PMAC meets to discuss veteran mental health

The Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Veterans’ Mental Health (PMAC) met for the first time on 24 and 25 July 2014. Announced on 13 March 2014 by the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, PMAC is chaired by Vice Admiral Russ Crane AO, CSM, RAN (Ret’d), who is supported by Deputy Chair, Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC, MG, and eight members.

Tackling the mental health challenges faced by veterans and their families is a key pillar of the Government’s plan for veterans’ affairs. While mental illness will impact almost half the Australian population over their lifetime, there are particular risks for former serving men and women who may have been put in harm’s way in the course of their service.

“The new PMAC has the Prime Minister’s unequivocal support in ensuring the Government can provide the very best support to veterans and their families facing the challenges of service-related mental illness,” Senator Ronaldson said earlier this year.

The Prime Minister and Senator Ronaldson both met with the Council on the first day of its meeting.

“It is very encouraging to see that the Council has the full support of the Prime Minister, the Minister and the Secretary in undertaking this important role,” Vice Admiral Crane said.

The inaugural meeting provided PMAC with an overview of issues relating to veterans’ mental health and included briefings on mental and social health, DVA’s service delivery processes and legislation, treatment and management of mental health conditions, and mental health resources for veterans and their families.

On the second day of the meeting, the Council spent time developing a strategic framework for future work.

“The key areas of activity we discussed included peer support, family support, vocational rehabilitation, engagement with corporate Australia, partnerships with not-for-profit organisations, a strategic communication plan, and strategic partnership between DVA and Defence,” Vice Admiral Crane said.

PMAC identified the following three areas of priority:

• A national communication strategy to promote a positive view of service and its contribution, and to increase awareness of the available mental health services and the benefits of early intervention. The strategy would target a wide range of audiences including serving and former serving members, families, the community and industry. It would be aimed at reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and would aim to break down barriers to seeking assistance.

• Peer support, which allows individuals to be suitably matched with peers to receive practical support in managing their mental health and wellbeing, leading to improved quality of life. The Council is interested in auspicing a peer support forum to bring together relevant stakeholders to share information on peer support programmes and canvass ideas about expanding peer support in the veteran and ex-serving community.

• Vocational rehabilitation and transition management. The Council will look at ways in which industry can be engaged to provide greater employment opportunities for former members undertaking vocational rehabilitation. The Council will also examine how the transition process from Defence to DVA can be improved.

The Council meets again on 25 November 2014. To learn more, visit the Council’s website www.pmac.dva.gov.au

New initiative links injured vets to employment

The Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, recently launched a new initiative that will help wounded, injured or ill veterans achieve their employment goals.

Senator Ronaldson said the Veterans Employment Assistance Initiative will broaden the employment assistance and support for former members and employers currently provided under DVA’s rehabilitation program.

“This initiative is a new opportunity for former ADF members currently provided under DVA’s rehabilitation programs that help veterans adapt to, or recover from, their injuries. The initiative is being undertaken as a trial in Queensland involving up to 50 participants and will help inform a national approach. For more information on rehabilitation visit www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation

On a recent visit to Brisbane, Senator Ronaldson met with Terry Thompson, a veteran who was injured during his service in the Australian Army. Terry was discharged in 2012 and participated in a DVA rehabilitation program as part of his recovery.

Terry worked closely with his rehabilitation provider and undertook a 12-week work trial with Downer EDI Works. Terry excelled in his placement and was subsequently offered permanent employment with the organisation.

The Minister also presented Downer EDI Works with a certificate of appreciation, recognising their role in Terry’s rehabilitation.

“Former ADF members have an extensive range of skills and experiences that would be valuable to any organisation and it is encouraging to see employers, such as Downer EDI Works recognising this,” he said.

This new initiative broadens the assistance and support available to former ADF members offered through DVA, including a range of vocational and non-vocational rehabilitation programs that help veterans adapt to, or recover from, their injuries.

The initiative is being undertaken as a trial in Queensland involving up to 50 participants and will help inform a national approach. For more information on rehabilitation visit www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation
Letters to the Editor

Dying with dignity
The article “Suicide and the elderly” published in the Winter issue of Vetaffairs didn’t surprise me. What I found unbelievable is the lack of understanding into why people do these things. I am in my 70s and I belong to Dying with Dignity organisation (DWD) and I am a great believer in euthanasia. When I can’t look after myself anymore, certainly won’t be a burden either to my family or the welfare system. My life is mine and nobody is going to tell me what I can or can’t do.

To keep old people alive with tablets and potions is cruel. We are kinder to our animals and put them to sleep when they have had their day. It is time to wake up to the reality of old age and legalise euthanasia. Then we won’t talk of suicide, but say, that person died to tell me what I can or can’t do.

Dagnarraa Fox
Forest Hill, Vic

HMS Formidable
In the Vetaffairs Winter edition, there was a letter to the editor regarding crew members of the HMS Formidable. This letter awakened happy memories of my own journey on this Cruiser in April 1945 from Manila to Sydney, with several thousand other ex-POWs recovered from Japan and other areas of Asia. We had waited five weeks in Manila for transport home, as there were thousands waiting repatriation.

My most vivid recollections are of the generosity and kind treatment shown to us by all the crew. Nothing was too much trouble for them. We slept on camp stretchers on the hanger deck, but had the full use of the canteen. We arrived in Sydney on 13 October, almost two months after the war ended.

Maybe through your newspaper I can express my thanks to all of the Formidable crew. Our arrival in Sydney harbour was accompanied by huge crowds and the media coverage was extensive. I still have press cuttings with photos taken from the air from the docks. We were taken by bus through crowded streets to Ingleburn Camp for processing. I arrived in Melbourne on 21 October 1945. It was my mother’s 45th birthday – what a great present four years after my departure. Indeed, this whole war years was a 15-month period where I was classified as “Missing Believed Evicted on War”.

Neil MacPherson ex 2nd AIF
WX16572
Address withheld

Anzacs
Reading your article on the Anzac Centenary, I wondered why no mention is made of New Zealand. My husband is a New Zealand veteran of the Second World War and he tells me that during the First World War, New Zealand lost more men (in respect to the population) than Australia, yet they are rarely mentioned in Australia.

Nell Anderson-Smith
Buderim, Qld

Expanded paper – good news
The latest issue of Vetaffairs was most welcome, especially in its expanded version. The articles, although not all being of relevance to me, are most interesting.

Keep up the good work; I shall look forward to receiving future issues.

Peter McNay
Address withheld

Notice board success
We were in touch back in November about the Addison Road Talking History project. Many thanks for accepting our notice and placing it in Vetaffairs. It was effective. In fact, we were overwhelmed by the response. We had so many people get in touch we had to call on a volunteer to help. It has been terrific to talk to them and hear their memories about the enemy depot. So, many thanks for your help. It has been invaluable.

Sue Castrigne
Address withheld

DVA’s central mailbox
A large number of letters are being sent to DVA street addresses. DVA has a central mail box that should be used for all incoming mail. All mail that is sent to DVA’s major office locations should be addressed to GPO Box 9998 IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY. “In your capital city” means that you need to insert the location, based on which city you would like the mail item delivered.

Separate post office boxes for addresses pertaining to VAN or VVCS offices, the OAGW, RMA, VRB, DSH and DSHL remain unchanged.

GPO Box 9998
ADELAIDE SA 5001
HOBART TAS 7001
BRISBANE QLD 4001
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
CABRARRA ACT 2610
PERTH WA 6648
GPO Box 9998
SOUTH ADELAIDE 5000
SYDNEY NSW 2001

A change for the Summer issue of Vetaffairs
Three issues of the Vetaffairs newspaper will continue to be printed and distributed each year, while one issue, the Summer issue, will be produced electronically only.

Many of DVA’s clients already communicate with the Department electronically through channels such as MyAccount, which currently has more than 30,000 registered users, as well as the DVA website which receives more than one million page views each month. With this in mind, it is hoped that you will enjoy the opportunity to read one issue of Vetaffairs online each year, from any location that your Summer takes you. You will simply visit www.dva.gov.au and follow the Vetaffairs link on the home page.

If you think you would like a reminder, you can email Vetaffairs vetaffairs@dva.gov.au and request to be added to an email list that we will keep specifically for alerting you that the Summer issue has been published and is available for viewing. This list will be kept for this one purpose only, and you will continue to receive the Autumn, Winter and Spring hardcopy newspapers in your letter box.

Remember that DVA is still producing four Vetaffairs each year, in Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer, and all four issues will also continue to be available on the DVA website.

Do you have a complaint, compliment or suggestion for DVA?
Email feedback@dva.gov.au
Phone 1300 555 185

Do you have a general enquiry for DVA?
Email generalenquiries@dva.gov.au
Phone 133 254 or from regional Australia freecall 1800 555 254

Follow DVA on Facebook and Twitter @DVAAus.

Vetaffairs is published by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs as a free newspaper for Australia’s veteran community.

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mail GPO Box 9998 Canberra, ACT 2601

News from the Department

Simon Lewis, PSM
Secretary
Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Throughout recent months, we have been looking closely at our Rehabilitation and Compensation (R&C) business in relation to client service. Improving service to our clients is a significant priority for me as Secretary of DVA, as well as for the Minister and the veteran community. We all want to see things done better and smoother.

The recently released DVA strategic plan, DVA Tovards 2020, emphasises the importance of DVA continuing to be responsive and flexible, efficiently delivering high quality and connected services and making the best use of the many channels available to interact with our clients. These are not just words – they are clear statements about where we are heading and what we want to deliver. We are making solid progress.

