



Serving and ex-serving personnel help with flood relief



Clockwise from top left: Sappers from 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment assist Gympie Roads & Infrastructure rebuild a culvert and open up roads; an Army aircrewman and a young child are winched aboard an MRH-90 Taipan helicopter near Lismore, NSW; an MRH-90 Taipan flies over Lismore; a rifleman assists the local community to move flood-damaged belongings in St Lucia, Brisbane

Members of the veteran community – both serving and ex-serving – played a huge role in supporting communities in New South Wales and Queensland during the recent floods.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) deployed thousands of personnel during the floods and for the clean-up afterwards as part of Operation Flood Assist

2022. Among other things, they conducted evacuations, search and rescue work, clean-up and recovery tasks, aerial reconnaissance, food, water and supply drops and distribution, and helped to restore communications and repair infrastructure.

Ex-service organisations such as Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) also pitched in. DRA (see page 13)

worked alongside locals, removing rubbish and debris, treating mould, clearing key access points and generally cleaning up.

And of course individual members of the veteran community did what so many Australians did: offered a helping hand to their neighbours and their communities during this challenging time.

Federal Budget and the veteran community

In Budget 2022-23, \$369 million in funding has been allocated on top of the more than \$11.5 billion provided to support around 340,000 veterans and families every year.

DVA's claims processing system is

receiving additional funding to help reduce the claims backlog.

The Psychiatric Assistance Dog Program has received ongoing funding to help more eligible veterans. The funding will also provide financial support to veterans living

with post-traumatic stress disorder who have privately sourced a suitably trained psychiatric assistance dog prior to or shortly after the start of the Program in September 2019.

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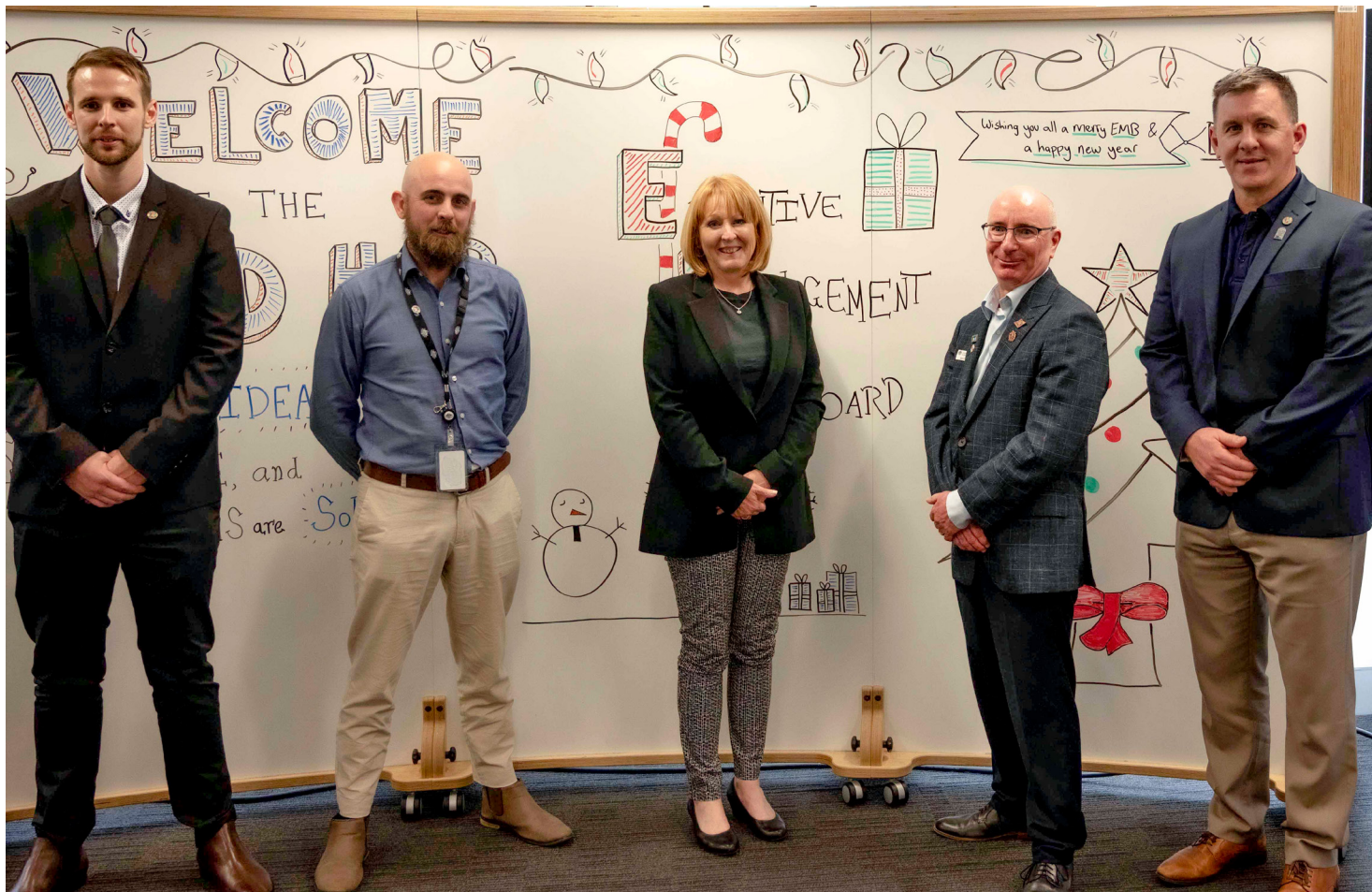
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NEWS



FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Liz Cosson AM CSC
Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs



With Veteran Employment Pathway participants and Program Manager Mick Barnes (second from left).
See the article on page 15.

2022 is shaping up to be another year of opportunities and challenges facing the nation and our Australian Defence Force. Since the establishment of the Repatriation Department in 1918, the services and support available to veterans and their families have evolved significantly, but our purpose has remained the same: to support those who serve or have served in defence of our nation and to commemorate their service and sacrifice.

Each conflict and peace-keeping mission that Australia has been involved in has seen new generations of veterans with different needs come to the department for support. The most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are no exception, bringing with them a young generation of veterans who seek support and services in a digital world. The department has had to innovate, through initiatives

like MyService, to ensure support remains accessible and efficient for them and their families.

We have also learnt more about the significance of thinking about an individual's overall wellbeing and to consider all aspects of lifetime wellbeing. The Veteran Centric Reform program has seen the department shift into thinking about prevention and holistic health by putting in place initiatives aimed at providing a range of proactive support measures that cater to the different needs of ADF members and families. I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the recent Census when we asked, for the first time, 'have you served in the ADF?'

As part of our overall focus on health and wellbeing it is important we recognise, ask for and know where to access help. With the introduction in 2016 of non-liability

mental health care for every veteran with one day of continuous full-time service or disaster relief operations (such as the ADF support to those communities impacted by recent flood events), contact us if you have not received your White Card to access this support. We have also expanded access to Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling in 2017 to ensure partners, children and immediate family members of veterans could seek support. This was done in recognition of the fact that family members are also impacted by military service.

A more recent challenge has been the significant increase in claims for support from the department and the backlog this has created. I acknowledge this may be causing additional distress or frustration for veterans and their families. Please know we can provide a range of supports while claims are being

processed and anyone experiencing difficulties is encouraged to reach out on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). DVA is working tirelessly to tackle this issue by improving IT systems and processes and bringing on around 250 additional staff to work on claims processing, which were provided for in last year's Budget.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has held a number of hearings since its commencement in December 2021. I appreciate that listening to the hearings, making a submission or appearing as a witness may be confronting or distressing. If you, or someone you know, needs support, support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. At any time, call Open Arms on 1800 011 046 or Safe-zone on 1800 142 072, for those who wish to remain anonymous.

With the restrictions associated with COVID, we have been unable to deliver or participate in our traditional Anzac Day services. I am happy to announce that with Anzac Day 2022 quickly approaching, the department is working to deliver services in France and Turkey for the first time in several years. Though attendance is anticipated to be lower than in previous years, it is part of our mission to commemorate at these sites – Villers-Bretonneux and Gallipoli – which are so significant in our military history. I hope you can all connect with others to commemorate this important day in our calendar. Check 5 (#5) is an important reminder that mates helping mates remains at the heart of our veteran and family community.

This year will not be without its challenges but I also see enormous opportunities to continue our work with the veteran community to ensure we are delivering support and services where they are needed. Please remember we are here whenever you need us to help and support you as best we can.

Liz

For more regular news, visit 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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Medals

As incredible as it seems, the injustice bestowed on Brian Winchcombe as described in the *Vetaffairs* Vol 37 No 3 December '21 is more common than people think.

I did a tour of Malaya with 8RAR in 1967-69. We were stationed in Terendak near Malacca. In that time the Confrontation was on its last legs. But 8RAR and the SAS were still doing ops on the Thai border as late as 1968. So we were still in an operational area and mode at that time.

In fairness, we were awarded the ASM with Bar, but were also entitled to the Malaysian Service Medal (PJM). But because some pogo in Canberra decided the Confrontation was over and it wasn't war like service anymore, we missed out on the PJM by *two weeks*.

But don't lose heart Brian, because after 54 years I received my first copy of the *Vetaffairs* newspaper, so maybe I'm a vet after all. But still no medal.

CJO'Shea
Brisbane, QLD

All I can say about Phillip Daniel and Brian Winchcombe is that I agree with them. If you were sent to war for even a day you deserve whatever medals etc that were given out. I can't see why personnel have to fight for this.

Peter Foley
Sunshine Coast, QLD

If you would like to apply for an original medal for yourself or a relative, or a replacement, visit the Department of Defence website's Defence Honours & Awards page (defence.gov.au and search for 'Defence Honours & Awards'). From this page you can also review eligibility criteria for various medals and other awards. Veterans who are 90 years of age or older will have their application fast-tracked.
- *Vetaffairs* Editor

Vetaffairs readability

Well done and congrats on finally increasing the font size and leading in the recent issue. Makes it so much easier to read and understand. Keep up the good work.

Lynette Brice (full-time carer and wife to a veteran)
Moama, NSW

Last edition

The Bendigo sheds program celebrated 10 years of being open [on 15 December 2021]. Your story on Defence sheds covered nothing of the Central Victorian story of the RSL Shed program funded by DVA and the Bendigo RSL. We have the biggest sheds program I have ever seen.

Chris Butters
Bendigo, VIC

Congratulations!

May I say, thank you for a great newspaper and informative read. The last issue is one of the best I have had the pleasure to read from DVA whilst relaxing at my favourite cafe. The newspaper contained vital information not limited to: The Hon Andrew Gee MP at the laying a wreath at the Australian War Memorial on Remembrance Day to Preliminary Interim Report on Veteran Suicide Prevention, to the relevance of the RSL today.

I particularly enjoyed reading Commissioner Gwen Cherne's well-written article. At first, I approached her article with lukewarmness. That soon changed to necessary reading - thank you Commissioner! There were of course many other thought-provoking contributors to this wonderful issue. And as I rose to leave the cafe, I left *Vetaffairs* proudly on the table for another patron who might just gain a glimpse of how much veterans are cared for by DVA and other veteran wellness providers.

Frank Kovas (formerly Royal Australian Engineers) Kingswood, SA

I wish to bring to your attention the words used in the article 'From the Minister', December 21 issue. Minister Gee spoke about Australia's first Victoria Cross recipient, Sir Neville Howse. It stated, 'He won his Victoria Cross during the Boer War, risking his own life to save another.'

I was taught that in a theatre of war, a recipient doesn't 'win' a medal, they earn it. I would appreciate it if you could amend the article to reflect this.

Colleen Crabb (ex-Army nurse)
Hervey Bay, QLD

Life after service

Have you recently separated from the Australian Defence Force, or are you thinking about doing so? Did you know that you have skills and abilities (dare I say super powers) that are easily transferred to one of the volunteer emergency services. Your training in the Navy, Army or Air Force will have prepared you well to take on the challenges that face the volunteers of the State Emergency Service, your local country/rural fire service or the volunteer ambulance service.

Don't let your years of training and operational readiness go to waste. Most of our towns and communities have some form of emergency services and most of these are quite well funded and equipped, though lacking in able-bodied volunteers.

Being a volunteer rescuer, firefighter or ambulance officer is challenging and rewarding and can keep you in good shape both mentally and physically and help protect and support your community.

Axel Larsen ESM (Navy veteran and active member of the SA Country Fire Service and SES for around 30 years)
Saddleworth, SA

Army Amenities Fund housing

My name is Glen Johns, ex RAN and Vietnam vet. South Australia has an AAF housing facility at Goolwa which I use on a regular basis but unfortunately the Department of Defence has decided to sell it with no consultation with members or even letting us know, thus depriving serving and ex members of a facility we richly deserve.

Personally, I think it's a disgrace and should be halted and reinstated to its original purpose. Not sure if you can do anything about it but your paper could inform members of this travesty.

Glen Johns (ex-RAN and Vietnam vet)
Waikerie, SA

Get in touch

Vetaffairs welcomes Letters to the Editor by emailing vetaffairs@dva.gov.au or writing to GPO Box 9998 Brisbane QLD 4001.

All letters must carry the sender's full name, address and contact telephone number and be of no more than 200 words.

Letters may be edited and not all letters may be published due to space constraints. We may not be able to reply to your letter personally but we will try to.

