

VETAFFAIRS



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

DVA'S FREE NEWSPAPER FOR AUSTRALIA'S VETERAN COMMUNITY

Vol. 40 No. 2 AUGUST 2024

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS!

Ex-service, experienced – and ready to work



Being an ex can be a good thing. Ex-service people are experienced and ready to join your organisation.

That's the message of a national campaign now under way to promote the benefits of employing veterans in the civilian workplace.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is an incredible training ground. Veterans develop a skill-set in the ADF that is difficult to obtain and expensive to cultivate in new employees.

Veterans can bring valuable skills to any workplace or industry – skills like leadership, teamwork, agility and the ability to work well under pressure. Many of these skills and capabilities are readily transferrable to the civilian workforce.

This campaign aims to educate employers on the diversity of skills veterans can bring and provide the necessary advice to make sure they

are set up to thrive. It highlights the advantages of employing veterans, including through the stories of 5 former ADF members in workplaces and professions you might not expect.

One of them is chef Sam Green, who has thrived in the heat of all kinds of kitchens, from Air Force mess halls to high-end restaurants. After leaving the armed forces to be closer to her family, she started work with a large Australian food and support services company, and found that her skills were very transferable.

'I spent more than three years in the Air Force, where I received excellent training to operate a bulk food service, and found a vocation I loved,' Sam says. 'I was the chef supervisor at Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane and that was very similar to mining, and basically identical to the work when I was in the RAAF.

'I thrive on having a chain of command. I think being able to work within that structure is really important.'

The campaign is part of the \$24 million Veteran Employment Program, which delivers initiatives that support Australian organisations to improve employment outcomes for veterans. The response has exceeded all expectations, with the online videos viewed 55 million times by the end of July.

Employers – ex-service people excel at what they do. Learn how and where to connect with the veteran talent pool and find advice to help you create a workplace where veterans perform at their best, at www.veteranemployment.gov.au.

The campaign is running nationally and includes newspaper and magazine, radio and television ads, online videos and much more. Keep an eye out!



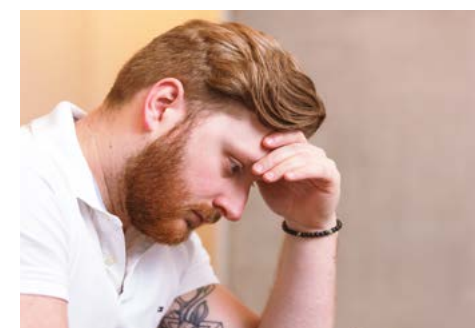
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New veterans' legislation introduced into the Parliament

The Australian Government has introduced legislation into the Parliament to simplify and harmonise the veterans' rehabilitation and compensation framework.

This is another important step the Government has taken to respond to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report.

The Bill would consolidate legislation governing veterans' compensation and rehabilitation into the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA). It will also introduce a range of enhancements to the MRCA to improve compensation arrangements for veterans.

As of 1 July 2026, the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) will close to new compensation and rehabilitation claims. An underlying principle of the Bill is that there will be no reduction in payments that veterans or families have previously received or are currently receiving.

These changes will address the complexity of the current tri-Act model which makes it difficult for veterans, families and representatives to navigate the system, and causes processing inefficiencies and delays for DVA.

The Bill is the result of significant community consultation undertaken over 3 rounds since late 2022. More than 50 consultation sessions were conducted in 2023 and 2024 and 569 submissions were received. DVA found there was broad support within the veteran community for a single ongoing Act.

The Senate referred the Bill to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 3 October 2024.

If passed, the Bill will make the claims system easier to navigate and help veterans and families receive the support and services you are entitled to.

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The Department of Veterans' Affairs respects and gives thanks to all who have served in our Defence Force, and the families who support them.



FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Alison Frame
Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

My contribution to this edition of *Vetaffairs* provides a great opportunity to share some information on how DVA is working to improve and increase innovation and continuous improvement across all our services.

We are focussed on streamlining and improving the way we do business so we are better able to serve you. For example, we have implemented some improvements to MyService which now allow you to view up-to-date information and provide all documents for all claims, whether submitted through MyService or other channels, reducing the need for you to send that information by email or post.