In late August, we commenced a four week consultation period to seek stakeholder views on the VAN services in the Parramatta area. We received feedback from staff, clients and other key stakeholders, including ex-service organisations. We are looking at whether the maintenance of a stand-alone VAN office is the most efficient method by which to deliver services, or if other alternatives that meet the changing needs of the veteran community should be considered.

We are also looking into the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS). The Government is committed to VVCS services continuing to be available to VVCS clients in the Sydney region, including in Parramatta, through a network of centre-based and outreach counsellors. However, as the VVCS lease in Parramatta is due to expire in early 2015, the consultation process assessed views in relation to a number of potential options for VVCS services in the Sydney region. Client demographics identify that VVCS clients are distributed across the entire Sydney region. We want to ensure that clients can access VVCS services in locations convenient and accessible to them.

The Government is committed to a stand-alone Department of Veterans’ Affairs and maintaining a viable presence in each State and capital city, so that we can continue to offer sustainable and effective services to veterans and their families for the long-term. I would like to reassure you that any reviews we are undertaking now (or any we undertake in the future), will be carried out with service delivery front and centre of our work.

Simon Lewis

DVA Towards 2020
Upcoming commemorative missions

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs is planning two commemorative missions of eight veterans each, to travel overseas in 2015. Staff from DVA will travel with both mission parties. The Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, invites Australian veterans to apply.

Mission to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the declaration of Victory in Europe

DVA is planning a commemorative mission party of eight veterans to travel to London and Paris in May 2015 to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the declaration of Victory in Europe. Australian veterans of the Second World War who were serving in the European theatre in 1945 (including prisoners of war), are invited to apply for inclusion in the mission party.

The mission itinerary is still being developed. However, the delegation is likely to be away for approximately ten days from 2 May 2015. Nominations will close at 5pm AEDT on 24 October 2014.

Details about the mission and how to nominate can be found on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au or by contacting Ms Estelle Musprat in the Department’s Commemorations Branch on (02) 6289 6396 or email france@dva.gov.au

Mission to Borneo to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Operation Oboe landings

DVA is planning a commemorative mission party of eight veterans to travel to Borneo in June 2015 to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Second World War Operation Oboe landings that liberated Borneo from Japanese occupation.

Australian veterans who served in, or directly supported, the landings in 1945, in either the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army or the Royal Australian Air Force, are eligible to apply. The landings were:

- Oboe One at Tarakan (1 May – 21 June 1945);
- Oboe Six at Labuan, Brunei Bay and British North Borneo (10 June – 15 August 1945); and
- Oboe Two at Balikpapan (5 – 21 July 1945).

The mission itinerary is still being developed. However, the delegation is likely to be away for approximately eight or nine days in early-to-mid June 2015. Nominations will close at 5pm AEDT on 15 December 2014. Details about the mission and how to nominate can be obtained from Mr Stuart Watson in the Department’s Commemorations Branch on (02) 6289 1109.

Cutting red tape for claims

Current serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), including Reservists who hold a purple ADF ID card, will benefit from a new DVA and Defence move to reduce red tape in the claims application process.

From 1 September, ADF members can use their purple ADF ID Card to prove their identity for the purposes of making a DVA claim at any On Base Advisory Service (OBAS), DVA Veterans’ Access Network (VAN) Office or one of DVA’s co-located Centrelink Veterans’ Information Service (VIS) offices.

Streamlining the current too point identity verification process means that, when dealing with DVA for the first time, a current serving member will no longer have to provide documents which may not readily be at hand, such as a birth certificate or passport. This will speed up the process for accessing any entitlements from DVA.

While this streamlined arrangement has commenced, there may be exceptional circumstances where further information from a new client is required to establish proof of identity.

This is one of many actions DVA is taking to reduce the time taken to process claims.

More information on new proof of identity arrangements is available on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au

News from the Minister

Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and the Special Minister of State

The Anzac Centenary period commenced on 4 August 2014, commemorating the declaration of the First World War 100 years ago. The 1914-18 ‘Great War’, was to become the largest and most costly conflict the world had known, involving 70 million men worldwide.

Almost half of Australia’s eligible male population enlisted - 417,000. More than 330,000 embarked for service overseas and almost two-thirds became casualties.

For Australia, the effects of the war were profound and enduring. Yet, the nation took pride in the fact that Australians had played a pivotal role in the allied victory, that liberated the invaded nations of France and Belgium.

We are at the beginning of our nation’s four-year commoration of these cataclysmic events that shaped our sense of what it means to be Australian.

It will be a defining period in our nation’s history, as many younger Australians better understand our nation’s contribution and reflect on the values we fought to defend.

Rabaul in Papua New Guinea saw the first Australian action and casualties of the First World War. A commemorative service took place on 12 September to remember those Australians who lost their lives at Bita Paka in Rabaul, 100 years ago. It remembered those Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF) personnel whose sole purpose was to destroy German wireless stations operating in the Caroline Islands at Nauru and New Britain. I attended the very moving commemorative service at Bita Paka where a total of 455 Australians are buried.

Planning is well underway for the Albany Convoy Commemorative Event (ACCE) in Western Australia, the first major domestic Anzac Centenary activity. The ACCE, commencing on Friday 31 October 2014, will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the departure of the first convoy of ships carrying the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) to the First World War. Troops who were later to become collectively known as the ‘ANZACS’.

Albany was their last Australian port before arriving in Egypt to commence their training, and for the majority, ultimately taking part in landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Sadly, for many, it was the last time they saw Australia.

I will be in Albany during the commemorative events that will involve the Royal Australian Navy, New Zealand Navy and Japanese Navy that will participate in a representation of the first convoy that left Albany. The weekend will include a march along York Street to represent the footsteps of those troops 100 years ago, a Ceremonial Sunset, a commemorative service to honour those who went to war, the opening of the National Anzac Centre and a Ship Open Day.

On page 5 of this issue of Vetaffairs, you will find information about the Anzac Centenary and Century of Service commemoratives and initiatives. It is important that all Australians receive information about these important commemorative events that start in Bita Paka in Rabaul, then Albany in Western Australia and onto Gallipoli and The Western Front. The Department has been working closely with the ABC to ensure live national broadcasts of these commemorations.

As Australia enters the Anzac Centenary period, I encourage you to remember not only the original Anzacs who left Albany and Fremantle and served at Gallipoli and the Western Front, but commemorate more than a Century of Service by Australian servicemen and women.

We owe it to those who gave their lives, the families who cared for and mourned them, to remember the extraordinary service and sacrifice made in our name, during the First World War and through the century since. An understanding of this service and sacrifice will live on in future generations of Australians. 100 years on, we will remember them.

As important as these commemorative events are, I am also very focussed on the needs of our contemporary veterans and I would like to draw your attention to articles on the front page of this issue of Vetaffairs, where you can read about the recently launched Veterans Employment Assistance Initiative and the work of the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Veterans’ Mental Health.
The importance of Qualifying Service

Did you know that having your Qualifying Service determined and accepted by DVA can provide you with a range of benefits, including the exclusion of DVA Disability Pension income from the calculation of aged care fees?

What is Qualifying Service?
Qualifying Service is one of the criteria used to determine if you are eligible for a service pension, but it also carries with it other benefits.

As a member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), you may have Qualifying Service if you:
- rendered service during the First World War or Second World War and incurred danger from hostile forces (this criterion also applies to Australian mariners);
- served in an operational area after the Second World War and were allotted for duty, or were a member of a unit that was allotted for duty in that operational area;
- have warlike service;
- served on certain submarine special operations between 1937 and 1992 and were awarded, or were eligible to be awarded, the Australian Service Medal with the Special Operations Clasp; or
- have been awarded, or were eligible to be awarded, a medal/clasp listed in the “Bomb Clearance or Minesweeping Clasp”.

Commonwealth or allied veterans may have Qualifying Service if they served prior to 12 January 1973 and incurred danger from a hostile force. If a Commonwealth veteran was awarded – or was eligible to be awarded – a campaign medal, they may also have Qualifying Service.

What are the benefits related to having your Qualifying Service determined?
A claim for Qualifying Service determination can be made at any time, and by doing so, you will have completed the first step towards claiming (or automatically receiving, if you meet other relevant criteria) the following benefits:
- Service Pension;
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC);
- the Veterans’ Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Scheme which reimburses eligible veterans for out-of-pocket costs associated with the concessional pharmaceutical copayment;
- automatic issue of a DVA Gold card at age 70; and
- exemption of your DVA Disability Pension income from the calculation of aged care fees.

Pensions and allowances rise
Veterans’ pensions were increased from 20 September 2014 following the latest round of indexation adjustments. As pension rates are calculated on a daily basis, the pension paid on payday 2 October 2014 will be paid partly at the old rate and partly at the new rate. The first full payment at the new rates of pension will be payday 16 October 2014.

Pensions and allowances rise has increased by $8.70 to $644.00 per fortnight (each). These rates include pension and clean energy supplement.

The Special Rate of disability pension (T&P1 pension) has increased by $18.10 to $713.30 per fortnight. Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) has increased by $10.10 to $724.40 per fortnight and the 100 per cent General Rate of disability pension has increased by $6.50 to $466.10 per fortnight. These rates include the clean energy supplement.

The pension paid to war widow(er)s has increased by $5.80 to $868.00 per fortnight (including the clean energy supplement), while the ceiling rate of the income support supplement, which is paid to some 62,000 war widow(er)s, has risen to $256.00 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 $5.90 to $434.00 paid fortnightly. This rate includes the clean energy supplement.