Letters are published in good faith and *Vetaffairs* takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the content.



Home building insurance for eligible veterans and serving ADF members

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Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

DEFENCE SERVICE HOMES

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Defence Service Homes Insurance is committed to putting our veterans and their families first. Key features include

- No excess on claims (except for earthquake and some accidental damage)
- Flexible payment options
- Accidental damage (up to \$5,000)
- Flood cover
- Temporary accommodation should your home become unfit to live in
- Storm damage to fences

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FREE rapid antigen tests for veterans



Veteran Card holders can get free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests from participating community pharmacies across Australia. Gold, White and Orange Card holders can access up to ten tests over a three-month period, to a maximum of five tests per month.

Veterans will need to attend the participating pharmacy in person and present their Veteran Card to receive the amount of tests required, noting the limit of up to five tests in any month.

If you do not have a Veteran Card, you may still be able to access free tests if you have a:

- Pension Concession Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card
- Health Care Card
- Low Income Health Card

Make sure to call your local pharmacy ahead of time to check if they

have tests in stock and that they are participating.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms do not attend a pharmacy to collect Rapid Antigen Tests. Go to a testing centre. Tests that are not sourced from a participating community pharmacy (e.g. if instead purchased from a supermarket) will not be covered by the Australian Government under your Veteran Card, and will be an out of pocket cost.

For more information, visit the 'Testing for COVID-19' page of the Department of Health website (health.gov.au and search for 'testing for COVID-19').

Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide continues in 2022

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide began its first hearings in Brisbane in December 2021 and recommenced this year in Sydney in February and March, with the fourth hearing block scheduled for April in Canberra. DVA is closely following the progress of the public hearings and is committed to responding in a timely and transparent manner to all requests from the Royal Commission.

The department understands this is a difficult time for many sharing their stories and it is important for all veterans and their families to know that if they need support they can continue to contact Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (www.openarms.gov.au) for free support and counselling (available 24/7 on 1800 011 046). Those who wish to remain anonymous, can contact Safe Zone Support on 1800 142 072.

Submissions to the Royal Commission are open until Friday 14 October 2022, according to the Royal Commission website (defence-veteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au). This is your chance to share your thoughts, and to contribute to the important work of the Royal Commission. Your submission can be made anonymously and you do not need to provide your contact details. You can make a submission online via the 'Make a submission' link on the home of the Royal Commission's website, or by calling 1800

329 095 to request a mailed submission form.

If you are providing a submission or appearing as a witness to the Royal Commission, you may wish to obtain official records from DVA to assist you to prepare your submission and/or to give evidence.

Information about how you can make a request for your official DVA records, or how you can request third-party records (if you have the appropriate authorisation), is available on the DVA website on the Freedom of information (FOI) page (dva.gov.au/foi) and select 'Accessing information for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide'.

You can also complete a short query form and a member of our staff will contact you to provide assistance, including explaining the process and timeframes.

For more information, visit the above web page or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

Construction begins on Nowra Veteran Wellbeing Centre

In January, construction works for the permanent home of the Nowra Veteran Wellbeing Centre was officially launched.

Once construction has finished, the new, purpose-built facility will provide a range of health and wellbeing services for veterans in the region.

It is part of a network of Veteran Wellbeing Centres across Australia established in partnership with ex-service organisations and state and territory governments. The centres focus on the provision of health and wellbeing services, and are designed to be community hubs for veterans and their families.

Veteran Wellbeing Centres will be available in eight locations nationally – Perth, Townsville, Adelaide, Nowra, Wodonga, Darwin, South-East Queensland and Tasmania – with six of the centres already providing much-needed

services in their communities. The expansion of the network into South East Queensland and Tasmania is underway with new lead organisations and locations expected to be announced in the coming months.

The centres are available to all current and former serving Australian Defence Force members, including reservists, and their families, and provide individualised wellbeing services based on the needs of the local veteran community. They are run by established ex-service organisations in the region.

This event marks a milestone for the Nowra community with the new permanent facility expected to be operational by mid-2022.

For more information about the national network of Veteran Wellbeing Centres visit the DVA website (dva.gov.au and search for 'veteran wellbeing centres').



Federal Budget and the veteran community

Continued on from page 5.

In addition, the following has been provided:

- an increase to fees for domestic assistance and personal care services under the Veterans' Home Care program to provide more sustainable access to Veterans' Home Care services, including for veterans in rural and regional areas
- an extension of the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment Package for a further two years to 30 June 2024

- funding to maintain incapacity compensation payments for a further year at 100% of pre-injury earnings for veterans undertaking study as part of their DVA-funded Return to Work rehabilitation program
- a grant to Invictus Australia to support the Australian team participation at the 2023 Invictus Games and 2022 and 2024 Warrior Games, and promote and encourage veteran involvement in adaptive sports across the country

- expanded services in the Family Support Package to more families, allowing them greater choice in how they use the services.

The Budget also provides a grant to support Legacy Australia to commemorate its 100th anniversary in 2023, including a remembrance torch relay from Pozieres in France, to London, and onto Australia to raise awareness of the great work Legacy does supporting veteran families.

More information on DVA's Budget 2022-23 measures is available on the DVA website: www.dva.gov.au/Budget2022-23



Launch of new 'DVA Services' videos

DVA TV is rolling out a new series of videos highlighting some of the services and support the department offers the veteran community. Called 'DVA Services' it can be found at www.youtube.com/DVATVAus.

One of the videos is about the department's Psychiatric Assistance Dogs program.

The short video looks at the experiences of three veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) whose lives have been changed by being provided with highly trained assistance dogs through DVA's Psychiatric Assistance Dogs (PAD) program.

The PAD program aims to help eligible veterans with PTSD meet their clinical recovery goals.

Find out more about the program on the 'Psychiatric Assistance Dogs' page of the DVA website (www.dva.gov.au/dogs).

Another of these videos looks at the experiences of Warren (pictured) – a policyholder with DSH Insurance and a sergeant in the Royal Australian Air Force. On 31 October 2020, Warren and his

family were at home when a freak hailstorm hit their Brisbane suburb. The hailstones were the size of cricket balls and, while no one was hurt, the storm destroyed the roofs of dozens of homes, including Warren's.

The video shows stark footage of the hailstorm and the impact it had on the quiet suburban neighbourhood. Luckily for Warren, he found making a claim with DSH Insurance to be easy and the response quick and effective.

DSH Insurance is currently supporting veterans and defence personnel affected by the flooding in Queensland and New South Wales.

Established more than a century ago, DSH Insurance offers Defence-focused insurance expertise and competitively priced home building insurance to current and

former Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel who have served even one day (including reservists, peacekeepers, widow(er)s of ADF members). DSH Insurance also provides access to personal insurance products such as contents, motor vehicle and caravan insurance through an agreement with QBE (Australia).

Visit the DSH Insurance website (www.dsh.gov.au) for more information.

The DVA Services series is being rolled out on DVA TV, which has been established to raise awareness of the support and services DVA provides, share veterans' stories, and commemorate and recognise their service to our nation. Make sure to subscribe to the channel to be the first to find out about new content.



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DVA services following east coast flooding

To all of those who were affected by the terrible flooding in south-east Queensland and New South Wales, please know that DVA and other Government agencies are here to support you in any way we can.

DVA offices

As of 4 April, while online and telephone services remained operational, the floods led to some temporary office closures.

Veteran Access Network (VAN) offices, Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling offices, and Veteran Review Board offices – in Aspley, Brisbane, Broadbeach, Maroochydore, Ipswich and Lismore were closed to the public.

All offices are now open with the exception of Lismore. Keep an eye on the home page of the DVA website for updates.

Anyone who is still affected by the floods and requires assistance can call **DVA on 1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) or lodge enquiries through MyService.

Counselling

Counselling support remained available through Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (1800 011 046) and SafeZone (1800 142 072) – both of which are available 24/7 for the veteran community. If you were impacted by the floods, please get in touch with Open Arms or Safezone.

Payments

Services Australia is the main Australian Government

agency responsible for providing immediate financial assistance to people affected by the floods in New South Wales and south-east Queensland. This includes members of the veteran community.

There are two payments available:

- The **Disaster Recovery Payment** is a lump-sum payment for anyone who has been significantly affected by the disaster.
- The **Disaster Recovery Allowance** is a short-term payment to help those who have lost income as a direct result of the disaster.

Claims can be made through MyGov (my.gov.au).

Visit the Services Australia website (servicesaustralia.gov.au) for more information on financial support available in your area:

- South-East Queensland local government areas
- Northern NSW local government areas

DVA enquiries

DVA payed its part with some financial support, assistance with health treatment, home care, counselling and replacement of lost cards and rehabilitation appliances.

Veterans who require assistance with DVA services and support can call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) or log in to MyService (dva.gov.au/my-service).

Defence Service Homes Insurance

Flood cover is an automatic inclusion in DSH Insurance's home building insurance policy.

Pensions and allowances rise

Veterans' pensions were increased from 20 March 2022 following the latest round of indexation adjustments.

As pension rates are calculated on a daily basis, the pension paid on payday 24 March 2022 will be paid partly at the old rate and partly at the new rate. The first full payment at the new rates of pension was payday 7 April 2022.

The maximum rate of single service pension has risen by \$20.10 to \$987.60 per fortnight and the maximum rate for couples has increased by \$15.10 to \$744.40 per fortnight (each).

The Special Rate of Disability Compensation Payment (T&PI pension) has increased by \$30.90 to \$1,518.80 per fortnight. Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) has increased by \$17.10 to \$839.50 per fortnight and the 100 per cent General Rate of Disability Compensation Payment has increased by \$11.00 to \$540.10 per fortnight.

The pension paid to war widow(er)s has increased by \$20.50 to \$1,004.70 per fortnight (including the energy supplement), while the ceiling rate of the income support supplement has risen to \$297.60 per fortnight.

Payments have also increased for benefits under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). The weekly MRCA wholly dependent partner payment has increased by \$10.25 to \$502.35. This is paid fortnightly (\$1004.70).

The indexation factor used to index pensions each 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 March 2022, the indexation was driven by CPI.

More information on the new pension rates is available from DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). Current and historical pension rates are available on this website: <http://clik.dva.gov.au>.

NEW PENSION RATES FROM 20 MARCH 2022

SERVICE PENSION	Old rate (fortnightly)	New rate (fortnightly)	Increase (fortnightly)
Single person	\$967.50	\$987.60	\$20.10
Couples (each)	\$729.30	\$744.40	\$15.10
Single person – transitional	\$807.30	\$824.00	\$16.70
Couples (each) – transitional	\$651.20	\$664.70	\$13.50
WAR WIDOWS			
War widow(er)'s pension	\$984.20	\$1,004.70	\$20.50
Income support supplement (ceiling rate)	\$291.40	\$297.60	\$6.20
DISABILITY PENSION			
TPI (Special rate)	\$1,487.90	\$1,518.80	\$30.90
Intermediate rate	\$1,010.40	\$1,031.40	\$21.00
EDA	\$822.40	\$839.50	\$17.10
100 per cent	\$529.10	\$540.10	\$11.00
10 per cent	\$59.84	\$60.94	\$1.10
VETERAN PAYMENT			
Single Person	\$1,047.40	\$1,069.50	\$22.10
Couples (each)	\$816.30	\$833.50	\$17.20
MRCA*			
Wholly dependent partner payment	\$984.20	\$1004.70	\$20.50
Special Rate Disability pension (SRDP)	\$1,487.90	\$1,518.80	\$30.90

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

The first full payment at the new rates was the payday 7 April 2022.

***Note that the MRCA payments in the bottom two rows are the fortnightly amounts, not the weekly amounts.**

Looking after yourself during the pandemic

For two years, we have been focused on every bit of health advice around preventing COVID-19 infection, from hand hygiene and wearing masks, to vaccinations and physical distancing. For many that has meant staying home and not going about our usual activities, including our usual GP, specialist and allied-health provider visits.

COVID-19 has been a game-changer for the way health care is delivered, with the development of telehealth and e-prescriptions. I am sure many of you have taken advantage of this and called your doctor to, for instance, request repeat prescriptions, but I am also sure many of you have avoided or missed some of the usual preventive health actions recommended by your GP.

While it is important to avoid COVID-19 infection, it is still important to look after your long-term health. Even though it feels like the COVID-19 pandemic will go on forever, it's important to look after your health now to make sure that you can enjoy your life after COVID-19.

When you visit your GP, he or she will be thinking about preventive activities suitable for your age, sex, health and family history.

In Australia, the leading cause of death after the age of 45 in men is coronary artery disease followed by dementia, then lung cancer then cerebrovascular disease (stroke). In women, dementia tops the list with coronary heart disease second.¹

Therefore doing everything we can to address the risk factors for cardiovascular disease is important. After the age of 45, your risk increases and during a health assessment your GP will check your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood

sugar to check for diabetes, look for evidence of kidney disease and perform a cardiovascular disease risk assessment.

Addressing these risk factors will reduce your cardiovascular risk. This assessment is generally recommended every two years but your GP will consider checking more frequently if you have other health conditions or a family history of coronary disease. Such a health assessment is a good time to check if you are a smoker and whether you are interested in getting help to quit.

Colorectal cancer in men is seventh on the list of causes of death for men and women and everyone at age 50 gets a present from the Government in the form of a faecal occult blood test kit in the mail.