In July, we rolled out a new online training program targeted at GPs and other primary care providers to give them a better understanding of veteran health issues and the services available through DVA. So far, two webinars have also been conducted with a high level of interest and there have been 2,300 visits to the training website. More training modules will be made available over the coming months.

In our Rehabilitation Program, we have made it simpler for providers to deliver services, giving them more autonomy so they can make decisions within certain guidelines, delivering support faster to those clients who need it. DVA has also updated and simplified the documents that rehabilitation providers use, enhanced our capabilities to monitor their performance, and made it easier for you to tell us about your experience of the program.

One example of where we are seeking to work side by side with veterans and advocates is through a new claims program in Western Australia where experienced DVA claims processing staff work alongside ex-service organisation (ESO) advocates to support veterans to lodge their claims. The program initially involved two local ex-service organisations, with another joining in July.

Programs like this have the potential to smooth the claims process. Veterans who use this service can be assured that when they submit a claim their documentation is in order, which prevents unnecessary delays and delivers a faster outcome, minimising stress and frustration for clients. To date, our staff have supported veterans to lodge more than 250 claims and provided on-site support for advocates. The feedback so far has been extremely positive and we are aiming to roll this program out nationally.

Initiatives like this have the potential to make the claims process easier for veterans. They reduce unnecessary delays and minimise stress and frustration for clients. In the future, we hope to expand such initiatives: getting our staff on the ground, sitting alongside veterans who require additional support so they can hear their needs directly and work towards the shared goal of getting them the support they are entitled to.

Another recent innovation we are pleased to see commence are the new, community-based PTSD Treatment and Recovery and Referral Pathways programs that have begun in Tasmania. Veterans can now be referred directly to Open Arms through the state's Centralised Intake and Referral Service, which they can access themselves or through a general practitioner. You can read more about this on page 13.

One of the ways we are ensuring DVA services and support are fit for purpose is by building them in collaboration with the veteran community. We are always seeking different ways to tap into the diverse and unique experiences of the veteran community to inform our programs and policies.

In recent months, we've held two online Community Consultation Town Hall events: the first on Grants and Hubs, the second on IT Innovation and Cyber Security. This is the first time DVA has held events like this, where veterans have engaged directly with senior members of DVA staff and provided direct feedback on how we could improve our delivery and services. These events are part of our commitment to open, genuine and meaningful engagement, and we are looking forward to holding more in the future. Thank you to all those who participated.

DVA is on a journey of improvement and our next steps will be guided by the Government's response to the final report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. The Department has already undertaken significant preparatory work to ensure that we are well placed to rapidly respond to its findings and the Government's response.

In closing, I wish to offer my sincere gratitude to outgoing Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Thistlethwaite for his support and steadfast commitment to the veteran community during a time of transformation for the Department.



L to R: RSL-WA Vice President Miquela Riley; DVA Deputy Commissioner Peter King; RSL-WA CEO Vince Connelly, Secretary Alison Frame, Repatriation Commissioner Kahlil Fegan, RSL-WA State President Duncan Anderson



The 2024 Women Veterans Policy Forum

In particular, the Assistant Minister's support for Open Arms and innovation within the DVA has been greatly appreciated.

We also welcome Luke Gosling MP as Special Envoy for Defence, Veterans' Affairs and Northern Australia. Mr Gosling is a veteran of peacekeeping in Timor-Leste and will be helping us with the upcoming program of events commemorating the 25th anniversary of the beginning of Australian service in that country.

DVA was established to fulfil the nation's duty to support the wellbeing of Australia's veterans and families. It's a great privilege to lead the Department in this important work and at this pivotal time. As we continue to innovate and improve our services, I look forward to continuing to work with members of the veteran community to ensure we are successful in our mission.



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FROM THE MINISTER

The Hon Matt Keogh MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel

I have introduced into Parliament the legislation to simplify and harmonise the veterans' entitlements, compensation and rehabilitation system, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide's Interim Report.

With these law changes it will be easier for veterans and families to understand what they are entitled to, easier for claims advocates to assist them with their claims, and easier for DVA staff to process those claims. This will mean veterans and families will be able to receive the benefits and supports they need and deserve as quickly and as easily as possible.