Changes to the assessment of superannuation account-based income streams for income support payment recipients
From 1 January 2015, superannuation account-based income streams (also known as allocated income streams and account-based pensions) will be assessed for pension purposes in the same way as other financial investments.

Deeming rules are used to calculate income for pension, benefit and allowance payments. They assume financial assets are earning a certain amount of income, regardless of the income actually earned.

Under the new rules, the account balance of superannuation account-based income streams will be added to the combined value of a person’s other financial assets. Deemed income is then calculated on the combined amount and used in determining a person’s income support entitlement.

The current deeming rates are two per cent for financial investments up to $48,000 for single pensioners and $79,600 for a pensioner couple, and 3.5 per cent for balances above these amounts. Deeming rules reflect the rates of return people can reasonably expect to earn from their financial assets.

If you are in receipt of an income support payment on 31 December 2014 and hold a superannuation account-based income stream, your superannuation account-based income stream will continue to be assessed under the current rules. If you choose to change your existing products to a new product or purchase new products after 1 January 2015, they’ll be assessed under the deeming rules.

How do I make a Qualifying Service claim?
You must complete the DVA Qualifying Service Claim form. This is available on the DVA website or can be sent to you by phoning DVA and requesting a copy. The completed form can be lodged at your local DVA office or posted to:
Department of Veterans’ Affairs
GPO Box 9998
IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY
Alternatively, you can complete and lodge your claim securely online through your DVA MyAccount or the Online Claims Facility which can be accessed from the DVA website.

How do I find out more?
If you are unsure whether you have had your Qualifying Service determined, contact DVA on 133 254 or from regional Australia free call 1800 555 254. However, if you are currently receiving a DVA Service Pension or CSHC, then you can rest assured that you have had your Qualifying Service determined and accepted by DVA.

Further information is available on the DVA website www.dva.gov.au from:
• a range of DVA Factsheets, including 1566 – Qualifying Service Overview; and
• the Entitlement Self-Service tool which can help you assess your potential DVA entitlements, including Qualifying Service.

IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY

Changes to the assessment of superannuation account-based income streams for income support payment recipients

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<th>SERVICE PENSION</th>
<th>Old rate (fortnightly)</th>
<th>New rate (fortnightly)</th>
<th>Increase (fortnightly)</th>
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<td>$842.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couples (each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couples (each)–transitional</td>
<td>$581.40</td>
<td>$593.00</td>
<td>$11.60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| WAR WIDOWS | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| War widow(er)s’ pension | $868.00 | $880.00 | $12.00 |
| Income support supplement | $255.00 | $266.00 | $11.00 |

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<tr>
<td>Intermediate rate</td>
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<td>$11.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>$724.20</td>
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<td>100 per cent</td>
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<td>10 per cent</td>
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<th>Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP)</th>
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<th>New rate</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wholly dependent partner payment</td>
<td>$646.00</td>
<td>$655.60</td>
<td>$9.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rates include the clean energy supplement and the pension supplement where relevant.

IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY
ANZAC CENTENARY 2014

The Landing at Rabaul
Following a request from the British government, the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANZEF) was formed on 6 August 1914. Its sole purpose was to destroy German wireless stations, operating in the Caroline Islands, Nauru and New Britain, which were communicating with the German East Asia Cruiser squadron operating in Pacific waters.

On 11 September 1914, shore parties landed unopposed at Rabaul and nearby Karkaraul, where a patrol of 25 Australian naval reservists pushed inland to the wireless station at Bita Paka. There they were engaged by a composite force of German reservists and Melanesian police. In this action Australia suffered six dead and five wounded, and took 66 prisoners. It was the first Australian action of the First World War.

Those Australians killed at Bita Paka were the first of more than 60,000 killed in the four-year conflict.

A commemorative service was held on 11 September 2014 at Bita Paka to remember those who lost their lives. A total of 455 Australians are buried at the Bita Paka War Cemetery in Rabaul.

100 years since the start of the First World War
The Anzac Centenary period began on 4 August 2014 with commemorations held in capital cities to mark the day Australia became involved in the First World War. Commemorations included a national service at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, where Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Special Minister of State delivered an address and laid a wreath. Other services were held around the country, as well as a call for ringing of bells in churches and schools.

The First World War began when Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, and Prime Minister Andrew Fisher’s Government pledged full support for Britain. The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia, as in many other places, with great enthusiasm.

Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Special Minister of State delivered an address and laid a wreath. Other services were held around the country, as well as a call for ringing of bells in churches and schools.

Upcoming events – October to December
There are a number of national commemorative events that Australians can be involved in to acknowledge both the Anzac Centenary and a Century of Service for those who have fought and served in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations over the past one hundred years. It is important to recognise and remember the supreme sacrifice as well as acknowledge the families and communities who supported them and made so many sacrifices at home.

For upcoming events and significant dates visit DVA’s Anzac Centenary Facebook page www.facebook.com/anzaccentenary

You can share in the spirit of Anzac and involve yourself in the conversation by using hashtag #anzaccentenary

“Website – Please visit to see regular commemorative posts and shares.


Albany Convoy Commemorative Event – planning well underway
The Albany Convoy Commemorative Event (ACCE) will commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the departure of the first convoy of ships carrying the AIF and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) to the First World War. In October 1914, Albany in Western Australia was the gathering point for ships carrying the AIF and NZEF, which were later to become collectively known as the ‘ANZACS’. Merchant ships carrying troops from New Zealand, Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria departed from Albany on 1 November 1914, together with three cruisers – HMA Ships Melbourne and Sydney and the HMAS Minotaur. They were joined at sea two days later by two ships carrying troops from South Australia and Western Australia, along with the Japanese cruiser, HIJMS Ibuki. Albany is the last Australian port these ships saw before arriving in Egypt to commence their training, and for the majority, ultimately taking part in landings at Gallipoli from 25 April 1915.

The first convoy left for Egypt and Gallipoli on 1 November 1914.

Anzac Centenary Public Fund
The Anzac Centenary Public Fund has been established to enable the Australian business community and the public to donate to Anzac Centenary commemorations which will take place between 2014 and 2018 – the Centenary of the First World War.

The Fund will contribute to a range of significant projects associated with the Anzac Centenary and will help leave an enduring and unifying legacy for current and future generations of Australians.
All Australians can donate to the Fund. Donations over $2 are tax deductible and can be made until 31 May 2019.

The Government has adopted the recommendations of the Anzac Centenary Public Fund Board to support the following:

- $500,000 to install a Flame of Remembrance at Hobart’s Cenotaph. Hobart is the only state capital currently without a flame of remembrance;
- $7.5 million to support the Albert Borella Ride in the Northern Territory. The Ride commemorates the journey of Albert Borella VC to enlist and serve in the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF);
- $2 million to begin work on the Memorial Garden Walk project in Adelaide. This funding will be contingent upon matching contributions from the South Australian Government and the City of Adelaide. This is a $9.7 million project of which the Commonwealth will fund up to $5 million;
- redevelopment of Anzac Square in Brisbane (up to $5.9 million);
- redevelopment of the Hyde Park Memorial in Sydney (up to $19.6 million); and
- redevelopment of the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne (up to $22.5 million to be reimbursed to the Victorian Government).

For further information about the Fund, its projects and how to donate, please visit www.anzaccentenary.gov.au/fund/index.htm

Commemorative events
A series of commemorative events will take place at Albany from 31 October to 2 November 2014 to mark the 100th Anniversary of the departure of the first convoy and the significant role Albany has played in Australia’s military history.

The ACCE will involve the arrival of naval ships into King George Sound on Friday 31 October, followed by a RAN Ceremonial Sunset.

On 1 November, Australian and New Zealand Defence Force personnel will participate in a troop march followed by a commemorative service with representatives from the Australian and New Zealand Governments, veteran and Defence communities. The National Anzac Centre will be officially opened on the afternoon of 1 November and the naval ships will depart King George Sound to represent the departure of the first convoy. On 2 November a ship open day will be held, and later that day, the naval ships will depart. The City of Albany and surrounding region is also organising a series of community events to complement the national events. These will include a community concert, a children’s commemorative event, a projections and storytelling display on key buildings in Albany, and a lighting and pyrotechnics display.

What to expect at Albany
Albany is expecting large numbers of visitors to the region from 31 October to 2 November. If you are attending the commemorative services and community activities, you should make yourself aware of the conditions applicable to those events. To support your attendance, assist in managing expectations and to help you to have a safe and enjoyable experience, please visit www.anzaccentenary.gov.au and visit the What to expect at Albany section for more information on the environment and location and What to expect at Albany FAQ’s for information on the commemorative events.
Opening of the Musée de la Bataille de Fromelles

Australians who fought in the 1916 Battle of Fromelles were honoured at the official opening of the Musée de la Bataille de Fromelles on Friday 18 July 2014. In the worst day in our nation’s history, Australia suffered 5333 casualties at Fromelles on the night of 19–20 July 1916. Attending the opening in France, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson said he was pleased that the Australian Government has been able to contribute more than $1 million to construct the new Musée de la Bataille de Fromelles.

The Battle of Fromelles Museum tells the story of that bloody 24 hours through a large collection of artefacts, photographs and multimedia, and recreations of German and Allied trenches that showcase original materials recovered from the battlefield. It also tells the story of the recovery of the remains of 250 Australian and British soldiers from a mass grave at Pheasant Wood, near Fromelles. The remains of these men, who died in 1916, were exhumed and reburied with military honours at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery in 2010, and the subsequent effort which (to date) has identified – by name – 144 Australians.