"While it is important to avoid COVID-19 infection, it is still important to look after your long-term health."

This is then provided every two years up to the age of 74. It's a simple test that can help screen for bowel cancer and ideally pick it up earlier and save lives. Cancer Council Australia estimates that screening can reduce death from the disease by 15–25%. If you have a history of polyps in the bowel or a family history of bowel cancer you may need a colonoscopy, and screening might

need to start at an earlier age. You can discuss this with your GP.

Many veterans have had a lifetime of sun exposure and have sustained skin damage as a result. Your GP can conduct regular checks of your skin looking for any signs of skin cancer and help you to know what to look out for at home between visits. Again, if you have a family history or have had previous skin cancers your risk is increased and these checks are important.

Breast cancer screening with mammograms is recommended every two years for women over 50 and earlier for women with a history of breast cancer or a family history. Your GP can discuss this and help you understand the risks and benefits of screening for you as an individual.

Cervical cancer screening is now recommended less frequently than it was in the past with the new screening program involving a pap test that checks for the HPV virus recommended every five years starting at age 25 until age 70–74. Your GP may recommend more frequent testing depending on your history and other health conditions.

Prostate cancer in men is the sixth cause of death in Australia. Screening for prostate cancer with a blood test, the PSA test, is not recommended because it is not clear on a population basis that the benefits outweigh the harms and there is a clear risk of over diagnosis (and the associated risk of harm due to unnecessary treatment and further investigation). The decision to screen for prostate cancer is definitely a personal decision and you should discuss this with your GP.²

There are many more checks your GP might recommend, including having a regular dental check, having your vision and hearing checked and making sure you have been fully immunised. Since COVID-19, with everyone observing



PROF JENNY FIRMAN AM

Chief Health Officer

Department of Veterans' Affairs

good respiratory hygiene, influenza rates have fallen dramatically but will be expected to return to normal levels after this pandemic. It's important to make sure that you have your routine immunisations on time.

There is a Medicare item number for a health assessment of people aged 45–49 at risk of developing a chronic disease as well as one for those aged 75 or over. DVA funds a veteran health check by your GP. This is a one-off check that can occur at any time after leaving the ADF. There is also an Annual Veterans' Health Check that you can have done each year for up to five years after leaving the Australian Defence Force for those who left on or after 1 July 2019. These are both comprehensive checks and should take up to 45 minutes. See the DVA website for more information (dva.gov.au and search for 'veterans health check').

DVA provides a guide for your GP on common health conditions in veterans and a handy Veteran Health Check Assessment Tool (dva.gov.au and search for 'assessment tool').

Concerns about mental health have been a frequent topic of interest during the pandemic but mental health problems can occur at any time or age. Your GP is a good person to discuss any mental health concerns you might have and can help you get further care, including through psychologists. A good diet and keeping physically active are very important for your mental health as well as your overall health. Exercise is one of the most important preventive activities we can do. If you're not sure where to start, talk to your doctor.

1. aihw.gov.au and search for 'deaths in Australia'

2. psatesting.org.au/info



Self-care a luxury? Think again

Are you OK? has never been so critical a question – especially when asked of ourselves.

The simple act of asking someone how they are travelling and taking the time to share an honest exchange, has never been so important. The ongoing stress and chronic uncertainty associated with COVID-19 have taken their toll on all of us in one way or another. Many of us are feeling flat, overwhelmed and exhausted at least some of the time. Taking a step back and reflecting on how we can care for our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing, and support others to do the same can assist in navigating these times with equanimity.

Focusing on caring for ourselves may appear selfish, but in reality it is not, and nor should it be seen as a luxury only for those who have time. To be there for others we need to ensure we are okay too. In looking after ourselves, we are in a better place to support others, which can in turn help them to reach out and take steps towards building their own reserves to deal with the ups and downs of life. Self-care enables us to accept and adapt to those things in life we can't control, and to make wise choices about the things we do have some control over.

It is important to remember that we all react to stress differently, so working out your priority areas for intervention, and what strategies work best for you are critical. We need a range of tactics in the toolkit. The first rule in self-care is to recognise what is happening within yourself. This sounds obvious; however, we are very good avoiders and absolutely fabulous at not seeing what is right in front of us. This is why family and friends can often be the first to notice something is wrong, which does not always go down well.

Self-awareness means listening to what our body is trying to tell us. Are your thoughts racing,

are you finding it difficult to focus, are you confused or worried more than usual? Perhaps you are feeling that people have become a lot more irritating lately, or you are crying at the drop of a hat. Is your heart racing more than usual, are your palms more sweaty more often, or are you experiencing more headaches? Are you avoiding tasks, or working long hours without a break, perhaps eating more or less? How is your sleep? These are all signs that a reset is required.

Many of us know at least some things that will help us keep a measure of equilibrium, such as sleep, exercise, good nutrition, relaxation, and meaningful and supportive social connection. The difficulty is how do we find the motivation to put these things into practice?

“Self-care should not be an optional extra in our busy lives.”

Planning is key, along with starting small. One pitfall on the path to change is to take on too much in too short a time and then feel overwhelmed, exhausted and guilty at failing, yet again. Sound familiar?

You are not alone. This behaviour is part of the human condition. Recognising that, we can act wisely and choose to focus on one strategy at a time when building a new self-care routine. It starts by picking one area you would like to focus on. Reflect on what you are trying to achieve and why. Motivation is key, as is self-discipline and commitment. But be realistic. This will help prepare you for the inevitable lapses.

It is important to have a plan, to be consistent, to review the ‘why’ regularly, and be patient.



DR LORETTA POERIO

Senior Mental Health Adviser

Department of Veterans' Affairs

As you are building your self-care plan, the following steps can be helpful to think about:

- **Review your situation:** List what is happening in different areas of your life – home, work, friendships, family. Why do you need to make improvements?
- **Identify the stress triggers:** Review the different stress triggers in your life and think about strategies you can put in place. See websites below.
- **Prioritise one self-care strategy:** Stick to one strategy at a time. Remember the goal posts can be very small. This will help in not feeling overwhelmed. Make a time in your diary for the task, or involve a friend to help motivate you.
- **Take small steps:** Break down the task/activity into small steps, and commit to taking one at a time.
- **Plan for roadblocks:** There will be challenges, and you will need to be agile. Plan for how you will deal with these events. Don't be deterred by lapses.
- **Schedule time to practise and review the self-care strategy:** Even when you are telling yourself you are too busy, carve out a little ‘you’ time, even if you start with two minutes a day to just focus on noticing your breathing and slowing it down.

For some great strategies, try the following websites:

1. Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (www.openarms.gov.au) and click on ‘self-help tools’
2. Head to Health (www.headtohealth.gov.au) and select from the ‘COVID-19 support’ menu
3. Black Dog Institute (www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) and select ‘Resources and Support’ menu
4. Beyond Blue (www.beyondblue.org.au) and select ‘Supporting yourself’ from the ‘Personal best’ menu

Self-care should not be an optional extra in our busy lives; it should be a critical part of our lives *because* we are so busy. It impacts how we feel about ourselves, the quality of our relationships and ultimately our satisfaction with our lives. Without a focus on our own health and wellbeing, we can't do justice to ourselves or those we love. So, what will your next step to better health and wellbeing be?



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.

Queensland Premier announces annual War Widows Day

A message from Australian War Widows Queensland (AWWQ)

On 19 October 2021, Australian War Widows Queensland (www.warwidowsqld.org.au) held our annual Jessie Vasey Day at Parliament House in Brisbane. We were fortunate to have the Queensland Attorney-General and Minister for Women, Shannon Fentiman, along with former Governor of Queensland, His Excellency Paul de Jersey AC CVO QC, present at the event.

The same day, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and Minister Fentiman announced that from 19 October 2022, Queensland will annually celebrate War Widows Day. This is a first for Australia.

19 October was the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey (pictured), who started the first Queensland branch of the War Widows Guild in Toowoomba in 1947.

'I can think of no better way to celebrate next year's 75th anniversary of what is now AWWQ than to formally dedicate this day as an annual recognition of the people left behind by those who have served Australia,' Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said.

'Queensland will be the first to do this, to honour the widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force.'

Ms Fentiman said the widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force bear their sacrifice with dignity and fortitude.

'From 2022 onwards, War Widows Day in Queensland will honour the resilient families in our communities who have faced enormous grief,' Ms Fentiman said.

'The day will further highlight AWWQ's stated aim to empower, support, inspire and celebrate war widows, carers and families affected by defence service.'

Assistant Minister to the Premier for Veterans Affairs Bart Mellish said there are 10,908 war widows in Queensland today.

'2,201 of them are members of the organisation, and many attend the 28 sub-branches and social groups across the state,' Mr Mellish said.

'It provides support, friendship and comfort, built on a wonderful historical foundation, and War Widows Day will be a fitting annual acknowledgment.'

AWWQ President Jenny Gregory said Jessie Vasey lost her husband, Major-General George Vasey, just four months before the end of the Second World War.

'Mrs Vasey worked to ensure that war widows were recognised by governments in Australia and given the financial support and services that they needed,' Mrs Gregory said.

'We are delighted that the Premier is declaring Mrs Vasey's birthday as a special day for us to acknowledge the sacrifice of widows from all conflicts whose loved ones gave their lives for their country.'

'War Widows Day will remind Queenslanders of the loss felt by many people across our communities, and it will also raise awareness of the network of resources and support available to war widows and widowers.'



Jessie Vasey



AWWQ President Jenny Gregory

A place to call home

A message from Australian War Widows NSW

Did you know that social isolation negatively impacts wellbeing?

Social connection meanwhile is a strong protective factor, guarding against depression, ill mental health, burnout, and elder abuse.

The best support for war widows, is war widows

It is my view that the best support for war widows is war widows, and the best support for veterans' families is veterans' families. That by providing avenues and facilitating connection among peers, we can positively impact one another's health and wellbeing outcomes.

Veteran and family support

Just as our veterans need their peers, so too do their families, particularly where those family members are not veterans themselves.

Often overlooked, social connections and other social factors positively impact health and longevity. Perhaps this is why so many of our widows are living well into their 90s and 100s?

Together we thrive

AWWNSW supports and advocates for widows, women and families united by defence service

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY



A shared social identity

But social connection is most effective when it is meaningful. Social connection through a *shared social identity* resulting from a sense of meaning, purpose, support and efficacy has particularly positive psychological outcomes. And there is growing scientific evidence to support this.

You now have a home

It is time to bring our model of connection to those who need it most and have nowhere else to go. We are expanding and diversifying our program of social connection to bring widows, women and families together to develop strong

bonds and support for each other, as our older war widows have for decades.

We know there are thousands out there with nowhere to go who are feeling incredibly isolated. Our message to you is: you now have a home. We might still be building some parts of it, but you are more than welcome at any time.

If you would like to know more or join our community, please contact us directly at guild@warwidowsnsw.com.au. You can also visit our website (warwidowsnsw.com.au).

Renee Wilson

Chief Executive Officer
Australian War Widows NSW

COVID's impact on RSL fundraising

A message from RSL Australia

It was an impromptu gesture that warmed Vietnam veteran Peter Kerley's heart.

As the clock ticked over to 11am on 11 November 2021, Peter stood tall in his place at the Karingal Hub mall in Frankston just south of Melbourne, where he had been fundraising for the RSL Poppy Appeal (poppyappeal.com.au) over the last few days. Amid the hustle and bustle of the shopping centre, which was undergoing a noisy renovation, he found his loudest and best voice and began to recite the Ode of Remembrance, paying tribute to our fallen diggers.

Within moments, shoppers froze in their spots and the chorus of jackhammers and other construction noise fell silent.

One by one the workers emerged from behind the construction hoarding and lined up, hard hats off, heads bowed, solemnly paying their respects while Peter's lone voice said those haunting words, accompanied by a bugler playing the Last Post and Reveille.

'It was wonderful,' says Peter, who is the Frankston RSL's Appeals Officer. 'It was so heartening to see this roll-up of people and the reverence they had for our departed was really something special. I was very pleased.'

It's moments like this that Peter, who served 346 days in Vietnam, and the Frankston RSL President Kevin Hillier OAM, a Navy veteran of 28 years' service, cherish from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has challenged the way they traditionally operate.

When the global pandemic hit our shores in March 2020 it plunged the nation into lockdown just as RSLs around the country were preparing for major Anzac Day commemorations, including the vital ANZAC Appeal.

'COVID absolutely put the kibosh on everything,' says Peter. 'All of the regular places we did our fundraising, such as Bunnings, were no longer able to host us, so we had no funds at all generated from Anzac Day.'



Peter Kerley, Frankston RSL's Appeals Officer

'Our main task is looking after our veterans, and we have 400 veterans who are over 80 years old,' says Kevin. 'So we really put our efforts into making sure they were okay. Sadly, our hospital visit program had to stop, but we made sure we were ringing our veterans regularly, dropping off toilet paper and other necessities. We mowed lawns and helped with maintenance. It was a very practical offer of help within the parameters of what we were allowed to do.'

This year the Frankston RSL is back on track for the ANZAC Appeal with a strong presence planned at local retailers such as Bunnings and Karingal Hub, and

enthusiastic support from more than 70 small businesses and 35 local schools.

Funds raised through the ANZAC and Poppy appeals help local RSL sub-branches continue to provide grassroots outreach such as food vouchers, accommodation support, hospital visits, and help around the home for veterans and their families.