A significant amount of engagement, consultation and collaboration informed the content of the Bill. We received 323 written submissions, and input from many more veterans through meetings and online consultation sessions on the draft Bill about how the legislation could better serve the community. We listened to that feedback, and those views informed the legislation. Please check out the DVA website for all the information about how these changes work.

A Senate inquiry into the legislation – the *Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024* (the VETS Bill) – has already commenced and will report later this year with the aim of allowing the legislation to pass this year.

But we aren't just waiting for better laws.

The work we have done to remove and process the backlog of claims we inherited together with our proposed laws to simplify and harmonise veterans legislation will see an additional \$6.5 billion in benefits and supports being provided to veterans and families over five years.

We are also making the claims process more efficient for everyone. For example, DVA has just completed a major review of its medical assessment forms to make them easier to understand, quicker to complete for medical practitioners,



With (L to R) Doug Baird OAM, North West Tasmanian Veteran Welfare Board Chairman Dr Andrew Clarke and Senator Anne Urquhart at the opening of the Burnie Veterans' and Families' Hub. A section of the new Hub is named 'Cam's Corner' after Mr Baird's son, Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG, who lost his life in Afghanistan.



At an Anzac Day service in Villers-Bretonneux, France, alongside the Prefect of the Somme, Mr Rollon Mouchel-Blaisot.

and more effective in helping staff to obtain the information necessary to make informed decisions on claims. This project has successfully reduced 210 forms to 84 – streamlining more than 650 pages down to less than 200.

We are also improving accessibility to services and DVA information with our new Digital Veteran Cards, now available in the myGov app. Almost 300,000 Veteran Card holders can now add their Veteran Gold or White Card to the wallet in their myGov app. If you have a MyService account, you can add your digital card to the wallet once you've linked your account to myGov. You can also save your card to the myGov app home screen for easy access.

Tackling veteran homelessness is also a priority for the Albanese Government. Veterans are three times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population. That's just not acceptable. I recently launched our \$30 million Veterans' Acute Housing Program to fund not just homes but also wrap-around services to support veterans and their families who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, get back on their feet. (You can read more on page 5.)

Our Veterans' and Families' Hub Program is also expanding. In June, I opened the newest Hub, in Burnie, Tasmania. This Hub will provide health and wellness support (with general practitioners on site) and will also take its services on the road, operating a mobile outreach clinic for veterans living in regional areas. (See more about Hubs on page 9.)

I want to thank every member of the veteran and family community who shared and re-lived their often distressing experiences with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. In June, the Royal Commission presented a culmination of these submissions in the lived experience

report, *Shine a Light: Stories of Trauma & Tragedy, Hope & Healing*.

The report made for hard, and at times harrowing, reading. But to bring real, meaningful change to the way we support serving personnel, veterans and families, it is important that those stories were shared and their experiences not repeated.

The Government looks forward to receiving the Royal Commission's final report and recommendations, knowing they will be informed by those stories.

I was honoured to deliver the commemorative address at the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Villers-Bretonneux in France this year.

While paying tribute to the 46,000 Australians who lost their lives on the Western Front, we can never lose sight of not just those who have died for Australia in many conflicts since, but also those who have come home not just with physical scars but mental scars as well, and the families that live with and support them. It was very moving to see so many Australians, young and old, doing just that across Australia and across the world, like in France, on Anzac Day.

Finally, I would like to thank my good friend Matt Thistlethwaite for so capably working with me as Assistant Minister for Defence and Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Matt's genuine dedication to supporting serving and ex-serving personnel, with a particular focus on their mental health, has shone through.

I also welcome Luke Gosling to the role of Special Envoy for Defence, Veterans' Affairs and Northern Australia. As a veteran himself, Luke is well positioned to provide valuable insights and I look forward to working with him on the issues of importance to the veteran community.



FROM THE FORMER ASSISTANT MINISTER

The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Former Assistant Minister for Defence and Former Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs

While I have now moved to a different role in the Government, for more than two years it has been my great privilege to serve you and work to provide a better future for veterans, who sacrifice much in the service of our country by putting their lives on the line to protect our nation. We can never fully repay this debt, but we do our best by supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of veterans and veteran families.