Fromelles is one of 12 key sites on the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front. The Trail is a $10 million Australian Government initiative, in partnership with French and Belgian authorities, comprising walking trails, museums, battlefields, memorials and cemeteries. All of these sites can now be explored online through the new interactive features of the Australian Remembrance Trail Virtual Visitors Centre at www.ww1westernfront.gov.au

Gallipoli 2015 update

Australians offered a place at Anzac Day commemorations at Gallipoli in 2015 will need to get yourself from your car to the services.

- The Jandarma will not permit private vehicles to enter the Gallipoli Campaign Historical Site (at Kiyile Koy), even if the people in the private vehicle are ticket holders.
- Previously, a very small number of visitors have arrived by taxi, but they have found this to be problematic. There are no phones available to call a taxi after the services. If a taxi does agree to pick you up, it may have to wait several hours in the coach queue before arriving. Tour operators do not allow visitors who are not on their tour to “get a lift” with them, after the services, to the nearest town.

For more information on what to expect at the commemorations and how to prepare, visit www.gallipoli2015.dva.gov.au

More double passes for Gallipoli 2015

A further 60 double passes to Anzac Day at Gallipoli in 2015 have been provided to Australians on the waitlist. The Turkish Government have handed back 150 of the 250 places originally reserved for its official guests, providing additional places at the commemorations for Australians and New Zealanders.

This means a further 75 double passes have been released to Australians and New Zealanders on waitlists: 15 to New Zealanders and 60 to Australians. Australian passes were offered to the next 60 Australians on the waitlist.

The 60 double passes are in addition to the more than 140 double passes offered to Australians recently, following the activation of the waitlist in late June. The waitlist will operate until 31 March 2015. Further draws of the waitlist are expected in the coming months as those who initially offered a place in the ballot accept or decline their passes.

ACT and WA schools take out Anzac Day Schools’ Awards

Top honours in this year’s Anzac Day Schools’ Awards have been awarded to Melba Copland Secondary School in the ACT and Binnu Primary School in WA, in their respective state and national categories.

This year’s National and ACT Secondary Winner, Melba Copland Secondary School, was commended for undertaking a wide variety of Anzac-related learning activities, and encouraging students to research and think critically about Australia’s military service. The school involved their local community by inviting veterans to talk to students and also inviting current serving members of the Australian Defence Force and other local schools to participate in their Anzac Day service.

The National and WA Primary Winner, Binnu Primary School, conducted a special project where students grew 100 seedlings from their established Lone Pine tree. They will gift the seedlings to other schools across the state in a gesture of sharing the Anzac spirit. The seedlings will be planted on Anzac Day in 2015.

The Anzac Day Schools’ Awards competition recognises the innovative learning that is occurring in our schools and the importance of commemorating our wartime history.

For more information on the Anzac Day Schools’ Awards visit www.dva.gov.au/schoolsawards
Remembering on Vietnam Veterans’ Day

Thousands of people attended events organised around Australia to mark the 48th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and Vietnam Veterans’ Day on 18 August. The Battle of Long Tan was one of Australia’s most costly victories of the Vietnam conflict, with 18 Australians losing their lives and 24 others wounded in the battle. On 18 August 1966, Australian soldiers from D Company 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, encountered the leading elements of a 2500-strong enemy force in a rubber plantation north of the village of Long Tan. Although heavily outnumbered, the Australians held firm until a relief force arrived.

The Australians at Long Tan showed remarkable courage – a spirit revived often over subsequent years as veterans battled with the aftermath of Australia’s longest and perhaps most controversial military conflict. By the time the war had come to an end, over a decade later, almost 60,000 Australians had served. Of these men and women, 521 died and more than 3000 were wounded.

Over the Anzac Centenary period we will remember a century of service and sacrifice in all wars, conflicts and peace keeping operations, including Vietnam. In 2016, the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, this important anniversary will be marked in the respectful and dignified way it deserves.

As many people know, the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) is the legacy of Australia’s Vietnam veterans. This service, founded as the Vietnam Veterans’ Counselling Service, has come a long way from its humble beginnings. Founded in 1982, today VVCS provides free and confidential, nation-wide counselling and support for war and service-related mental health conditions to all Australian veterans and their families. And, as you will read on this page, the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson launched the new VVCS website and Facebook page on Vietnam Veterans’ Day.

For more information on the Vietnam War visit www.vietnam-war.commemoration.gov.au

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service joins Generation Facebook

It has been an exciting few months for Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS), with the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson launching the new VVCS website and Facebook page.

The VVCS Facebook page will enable the veteran and ex-service community to learn more about VVCS group programmes and available services. It will connect the community to much needed support, especially during times of commemoration, and it will provide an opportunity for a supportive community to be established within the VVCS online space.

In announcing these initiatives, Senator Ronaldson highlighted the support VVCS provides to the families of Australia’s serving men and women.

“VVCS does an amazing job on the frontline, providing mental health support to the veteran community and their families. The counselling and group programmes are vitally important, but so is the access to online support,” Senator Ronaldson said.

“Tackling the mental health challenges facing veterans and their families is a key pillar of the Government’s plan for veterans’ affairs … the Government’s priority is to ensure that we have the mental health services and support in place,” he said.

Launching the VVCS Facebook page on Vietnam Veterans Day, Senator Ronaldson acknowledged that social media and online tools will never replace face-to-face services. He highlighted the role that social media can play in encouraging peer-to-peer support, improving mental health literacy, assisting members of the veteran community with self-management, and providing contact information and referral pathways for those in need.

“Our challenge is to ensure that the available information is accurate and up-to-date, as well as easy to access, informative and appealing. The VVCS website and Facebook page are fine examples of this,” Senator Ronaldson said.

The VVCS online presence is part of a wider initiative by DVA to increase its online and social media presence. The community’s overwhelmingly positive response to the recent mental health support campaign, sponsored by the DVA Aus Facebook page, has shown that there is a real desire in the community to learn more about veteran mental health via online channels.

VVCS provides free and confidential, nationwide counselling and support for war and service-related mental health conditions, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance and anger. VVCS also provides relationship and family counselling, travel reimbursement online means clients can often get their money faster.

Regional clients who have to travel some distance for treatment. Claiming travel medical transport booking and reimbursement. This is particularly beneficial for

DVA’s online services continue to grow

Since DVA launched its online service MyAccount in May 2012, more than 26,000 clients have registered to use this convenient service. The number continues to grow daily, as clients and their representatives discover the many features, choice and ease that comes with engaging with DVA online.

Changing income and assets

In the past, if a client wanted to notify DVA of changes to their personal or financial circumstances, they needed to either contact the Department during business hours by phone or by visiting a VETAN office, or by sending a fax or letter. Now through MyAccount, registered users have access to an online avenue to quickly and easily update their income and asset details at any time that is convenient to them.

What are some of the other things that can be done through MyAccount?

- MyAccount users can update their bank account details online for the payment of benefits.
- DVA has enhanced transport services and removed the 100 kilometre limit for medical transport booking and reimbursement. This is particularly beneficial for regional clients who have to travel some distance for treatment. Claiming travel reimbursement online means clients can often get their money faster.
- DVA clients are now able to lodge additional claims for their Service Pension Qualifying Service, cards and claims for compensation following the death of a spouse.
- If you are still hesitant to establish your MyAccount, remember that the online service complements the more traditional ways of communicating with DVA. People who prefer to contact the Department by phone, fax, email, mail and in person, are still welcome to do so.

For more information on MyAccount, visit www.myaccount.dva.gov.au or contact DVA on 133 254 or from regional Australia free call 1800 555 254. Staff will help you get started in setting up your own MyAccount.

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Long Tan Bursary Scheme now open for applications

Children of Vietnam veterans can now apply for funding assistance to help with the cost of following their chosen career path. The Long Tan Bursary Scheme is named after the Battle of Long Tan, the well-known battle fought by Australians during the Vietnam War. Each bursary has a total value of up to $9000 over three years, to help cover costs such as enrolment, course fees and textbooks.

This year, 41 students from across the country received bursaries assisting them to study a wide-range of disciplines including nursing and other health sciences through to education, commerce and law.

The scheme is administered by the Australian Veterans’ Children Assistance Trust in partnership with DVA. Applications for each academic year open on Vietnam Veterans’ Day, 18 August, and close on 31 October. For more information on the Long Tan Bursary Scheme or to apply, visit the DVA website www.dva.gov.au/grants. For a list of 2014 recipients who have agreed to be named, visit www.dva.gov.au/media.

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Health care and friends

DR GRAEME KILLER AO
PRINCIPAL MEDICAL ADVISER

After 23 years as Principal Medical Adviser (PMA) to DVA, I will be moving on to greener pastures before the end of the year. I am not moving to my beloved North Queensland, but I am off to join my family in Melbourne – still a good option. My current position as PMA is an important one and DVA will be looking for a replacement. I wish him/her the very best.

I look forward to a new role where I may be able to continue to contribute. I have had a great run and it has indeed, been a great privilege to work with the veteran community and the staff at DVA. I enjoyed my 23 years in the RAAF, but working with the veteran community has been even more satisfying.