Funds raised through the appeals also go towards helping the RSL provide its statewide welfare, advocacy and wellbeing support programs.

Read the full story in the digital version of this edition of Vetaffairs (dva.gov.au/vetaffairs).

Mates4Mates encourages social connection



A message from Mates4Mates

Earlier this year, a group of veterans and their family members spent the day spotting koalas in trees, hand-feeding kangaroos and lorikeets, and getting up close with other Australian wildlife at Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary located in Brisbane. There was a positive buzz of children and adults alike having fun while also taking the time to

enjoy each other's company in a safe environment.

Social connection activities offered by Mates4Mates provide current and ex-serving ADF members and their families with the opportunity to form meaningful connections with others. Those impacted by wounds, injuries or mental health illnesses may

experience isolation, particularly if they've recently transitioned out of a close-knit Defence community. Having a community of like-minded people – a group of mates – can be an important part of their wellbeing and recovery.

Now more than ever, the benefits of interpersonal relationships and connecting with others are

important as we continue to ride the rollercoaster of the COVID-19 pandemic together. When we feel connected to others, it is shown to lower the levels of cortisol (stress hormone), increase our ability to get through difficult situations, lower symptoms of depression and anxiety, improve our ability to recover from physical injury, and improve overall physical health.

Mates4Mates holds regular social connection activities throughout the week and on weekends that provide a safe place to build connections and find mateship. From weekly barbecues and coffee catch-ups to creative arts or cooking groups, school holiday programs and more, there's something for everyone.

If you're a veteran or a family member who has been impacted by service, you can take part in these regular social connection activities in a variety of locations across Australia, including online. Visit mates4mates.org to find out more.

Become a Legatee

A message from Legacy

The iconic Australian charity Legacy is looking for new Legatees to help support families of veterans who have given their lives or health in service to their country. Legacy has been caring for such families for nearly 100 years.

What makes Legacy so special?

Legacy comes from the military service tradition and is an extension of those values. Becoming a Legatee is a wonderful opportunity for veterans seeking to make a meaningful contribution to the community by caring for the families of their mates.

How does Legacy care for families?

Legacy assigns a Legatee (volunteer) to each family to ensure that the family does not suffer socially or financially from the loss of life or health of their loved one.

What does a Legatee do in caring for families?

Legatees become mentors to families and are there to provide support where a family might be struggling or needing assistance.

What do Legatees typically help with?

Each family's circumstances differ but the Legatee may be called on to deal with DVA and other government agencies, to be a good listener and provide guidance on the practical day-to-day challenges of juggling work, health and finances, and maintaining a safe family home. A significant part of the role is to ensure that the Legacy widow or family is not socially isolated or left behind.

How are Legacy clubs organised?

Legatees are assigned to, and inducted into, a Legacy Club near



James and Emily pictured with their Legatee Brian (middle), who has helped support their family after the loss of their father.

where they live. Legatees are given training and backup to undertake their support role.

How much time does a Legatee need to give to Legacy?

As much, or as little, as is practical and possible – even an hour a week can be helpful.

What is Legacy looking for?

Legacy is looking for mature members of the community with practical life skills, and a strong sense of community spirit and service.

To find out more, visit www.legacy.com.au/legatee

Join the Australian Army for 'Run Army 22' this April



Participants in the Australian Army's Running Change program at the Run Army finish line, in 2021, with: Commander 1st Division, Major General Justin 'Jake' Ellwood DSC AM; Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Rick Burr AO DSC MVO; and former world champion marathon runner Rob de Castella.



Members of the Indigenous Marathon Foundation taking part in the inaugural Run Army 5km and 10km events at Gallipoli Barracks, Brisbane, April 2021. More than 800 people took part in the event.

A message from Run Army, an Australian Army initiative

Run Army is an exciting new initiative to encourage people from all backgrounds to run. It is scheduled to become an important annual event that promotes resilience, health and wellbeing, not just among the Army, but across the community.

An important element of Run Army is an eight-week health and running program, called Running Change, which builds resilience and community among participants, and culminates in the Run Army 10km run.

Physical training has always been a fundamental part of Army life, but the Running Change program goes further, incorporating mentoring, sports psychology, physiotherapy and nutrition. The program is voluntary and is designed to support soldiers struggling with weight, physical or mental health challenges.

Supporting our veterans

Conducted annually on the weekend leading up to Anzac Day, Run Army allows the community to follow in the footsteps of generations of diggers, pushing themselves mentally and physically through a 5km walk/run or 10km run. Runners and walkers will not only be recognising the Anzac spirit, but also supporting current soldiers involved in the Running Change Program.

The event will take place on 24 April 2022 in the Brisbane CBD, which will be draped in camouflage. Taking part will support Legacy and raise vital funds for veterans' families.

Run Army will bring together a community of people with one common goal: to support the Australian Army, and the families of our fallen, wounded and injured veterans.

Anzac Day 2022 will be especially significant, marking the end of Australia's longest war, the 20-year commitment to Afghanistan, and allowing Australians to reflect and thank those veterans for their service.

Run Army 22 plans to pay tribute to the 41 Australian soldiers who lost their lives in Afghanistan, and the many more who were wounded, both physically and mentally. We honour their sacrifice, and the sacrifice of all military families.

Army in the community

Registrations are now open to the public to run with the Australian Army on 24 April.

Not in Brisbane? You can sign up to take part in Run Army 22 from your own neighbourhood through the virtual event.

Head to the website (www.runarmy.org.au) and register to be part of Run Army.

Professional coaching program for transitioning Clearance Divers

A message from the Navy Clearance Diver Trust

Change is often difficult, but for personnel transitioning from the Australian Defence Force, it can be particularly challenging due to the unique nature of military service. In a recent survey of ex-serving Clearance Divers by the Navy Clearance Diver Trust (NCDT):

- 34% find their civilian jobs boring;
- 37% are not satisfied with their current careers;
- 73% found transition difficult; and
- 63% have felt trapped or depressed at some time since leaving.

To assist Clearance Divers in their transition, the NCDT has established the Clearance Diver Professional Coaching program (CDPC). The CDPC brings together funding and professional coaching resources for transitioning or recently transitioned Clearance Divers.

The CDPC program matches each transitioning Clearance Diver with a certified coach, who will then work with them on an individual basis as they develop a personal plan for a successful

civilian career / life. Professional coaching is not therapy, counselling, mentoring, consulting, training, or athletic development. Coaches honour the Clearance Diver as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every Clearance Diver is creative and resourceful.

This process can help Clearance Divers dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while growing leadership skills and unlocking potential.

How to sign up

Serving Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers have the option to nominate for participation in the program about 12 months prior to their transition date.

Ex-serving Clearance Divers can sign up at any point if they are re-thinking their career direction. This can be after transition, if they find their civilian job is not what they expected, or if they are looking to chase new opportunities.

If you would like to know more about the CDPC, please contact the program coordinator via email at cdpcprogcoord@ncdt.org.au.

More information on ncdt.org.au.

Finding the strength to overcome the challenges of transition

By Jeanette Svehla, VMHS Manager, Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury

Serving in the military requires intense physical and mental conditioning, but it does not entirely prepare you for the transition back into civilian life.

Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury is offering a new integrated third-party service for veterans, family members and carers who live, work or are educated in the following NSW local government areas: Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Willoughby, Northern Beaches, Ryde and North Sydney.

Our Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service (VMHS) can help build problem-solving skills and support your transition with a tailored program that caters specifically to your unique experiences and complex needs.

VMHS provides not only independent, confidential and trustworthy support from clinical and community professionals, it also gives the veteran community

access to Lifeline's entire suite of counselling and group support services, including financial counselling, legal assistance, the Managing Your Mood program and the Suicide Bereavement Support group.

Visit the Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury website (lifelineh2h.org.au) to find out more. We would be grateful if you could complete the survey on the website. Your views will help guide our planning.

Lifeline is a trusted leader in crisis intervention and suicide prevention. We understand better than most just how much strength and courage it takes to reach out for help when you're confronted by challenges.

So, take that important first step and contact us today. Our team stands ready to support your transition to post-military life, and to work with you and your family to achieve your goals.



Launch of Invictus Australia in October 2021. From left: James Brown, Invictus Australia's Chairman of the Board; General Sir Peter Cosgrove (Retd), Invictus Australia Patron; Commissioner Gwen Cherne, Veteran Family Advocate and Invictus Australia Ambassador; Michael Hartung, CEO Invictus Australia

Invictus Games 2022 – harnessing the power of sport

A message from Invictus Australia

In October 2021, Veteran Sport Australia, the legacy organisation of the Invictus Games Sydney 2018, officially changed its name to Invictus Australia (invictusaustralia.org). The not-for-profit provides opportunities for veterans and their families to engage in sport for ongoing health, whether it's grassroots participation in local communities, or international competition such as the upcoming Invictus Games.

Originally scheduled for 2020, the Games will now take place 16-22 April this year in the Hague in the Netherlands, COVID permitting.

Working in partnership with the Australian Defence Force, Invictus Australia is sending 26 former-serving Defence members as part of the 32-strong Team Australia to this year's Games.

Beyond these Games, and the 2023 Games in Düsseldorf, the immediate priority for Invictus Australia is to extend its reach to provide sport recovery services in all states and territories, reaching as many of Australia's veterans and their families as possible.

To this end, Invictus Australia employs two Veteran Engagement Specialists in local communities,

building connections with veterans, sporting clubs and ex-service organisations. One of these is Rachel Kerrigan, who is based in Newcastle, NSW and works as far north as Ballina.

'I really enjoy getting out there and bringing other veterans through that journey to health and well-being, as well as family and mateship, and all those things you miss outside the military,' says Rachel.

To continue supporting the veteran community, both internationally and locally, Invictus Australia is launching an exciting fundraising challenge this May. To find out more and sign up, visit Zero600.com.au. Invictus Australia relies on the generous support of government, corporate Australia and the general public, so if you can support in any way, please get in touch.

To view the four-part video series funded by the DVA on the work of Invictus Australia, visit the Educational Toolkits page of the Invictus Australia website (invictusaustralia.org/educational-toolkits).

Read the full version of this article on dva.gov.au/latest-news.



Veterans taking part in an Invictus Australia sailing event at the Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, Sydney.



Operation Woods in the Perth Hills, WA, February 2021. The Wooroloo fires in the north-east of Perth destroyed at least 86 dwellings and burnt more than 10,500 hectares. DRA and the Minderoo Foundation stepped up to help.

Disaster Relief Australia

A message from Disaster Relief Australia

There are few areas of civilian life that offer an experience that parallels the ADF. However, they do exist. Volunteering with Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) is one. Founded in 2016, DRA deploys veterans and emergency services specialists to assist communities in disaster resilience and recovery, both in Australia and overseas. According to DRA CEO, Geoff Evans, 'deploying veterans into disaster zones encourages them to capitalise on the training and experience provided by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and to use those attributes to continue to serve the nation'.

While volunteering for DRA recreates many of the mental-health protective factors of ADF service, such as a new team, mission and identity, it does not recreate the military. Volunteering with emergency services personnel and civilians helps veterans establish connections with people outside of the military and develop rapport with individuals and communities recovering from a disaster.

'Connections to communities outside of the ADF are important, especially during transition, as are peer networks,' says Geoff. 'I still believe that the best person to help a veteran transition is another veteran, but they have to be a positive role model.'

'Veterans want to continue to serve. They just need the right opportunity, and when they find it, they rediscover the sense of self-worth, importance and purpose we all miss when we leave the ADF. Our volunteers are incredibly effective and very often take advantage of our training to move into skilled civilian employment. So volunteering with DRA should not necessarily be viewed as an end in itself but rather as a vehicle to engage, develop and inspire veterans to grow beyond their military service.'

'DRA's virtue is that it achieves two mutually supporting objectives. Veterans who work with

us are required to use their skills, experience and initiative to serve communities devastated by disasters. We often operate in remote and austere environments assisting people who are completely overwhelmed and unable to recover by themselves. The skills, experience and empathy veterans can bring to a problem like that is literally life changing – for everyone.'

"Our volunteers are incredibly effective and very often take advantage of our training to move into skilled civilian employment."

Just how life changing is reflected in an analysis of more than 300 'reflections' collected from DRA volunteers across 18 disaster relief operations over the last five years. Reflections are written or verbal accounts of what volunteers think about the work they've been doing on a given operation.

Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHA) is a charitable organisation that conducts research into the mental health and wellbeing of serving and ex-serving ADF, first-responders, and their families. Recently, they conducted qualitative analysis of the reflections, and found that among the chief reasons people volunteer with DRA was the desire to find a new way to serve the community, and that their experience of DRA was that it gave them purpose and a sense of family or tribe.

These are quotes from some of those reflections:

'On each and every occasion, without fail, I have been humbled to witness the synergistic healing that takes place between communities impacted by natural disasters who receive the help they so desperately need, and our veterans who have selflessly protected their country, filled with



A DRA volunteer sifts through the remains of bushfire-destroyed home in search of precious memorabilia

purpose and passion by putting their previously crafted skills towards a greater cause.'

'Our community quickly realised that when they moved into our street there was no stepping back. These volunteer men and women, and the discipline and skills they demonstrate are a national asset, and deserve our support.'

