPI/War Widow/EDA/MRCA/ ex-serving military member or a partner or family of an ex-member and looking for social interaction, and live in the western suburbs of Melbourne? We are seeking new members. We hold our meetings at the Sunshine RSL Club on the first pay Thursday of each month. It's an informal gathering where we discuss current veteran issues and enjoy a meal together. Additionally, we have regular social outings and lunches. Spouses and partners are welcome.  
**Contact:** Shane Turner, President  
☎ 0438 428 932  
✉ [stur5449@bigpond.net.au](mailto:stur5449@bigpond.net.au)

### Wesley College, Melbourne seeking information

In recent years, substantial work has been undertaken improving the knowledge of the service of former students of Wesley College in the conflicts of WWI and WWII. Wesley now seeks information on former students who had any military service in the post-1945 era. Any Collegians who have served or are still serving, or family members of those who are deceased, are invited to make contact.  
**Contact:** Leigh Treyvaud (NS Intake 4/1967).  
✉ [treyvaud-lc@bigpond.com](mailto:treyvaud-lc@bigpond.com)

# NOTICEBOARD

## MISCELLANEOUS CONTINUED

### Commemorative Greek Campaign medal WWII 1940-41

Australian veterans who served in the Greek Campaign can apply to receive the commemorative medal from the Greek Government. Families can also apply on behalf of a deceased veteran. This is not a new medal

– the medal was introduced in early 1970 for all Australian servicemen who served in Greece in WWII.

**Contact:** Steve Kyritsis OAM, Hellenic RSL Sub-Branch  
☎ 0418 571 800 or (03) 9589 3403  
✉ steve.kyritsis@hotmail.com

### Nowra and District TPI Social

### and Welfare Club

Are you a Military TPI looking for social interaction? We are seeking new members. We hold meetings at the Nowra Veterans Wellbeing Centre, 1/19 Nowra Lane, Nowra, every third Tuesday of the month at 11:00am, as well as social outings and lunches. Spouses and partners are most welcome.  
**Contact:** Leanne Wehmeier

## REUNIONS

Please note that the following reunions may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please contact organisers for more information.

### No. 23 RAAF Academy Course

16 January 2022, Newcastle, NSW  
Course members and staff interested in attending, please contact Burls. Date subject to change due to COVID.  
**Contact:** Neil Burlinson  
☎ 0409 153 588  
✉ burlinsons@bigpond.com

### HQ1ATF Association

3-7 March 2022, Capital Country Holiday Park, Sutton, NSW  
02 6230 3433  
In memory of our D&E losses at Long Khanh – 12 June 1971.  
**Contact:** John V - HQ1ATF Association  
✉ jverhelst@jhconsult.com.au  
🌐 www.hq1atf.org

### RAAOC Corps

7-10 March 2022, Sydney, NSW  
Seeking expressions of interest in a reunion.  
**Contact:** Russell Fozzard  
☎ 0412 915 754  
✉ pj.rocky@yahoo.com.au

### Military Police Association Australia

1-3 April 2022, Hobart, Tasmania.  
Open to all serving and former members of Royal Australian Corps of Military Police.  
**Contact:** John Watson  
☎ 03 5156 7401  
✉ infopost828@bigpond.com

### LSTAA ANZAC Reunion

23-25 April 2022, Brisbane, QLD  
For ex-soldiers and serving members who served in any of the Locating Units and Surveillance,

Target Acquisition Units. Starting at Fort Lytton on the 23rd and ending in Anzac Day march on the 25th.  
**Contact:** Keith Ayliffe  
✉ aylif@westnet.com.au  
🌐 www.locatingartillery.org

### RAN Communications Branch Association

24-27 April 2022, Darling Harbour, Sydney, NSW  
Welcome reception and cocktail cruise Sunday 24 April. Day 2 – Anzac Day wreath-laying ceremony at Martin Place Cenotaph, followed by the Anzac Day march. At conclusion, participants will board a vessel in Darling Harbour for a lunch cruise. Day 3 – activities to be advised. Day 4 – farewell lunch cruise aboard Sydney Showboat. To register, visit the website.  
**Contact:** Brian Gray  
✉ secretaryrancbansw@gmail.com  
🌐 www.rancbansw.org

### Collins and Walton 40th intake - 50-Year Reunion

23-25 May 2022, Bribie RSL, Bribie Island, QLD  
Details are available on the website and also on Facebook – HMAS *Leeuwin*, 40th Collins & Walton Intake, 1972-73. All 40th intake members welcome.  
**Contact:** Glenn Murch  
✉ murchglenn1@gmail.com  
🌐 https://collins-walton-40th.org

### 104 Sig Sqn National Reunion

19-21 July 2022, Twin Towns Service Club, Gold Coast, QLD

55th Anniversary Reunion for all ex-members and families of 104 Sig Sqn, SVN and later. Other RASigs most welcome. See reunion website and Facebook page: 104 Sig Sqn National Reunion 2022  
**Contact:** Denis Hare  
☎ 0419 224 535  
✉ reunion@au104.org  
🌐 http://2022.au104.org

### RAADC 80th Shin Dig

21 April 2023, the Portsea Camp, Vic.  
Open to all past, present, family and associated friends of our outstanding Corps. Golf day on Friday 22 April for those keen. Pop-up spit roast on the Saturday. Sunday you can enjoy walking the Portsea Barracks at your leisure. Reaching out to members not on Facebook as many have already locked in the date.  
**Contact:** Sonia Thompson  
☎ 0402 444 460  
✉ sonithompson1@gmail.com