The 2024–25 Federal Budget continues the Government's steadfast focus on the psychological welfare of serving personnel, veterans and families. It provides \$2.5 million to extend the Military and Veteran Psychiatry Training Program, which seeks to improve veterans' access to psychiatrists who have specialist training in veteran and

trauma-focused care. The dedicated funding will add up to 20 additional trainees to the program, expanding access for more veterans.

We're also investing \$1 million to extend the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program. This program provides continuity of chaplaincy support after separation from the ADF – particularly for at-risk veterans and families – through pastoral care, spiritual health and support for moral injury.

The Open Arms network is continuing to expand and broaden its services. In April, I opened two new offices in Brisbane, while in Tasmania, Open Arms has developed a first-of-its-kind eight-week Stress, Resilience and Functioning Program to support veterans

develop practical skills to reduce the impacts of stress and PTSD.

Also in Tasmania, we launched a new pilot project which promises to better identify veterans and refer them to Open Arms services. We have been working with local partners to reach veterans not previously known to DVA, but who could benefit from our services. The project will use the state-based mental health intake service to identify veterans and connect them directly with Open Arms. The Department will monitor the performance of the project closely so that key learnings can inform a potential rollout of similar initiatives across Australia.

On Anzac Day, I was honoured to represent Australia at the site of

the former prisoner of war camp in Sandakan, Malaysia. We honoured the courage, service and sacrifice of the Australian prisoners of war incarcerated at Sandakan, many of whom perished on the horrific death marches to Ranau in the Second World War.

As we remembered their terrible suffering and immense endurance, I expressed the pride Australians feel for those who volunteered or were called upon to serve in the war. It is the same pride we feel for today's veterans and ADF members and I feel privileged to have played a role in the Government's work to continually improve the services and support veterans and families rely on for their wellbeing.

A new financial year resolution – keep safe from scams

We've heard about making New Year's resolutions at the start of the calendar year. What if we made financial resolutions at the start of each new financial year – what would they look like?

DVA's new financial year resolution for keeping veterans safe from scammers is: *We want to make it harder for scammers to target veterans and families by raising awareness to help them identify, evade and report financial scams.*

According to Scamwatch, Australians lose more money to investment scams than any other type of scam. These types of scams offer big rewards, with little or no risk.

Investment scams can be hard to spot. Scammers use convincing tactics including new technologies and pressure tactics to lure potential victims to act fast or risk missing out. Scammers want you to act quickly to better their chances of stealing your money.

If someone in Australia is trying to sell you a financial or investment

product, or is giving you professional financial advice, they must have an Australian financial services license. You should check that the person trying to sell you the product has this type of license.

Scammers are known to try to 'sell' shares at prices well below market value – offers like this are probably a scam. If you are told the reason for the discount is that shares are being released before an initial public offering, be even more cautious: this is almost definitely a scam.

You can protect yourself and your money by taking time to stop, think, and check before you act, especially if you notice any of these:

- Fake news stories or ads online claiming a celebrity recommends a scheme to make big money.

- An online contact (a friend or romantic interest) whom you've never met in person starts talking to you about investing.
- Emails, websites or ads with testimonials and over-the-top promises of big returns but little or no risk.
- High pressure tactics designed to rush you to act so you don't 'miss out'.
- The 'adviser' who is helping you doesn't have, and claims they don't need, an Australian financial services license.

- You are asked to promote the scheme to friends and family to earn commissions.

Don't be rushed into making an investment decision. If you are not sure, seek independent legal advice or financial advice from a financial advisor who is registered with ASIC (charges may apply).

For more information about investment scams visit the Australian Government's Moneysmart website.

If you have been scammed, we encourage you to report the scam to Scamwatch (www.scamwatch.gov.au).



The cartoon strips of Flight Sergeant (Retd) Darrin 'Howie' Howe ran in *Air Force News* from 1993 to 2003. FSGT Howe served in the Air Force and Reserves for 38 years, finally retiring on Anzac Day 2024. They are republished in *Vetaffairs* with his kind permission.