When I first joined DVA, veteran care was mainly delivered through the Repatriation Hospitals but was transitioned through the arrangements of the Repatriation Private Patient Scheme (RPPS) and delivered with the Gold Card entitlements. These new arrangements provided quality care for the veteran/war widow community and also greater choice. The RPPS has served the veteran community very well. In terms of health care innovation, using its unique database, DVA has led the way in introducing innovative health care programmes for the veteran community, ranging from the MATES Program, modern wound management, dose administration aids and more recently, the Veterans’ Coordinated Care Program, to name just a few. These programmes have been successful and more importantly, added value.

Writing this health column has been a bit of a challenge but a lot of fun, and I have attempted to get across some simple but important health messages. From the responses I have received, for which I am very grateful, at least on some occasions I appear to have hit the mark.

In my recent illness, I’ve learnt a lot more things about health from a consumer perspective. The quality of care recently provided to me has greatly restored my faith in the caring professions. This applies particularly to the staff of St Vincent’s Private Hospital in Melbourne.

I’ll always be on the side of veterans and do what I can to help them in any way. I wish to thank the Minister and the Secretary and all those who sent me emails and cards during my recent illness – I will try not to forget. If one day you see an old doctor sitting in the sun with his dog on his lap reading Vetaffairs, you will know he is happy. It could well be me.

Best wishes.

Australian para-canoe athlete Curtis McGrath has won Gold for Australia at the ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships in Moscow, Russia. These Championships were part of the lead-up to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games where the sport is making its debut in the Paralympics.

In record time, the 25 year old held off British paddler Jonathan Young by half a boat length to win the V1 200 TA final.

“It is quite a special result and I am honored to be the world champion,” Curtis said.

“It has been a lot of hard work, a lot of man hours, a lot of coach hours so it is really good to come away with a medal.”

Two years earlier, on August 23rd 2012, Curtis lost both his legs after stepping on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Afghanistan. Curtis said when he was on the stretcher getting carried to the medivac chopper, he made a statement that he was going to be in the Paralympics.

Curtis fought against shock, blood loss and agonising pain, knowing that his life depended on it.

“Td already searched the ground that I was about to walk on, and I’d missed one [an improvised explosive device], and stepped on it.” Curtis said.

“I opened my eyes, it was dark, I’m on my back, there’s lots of dust falling and it’s extremely silent. Deadly silent ... I sat up, a little bit on my elbows and looked down and my legs were gone.”

Curtis’ comrades rushed to help, but Sapper McGrath was the specialist medic, and he had to talk them through his own first aid.

“I told them I was going into shock, started breathing extremely fast, and I told them I needed an IV and to hurry up, hurry up, hurry up!”

Eventually a chopper arrived, and Curtis was eventually carried to the medivac chopper, he made a statement that he was going to be in the Paralympics.

Improving your mental health – DVA, your Doctor and you

Improving the mental health of veterans is a major priority for DVA. The Veteran Mental Health Strategy 2013-23 provides a structured and strategic approach to responding to the mental health needs of current and future veterans.

Improving mental health doesn’t simply involve DVA working with veterans and their families, but also with their mental health practitioners – the health professionals who assist them on their journey to recovery.

As each veteran’s experiences are different, so too are their treatment journeys. A priority for DVA is the use of evidence-based treatment – treatment that has been shown by research to be effective. Effective, evidence-based treatment can be tailored to each individual, to suit their specific needs. This treatment can often be provided by a range of different health professionals, to suit the needs of the veteran.

For example, the past two decades have seen major advances in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder. There is now clear evidence of the effectiveness of trauma-focused psychological therapy – a range of treatments aimed at helping veterans address traumatic memories, re-engage in activities they have avoided due to their trauma, and assist them to think about their experiences in more helpful ways to promote recovery. We also know from research that, unfortunately, up to one third of mental health practitioners do not use these evidence-based treatments. Many GPs are also either unaware of these treatments or are unsure of where to send their veteran patients to receive it.

DVA is collaborating with experts, including the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health and Flinders University, and professional associations such as the Australian Psychological Society and the Royal Australian College of General Practice, to develop resources to help health practitioners to better understand the military experience and how to effectively use evidence-based treatment options.

DVA’s At Ease Professional website at-ease.dva.gov.au/professionals/ is the centrepiece of this collaboration, offering health practitioners a one-stop online resource to access evidence-based assessment tools, information on treatment options, patient resources and the latest research in military mental health. DVA has released a series of online training programmes, YouTube videos, treatment manuals for clinicians, and provided funding for the development of the Australian Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Stress Disorder and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to encourage evidence-based treatment practices. The Department also actively works with practitioners to increase their awareness of these resources.

DVA’s aim is to support health practitioners to deliver high quality health care to Australia’s veterans.

For more information visit at-ease.dva.gov.au

Annual Monetary Limit on dental treatment

While DVA entitled persons have access to dental treatment under the DVA Health Care Cards arrangements, there are restrictions on some of the services available.

Some dental treatment is subject to an Annual Monetary Limit (AML), which is the maximum amount DVA will fund in any calendar year. These dental items are generally related to restorative dentistry and include expensive treatment options with crowns and bridges. Any treatment received that exceeds the AML will require a co-payment from you.

The AML for the 2014 calendar year is $24,88, so it is important to ask your dental provider or DVA if the treatment you are receiving is subject to the AML to ensure you are aware of any out-of-pocket expenses you may incur.

If you or your dental provider require further information on dental services available under the schedule, contact DVA on 133 254 or from regional Australia free call 1800 555 254.

The DVA Health Card – For Pharmaceuticals Only (Orange Card) provides some Commonwealth and Allied Second World War veterans and mariners with access to prescribed medications at the current concessional rate of $6 per item including items not listed in the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits, based on clinical need. This includes pharmaceutical items available under the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS), which is much broader range than that listed on Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). For full details on the eligibility requirements, refer to DVA Factsheet HSV69 – DVA Health Card – For Pharmaceuticals only (Orange).
Kathleen Cochrane, a Coffs Harbour war widow, has been commended for brave conduct. In 2008, Kathleen (then aged 81) intervened to assist her 82 year old neighbour, Elsie Beckhouse, (also a war widow), who was being assaulted in her home. Mrs Cochrane heard cries for help and found Mrs Beckhouse pinned to the floor, with her assailant holding her by the throat and using the other hand to punch her in the head and face. Mrs Cochrane used her friend’s emergency call button to alert the authorities. She stepped in between her injured friend and the assailant and distracted the assailant, who then left. Mrs Cochrane locked the door and waited with her friend until the police and paramedics arrived.

Mrs Cochrane said that Mrs Beckhouse’s face was covered in blood and she was unconscious.

“I calmly spoke to Terri (the assailant), saying, ‘No darling, don’t make things worse for yourself. The police are on their way ... sit down on the lounge next to me and we will wait for the police together.’ Calming the attacker, she convinced her to walk outside the unit. Mrs Cochrane then activated the alarm and locked the door.

“If it wasn’t for Kath, I would have died, I will never forget what she did for me,” Mrs Beckhouse said. The attacker was later charged and convicted.

Mrs Cochrane’s friends at the Coffs Harbour War Widows’ Guild Club are very proud of her, saying they could not imagine any one of them doing anything so brave to help their neighbour. Congratulations to Mrs Cochrane on her calm and determined actions on that night, and on the bravery commendation.

Anne Bonner 1941-2014

We are sad to report the death of Anne Bonner, former NSW and National President of the War Widows’ Guild of Australia.

Tributes have been sent from the many people who knew Anne in her role at the Guild and across the ex-service community, recognising her leadership and advocacy skills, her warmth and friendly approach.

Anne became a war widow in 1997, following the death of her husband Jim, a Second World War veteran. She joined the Guild shortly afterwards and served the widows in many capacities, including as NSW President and National President.

Anne made a commemorative visit to Gallipoli for Anzac Day in 2009 and laid a wreath at Lone Pine on behalf of war widows, with fellow war widow Mary Angus. Anne’s father-in-law had been injured at Lone Pine, later becoming an amputee, so it held a special significance for her.

Wendy Charlton, now National President, paid tribute to Anne’s caring personality and her attention to detail. She acknowledged Anne as a true advocate and voice for all war widows. “Anne’s service to the Guild was admirable and her compassionate leadership of war widows highly valued”, she said.
**Research Programme Update**

The Australian Government, through DVA and Defence, is investing $5 million in improving our understanding of the impact of military life on the physical and mental health of serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs has commenced the Fourth Mortality and Cancer Incidence Study of personnel who were involved with the F-111 Deseal/Reseal (DSRS) Programmes at Amberley, Queensland between 1977 and 2000.

No action from the F-111 community is required – this is a data analysis exercise conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The study has the required ethical approvals and the privacy of individuals will be protected.

The study is expected to be completed in 2015 and is a continuation of three previous studies completed between 2003 and 2009, as part of the broader Study into the Health Outcomes of Aircraft Maintenance Personnel. The passage of time and further information to expand the study group has provided an opportunity to add to current and previous studies.

The Department of Defence has completed the Jet Fuel Exposure Syndrome Study (JFESS) investigating genetic factors that may contribute to associated health outcomes among some former F-111 DSRS personnel.

Together these studies will ensure that DVA and Defence have an accurate picture of the prevalence of cancer and mortality in personnel involved in the DSRS programmes and are able to support them now and in the future.

In the meantime, compensation, ex-gratia payments, health care and counselling is available for eligible F-111 DSRS participants. For more information about the study or the support available, visit the F-111 website www.f111.dva.gov.au or call the F-111 hotline on 1800 555 323.