Holly Bowen-Salter, a senior research officer at MESHA says, 'there was enormous consistency among volunteers' experiences, and a clear message that people who leave military service often find it difficult to operationalise their skills and that by volunteering with DRA they feel better about transitioning, and better connected to the community.'

Geoff says DRA is looking to bolster the nation's disaster sector: 'Despite extensive investment in this area, I believe there is more we can do to support communities prior to and after disasters. That is why DRA looks to mobilise one of Australia's most underused resources, the Australian veteran, as a key player in disaster resilience, recovery and community volunteering.'

'The term "veteran" in Australia often conjures images of either old men with medals or broken young people with PTSD in need of charity and sympathy. DRA looks to actively challenge that narrative by continuing to demonstrate the exceptional skills and experience ADF service provides. When combined with the direct impact veterans have on disaster-affected communities, we aim to not only change the way veterans are viewed by the public but, in many cases, change the way veterans look at themselves.'

For more information, visit the DRA website (disasterreliefaus.org).

Disaster Relief Australia has received grant funding from the Australian Government, through DVA.

TRANSITIONING WELL



Gordon graduating with his Master of Education in 2016



Gordon as a recruit in 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka, 1989

Our Veterans – Gordon Webb

Gordon Webb enlisted in the Australian Army in 1988. He began his career in Artillery, as an air defence gunner, before retraining as a clerk. He proudly served for 23 years, and deployed to Operation Mazurka in Egypt where he performed peace-keeping duties. He ultimately reached the rank of sergeant.

The thought of leaving the Army after such a long time was hard to contemplate, however Gordon knew it was time for him to look at a new career.

‘I knew educating children was what I wanted to do,’ he says. ‘While studying, I trained as a swimming teacher where I gained valuable experience working with children from six months to late teens. I was also fortunate to spend some time working in the Deakin University call centre where I was able to assist students.’

‘Once I completed my Bachelor of Education in 2015 I was recognised by the Golden Key

International Honour Society for academic performance. Whilst working on contract and as a casual relief teacher, I went on to complete my Master of Education in 2016 and Master of Specialist Inclusive Education in 2018.

‘A career in education has provided me with the same strong sense of achievement and job satisfaction as I experienced within the Australian Defence Force (ADF).’

Gordon’s advice for others looking at transitioning out of the ADF is:

‘Reflect on the plethora of skill sets you have acquired throughout your career. Use this information to choose a career that builds on or enhances these attributes. Make a plan and maximise the services that the ADF has when you are transitioning. Ensure you complete training in your new chosen career. Make sure you set goals, persevere, be reflective and never just settle for second best. Most importantly, be kind to yourself and appreciate the support of family and friends on your transition journey.’

We are grateful for your service, Gordon.

Our Veterans – Bill Sandstrom

Bill began his military career not in Australia but Norway where he lived from age ten to twenty.

After completing his 12 months national service he returned to Australia with two things in mind: to study international studies at university and sign up for officer training with the Army Reserve.

‘I was drawn to the idea of leadership and the challenge and growth that it offered,’ Bill says. ‘But it was also about being part of something larger than yourself, and serving that cause.’

He joined the Army Reserve in March 2017 and remains in it today.

Bill has served on various domestic operations,

including Operation COVID-19 Assist, and Operation Bushfire Assist.

There he had the opportunity to work with ‘salt of the earth Australians’ in the NSW Rural Fire Service and the Australian Defence Force. He found they embodied the values of mateship, dedication and optimism in the face of adversity.

In 2020, he joined DVA as part of its graduate program and now works on the department’s Transformation program. As a fellow veteran, he is part of the support network for



Bill in Lithgow, NSW in January 2020 as part of Operation Bushfire Assist, and at his desk at DVA head office, Canberra.

participants in the DVA’s Veteran Employment Pathway (see opposite page).

Bill’s advice for others when leaving the Australian Defence Force is to know that the skills and core values fostered through military service are highly valuable in the civilian workforce.

He recommends selling these skills with confidence in interviews.

‘Members of the Defence Force are dutiful, hard-working, and loyal – that’s proven; it goes with the job.’

‘The challenge is communicating this effectively when applying and interviewing for jobs.’

‘So reach out to anyone you know who’s made that transition and the different support networks out there.’

‘The Support For Employment program DVA offers can also help here.’

Bill is passionate about organ donation and encourages others to register as a donor on the DonateLife website (donatelife.gov.au).

We are grateful for your service, Bill.

For more Our Veterans stories, visit the DVA website (dva.gov.au/newsroom/meet-our-veterans).

Continuing to serve: Launch of the APS Veteran Employment Pathway

On 7 February 2022, DVA welcomed 13 veterans to the inaugural launch of its Veteran Employment Pathway (VetPaths).

VetPaths is a collaboration between DVA, the Department of Defence and the Australian Public Service Commission. Its purpose is to aid transitioning and transitioned veterans to establish an ongoing, meaningful career in the Australian Public Service (APS).

This is the first veteran-exclusive pathway to lead to an ongoing role in the federal public sector. VetPaths offers veterans a variety of supports throughout their first year of employment with the Pathway including:

- formal learning and development
- a mentor
- an internal buddy (see article below)
- access to peer networks
- family inclusion events.

“This is the first veteran-exclusive pathway to lead to an ongoing role in the federal public sector.”

VetPaths has been designed to ensure long-term career success in the APS. The 13 veterans participated in a recruitment process in the latter half of 2021. A variety of positions were on offer within DVA and Defence where military experience was recognised as being beneficial to

success in the role. Roles were available in most capital cities across Australia, with placements best matched to their qualifications and skills.

Induction

Participants took part in a five-day induction where they heard from key personnel from DVA, Defence and the APS Academy who welcomed them to the APS, provided a comprehensive overview of how the APS works, and provided useful insights on how to succeed in their careers post Australian Defence Force (ADF) service.

The group also began their formal learning with two APS Academy courses: Ethics and Values, and Understanding Government. This included background on the machinery of government provided by representatives from the Museum of Australian Democracy. Current APS staff who are veterans also shared their experiences

on transitioning from the ADF to the APS, and provided hints and tips on how to flourish using their military experience in an APS context.

The majority of participants said their main reason for seeking APS employment was wanting to continue to serve the Australian community in a meaningful way. This is why the program slogan, *Continuing to serve*, is so important. Because it resonates with the mission and purpose of both the APS and the ADF.

A formal program evaluation will take place that may lead to an expansion of the program scope to other APS agencies.

All other career opportunities to work at DVA can be found on the department’s website: dva.gov.au/about-us/careers.

Information on the pathway is also on the DVA website (dva.gov.au) and search for ‘APS Veteran Employment Pathway’.



Participants in DVA’s Veteran Employment Pathway taking part in a five-day induction at the department’s head office in Canberra. DVA Deputy Secretary Vicki Rundle PSM is third from left.

Get involved with DVA’s Support for Employment program

Launched on 29 March 2021, the Support for Employment Program is celebrating its first birthday. The program provides eligible veterans with up to 10 hours of one-on-one support across a range of pre-employment and post-employment services.

The Program has got off to a great start, supporting veterans to build their job-seeking skills and helping them adjust to employment in the civilian workforce.

The program is part of the Prime Minister’s Veterans’ Employment Program (veteranemployment.gov.au), and is available to eligible veterans who have transitioned from the permanent Australian Defence Force (ADF) between 12 months and five years previously. This complements the ADF’s Defence Force Transition Program support available prior to and after transition.

Participating veterans are able to take full advantage of many opportunities available in the civilian workforce through advice, training and support offered by a range of professional employment support providers.

Veterans can access services including interview skills, personal branding and marketing, mapping transferrable skills and experience to civilian roles, developing career goals, and assistance adjusting to and understanding the civilian workplace, which – as any veteran knows – can be very different to that of the ADF. The one-on-one, targeted support means outcomes are personalised and directly relevant to the veteran and their needs, offering the best chance of success in the civilian workplace.

One of the many services the program offers is resumé writing, a task that can stump even the savviest of job-hunters. Jade Crisp, a consultant at Rehab Management says, ‘I have found the Support for Employment Program really beneficial for my client. We have only completed four sessions and he has had multiple interviews and received a job offer since being referred to me. Prior to starting the program, he had applied for numerous roles with only a couple of interviews, and neither resulted in a job.’

This feedback has also been reflected by a client who a provider advises is now studying and working in a new career: ‘Sally [the provider] was

exceptionally helpful, helping me find a pathway to study something that lines up with my interests and natural skill set ... Her communication was fantastic and I would highly recommend this to any veteran seeking help with finding a career path post-military.’

A representative from Workcom, another provider of the program, says, ‘This is a great program to assist with the transition from Defence to civilian employment. I love that it is targeted to the veteran’s employment needs, it’s user-friendly and can be administered in a timely manner.’

Whether you’re actively job seeking, or just want to brush up your resumé or discuss career options, don’t miss this opportunity – accessing this service is easy.

Log into your MyService account via myGov (my.gov.au). If you are eligible, a Support For Employment tile will automatically appear on the home page of your account. Click on this tile to start enrolment in the program. If a tile does not appear, and you believe you are eligible, email SFE@dva.gov.au.

Army wives find flexibility by starting their own businesses

by Lydia Teychenné, Australian Defence Force (ADF) partner and Programme Coordinator for Prince's Trust Australia



From left: Courtney Snowden; Loren Kalis; Bianca Newey

Prince's Trust Australia has released a video featuring three women who are married to soldiers and forging new careers designed to withstand life on the move.

The video is a rare glimpse into the life of the modern-day Army wife, revealing challenges to career progression when managing postings, raising young children and isolation.

Loren Kalis loves the adventure of moving around Australia with her Army musician husband and young child but finds it hard to maintain employment when moving every year.

The digital signage creator launched her business Now Now Foundry in April last year, creating customised gifts from her home in Townsville.

For career journalist Courtney Snowden, it took a redundancy and a new baby to take the leap into freelancing.

But getting started wasn't easy.

Courtney found her biggest challenge was understanding the nuts and bolts of business, how to network and how to source clients.

'One of the biggest struggles was finding clients who I could work with, but also finding work that fits around looking after two young children.'

Courtney signed up for Prince's Trust Australia's Enterprise Programme, (princes-trust.org.au) a series of free entrepreneurial workshops for ADF veterans and their families.

Courtney said it wasn't just skills the Enterprise Programme offered that proved invaluable, but the network she found through Prince's Trust.

Graphic designer Bianca Newey said with three small children, it was difficult to go out and make connections.

'Being a Defence partner can be very isolating and very lonely if you're somewhere that you don't have friends and family and support,' she says.

Passionate about design, Bianca set up her business, B Luvd. But starting a business was difficult without access to the right resources or knowing where to begin.

'Having advice and knowing how to do a business plan is probably one of the biggest challenges. Knowing who your target audience is, that's also very difficult to figure out initially.'

The Prince's Trust Australia Enterprise program received grant funding from the Australian Government to support veteran-community owned businesses.

For the full version of this story, visit dva.gov.au/vetaffairs.

Research shows how mental health training may help families

Most adults are trained to provide physical first aid to someone in need, but what about someone having a panic attack or struggling with depression?

Families see firsthand the severe consequences of mental health issues on veterans in our community. A study from the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) has revealed that 12 hours of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for family members may help support veterans living with mental health concerns.

Sponsored by Medibank's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, GMRF's Mental Health First Aid Study looked at what family members can do to help veterans in immediate need.

Some veterans may not feel comfortable asking for professional 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, but adequate training for family members is currently limited.

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 training includes practice sessions where participants are taught how to

apply these steps in a range of situations. As with physical first aid, MHFA is designed to provide immediate care until professional help can be accessed.

If you or someone you know would like to take MFHA course, Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, in partnership with the RSL, runs frequent two-day workshops around Australia. Visit the Open Arms website (www.open.arms.gov.au) for more information.

If you would like to learn more about GMRF or would like to support research efforts, please visit our website at www.gallipoliresearch.com.au

- If you are in need of assistance, call
- Open Arms 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or www.openarms.gov.au
 - Lifeline on 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au

Take part in our veterans' families study

DVA is partnering with the Department of Defence and the Australian Institute of Family Studies to conduct a new study to better understand the experiences of families of serving and ex-serving personnel.

We are seeking participation from young families where at least one member is currently serving in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) or has transitioned in the last five years. You must either have children under 18 or are expecting

or planning children. If you are separated from your partner we still want to hear from you.

The study aims to understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by young military and veteran families. This will identify opportunities for early intervention that can improve our services for those families.

The goal is to interview families over the coming months, with the final report expected in late 2022.

We encourage all eligible families to share their experience and have their say in the study so we can help shape decisions to better serve you.

More information can be found on the AIFS website (aifs.gov.au and search for 'Australian military and family').

If you would like to participate in the study, please register your interest by emailing amvf-study@aifs.gov.au or calling (03) 9214 7984.



The future of Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling

Dr Grant Pegg, the new National Manager of Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling, discusses the future of the organisation in this, its 40th year.

I am now a few months into the role of National Manager at Open Arms. As with any new job, particularly such a rewarding and purposeful one, each day is a learning experience. With Open Arms celebrating its 40th anniversary supporting the veteran community in 2022, it is also a time to honour the history and the people that have made it what it is today.

The legacy and insights of the Vietnam veterans who founded the service are at the forefront of my mind. I strongly believe that to know where we're going, we have to know and respect where we came from. I am confident this rich history will continue to inform the evolution of Open Arms to ensure we meet the needs of veterans and their families into the future.