If you or a family member are the victims of a scam you might feel distressed. Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling offers support services for veterans and families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you need support, contact Open Arms by visiting www.openarms.gov.au or by phoning 1800 011 046.

Understanding the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme

The Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) Scheme is a defined benefit superannuation scheme that was available to members of the ADF between 1972 and 1991. Subject to scheme rules, upon retirement members will generally be eligible for an indexed pension plus an optional "Commutation Benefit" of up to 5 times their annual pension amount, and an additional lump sum of their "Productivity Benefit".

Commutation is a lump sum pre-payment of part of a member's future retirement benefit. By taking this option, a member can elect to commute (that is, exchange) a portion of their future retirement pension for a lump sum. The purpose of commutation is to allow members the flexibility to receive a lump sum if required, depending on their financial situation at the time of discharge, and to assist the member in resettling into civilian life.

The decision to access commutation is voluntary. An important consideration is that if a member chooses to commute part of their pension, this will result in a permanent reduction in their annual pension based on their life expectancy. The pension entitlement will not increase if the member outlives the life expectancy used to determine the reduction in their pension. Permanently reducing the pension recognises that members who elect to commute will obtain a long-term advantage from the immediate use of their lump sum, depending on what they choose to do with the amount.

Reviews

As a result of advocacy by veterans and veteran groups, the DFRDB scheme has been reviewed on several occasions in recent years. Most recently the Commonwealth Ombudsman (in 2019) and the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Reference Committee (in 2021) both considered the scheme.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman recognised the beneficial nature of the scheme, and that benefits are being paid correctly. However, it also concluded that the Department of Defence had historically provided DFRDB members misleading information regarding commutation, which led some members to believe incorrectly that their pension would increase once they reached their life expectancy factor age.

In addition to the commutation concerns, some veteran groups have proposed changing the life expectancy tables or reviewing indexation arrangements for the DFRDB. There have been a number of changes to the indexation methodology for this scheme following the recommendations of the *Review into Military Superannuation Arrangements*.

Since 2014, DFRDB pensioners over the age of 55 receive twice-yearly adjustments using the higher of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI), which provides a similar basis to how indexation is treated for the Age Pension. In some circumstances, the indexation adjustment may not be applied to the full pension amount. Those interested in learning more can find an example of how this calculation is applied in *A summary of the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme* (page 14 of this book) which can be found at www.csc.gov.au.

With regards to changes in life expectancy factors, it would not be feasible to adjust one component in isolation without considering the rest of the scheme. Changes to the life expectancy tables could leave most members worse off, as the other key element of the scheme, the commutation factor, would also need to be updated and this would likely affect the pension amount an individual receives.

Further, the Commonwealth Ombudsman made note of the life expectancy tables in its investigation into the administration of the DFRDB scheme. The Ombudsman concluded that as the scheme's drafters did not include a provision to update the tables from time to time, it would suggest the tables were meant to be used as a static commutation factor. This is consistent with the static commutation factors used in the civilian Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme. If you would like to find out more about the recent reviews into the DFRDB, the Senate Committee and Ombudsman reports can be found on their respective websites.

Compensation

Members of the DFRDB scheme who believe they have suffered a financial detriment due to being provided misleading information are encouraged to lodge a claim under the Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA). Defence has tailored the claims process to help focus on the issues critical to the determination of the claim and provides members access to a case manager to assist with the process.

You can lodge a claim by completing the DFRDB CDDA Application Form, available from the Defence website (at www.defence.gov.au/about/governance/legal-services) and submitting it to dl.deldc@defence.gov.au. Appendix F of the Ombudsman's report sets out the criteria that should be considered prior to lodging a claim for CDDA. Applicants are encouraged to consider these criteria before making any claim.



More ways to securely store your Veteran Card

DVA Veteran Card holders with a smart phone or other smart device now have the option to securely store and access their Veteran Gold and White Cards in the myGov app.

For some, digital cards provide greater convenience and flexibility. This is great news for veterans and families who prefer to use their phone or other smart device to access their health and concessional benefits.