**Data Study of F-111 maintenance workers underway**

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**Introducing Dr Stephanie Hodson, CSC**

Dr Stephanie Hodson works in the Mental and Social Health Policy Branch at DVA as the Mental Health Advisor. She has worked in the area of mental health for 22 years and is herself an Australian Defence Force (ADF) veteran. She graduated from James Cook University in Townsville in 1990 with a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) and joined the Army in August 1991. As an Army Psychology Officer she worked with Defence members in both clinical, research and organisational health roles both in Australia and on operational deployment.

In 2002, Dr Hodson completed her doctoral studies investigating the longitudinal psychological effects of operational deployment to Rwanda, the results from which assisted in the business case for this group of veterans receiving the active service medal. In 2006, she assumed command of the 1st Psychology Unit, a role in which she was responsible for all land-based mental health and psychology support to ADF operations and had the opportunity to deploy with teams to both the Middle East Area of Operations and Timor Leste. For this work she was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross.

Within Defence she played a key role in the development of the ADF Critical Incident Management Health Support Framework, the Self Management and Resilience Training (SMART), the ADF Mental Health Strategy and was co-principal investigator for the 2011 ADF Mental Health Prevalence and Wellbeing Study.

Dr Hodson now works as the DVA Mental Health Advisor and is assisting with policy and programme development, as well as mental health research. She is married to Shaun, who is also ex-military, and she has three teenage sons, two of whom are considering joining the military. She is a keen sports woman and a great supporter of her family.

She is a keen sports woman and a great supporter of her family. She has agreed to contribute to the Vetaffairs newspaper from next issue, so keep an eye out for her column.

**New ADF Post-discharge GP Health Assessment**

All former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) can now access a comprehensive post-discharge health assessment from their GP.

This assessment is available to all former serving personnel, including former members of either the permanent or reserve forces.

A key objective is to help GPs identify and diagnose the early signs of physical and/or mental health problems.

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs has funded the development of a specifically designed assessment tool to assist the GP to assess their patient’s current physical and psychological wellbeing. The tool includes questions to assess factors such as physical activity, chronic pain, sleep, any alcohol and substance use, psychological health and sexual health.

Talk to your GP, tell them you have served in the ADF and ask them about this health assessment. A Medicare rebate is available.

**Changes to Middle East Area of Operations service classification**

Operation SLIPPER has been the major operation in the Middle East for the Australian Defence Force (ADF). As of 1 July 2014, the ADF split the existing area of Operation SLIPPER into three separate operations of warlike and non-warlike service.

The changes affect ADF personnel deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO). Operation SLIPPER will remain classified as warlike service. However, the area will reduce to the area bordered by the land mass and superjacent airspace of Afghanistan.

Maritime operations in the MEAO will be conducted under Operation MANITOU and will be classified as non-warlike service.

Operations in neighbouring Gulf States (Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) will be conducted under Operation ACCOR-DION and will be classified as non-warlike service.

The Minister for Defence is responsible for determining whether an operation is warlike or non-warlike. Warlike service is determined when the application of force is authorised to pursue specific military objectives and there is an expectation of casualties. Non-warlike service is likely to be determined where military activities are short of warlike operations and where casualties could occur but are not expected, with the only force to be used by the ADF in self-defence. The classification of service has an effect on DVA payments including permanent impairment compensation and access to the service pension, in recognition of the effects of warlike service in an operational area.
News from the Rehabilitation Appliances Program

New items added to the RAP Schedule of Equipment

The changing nature of the health environment, and technological advances in rehabilitation aids and appliances, has resulted in new items recently added to the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) Schedule of Equipment.

Significantly, a new dementia-specific RAP Schedule category has recently been created. This is in response to the increasing number of Australians diagnosed with dementia – and the veteran community is no exception. Dementia is an umbrella term describing a syndrome associated with several different diseases, and characterised by the impairment of brain functions, including language, memory, perception, personality and cognitive skills. It is predicted that dementia will be the leading cause of disability in Australia by 2016.

The new category for Cognitive, Dementia and Memory Assistive Technology items is designed to address the specific day-to-day needs of dementia sufferers and include aids to assist with orientation to time and place within the home environment, as well as aids to maximise safety and independence.

Many state-of-the-art communication applications to support speech pathology needs are now designed for use on tablet computers and smart phones. These items are convenient and portable, and as a consequence, tablet computers (such as iPads) have been included in the RAP Schedule under the category of assistive communication devices. Tablet computers and smart phones are provided solely for the purpose of running speech pathology applications for persons with complex communication needs.

The changing aged care system and implications for RAP

The Aged Care Reforms are being progressively introduced over the next 10 years. The changes will ensure the aged care system provides more choice and control for consumers, and remains sustainable and affordable for older Australians.

The latest stage of reforms came into effect on 1 July 2014 and included the removal of the distinction between low care and high care in permanent residential aged care, for all new and existing residents. From 1 July, references to relevant Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) classification categories will replace any references to “low care” and “high care” in eligibility criteria, determining permanent resident access to other Commonwealth programmes.

Planning for your medical care

Even if you are hale and hearty, it is never too early to plan ahead for your end of life medical care, including completing an Advance Care Directive (ACD). This voluntary legal document, sometimes called a “living will”, allows you to clearly specify your choices for medical and personal care options at the end of your life, should you be unable to speak for yourself due to illness or injury. This may include recording your preferences regarding resuscitation or other life-prolonging medical interventions, pain management, or your wish to die in your home or an aged care facility rather than in a hospital.

End of life care planning is particularly important in Australia today, due to an ageing population, medical advances and changing patterns of disease. While palliative care has traditionally been in the domain of patients with terminal cancer, statistically, individuals who live past 80 years of age tend to die from other conditions that are characterised by a slow and general deterioration.

Evidence shows that early advance care planning means fewer days in hospital for patients at the end of their life, and most importantly, a peaceful and dignified final journey for individuals and their families. An ACD can provide peace of mind for families and care-givers who may otherwise have the burden of making difficult medical decisions on behalf of their loved one.

While you may have already nominated a Power of Attorney to deal with financial, property or business decisions on your behalf, they cannot make medical decisions for you. Advance care planning therefore gives you an opportunity to nominate a family member or friend who you trust to communicate your specific medical care choices, as recorded in an ACD. This person may be referred to as an Enduring Guardian, Substitute Decision Maker or Medical Power of Attorney, depending on where you live.

Each state and territory has its own guidelines and laws regarding ACDs. For more information, visit www.advancecareplanning.org.au or make an appointment today to discuss advance care planning with your GP or health professional.

The Red Cross – 100 years of helping

The Australian Red Cross celebrated its 100th anniversary on 13 August. This remarkable service began as the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society on 13 August 1914 at Government House, Melbourne, nine days after the outbreak of the First World War. Today, one million Red Cross members, volunteers, donors, staff, blood donors, recipients and supporters make a positive difference to the lives of people in need every day.

The Australian Red Cross made on the home front during the war extended beyond caring for returned soldiers, providing emotional support to families with loved ones at war. This saw the Red Cross establish a Wounded and Missing Persons Information Bureau in each state. By the end of the First World War the Australian Red Cross was handling 36,000 cases, discovering the fate of missing and wounded soldiers.

Acknowledging the outstanding contribution, support and dedication the Red Cross has provided to Australians, particularly in time of war, Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, paid tribute to the Red Cross.

The Australian Red Cross was founded out of the humanitarian needs of war, days after the commencement of the First World War, and we recognise an important milestone in their history,” Senator Ronaldson said.

The Australian Red Cross and its volunteers have demonstrated an enduring and dedicated commitment to working with those in need.” As the Australian Red Cross moves into its centenary year, it will host a number of planned community events across the country to honour and pay tribute to those Red Cross volunteers and the importance of people helping people.

The Australian Red Cross ‘Our Centenary’ website http://centenary.redcross.org.au has stories about the extraordinary generosity and compassion of everyday Australians.
Eligible veterans to receive the Legion of Honour

To commemorate the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy, the Ambassador of France to Australia would like to honour all eligible Australian veterans of the campaign by presenting them with the French Legion of Honour. The Legion of Honour is the highest decoration bestowed in France, awarded for bravery and to those who risked their lives defending the freedom of France during the Second World War.

This follows a recent DVA mission for seven Australian veterans who returned to France to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings and the Normandy Campaign. During their trip, those who hadn’t previously received the Legion of Honour, were presented with the medallion in a special ceremony in Caen, France. Here they were joined by veterans from other Allied nations such as Canada and the United States, in what was a truly unforgettable occasion for all veterans, their families and friends.

Veterans who believe they may be eligible can self nominate, or may be nominated by family or friends, but all requested information must be included in the nomination.

Veterans should contact the Embassy of France in Australia on (02) 6161 4840 for more information or to request nomination forms, or email a copy of their current valid identification details and a copy of their military service relating to the campaign for the liberation of France, to defence@ambafrance-au.org

A pipe rack tells an Aussie’s D-Day story

Colonel Paul Appleton, CSM remembers as a small child occasionally seeing a rather neglected wooden, stained pipe rack in his family’s shed. He shared his story with Vetaffairs, remembering how he thought nothing more of it until much later in life when Frank Appleton, Paul’s father, recounted its history. This is Paul’s brief story of the relationship of a pipe rack to D-Day.

My father was one of a number of Australians (RANVR) who were attached to the Royal Navy during the Second World War. He specialised in combined operations and had been very lucky to survive (with only shrapnel wounds) the disastrous Dieppe raid as Commander of a landing craft in August 1942. As a Lieutenant in 1943, he embarked on training and planning for future amphibious landings on the French coast and, having been promoted to Lieutenant Commander, he took charge of a landing craft flotilla. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, my father led his 12 landing craft carrying 48 Royal Canadian Artillery self propelled 105mm guns, mounted on Sherman tanks, onto the Juno beach shoreline.