I'm a registered medical practitioner with previous experience working as a GP and in mental health services in Queensland. I've also held various public health roles in Canberra. Most recently, I worked for the Therapeutic Goods Administration (part of the Department of Health) where I was responsible for the pre-market approval of prescription medicines including COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

I'm closely connected with the Australian Defence Force, with a number of family members, including my brother, currently serving. Open Arms presents an opportunity for me to return to my clinical passion for mental health while connecting to the clear purpose of supporting veterans at a pivotal time for the service.

The Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service was formed in 1982 from a deep sense of mateship and a strong commitment to peer support. From my first introduction to the service, it is clear that those values have formed a strong foundation on which Open Arms operates today.

"Open Arms presents an opportunity for me to return to my clinical passion for mental health while connecting to the clear purpose of supporting veterans at a pivotal time for the service."

The expansion of our services across Australia over the years highlights the increasing demand and clear need for a specialised, military-aware counselling service. It also reinforces our ability to adapt to meet the evolving needs of veterans.

One thing that has particularly struck me in these first months is the scope of support offered by the service. From 24/7 counselling, to group programs, peer support, and digital resources. The Peer program, for example, is a relatively new program that echoes the work of those who founded the service. It involves people with lived experience of the military and mental health support playing an active role in helping others, clearly reflecting our foundational principles.

After several years of significant expansion and growth, one of our main tasks in 2022 is to

ensure we are on a good operational footing for the next 40 years. This will include looking to the future to ensure we have the fundamentals right to continue to grow and provide our important services. It will also include learning from and collaborating with similar services domestically and internationally.

Open Arms, like other services, has had to rapidly adapt to the prevailing COVID-19 environment including pivoting to provide telehealth services. Australia's mental health system is experiencing unprecedented demand across the board, and Open Arms is not immune to these pressures. I'm keen to ensure that the lessons we have learned are incorporated into service improvement as we transition back to face-to-face service delivery.

Open Arms understands the unique issues that veterans may face, and the way ADF life has changed since our service was founded. Open Arms can help veterans and eligible family members work through mental health and wellbeing issues at any time.

Like anything in life, small problems left unchecked can grow into big problems. Reaching out and getting support early can make the world of difference. You're not alone and we're here to support you.

Help is available by calling 1800 011 046, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Online resources and further information is available on our website (www.openarms.gov.au).

Family visits DVA meeting room named in their father's honour

The late Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO was a distinguished Army officer and a dedicated champion of veterans. A meeting room in DVA's Canberra head office has been named after Bill as testament to the huge contribution he made to the veteran community as Repatriation Commissioner, Principal Member of the Veteran Review Board and as President of Legacy Canberra.

On 2 March 2022, DVA Secretary Liz Cosson AM CSC hosted a visit by Bill's family – his wife Joan and daughters Kath and Erin. Also present was former Repatriation Commissioner Mark Kelly AO DSC who was Bill's successor.

Joan Rolfe was delighted with the room and the decision to name it after her late husband. 'It's amazing,' she said. 'Really lovely. I'm sure Bill would have appreciated it.'

Bill grew up in Griffith, NSW, and entered the Royal Military College – Duntroon in 1965. In 1970, he was deployed to Vietnam where he served as a platoon commander

and was Mentioned in Dispatches. It was in Vietnam that he was badly wounded by a mine, which led to both his legs being amputated below the knee.

Bill retrained as a lawyer and in 1982 was the first Australian officer to attend the Graduate Course at US Army's Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. He was appointed Director of Army Legal Services in 1986 and Director General of Defence Force Legal Services in 1989.

Bill retired from the Australian Defence Force in 1992, when he joined the National Security Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Legal Practice. In 2007, he was appointed as the Repatriation Commissioner, and the following year was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to veterans. Bill sadly passed away in 2016.

'Bill was a remarkable man who made a huge contribution to the Australian Defence Force as a



From left: Former Repatriation Commissioner Mark Kelly AO DSC; Kath Rolfe; Joan Rolfe; Erin Rolfe; DVA Secretary Liz Cosson AM CSC.

serving officer and also to the veteran community following his retirement from the ADF,' Ms Cosson said. 'Bill was one of the veteran community's staunchest advocates. The commitment and dedication he gave to the veteran community will leave a lasting legacy.'

Ms Cosson presented the Rolfe family with a list of recipients of the Brigadier Bill Rolfe AO Award for Veteran Involvement – a category of DVA's Anzac Day Awards (anzacportal.dva.gov.au).

The full version of this article is available on the DVA website (dva.gov.au/vetaffairs/rolfe).



Brigadier Rolfe on a visit to Gallipoli in 2010. On one such visit, he was master of ceremonies at the Lone Pine service.

105 years of veteran support and commemoration



Returned soldiers from the First World War learn the art of boot-making, a common occupation acquiring skills from carpentry to motor-car maintenance by the and thus source of employment in small factories in inner Melbourne and Sydney.



Senator Edward Millen

In 1917, the federal Parliament passed the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act, creating the legislative basis for the Repatriation Department and the Repatriation Commission, which were established the following year. The legislation was introduced by Senator Edward Millen, who would soon be Australia's first Minister for Repatriation. He told Parliament that it would honour Australia's obligations 'to those who on its behalf have gone down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death'. He went on to say that though that there was 'no blazed trail for the work of Repatriation ... the story of the re-establishment of the soldier

in civil life... is, so far, a story of experiment, sometimes more, and sometimes less successful'.

There were 160,000 men and women overseas at the end for the First World War and it took about a year to get them all back to Australia. The man in charge of this was General Sir John Monash, who provided training and educational opportunities to his men in England while they waited for an available ship. Once back in Australia, they were all eligible to some extent at least for repatriation support. By 1920, 90,000 incapacitated soldiers were receiving war pensions from the Repatriation Department, as were almost 49,000 dependants of those who had died.

The department was also providing a good deal of vocational training and medical support – the latter was far and away Australia's most extensive public health initiative until after the Second World War. As part of this, the department provided suitable clients with prosthetic limbs, however, it was criticised for its failure to adequately look after veterans suffering from what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The department worked closely with what was then called the Imperial War Graves Commission, which

was responsible for administering the graves – known and unknown – of the tens of thousands of Australia's war dead overseas. Very few Australians were wealthy enough to visit these graves, but they derived some solace from knowing they were carefully tended, and from the various memorials that sprang up around the country, including the Australian War Memorial, as well as the growing popularity of Anzac Day.

New complications arose following the Second World War. For one thing, the Repatriation Department was one of a confusing array of federal government agencies that provided services to veterans. For another, it soon became clear that treatment of former prisoners-of-war of the Japanese would present a difficult task, as many of their conditions were largely unknown to their local doctors.

The full version of this article is available on the DVA website (dva.gov.au/vetaffairs/105).

This article draws on *Repat – A Concise History of Repatriation in Australia* by Philip Payton, which is available free of charge on the DVA website.

COMMEMORATIONS

Arrangements for Anzac Day 2022

Anzac Day international services to proceed in 2022

Anzac Day services, led by DVA, will take place in Gallipoli, Turkey and in Villers-Bretonneux, France in 2022.

For the past two years, international services could not proceed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local wreath-laying services were conducted to mark the occasion.

Both Gallipoli and Villers-Bretonneux hold a special meaning. Australians fought and died in both locations during the First World War, and were integral in the forging of the Anzac traditions that are embraced and carried on today by our Australian Defence Force.

A Dawn Service will take place at Anzac Cove on Gallipoli, followed by a service at the Lone Pine memorial. The Dawn Service in France will take place at the Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux, followed by an afternoon service at the Australian 'Digger' Memorial at Bullecourt.

Anyone planning to attend the services must register for an

attendance pass. Attendance passes are available from the Anzac Day services ticketing website (commemorations.teg.com.au).

The international Dawn Services will also be broadcast live on the ABC on Anzac Day and streamed live on Facebook.

More information on the services is available from the Anzac Day 2022 page of the DVA website (dva.gov.au and search for 'Anzac Day 2022').

Anzac Day in Australia

With pandemic restrictions on public gatherings eased or abolished, Australians can look forward to again gathering to commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Defence personnel at community services on Anzac Day.

While Anzac Day is a time for public commemorations, it can also be a time for private reflection when Australians, whether they attend a community commemoration or not, pause and reflect on the contribution of service men and women for over a century.



If you are looking to attend a service in your local community, the RSL, ex-service organisations and state and territory governments are again organising Anzac Day services throughout the country. You can find out about local ceremonies by getting in touch with your local RSL sub-branch or visiting their websites.

If you are commemorating at home, you can again take part in the RSL's inspiring 'Light up the Dawn' initiative (lightupthedawn.com.au), or commemorate this important day in your own way. For details

about the Dawn Service and Commemorative Address taking place at the Australian War Memorial, visit the Memorial's website (awm.gov.au).

DVA has provided a digital kitbag of printable materials to help Australians plan their Anzac Day commemorations and recognise our veterans and serving personnel.

The kitbag includes Anzac Day speeches, orders of service, commemorative music playlists, craft activities and more. Visit anzacportal.dva.gov.au/ad-kitbag.



Some of the past and present DVA staff involved in establishing the Sir John Monash Centre



Medal of the Knight of the French National Order of Merit

France honours DVA staff member

In recognition of her many years of service to the Defence and veteran communities, Caroline Bartlett, project manager and inaugural Director of the Sir John Monash Centre (sjmc.gov.au) has been invested as a Knight of the French National Order of Merit by the Ambassador of France to Australia, His Excellency M Jean-Pierre Thebault.

The investiture ceremony took place at the French Embassy in Canberra on 7 December 2021.

'This recognition is a wonderful testament to the dedicated teams I had the privilege of working with to ensure the memory of the service and sacrifice of Australia's servicemen and women on the Western Front is preserved for future generations,' said Ms Bartlett.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Liz Cosson AM CSC attended the ceremony, along with family, friends and colleagues of Ms Bartlett.

'It was an honour to attend,' the Minister said. 'Ms Bartlett was integral in the establishment of

the Sir John Monash Centre in France, where people from all over the world can learn more about the Australian experience of war on the Western Front during the First World War.'

His Excellency M Thebault spoke about the strong connection between France and Australia, that began a century ago during the First World War and with the joint commemorations since.

General de Gaulle, as President of the French Republic, founded the National Order of Merit on 3 December 1963. It is the second French national order, after the Legion of Honour, and is awarded by the French President to French and foreign nationals, both military and civil.

80 years since Australia's involvement in the Pacific War

Over the past few months, Australians around the nation have paused to remember a series of momentous 80th anniversaries, as the frontline reached our shores during the Second World War.

From the initial attacks on Malaya in December 1941, it took Japan just 70 days to overrun the British Empire forces and capture Singapore.

The first major engagement between Australian and Japanese troops in Malaya was the Battle of Gemas on 14 January. The last major battle of the Malayan campaign was the Battle of Muar River (14–22 January). Following this, some 150 severely wounded Australian and Indian soldiers forced to be left behind in the desperate Allied withdrawal were executed at Parit Sulong on 22 January in what is thought to be one of first such massacres of Allied prisoners of war in Malaya.

Moving swiftly through Malaya, the Japanese reached the outskirts of the British 'island fortress' of Singapore in late January. There was fierce fighting on the island, but British forces were poorly led and the defence was disorganised.

Later that month, an Australian battalion with ancillary support elements – 'Gull Force' – was sent to protect the small island of Ambon (in present-day Indonesia) alongside Netherlands East Indies troops. Ill-prepared, under-equipped and without air support, they were overwhelmed and forced to surrender on 3 February 1942.

Singapore was surrendered on 15 February 1942 and more than 100,000 British and Commonwealth troops, including some 15,000 Australians, became prisoners of war.

In the days prior to the Fall of Singapore, thousands of civilians were evacuated, including Australian Army nurses who boarded ships bound for Australia. The last nurses to leave were the 65 who boarded the SS *Vyner Brooke* on 12 February 1942.

Two days out of Singapore, the *Vyner Brooke* was bombed and sunk by the Japanese. After many hours in the water, one group of 22 nurses made it to Radji Beach on Bangka Island, where survivors from other allied vessels sunk were found.

Captured by the Japanese on 16 February, this group of nurses were ordered to wade into the sea, where they were machine-gunned. Just one nurse, Sister Vivian Bullwinkel, survived – she would again be taken prisoner some 12 days later and managed to survive the war and return to Australia.

On 27 February, the Australian light cruiser HMAS *Perth* was part of an Allied fleet of 14 Dutch, American and British ships that fought a Japanese invasion fleet at the Battle of the Java Sea. That battle was a disastrous defeat for the Allies, with nine of the ships being lost that day or in the days that followed.

The next day, two surviving ships, HMAS *Perth* and USS *Houston*, were headed towards the south coast of Java, where they encountered another powerful Japanese invasion fleet. On 28 February, the *Perth* was lost along with more than 350 of the ship's company of some 680 men in the Battle of Sunda Strait. Of the *Perth*'s survivors, 106 would die while prisoners of war. Only 214 men from the ship's company survived the war and were repatriated home to Australia.