With in-built protections against fraud and theft, including holograms and QR codes, the myGov app is a safe and secure way to store most government-issued cards and documents.

DVA clients will need to have a DVA-issued White or Gold Veteran Card, a current MyService account, and the myGov app downloaded on their smart phone or device to access their digital Veteran Card in their myGov wallet.

Once you have a MyService account and the myGov app, adding your digital card to your wallet is easy.

For more information, an instructional video and a list of Frequently Asked Questions on how to add your digital Veteran Card to your myGov wallet, visit the DVA website.



The Australian Government committed \$477 million in the 2024-25 Federal Budget to build capacity for DVA and support more than 340,000 veterans and dependants accessing our services.

This Budget continues to make progress on the recommendations of the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, keeping the health and wellbeing of veterans and families a key priority.

An investment of \$194.4 million over 4 years and \$20.6 million every year from 2028-29 onwards will increase DVA's staffing levels and fund further modernisation of our information and communication technologies.

It will fund an additional 141 service delivery staff on an ongoing basis. This is on top of the more than 500 staff DVA has employed in the last two years. It will also provide \$8.4 million over 2 years to pilot a modern clinical case management and workflow solution.

The Government has committed an additional \$222 million in veteran and family entitlements across the first two years from commencement of the VETS Bill, subject to passage through Parliament. This reform will make it easier for veterans and families to access support. It's a commitment that represents a significant investment in direct support for veterans and their families and responds to Recommendation 1 of the Royal Commission's Interim Report, which called for the simplification and harmonisation of veterans' compensation and rehabilitation legislation.

A separate measure provides \$59.6 million over 3 years to support continued access to valuable health and support programs for veterans and families. This includes \$48.4 million over 2 years to support access to the

Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing programs benefitting 45,000 veterans and war widow(er)s. It also includes funding to extend the Military and Veteran Psychiatry Training Program, the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment Program and the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program.

A \$30 million investment commits to build more housing and provide specialist services for veterans and families who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, providing

veterans and families the foundation to live meaningful lives. (See article on pg 5.)

Other investments in the Budget 2024-25 package include \$1.16 million over 3 years, enabling the domestic War Graves program to continue to care and maintain official commemorations and memorials.

For more information, visit the Budget 2024-25 page of the DVA website.

Government tackling veteran homelessness

Applications are open for a share in \$30 million of grant funding to build more crisis and transitional housing, and provide specialist services for veterans and families who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

The Australian Government has invested \$30 million in the Veterans' Acute Housing Program to help provide veterans and their families experiencing or at risk of homelessness a pathway to access safe and secure temporary accommodation. It will also enable access to coordinated supports to improve their health and wellbeing outcomes and transition into long-term housing.

Part of this funding has been allocated through the Government's Housing Australia Future Fund, and is made up of 2 related streams:

- Capital Works Grant - \$24 million will be used to fund organisations to build and increase the supply and ongoing availability of sustainably managed crisis and transitional housing.
- Specialist Services Grant - \$6 million will be used to fund organisations to deliver coordinated access to specialist services

that address the risk factors for veteran homelessness.

Veteran-aware community housing providers and ex-service organisations (ESOs) are eligible to apply for this grant funding.

ESOs and community groups that support veterans are a critical part of providing a stable support system for veterans and their families. We encourage you to reach out to your local ESO to find out if they are getting involved in this opportunity to support veterans who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

Applications will be closing on 13 September 2024 on the Grant Connect website. For more information, please visit the DVA website. (Search for 'Veterans' Acute Housing Program'.)

More cost of living relief is on the way

From 1 July 2024, veterans can earn more, and the value of their assets can be higher before their pension payments are affected. This is due to changes in the income free areas and asset value limits that are used to calculate rates of income support pensions, which will see these amounts rise in line with the annual indexation process.

Different limits may apply for veterans who are assessed under transitional rules. Disability compensation payments and war widow(er)'s pensions are not subject to the income and assets tests.

Related to these thresholds increasing, some recipients of the service pension, income support supplement, veteran payment and social security age pension may see an increase to their payments. Pensioners don't need to do anything to receive the increase.