### D Coy 3 Bn RAR 67-68 SVN Tour Reunion

21-25 July 2022, Hervey Bay, QLD  
All who served in D Coy along with their partners during the 67-68 tour are most welcome to attend and renew friendships. We will be having Meet & Greet, tour of the Maryborough Military Museum and Gallipoli Memorial Walk, whale watching, Company dinner and farewell breakfast.  
**Contact:** Dutchy Lensing or Ken Windebank  
☎ 0418 952 850 or 0427 621 713  
✉ dutchyle@bigpond.com.au or windebank7@gmail.com

## MEDALS LOST AND FOUND

### LOST

#### Clyde Robert Wesley HOBBY, VX87451

Medals from WWII (Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-45, Australian Service Medal 1939-45) and our father's Returned from Active Service badge # 273527 have gone missing. We would very much like them back for his grandchildren and posterity.  
**Contact:** Alison or Ian Hobby  
☎ 0407 011 414 or 0402 728 031

#### Clement Topham's WWI and WWII medals

My grandfather's medals went missing more than ten years ago. They were sold at Public Auction 267 on 29 May 2010 in Castlereagh St, Sydney, but there are no details about who bought them. My 93-year-old mother would dearly love to find them.  
**Contact:** Maggie Somerset  
✉ maggiesomerset123@gmail.com

#### Trooper William John McDougall

Looking for Dead Man's Penny medallion that belonged to William, service number 979, 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment. Medallion was sold in the township of Sale in the 1980s.  
**Contact:** Graham Lay  
☎ 0431 624 366

#### Dave Birney, Defence Medal

Lost on Anzac Day 2021 at Culburra Beach, NSW  
**Contact:** Dave Birney, 221237  
☎ 0459 566 164

#### Albert Stanley Allen

British War Medal and Victory Medal belonging to my grandfather, 5704 Ordinary Seaman Albert Stanley Allen, WWI. He died in 1931. My Grandmother Edith May née O'Regan remarried in 1941 to Henry (Harry) Charles Marshall Quillerat, and the medals went missing in South Melbourne around this time.  
**Contact:** Michael Veale  
☎ 0417 880 422  
✉ mick.veale@bigpond.com

#### Carleton Douglas McDonell

Looking for my father-in-law's WWII Civil Service medal. Last located at Unit 10/12 AbbottCourt, New Farm, QLD  
**Contact:** Ron Lambkin  
☎ 0403 898 254

### FOUND

#### W Dalzeil WWI Medal

Inscription – 14650 DVR W Dalzeil 4-D.A.C. AIF. Enlisted 5/1/1916 RTA 12/5/1919.  
**Contact:** Paul McCrohan  
☎ 0418 313 520  
✉ pdmccrohan@hotmail.com

#### Flying Officer George Charles Jeffery

WWII medals 427477, deceased 10 January 1946. The medals were found in a shoebox in

NZ, and George was from Perth WA. I'm trying to find his family so I can return them.

**Contact:** MAJ C A Clarke (Rtd)  
☎ 0417 605 876

#### Gr L Strand

British 1914-1918 medal in the name of Gr L Strand 43839.  
**Contact:** Joyce O'Brien  
☎ 02 6285 1931  
✉ admin@rslwoden.org.au

#### Albert Lawrence Hill

We have two WWII medals (War Medal 1939-45 and Australian Service Medal 1939-45) engraved in the name of 144310 Hill, A.L. – believed to be Hill, Albert Lawrence RAAF.  
**Contact:** Peter Cameron, Vietnam Veterans Federation, Brisbane/Gold Coast Sub Branch Inc  
☎ 0408 276 044

#### David Easton dog tags

Name on the tags is David Easton and a number 47554.  
**Contact:** Joan  
☎ 0431 945 562

#### Margaret Le'Neve Wilson

Australian Service Medal 1939-1945, NAA: A9301, 109964. Currently in the hands of Port Macquarie Police Station (Detective Senior Constable David Halverson – 0412 645 517) following a break-in of a home in Port Macquarie.  
**Contact:** Colin Clark JP, Honorary Treasurer/ Trustee, RSL Port Macquarie sub Branch, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444  
☎ 0400 205 235

#### Patrick Donnelly

1939-1945 Defence Medal with green ribbon believed to belong to Patrick born 1916. Serial No. SX10801. Currently in Police possession and would like to return to NOK/family members.  
**Contact:** S/C Justine Vogelmann  
☎ 08 8083 8099  
✉ 50697@police.nsw.gov.au

#### William F Kingley

WWII dog tags. I am hoping to return them to family.  
**Contact:** Tara Dunn  
☎ 0418 269 651

#### J E or T E Bates

A medal was found a while ago with no ribbon attached. On the front, it reads 3 RD Battalion Old Faithful and on the back is L/cpl 324293 Bates J E 1st Admin Coy Opie Trophy Section 21C. The J could be a T.  
**Contact:** Chris Chalmers  
☎ 0438 703 130 (text please)  
✉ christopherchalmers1953@gmail.com

## ONLINE NOTICEBOARD

For some time now, the online noticeboard has not been working. We apologise for that. However, the problems have now been fixed and you can submit a notice via [dva.gov.au/vetaffairs-noticeboard](http://dva.gov.au/vetaffairs-noticeboard).

Your notice will appear online soon afterwards and may appear in the hard copy issue, space permitting. Note that *Vetaffairs* is published in April, July and December.

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*Vetaffairs* is published three times a year and is longer than ever. However, we often have to reduce the length of articles to make them fit. The full versions are in the digital editions on our website ([dva.gov.au/vetaffairs](http://dva.gov.au/vetaffairs)).

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