Excerpts from his memoirs about the day are vivid:

“...The Canadian gunners onboard opened fire at 15,000 yards and continued until the 3000 yard mark...there was so much smoke on the beach that we could not see whether the Commandos had landed ahead of us. "Heavy guns from the ships in anchor-dome. Supplies and reinforcements were then loaded for delivery onto Juno beach in continuous ferry operations for many days and weeks.

For his work leading up to (and during) these D-Day landings, my father was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and, in more recent years, the French Legion D’Honneur.

Not all that long before his passing, my father told me the story about his pipe rack. It had been hand-made by his sailors between ferry operations as a special thank you gift to him for getting them through the carnage of that day without major injury. They had used spare timber, and had carved – on its top – a very special reminder of the symbol under which they had operated: the Combined Operations emblem.

After his death, this enduring tribute to D-Day is a daily healing process.

In coming issues of Vetaffairs, several individuals will share their stories on how a rehabilitation plan has helped them and their families.

Rehabilitation success

DVA has a range of services and support available to assist former servicemen and women who are injured, wounded or ill as a result of their service, to continue to lead a normal life. Rehabilitation plans that are catered specifically to an individual’s needs and goals are central to this healing process.

Jason Brown – from active service to civilian life

I joined the Navy in 1984, and served for just over five years. When I resigned in 1989 for medical and psychological reasons, I knew I was facing a career change.

I decided to take up the challenge of becoming a self-employed restaurant operator. Years following the closure of this venture saw reduced employment opportunities for me due (to a great degree) to a failing knee condition.

It was thanks to my family that I managed to work in a local business for a while, with flexible work hours to help me with my worsening health conditions. Other short term jobs followed, but I ended up on sick benefits, I later got the sack. I did not know what to do, and for more than 16 years I remained out of the workforce.

When I turned 40, I suffered a minor heart attack, and shortly after that, I had a knee operation. The same year, I lost my partner of 16 years. What followed was a period of grieving. Substance and alcohol abuse led to very low points in my life. Bouts of depression meant for the future. I was not in a good space. It was a very, very traumatic time for me.

Since I have been picked up by DVA, the services have been absolutely terrific. Everyone has been cooperative and helpful. The rehabilitation service provider organised by DVA fully understood my circumstances and the French Legion D’Honneur.

Not all that long before his passing, my father told me the story about his pipe rack. It had been hand-made by his sailors between ferry operations as a special thank you gift to him for getting them through the carnage of that day without major injury. They had used spare timber, and had carved – on its top – a very special reminder of the symbol under which they had operated: the Combined Operations emblem.

After his death, this enduring tribute to my father was re-discovered and lovingly restored. No longer used to hold pipes, it now has a new life as a key rack and is a daily reminder to my family and me of a brave man whose life, as well as many others’ lives, was so affected by that historic day.

This is Jason’s story...
MEDALLION FOUND

Medallion/medal from the Great War for Civilisation 1914–1919, 2264 PTE R WELLS 53 BN. AIF. Found with other coins and medallions. Contact Debby 0419 971 517.

1939–45 WWII medal (no ribbon) V90867 K B JAMES. Found in a pocket of clothes in St Vincent de Paul op shop, Chinchilla, Qld. Contact Chinchilla RSL (07) 4696 1111 or chinchillarlslb@bigpond.com

A set of dog tags found in a bottle in a jumble store in Qld. Name on dog tags D H JOHNSTON, W104733, WRAN. Contact Graeme Oxley 0413 135 779 or graeme.oxley@defence.gov.au

Details on each tag are—according to the anonymous donor, all tags were “found in Vietnam”.

Recently some dog tags were handed to the Frankston RSL Club. We would like to return them to the rightful owners. According to the anonymous donor, all tags were “found in Vietnam”.

Details on each tag are—GORDON JOHN HULME DOB 7 July 1948 Kalgoorlie, WA s/n 55314 104 Signals Vietnam 11/67 to 11/68. KENETH ANDERSEN DOB 25 November 1948 Ipswich, QLD s/n 1411111 Service Corp Vietnam 07/67 to 02/68. THOMAS C PATMORE DOB 04 May 1945 Melbourne, Vic s/n 7387456 various units Vietnam 02/67 to 02/68. CHARLES W YOUNG DOB 25 Oct 1945 Melbourne, Vic s/n 3788443 A Spd 3 Cav Vietnam 03/67 to 02/68. JOHN W VAN ANHOLT DOB 04 Aug 1949 The Hague, Holland s/n 3799483 Catering Corp Vietnam 04/71 to 11/71. RAYMOND MCDONALD DOB 14 Dec 1947 Broken Hill, NSW s/n 4413177 3 RAR Vietnam 12/67 to 06/68 (wia). JOHN R CROOK DOB 27 Jan 1945 Armadale, WA s/n 5714057 104 Signals Vietnam 06/67 to 12/67. Contact Frankston RSL Sub Branch gwolson@frankstonrsl.com.au

Gordy Grose lives in World War II Post Office Box 345, Frankston, Vic 3199. Cell phone 0413 135 779 or graeme.oxley@defence.gov.au

All who have offered their lives in Australia’s service and those who have suffered injury and loss will be remembered at the Poppies of Remembrance. The Poppies of Remembrance pay tribute to the Gallipoli Anzacs, the Korean War Diggers, the Vietnam War veterans and all who have served in Australia’s armed forces.

To order, simply complete the order form and post your cheque/money order or credit card details to:

eSales Unit, Australian War Memorial, GPO Box 345, Canberra ACT 2601

Or shop online at www.awm.gov.au/shop

Gallipoli was the final resting place for thousands of young Australians, and when the Gallipoli campaign was over, there was the misery of the Western Front.

Patsy Adam-Smith read more about the First World War. These are the extraordinary experiences of ordinary men, and their stories strike to the heart.

The Anzacs remains a classic account of Australia’s involvement in the First World War. When first published in 1978, it won the Age Book of the Year award.

Soft cover, 492 pages, $9.95.

2015 DVA calendar: Over a Century of Service

Over a century of war and conflict, Australians have fought in battles from the North Atlantic Ocean to the Coral Sea and participated in peacekeeping missions on every inhabited continent. On the home front, the families and friends of Australia’s servicemen and servicewomen have gathered to farewell them and to welcome them home.

Featuring photographs drawn from the collections of the Australian War Memorial and Department of Defence, the 2015 DVA calendar illustrates over a century of service from the Boer War to Afghanistan and honours all who have offered their lives in Australia’s armed forces.

The calendar also lists official days of commemoration proclaimed by the Governor-General of Australia, national public holidays and DVA pension days.

Softcover, 12-month, $11.95.

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Protecting your home – a small investment

The extreme Australian climate can create many challenges for residents, including bushfires, storms, floods and the occasional cyclone. Whenever these events occur, one of the valuable lessons learnt is the importance of being adequately insured.

Recent statistics show that up to 25 per cent of homes are not insured, and of those that are insured, some 50 per cent are underinsured.

For most of us, our house is likely to be the most valuable asset we own. For the cost of a small premium (especially when considered as a percentage of the total value of your home), you will be protected financially for insured losses, ranging from small claims up to the total loss of your home.

A part from major events such as bushfires in the Blue Mountains or the Perth Hills, Cyclone ITA in north Queensland and the various floods across the country, many smaller partial losses still result in significant claims. Service Home Insurance's (DSHI) larger claims include those resulting from kitchen fires – often from simple cooking incidents, and water damage claims from blocked drains, split pipes or overflowing sinks.

Severe winds and storms are usually unpredictable and they can strike anywhere and account for millions of dollars damage each year.

Underinsurance is an ongoing issue and can leave people with insufficient funds to repair or rebuild their damaged homes. This can happen anytime, but is a major issue for older homes when (often) there are significant additional costs to repair a home to comply with new Building Codes.

To assist customers to correctly estimate the cost of rebuilding their home – including all structural improvements such as fences, swimming pools and sheds – DSHI provides a building replacement cost calculator. This is available at www.dsh.gov.au/insurance/ins_cost_calculator.php.

When calculating the sum insured, DSHI also factor in an allowance to cover the cost of the removal of debris as well as temporary accommodation. The sum insured is adjusted annually to keep pace with the movement in building costs. All this takes the worry out of correctly estimating the rebuilding costs and it reduces the risk of underinsurance.

More than 65,000 veterans enjoy protection under the DSHI, with any profits retained for the ongoing benefit of DSHI clients. DSHI is the winner of the Royal Morgan Research General Insurer of the Year Customer Satisfaction Award 2012 and 2013.

Contact DSHI on 1300 552 562 or email insurancedsh@dva.gov.au for more information.

Rugby league great, Preston Campbell, featured in the Winter issue of Vetaffairs, says he enjoys being the one asking questions rather than answering them. Speaking with Indigenous ex-service men at Currumbin RSL in the lead up to Anzac Day, Preston wanted to get a better understanding of what these men underwent during their time in the Armed Forces. At each ceremony, the personal story of one of the Australians who lost their lives in war or other operations is told, highlighting what we know of their service and personal life. After a recitation of the Ode, the ceremony ends with the sounding of the Last Post.