Top from left:

1. Troops of the ill-fated Australian 8th Division disembark at Singapore
2. Australian gunners with a two-pounder anti-tank gun overlooking the Johore Causeway
3. Australian anti-tank gunners firing on Japanese tanks on the Muar-Parit Sulong Road

Bottom from left:

4. Painting by Changi prisoner of war Murray Griffin in 1943. It depicts the fighting on the Muar-Parit Sulong Road
5. Lieutenant-General Percival and his party carry the Union Jack on their way to surrender Singapore to the Japanese
6. Front page of the Daily Mirror, 16 February 1942

The Fall of Singapore from those who were there

The following quotes are from video interviews conducted over several years with men who were at the Fall of Singapore. You can listen to the full interviews on the Anzac Portal (anzacportal.dva.gov.au/resources).

Bart Richardson, who served as a lieutenant with the 2/20th Australian Infantry Battalion in Malaya and Singapore, recalled how poorly fortified Singapore was when his battalion arrived.

'When we got back on Singapore Island, there was not a strand of barb[ed] wire erected, there was not a trench dug, there was nothing. Singapore was never... an impregnable fortress.'

'We were given a piece of ground to cover by our battalion that should have been covered by the whole division.'

Following the defeat of British and Commonwealth Forces, Bart Richardson became a prisoner of war (POW). He was forced to work on the Burma-Thailand Railway, including the Konyu Cutting (now Hellfire Pass), before being moved to Changi prison until his liberation in August 1945.

"I was scared stiff. Terrified, in fact. But you had no choice, you just had to keep going."

Alan Morris 'Maurie' Deed enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on 9 May 1940 aged just 17. Maurice served in Singapore

as a RAAF aircraft hand and recalled being one of many young Australians who had only just finished school before joining the war effort.

'They talk about heroes, but we were just frightened kids. Nothing else.'

Maurie recalled the relentless Japanese air raids and bombings that those stationed at Sembawang airfield endured in the lead-up to Singapore's fall.

'We were getting bombed all the time. As fast as we filled holes in, so the planes could take off, they'd come over and blow them up again. In the end, it was almost continuous, the bombing of the drome.'

'I know I was scared stiff. Terrified, in fact. But you had no choice, you just had to keep going.'

Bombing of Darwin Day – 80 years since Australia came under attack

Each year on 19 February, Australia marks Bombing of Darwin Day to commemorate the first time that the Australian mainland came under direct attack during the Second World War.

Darwin in early 1942 was an important far northern port and a vital strategic and logistic asset in Australia's defence against the forces of the Japanese Empire which had recently captured Malaya and Singapore, and were seeking to rapidly occupy the Netherlands East Indies (present-day Indonesia) to Australia's immediate north.

On 19 February 1942, Darwin came under attack by Japanese carrier-based aircraft and land-based bombers, the first of many air raids carried out across northern Australia. The two raids on this day involving more than 240 enemy aircraft and separated by about 80 minutes,

killed more than 250 Australian and Allied service personnel, merchant mariners and civilians.

During the first raid, three Allied naval ships (including the lugger HMAS *Mavie*) and five merchant ships were sunk and another ten ships were damaged. When the American destroyer USS *Peary* was sunk, 88 American sailors were killed – the greatest single loss of life on any ship attacked in Darwin Harbour that day.

The next air raid came just two weeks after the Bombing of Darwin, when Japanese aircraft attacked Broome. At least 89 people including Dutch civilian evacuees were killed and 24 Allied aircraft destroyed.

Throughout 1942, the Australian mainland faced its darkest days of the war, with the attacks on Darwin and northern Australia, soon followed by Japanese submarine attacks on Sydney and Newcastle in May and June 1942.

Further air raids on Darwin and the interior took place from March 1942 into late 1943. Between these raids, smaller sorties by Japanese reconnaissance aircraft also carried out operations over northern Australia.

On 12 November 1943, the Japanese conducted their 64th and final air raid on Darwin. Over almost two years, northern Australia had seen a total of 97 air attacks, though enemy air reconnaissance continued over the region until July 1944.

On the 80th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin, we remember those who served in defence of our nation during these attacks and in particular those who died.

Learn more about the 1942 bombing of Darwin and the other air raids the nation faced at the DVA Anzac Portal (anzacportal.gov.au).



From left: Imperial Japanese Navy 'Val' bombers; Australian troops inspect bomb damage; the destroyer USS Peary sinking by the stern; 101-year-old Brian Winspear AM with Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks AM at a commemorative service held in Darwin on 19 February 2022.

The Bombing of Darwin from those who were there

The following quotes are from video interviews conducted over several years with men who were there. You can listen to the full interviews on the Anzac Portal (anzacportal.dva.gov.au/resources).

Brian Winspear AM (pictured) served as a wireless air gunner in the Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF) No 2 Squadron.

Brian vividly recounted the first bombing of Darwin in which he was hit by shell splinters in his eye and hand.

'The Zeros and the dive bombers blew Hell out of Darwin,' he said.

'We were in a trench about fifty yards from the hangars and you could see the Japanese in their cockpits, see their faces smiling and laughing.

'I looked up and the sun glinted on the bombs as they were falling and it was just like confetti.'

Brian recalled the air superiority of the Japanese fighters, which decimated a squadron of US Army Air Force Kittyhawks, which were in the process of landing when the air raid occurred.

'They picked them off one by one,' said Brian.

'They weren't very good pilots, they'd just learnt to fly and of course the Zeros just butchered them all.

'Most of the pilots bailed out with parachutes but the Japanese would have pot shots at them when they were floating down.'

Don Anderson joined the Royal Australian Navy at age 17 on 11 March 1942 and his early service saw him posted to Darwin where he witnessed the aftermath of the first attack.

'Darwin was a mess,' he said. 'There was not a single undamaged building in the place. The *Neptune*, a 10,000-ton ship, lying on its side alongside the wharf where it had been bombed.

I didn't experience the initial bombing of Darwin but... every time it was a moonlit night, the Japanese planes would come over to do some bombing.'

The late Rex Lipman AO ED OLH ONM spent time in Darwin before re-joining the 2/4th Australian Commando Squadron in Timor in December 1942. Rex spoke of the disorganisation in Darwin before and after the air raids.

'No one was ready for anything,' he said.

After the initial attacks, Rex's Commando unit went hunting for Japanese soldiers who were believed to have landed on Australian soil.

'The Commando unit went out on the Roper River, the Victoria River, and the Daly River. There was an infiltration of some Japanese round where we were hunting, we but didn't find any. But they had been there... not in hundreds, in twos and threes.'

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



New podcast shares the stories of modern veterans

Up Close: Conversations with modern veterans is a new podcast series that explores the lives and experiences of Australia's modern veterans.

The Australian War Memorial has partnered with LiSTNR to develop the six-episode series hosted by Walkley Award-winning journalist, Adam Shand.

Over the six episodes, through the art of conversation, *Up Close* explores the lives of our modern veterans as they answer the question: 'What does it mean to be a veteran?'

From enlisting in the Australian Defence Force, to the personal challenges involved in training, conflict and life after the uniform, *Up Close* takes listeners through the experiences of four veterans:

- Fred Campbell OAM, former Royal Australian Navy warrant officer
- Auntie Lorraine Hatton OAM, Quandamooka Elder of the Noonuccal and Ngughi tribes in south-east Queensland and Indigenous Elder for the Australian Army
- David Nicolson, former Australian Army trooper
- Dr Kim Morgan-Short, a former Royal Australian Air Force Reservist who has twice been widowed.

'*Up Close* is, as the name suggests, a way for Australians to understand what it means to join and work in the military,' says Memorial Director Matt Anderson. 'They are our veterans' stories, in their words, up close and personal.'

'The podcast allows us to gain a strong appreciation of the very human aspect of our Australian Defence Force. Listeners will hear, through raw conversations, the real stories, challenges and rewards of military life.'

'It has never been more important for Australians to have a variety of ways to connect with our military history, in addition to visiting the Memorial in person. Podcasts enable us to reach and engage with people all over Australia and the world.'

Up Close: Conversations with modern veterans was produced with support from Lockheed Martin Australia.

Episodes are available on the Memorial website (www.awm.gov.au/podcasts), LiSTNR's website (www.listnr.com) and through all major podcast platforms.

ITEMS FOR SALE

Tribute poppies

The Flanders poppy has been a part of commemorative services since the early 1920s. Fabric poppies adorn the panels of the Memorial's Roll of Honour where visitors make a personal tribute to the memory of those who have lost their lives in the service of Australia.

Each bunch contains ten poppies, which can be separated for your own commemorative purposes.

\$10.00 per bunch

Poppy scarves

Perfect for any season, the Memorial's best-selling poppy scarves (available in black or navy) are lightweight and feature a vibrant poppy design. Presented in a gift box, these scarves also make the ideal gift for friends and family.

Scarves sold individually. \$24.99 each

Defence Force lapel pins

Proudly show your support for our current and former service personnel by wearing a Defence Force lapel pin – suitable for all commemorative occasions. Each with a distinct emblem, the lapel pins are crafted from silver- or gold-toned metal and have a single push-pin closure (about 2–3 cm in size).

Lapel pins sold individually. \$4.99 each



ORDER FORM

To order, simply complete the order form and post your cheque/money order or credit card details to (please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery): eSales Unit, Australian War Memorial, GPO Box 345, Canberra ACT 2601.

Phone (02) 6243 4555 (select option 2). Or shop online at www.awm.gov.au/shop.

	PRICE	NO OF ITEMS	TOTAL
Tribute poppies	\$10.00		
Navy lapel pin	\$4.99		
Army lapel pin	\$4.99		
RAAF lapel pin	\$4.99		
Poppy scarf – black	\$24.99		
Poppy scarf – navy	\$24.99		
*Postage & handling 1–3 items \$10.00; 4–9 items \$15.00; 10+ items \$20.00		*Postage and handling	\$
Postage & handling (per delivery address)		Total amount	\$

Visa <input type="checkbox"/>	Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/>	Cheque/money order <input type="checkbox"/> (made payable to the Australian War Memorial)	
Cardholder name	<input type="text"/>		
Card number	<input type="text"/>	Expiry date	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>		
Full name	<input type="text"/>		
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Daytime phone	<input type="text"/>		
Please provide your email address if you would like to receive the Memorial Shop e-newsletter for updates about new releases, special offers etc			
<input type="text"/>			

NOTICEBOARD

MEDALS LOST AND FOUND

LOST

Corporal Ivor Oscar Olsen

NX48795 I O OLSEN, WWII 1939–45 Star belonging to my late Uncle, ex New Guinea and Borneo 1943–45. The medal went missing around 30 years ago.

Contact: Rod Besier

☎ 0408 648 923

✉ r.besier@bigpond.com

Missing Vietnam medals

Seeking my Vietnam medals which were stolen from my locked locker at HMAS *Penguin* around 1969/70 while I was on leave.

Contact: Keith Sherwin

☎ 0488 692 211

✉ keithsherwin13@gmail.com

Howard Beckman

Trying to locate Howard's WWI medals.

Contact: Simon Lynch

☎ 0417 889 731

✉ simonlynch6@gmail.com

James Anthony Dwyer 8938

My grandfather James served in WWI. He was awarded 1914–15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal 1914–19. The three medals have gone astray and I would love to find them.

Contact: Bryan Dwyer

☎ 0488 007 618

✉ paddydwyer@aussiebb.com.au

Lt Esson Thomas James RULE

WWI Trio – 1914/15 Star, BWM, VM, No 188 Lt Esson Thomas James RULE, 10th then 50th Battalion. KIA 2/04/1917 Noreuil, France. Given/donated in Adelaide many years ago. Willing to compensate/purchase if located.

Contact: Andrew Rule

☎ 0419 821 547

✉ jarule@live.com.au

Walter Collins VX238392

Seeking Walter's Republic of Korea War Service medal which was stolen from our house in Broadmeadows, Victoria. Walter passed away in July 2021.

Contact: Edith Collins

☎ 03 9740 6256

FOUND

5699 George Gordon Jeffers

British War and Victory Medal plus the 'Dead Man's Penny' for 5699 George Gordon Jeffers. He passed away in Hopetoun, Victoria in 1919

after his return from WWI. We are hoping any family member would like to claim the medals.

Contact: Peter Drewry

☎ 0418 895 392

✉ pdrewry8@bigpond.com

J Birchall M N

Goolwa History Centre has medals in its collection engraved 'J Birchall M N' and we would like to find information on this person. We believe 'M N' indicates Merchant Navy and that he served on a vessel possibly under the British flag. The medals are 1939–45 Star, Italy Star and War Medal.

Contact: Goolwa National

Trust History Centre

✉ nattrustgoolwa@hotmail.com

Richard Wallace Flack A222509

I have an Australian Defence Medal that belongs to Richard. I have tried to find the rightful owner but am unable to do so. I believe that it was mistakenly sent to us as my wife's maiden name was Flack.

Contact: Steve Seed

✉ steve.seed@gmail.com

Lance Corporal Fredrick Norman ROSS 2854

WWI medals X 3.

Contact: Hilary Gallina

✉ hilary.gallina1960@gmail.com

CPL R D Batty

Medal from WWI 2523, CPL R D BATTY 17bn AIF.

Contact: Jim McEwen

☎ 02 6662 3287 or 0403 997 030

✉ jimandmarea@gmail.com

L Hallows VX6320

Two WWII dog tags.