The table below outlines the new limits and thresholds. For more information, including a summary of the new income and asset thresholds, pension rates and allowances please visit the DVA payment rates webpage.

	Single rate (fortnightly)	Couples rate - combined (fortnightly)
Amount of income an income support recipient may receive before their pension is reduced		
Service or Age Pension	\$212.00	\$372.00
Income Support Supplement (War Widow(er)'s Pension is included in these amounts)*	\$1,741.60	\$2,345.60
Maximum value of assets a person can have before their pension or supplement is affected		
Service or Age Pension		
Homeowner	\$314,000.00	\$470,000.00
Non-homeowner	\$566,000.00	\$722,000.00
Income Support Supplement*		
Homeowner	\$569,000.00	\$799,000.00
Non-homeowner	\$821,000.00	\$1,051,000.00
Deeming threshold	\$62,600.00	\$103,800.00
MRCA rates		New rate (fortnightly)
Maximum Permanent Impairment amount	\$843.44	
Maximum rate of Household Services	\$1,194.26	
Maximum rate of Attendant Care	\$1,194.26	
Dependent eligible young person	\$361.14	

*Different limits apply if assessed under transitional rules.

Understanding your travel for treatment entitlements

DVA provides support for all eligible clients who need to travel for DVA-approved health treatment within Australia. This is usually done through reimbursement of transport costs or payment of allowances.

While you can attend approved treatment Australia-wide with a provider of your choice, the amounts we reimburse you for travel are calculated based on the location of the provider considered appropriate to deliver your care. A DVA staff member determines this by assessing your travel claim against your legislated entitlement and individual circumstances.

While DVA decisions are not made based solely on the distance you have travelled, please be aware that what you are reimbursed for travel may not cover the full costs incurred. We encourage you to visit providers in your local area whenever possible to minimise out-of-pocket costs.

We understand there may be reasons why you need to travel greater distances for treatment. These could include:

- **provider availability**, including those who accept Veteran Cards in rural and remote areas
- **type of treatment**, including specialist referrals and reasonable continuity of care
- **public transport accessibility**.

Sometimes DVA may need further information or clarification to support the payment of a travel claim, such as a letter from your GP or specialist. If you're unsure whether you'll be able to receive

full reimbursement for travelling to your provider, please contact DVA's Transport Claims team on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) before you travel to discuss your circumstances.

Once you've travelled, you can submit your claim for reimbursement of travelling expenses using DVA's online service, MyService or by completing the D800 Claim for Travelling Expenses form available for download on the DVA website.

The terms we use

We calculate travel reimbursements based on the distance to either the:

- Closest Practical Treatment Location (CPTL), or
- Place Where Appropriate Treatment is Available (PWATA).

These terms differ because of the differences in legislation, however their intent is the same.

Clients with eligibility under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) are entitled to reimbursement of travelling expenses when receiving treatment delivered at the CPTL.

Clients with eligibility under the *Military and Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) are entitled to reimbursement of travelling expenses when receiving treatment delivered at the PWATA. In addition, VEA and MRCA clients may be entitled to reimbursement for reasonable and necessary road tolls.

Minimum distance

Under the MRCA or DRCA, we will reimburse you for travel costs if you are travelling by taxi or public transport. There is no minimum distance requirement.

However, if you are travelling by private vehicle, the distance must be more than 50 kilometres (return) for us to reimburse you.

Journeys under 50 kilometres (return) may still be considered on a case-by-case basis if there are exceptional circumstances that make using other forms of transport unreasonable. For example, if there is no public transport available or you have a condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult.

There is no minimum distance requirement under the VEA.

Get in touch

To learn more about travel for treatment entitlements, including information about how to claim, please visit the Travel for Treatment page of the DVA website (www.dva.gov.au/travel-treatment) or you can phone us on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).

If you disagree with a decision about the calculation of your travel claim, please contact DVA's Transport Claims team at transport.claims@dva.gov.au to request a review.