On the first and third Wednesday of each month Australia’s Federal Guard adds extra formality to the Last Post Ceremony. At 4pm a catafalque party mounts a vigil at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier in the Hall of Memory. There is a change of guard at 4.30pm, and the entire catafalque party then participates in the Last Post Ceremony, beginning at 4.55pm Canberra time.

For more information, visit www.awm.gov.au/events/last-post-ceremony/

First World War galleries

The Australian War Memorial is marking 100 years since the beginning of the First World War with the redevelopment of its First World War Galleries, opening to the public in early December 2014.

With only a few months left before the galleries open, Memorial staff have entered the final and most significant stage of the redevelopment, the installation of iconic collection items.

If you are visiting the Memorial before the galleries open you can catch a sneak peek into the new Galleries through some small windows into the space along the Orientation Gallery Entry corridor.

To keep up to date on the redevelopment, please visit the Memorial’s webpage www.awm.gov.au/1914-1918/first-world-war-galleries/

Projections

During the centenary period 2014–18, the name of each of the 62,000 Australians who lost their lives during the First World War will be projected onto the façade of the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial. The names will be displayed from sunset to sunrise every night, and can be seen from the Memorial’s grounds, with each name visible for 30 seconds.

For more information and to find out the times when a particular name will appear, visit www.awm.gov.au

The Roll of Honour Name Projections can be seen from the Memorial’s grounds every night over the next four years.
HMAS Leewin, 37th Rhodes Intake Reunion: 16–20 Oct 2014, Barossa Valley, SA. Contact the Organising Committee, eddy_rekms@hotmail.com or website www.37thleewin.net
RAAEC PNG Chalkies 1966–73 Reunion: 18 Oct 2014, Gehrng-Zillmere RSL Club, Brisbane. Service men and partners invited from 9.30am to 3.00pm for presentations and conversations about life at the five PNG barracks. Contact Greg Ivey (07) 5476 6671 or iveyg@gmail.com
Junior Recruit First Intake July 1966 HMAS Leewin 70th Birthday Bash: 23–27 Oct 2014, Melbourne. Don’t miss this one! Contact Ian Dunn, 0422 514 682 or Don Barker, 0417 219 762.
Korea War Veteran Memorial Reunion: 24–26 Oct 2014, Canterbury ACT. Korea War Vets, family and friends invited. Contact the Secretary, Wendy Karam, 0418 124 677 or wendy.karam@bigpond.com
zRAR Reunion: 25 Oct 2014, Twin Towns Club & Resort, Tweed Heads. AGM at 9.00am in the ANZAC Room, Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch. Level 2, Twin Towns Resort followed by a Commemorative Service in Cunningham Park. Coat, tie and medals are to be worn for the service. A reunion lunch will be held at the Twin Towns Club and Resort in the Bay Room following the Commemorative Service. Cost for lunch $35.00. Members, families and friends welcome. Contact Secretary Gordon Hurford (07) 5443 5383 or 2rsarsecretary@gmail.com
RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Assoc Reunion: 27–31 Oct 2014, Wollongong NSW. Contact Christina Luff, 0430 125 195 or rambengers@bigpond.com
End of an Era Steam Ships Reunion No 4: 7–9 Nov 2014, Mandurah WA. Visit www.navystockers.org
RAE 1966 17 Constr. SQ Reunion: 10 Nov 2014, Newcastle. Former members and partners welcome. Contact Jim Moss moss.rae@bigpond.com
HMAS Shoalhaven & 4 Frigates Assoc Members Reunion No 10: 10–12 Nov 2014, Nowra NSW. All ex-RAN members who have served on ex RAN Frigates Shoalhaven, Culgoa, Murchison & Condamine are invited. A Remembrance Day dinner will be held at Wollongong Ex-Service Club. Reunion starts with members and invitees. Their wives/partners to meet and greet at Bomaderry RSL. Contact Bodgie Gibson (03) 5423 4967, brianbonds2000@bigpond.com or PO Box 44, Belmont Vic 3216.
HQ Tas Command Anglesea Barracks Reunion: 15–16 Nov 2014, Hobart. All OR’s who served at Anglesea Barracks or Dowsing Point 1968–70 welcome. Contact Greg Stott (Flipper) (03) 5221 0647 or gregstott@gmail.com
The 5th Battalion, RAR Association 50th Anniversary Reunion: 26 Feb–1 March 2015, Gold Coast. Contact Gary Townsend (07) 5594 4780 or garry.tgar@gmail.com 25th Anniversary of Independence for Namibia Reunion: 21 March 2015, Windhoek Namibia. For Aust and NZ service personnel and families, contact markhorntertraining@gmail.com or 0438 275 554
HMAS Leewin 35th Intake STEVO Division, 44th Reunion: 23–27 April 2015, Ballina NSW. Wives and partners welcome. Contact Blue Skinnings (Skimmo) 0488 977 312 or bluevichkis@hotmail.com
RAAF Reunion: Anzac Day weekend 2015, Brissie Island. All personnel posted BUT, LAV, RIC, 1SD, 75T, MTU and HQOC between 1967–1980 welcome. Contact Geoff Peepall ocean.slayer139@bigpond.com or Mike Snouall mike@safekeysolutions.com.au
HMAS Leewin, 45th Intake 1962 Reunion: 13–15 May 2015, Rockhampton. Members of The Fighting 45th, including wives/partners, are welcome to attend a full schedule of activities, including a visit to HMAS Diamantina. Contact Garry (Crewie) Thorburn (02) 6678 3650 or gthorburn@bigpond.com
1st Australian Regiment Reunion: 22–25 May 2015, Albury. All ex and serving members (regardless of hat/badge) welcome. Contact John Brooker OAM vicepresident@paratus.org.au
6 RAR Assoc 50th Anniversary of the Battalion: 5–6 June 2015. All serving and ex-members are asked to attend. Visit www.6rarassociation.com for further details.
Royal Aust Engineers Tour: 18 June 2015, Gallipoli. To celebrate the ‘Waterloo Dinner’. Contact WO3 Graham Toll graham.toll@defence.gov.au or (02) 8782 3582.
B Coy x2RANZVN Vietnam Veterans 1970/71 Reunion: 14–23 Aug 2015, Sunshine Coast Qld. Contact Keith Carter (07) 5441 2835 or caddyscarter@gmail.com
1 Field Squadron Group RAE Reunion: 28–30 Aug 2015, Twin Towns RSL Services Club, Coolangatta. Contact Robin Farrell (07) 4661 7791, 0405 265 470 or info@fieldsappers.org
24 Construction Squadron Group RAE deployment to Sabah Malaysia 1965 Reunion: Aug/Sept 2015, Brisbane. Contact (Spr) Ian Johnston (08) 9448 5590 ijohnston88@bigpond.net.au or (Spr) Jack Campbell 0400 896 388 jackaspers@bigpond.com
Commemorating WWII’s Anzac Nursing Sisters – Aegean Voyage: September 2015. One week cruise on MS Serenessima from Athens to Istanbul. Bookings are through Wild Earth Travel in Christchurch, NZ www.wild-earth-travel.com/trip/aegean-anzac-nursing-sisters gallipoli or contact Clare Ashton, Hon Research Associate, Sydney Nursing School, Uni of Sydney, clare.ashton@bigpond.com
HMAS Quickmatch 60th Anniversary Recommissioning: 20–21 Sept 2015. All ex crew members and partners, and all ex Q class members welcome. Contact Bryan Burdett (03) 9877 4443 or burdettbryan@yahoo.com
115th RAR Modern Unit Reunion: 16–18 Oct 2015, Halls Gap Big 4 Parkgate Caravan Park. Contact Russell Cunningham bungee12@bigpond.net.au or (05) 6766 2413.
National Naval Services Reunion: 18–20 March 2016, Hobart Tasmania. Contact Shannon at Hanshahk@bigpond.net.au
33 Sig Sqn Reunion: Looking for all ex-members of 133 Sig Sqn ‘Kingswood’ who would be interested in a reunion. Time and place to be decided. Photos welcome for a display. Contact Kelvin Reunion.133.sig.sqn@hotmail.com
4/70 Vehicle Mechanic A & B (and Fitters) course held 1970–71 at Bandiana Reunion: date to be confirmed. Anyone interested contact phil.case@bigpond.com or 0439 498 601.

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Email vetaffairs@dva.gov.au or your concise written notice to GPO Box 9998 Canberra, ACT 2601.
Seeking new members to join Maroochy Waters Sub Sect, Naval Assoc. Meetings held on second and each Sunday at RSL House, 106 Memorial Ave, Maroochydore,10.30am. Contact Sue 0438 911 950 or madmin@ bigpond.com

Seeking new members to join Mary River Waters Sub Sect, Naval Assoc. Meetings held on first Sunday of each month in the lounge of the Mary River RSL, 169 Etna Rd, Cherbourg. Contact Reg Heffron (08) 8338 6183.

Seeking NEW MEMBERS to join Maryvale Sub Sect of the ABC, 168 Drayton St, Maryvale, 11.30am each Sunday. Contact Frank 0428 844 686. E-mail abcmaryvale@ bigpond.com.

Seeking new members to join Narromine Sub Sect, ABC. Contact Bob. narromineabc@gmail.com.


Seeking new members to join Newcastle Sub Sect, National Trust. Contact Kirsty, khud25@gmail.com

Seeking new members to join Newmarket Sub Sect of the ABC. Contact John 0418 330 619.

Seeking new members to join Newcastle Sub Sect of the CDU. Contact Pauline 0418 330 619.


Seeking new members to join Newcastle Sub Sect, RSL. Contact Peter 0418 330 619.

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