Contact: Bryan Dwyer

☎ 0488 007 618

✉ paddydwyer@aussiebb.com.au

Medals at the Dandenong RSL to be claimed

The RSL has the following medals and wishes to return them to NOK – 19856 SGT MacDonald BOOTHEY, 1939–45 Star, Pacific Star, War Medal, Australian Service Medal 1939–45; 1737 PTE James DEMPSTER, 1914–15 Star; WTR John Patrick O'CONNOR PM8485, Australian Service Medal 1945–75; LIEUT Donald McGaw ADDISON, British War Medal 1914–20.

Contact: Lance McDermott

☎ 03 9792 1535

✉ gbetros@southeastrsl.com.au

You may also want to visit the Defence Department website's Honours and Awards page for information on applying for medals, replacements and relatives' medals (defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards).

REUNIONS

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

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

🌐 <http://www.locatingartillery.org/>

2RAR/ANZAC Battalion 1967-68 Reunion

23–26 April 2022, Terang, VIC

All members who served in Vietnam are invited to attend.

Contact: Brian Humphrey, 03 5592 1979 or Gordon (below).

Contact: Gordon Hurford

☎ 0407 926 270

✉ ghurford@iprimus.com.au

Seeking members of Moran Division Class 5/82, 83

Looking to organise a reunion later in the year. If you are interested in attending and you are a member of this division, please contact us on Facebook under the class heading name or contact me via email.

Contact: Rod Beattie

☎ 0418 294 972

✉ rodbeattie@hotmail.com

Ex Supply Platoon members from 1973–90

Seeking expression of interest in a reunion of all ex members, including cooks, TPT drivers and ammo tech.

Contact: Michael Stone –

RAAOC-25 Combat

(Supplies Platoon)

✉ michael.stone@bigpond.com

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

All who served on Bougainville

25 April 2022, Glasshouse Mountains RSL, QLD

Meet and greet, and renew friendships.

Contact: Dean Davies

✉ dean9@live.com.au

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>

Royal Australian Engineers Explosive Detection Dogs 50-year Reunion

18–19 June 2022, Ingleburn RSL and SME Holsworthy, NSW

Saturday – meet and greet at 1400 hrs; Sunday – Dog kennels 1000 hrs. This will be the time to celebrate the 50 years that the RAE Corps has had Explosive Detection Dogs. Contact Smiley or the Dog Unit at SME Holsworthy, NSW.

Contact: Colin 'Smiley' Matthews

☎ 0403 501 112

✉ matthews.35@bigpond.com

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 334 535

✉ reunion@au104.org

🌐 <http://2022.au104.org>

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

Navy Cooks, Chefs and Stewards, Centenary 2022 Reunion

7–9 October 2022, Melbourne, VIC
Former, serving and Reserves are invited to attend and

celebrate 100 years of professional training at HMAS *Cerberus* over the Journey. For all details and registration, please email David (below) or ex WOSTWD Dave Stevenson (djstevenson7@bigpond.com).

Contact: ex CPOCK David Speed Dwyer

☎ 0423 675 146

✉ davidgdwyer@hotmail.com

RAAF Airman Aircrew Association 25th Anniversary

21–22 October 2022, Caloundra, QLD

Meet and greet on 21 October and dinner on 22nd. To register, visit the website.

Contact: Grendell 'Skip' Antony

☎ 0412 602 353

✉ theantonys@optusnet.com.au

🌐 <http://airmanaircrew.com.au>

55th Birthday Reunion of 9 RAR (67/73)

10–14 November 2022, Sunshine Coast, QLD

All those who served in the Battalion are invited. The event will be centred around Mooloolaba/Maroochydore. Please ensure your postal/email address is up to date with your state secretary.

Contact: Kevin Lynch

✉ kevannlynch@hotmail.com

HQ1ATF Association

18–21 November 2022, Capital Country Holiday Park, ACT

Call or email John for detailed itinerary.

Contact: John Verhelst

☎ 0437 212 121

✉ jeverhelst@gmail.com

Headquarters & Headquarters Company 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG)

20–25 March 2023, Broken Hill, NSW

Please make contact for reunion and accommodation details.

Contact: Tony Brown

☎ 0428 852 736

✉ tr4950@optusnet.com.au

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

NOTICEBOARD

NAVY

Sailors 1939-1945

Seeking information about those who served on Navy ships, *Australia, Perth* and *Sydney* during WWII – stories or photos to be displayed with model ships at Rathmines, NSW.

Contact: Alec N Howard

☎ 02 4975 1973

✉ friendsofrathmines@gmail.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. Anyone who believes 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
faaaa.asn.au/
operation-bursa-recognition

Stephen Sheehy – HMAS Vendetta, 1978

Seeking relatives of Stephen. We joined the Navy in 1976 as 15–16-year-old boys at HMAS *Leeuwin*, WA. We have a group of around 100 ex-service guys who all joined the Navy with Steve. We would like to let his family know that we still think of Steve regularly and celebrate all our mates we joined up with who are no longer with us on Anzac Day each year.

Contact: Craig Walters (HMAS *Leeuwin* Ramsay/Stevenson 55th Intake of 1976)

☎ 0466 397 711

✉ mattymew@hotmail.com

🌐 www.messenger.com/t/100000702599136

HMAS Warramunga Tribal Class Veterans Association NSW

Due to current conditions and members crossing the bar, I need to compile a contact list to discuss the future of the association. Please send me your contact details.

Contact: Larry Brown – President

☎ 0425 334 229 or 02 9668 9130

✉ lazbb@bigpond.com

Seeking shipmates – Ex HMAS Vendetta 1973-76

Hoping to contact Tom Johns (ABWM) from Tasmania and Ernie Hunting (ABQMG) from Newcastle. Ernie was posted to HMAS *Creswell*.

Contact: Phillip Smith

☎ 0438 542 892

✉ phillipsmith2020@hotmail.com

Old Sailors

I was in the RAN 1949–58, leading seaman RP2. O/n R37371.

Served on HMAS *Anzac, Culgoa* and *Warramunga*. Is anybody I know still out there?

Contact: Ken (K J) Dunne

☎ 0466 284 898, 07 3189 1017

✉ kjdunne123@optusnet.com.au

Seeking Tex Bullock, Robbie (Stumpy) Lee and Gary Brown

Tex is a former Navy diver who joined in Jan 1965, *Cerberus* and hailed from QLD. Robbie (Stumpy) Lee was a submariner from Jan 1965 intake at *Cerberus* and Gary Brown was a Fleet Air Arm Handler and former WA JR of 1963. Northmeade High in NSW.

Contact: Russell (Stoney) Pantlin

☎ 0416 254 716

✉ russell.pantlin@ssz.com.au

Seeking former shipmate Jerry (George) Dwyer

We trained together at signal school FND 1957, then HMAS *Voyager* 1957–59. Last contact in Adelaide 1963.

Contact: Gavin Ryan

☎ 0403 205 562

✉ gavinwryan@outlook.com

ARMY

Seeking Alec Graham

Alec served in the Royal Scots Regiment as a corporal and was born in Edinburgh, UK. He now resides in Australia. I last saw him at the Scarsdale Hotel, Victoria a long time ago. I would love to make contact.

Contact: Eric Robinson – British Armed Forces

☎ 0456 731 748

Seeking Sapper Ron Hutcherson

17 Constr Sqn Nui Dat, Vietnam, 1969/70

Contact: Jeff Gestier

☎ 0418 622 220

✉ gestier10@bigpond.com

Seeking Nashos who were posted to South Vietnam

Prior to 8 September 1967 or after 17 June 1969 and had less than 12 months remaining on their 24- or 18-month commitment. This also includes those who were KIA or sent home WIA or due to sickness.

Contact: Richard Barry OAM

☎ 02 6792 3114

✉ richyvonn47@hotmail.com

Ian Frank ‘Louie the Fly’ Lamont and Leonard Stanley Wade

Seeking 2787846 Pte Ian LAMONT of C Coy 3 RAR, SVN 1967/68 Tour and 3788239 Leonard WADE of 2 RAR, SVN 1967 Tour.

Contact: E ‘Dutchy’ Lensing (Formerly D Coy 3 RAR, SVN 1967/68)

☎ 0418 952 850

✉ dutchyle@bigpond.net.au

Allan W Downsborough

Allan (Roo to his mates) was a 3rd Intake Nasho, Feb 1966 – Feb 1968. After recruit training at Puckapunyal, he did Inf Corp Training at Singleton and was posted to 4 Pl, B Coy, 3 RAR at Woodside, SA. A well-built, strong digger, he hailed from Burracoppin in WA. He has been untraceable for the past 25 years. Last known address was a flat in Mosman Park, WA. Missed by all his B Coy mates.

Contact: Michael Healy

☎ 0407 615 141

✉ michaelhealy096@gmail.com

Brian Wood, ex National Serviceman

Seeking Brian DOB c1947, possibly from Victoria. He worked at Dept of Health and lived at Gorman House, Ainslie, ACT in the 1970s. I have some photos for him and would like to catch up.

Contact: Kathy Roda Curtis

✉ katemarley53@gmail.com

Seeking Private Mark G Bullivant

We lost touch in 1968/1969. Mark was a valued platoon member in Vietnam and I think of him often. It will be comforting to hear about him for his fellow diggers and myself.

Contact: Wayne (Snowy) Sheffield

☎ 0419 192 488

✉ stratham1@ozemail.com.au

AIR FORCE

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

Seeking crew photo A9-60

On 3 October 1942, a flight of 10 Beauforts (100 Squadron) left Milne Bay to attack Japanese shipping off the Shortland Islands. The crew of A9-60 did not return from the mission. The crew comprised Don Strumm, Ken Hendy, Cecil Hale and Arthur Walker. None of the other crews saw their fate, and they either crashed or were shot down. I am hoping that someone has a photo of the crew with their plane.

Contact: Rodger Hendy

☎ 0450 605 890

✉ rchendy@gmail.com

Seeking Ken Brandli

Ken and I worked together at No 2 Stores Depot in 1984 and then later at Base Squadron Darwin 1987. Would like to catch up.

Contact: Greg Willis

☎ 0422 046 998

✉ gregwillis47@optusnet.com.au

They Flew From Waddington by H M Blundell

Seeking a copy of this book.

Contact: Sue Archbold

✉ suejim48@bigpond.com

RAF Pathfinders in WW2

Our brothers, P/O Kelvin Munro and S/L Richard T Fitzgerald DFC have a tree with plaques on the famous Kings Park memorial avenues for Western Australians killed in action. If you have a relative who was deceased while serving in the above Squadron, a memorial can be established for them, provided their name is on the official State Memorial in Kings Park, Perth. Contact Peter Munro, Box 180, Midland, WA 6936 or Brian (below).

Contact: Brian Fitzgerald

☎ 08 9284 0483

6/74 Tighe St, Jolimont, WA 6014

Seeking Peter Robert Caudwell

Peter was an Instrument Apprentice from No 20 Course at RAAF Base Wagga in 1966. We served at RAAF Base Butterworth in the early 70s and I have been trying to track him down for ages. I believe he later re-mustered to Loadmaster.

Contact: Al Chiesa

☎ 0410 540 238

✉ alchiesa@bigpond.net.au

RAAF recruit course 1153

Seeking to contact fellow members. Hoping to get a reunion happening for our 50th year since we began our RAAF journey.

Contact: Buster Todd

☎ 0402 453 082

✉ toddbus54@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

The Third Movement novel

Written by 98-year-old Gerald Buttrose, this novel graphically and emotionally captures the capacity of WWII to disrupt lives and create widespread grief. Foreword by Ita Buttrose. 390 pages, published by Nenge Books. Purchase online with 10% discount or from booksellers, RRP \$29.99 + GST.

🌐 www.nengebooks.com

Book: Call Sign Vampire – the inside story of an Australian Field Hospital during the Vietnam War

This magnificent book contains 27 chapters covering every section of the hospital and includes more than 500 photos, personal accounts and comprehensively researched text. The book is published and distributed by the 1st Australian Field Hospital Association and is available via the email address below.

Contact: Paul Danaher

✉ book@callsignvampire.com.au

Seeking Bruce Thompson ex Army and Navy

7th Intake Apprentice Plumber at Army Apprentices School, Balcombe 1952. Served in RAE until transfer to Royal Australian Navy after completing a Clearance Diver Course. Was commissioned in RAN and left to join the Royal Navy of Oman. Moved to NSW on retirement. Present location unknown. Sought by fellow apprentice, 70 years since our enlistment in Perth.

Contact: Kevin (KT) Graham

☎ (08) 93891406 (preferred) or 0419 984 007

✉ ktgraham@iinet.net.au

Kevin J Harper ex 10Bn. RSAR & Ex HMAS Oxley

Seeking to contact former member of Sig Pl, 10th Bn, Royal South Australia Regiment who later joined the RAN and served aboard HMAS *Oxley*. His father was S/Sgt Don Harper who was CQMS, Spt Coy, 10Bn.

Contact: Des Hawkins

☎ 0434 676 050

✉ desmondh@ozemail.com.au

South Australians of Ukrainian decent who served in Vietnam

The Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of Adelaide would like to honour those South Australians of Ukrainian decent who served in Vietnam 1962–1975, by placing their names on a plaque, which will be displayed at their church grounds at Wayville.

Contact: Mr Eric Kokoshko

☎ 0428 254 018

✉ info@writerspen.com.au

🌐 www.writerspen.com.au

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