Annual increase to travel allowances

Travel allowances for transport, meals and accommodation under DVA's Travel for Treatment Program increased on 1 July 2024 in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The increase applies to travel by private vehicle as well as accommodation and meal allowances for all eligible veterans, war widows and widowers (entitled persons) travelling for treatment purposes or disability and income support claims under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

The intention of the program is to assist with travelling expenses for an entitled person and their medically required attendant, not necessarily to reimburse the entire cost incurred. While entitled persons can attend a provider of their choice, to receive the maximum benefit, travel should be to the Closest Practical Treatment Location. (Please see adjacent article.)

The increases under the program apply to holders of:

- Veteran Gold Cards and Veteran White Cards (for specific conditions) eligible under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* who are entitled to assistance towards travelling expenses when travelling to receive treatment for an accepted service-related condition, or for treatment of a specific condition covered under Non-liability Health Care.
- Veteran Gold Cards under the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests and British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Treatment) Act 2006* and the *Treatment Benefits (Special Access) Act 2019* who are entitled to assistance towards travelling expenses when attending approved treatment.

For any queries about travel for treatment allowances, contact DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372). Further information is also available on DVA's website. (Search for 'Travel for treatment'.)

Type of allowance	Measure	New allowance from 1 July 2024	Travel with a medically required attendant †
Private vehicle	Per kilometre	43.3 cents	x1
Public, community or air transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	x2
Taxi transport	Actual fare	Actual fare	x1
Commercial accommodation non-capital city - single*	Per night	\$179.00	x2
Commercial accommodation capital city - single*	Per night	\$212.60	x2
Entitled person and medically required attendant - commercial accommodation - shared*	Per night	\$291.10	x1
Subsidised accommodation - single*	Per night	\$111.80	x2
Private accommodation*	Per night	\$55.70	x2
Meal allowance - more than 50 km but less than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$17.80	x2
Meal allowance - more than 200 km from entitled person's home to the treatment location	Per day	\$36.20	x2

* A meal allowance is not paid on a day where an accommodation allowance is paid, as a meal component is already built into the accommodation allowance.

† This column refers to the number of times an allowance is paid when an entitled person travels with a medically required attendant. For instance, if an entitled person shares a room with an attendant, only the allowance for one room is paid for (x1). If they each have a single room, the allowance for both rooms is paid (x2).

Activity improves mood, decreases pain and drops your risk of cancer. Let's do it!



DR ANNA COLWELL

Deputy Chief Health Officer

Department of Veterans' Affairs

In 2022, only 1 in 5 adults aged 18-64 in Australia met the physical activity guidelines. However, more than half completed 30 minutes of activity on 5 or more days in a week. Veterans' self-reported activity in 2020-2021 suggests that as a group they tend to be slightly more active than the general population – perhaps remembering their training days and physical fitness requirements!

For many of us though, activity is easier to watch than to do ourselves. We need to find the time, energy and an activity we enjoy; overcome barriers such as darkness, weather, lack of fitness and pain; and figure out how to still be available for other commitments like caring duties.

The good news is that while we should all aim for the targets, doing something is better than doing nothing. Studies show that even small amounts of physical activity done often can improve fitness and cut the risk of heart disease and cancer. This might look like standing up and moving every hour. Or like adding several short bursts of 1 to 2 minutes of vigorous activity to your daily routine, known as 'exercise snacks' (or in my house as 'we're running late!').

Talking with a health professional can help you figure out what suits you. Some people like activity best in a group and need to be connected to a community group. Some can't leave the house and need some ideas for home or chair workouts. Some people find that an activity tracker or step counter can help them to stay motivated and track their success in increasing movement.



I am a big fan of adding activity into things that you are going to do anyway. Catching up with a friend? Go for a walk together. Taking the kids to sport? Do some laps of the field while you are there. Phoning your family? Walk around the house or yard while on the phone. Got an injured leg? Lift some cans/hand weights while watching the TV.

Dance along to the music in your car or while cooking. Use a mini exercise bike under your desk or near the couch. Do heel raises when waiting in line or while brushing your teeth. The list is endless.

If you haven't exercised for a while or are having trouble getting started due to an illness or injury, DVA funds eligible people for health services that can help them get moving safely. DVA will fund allied health services that support physical activity to help your health condition if you have a Veteran Gold Card, a White Card with a relevant accepted condition, or under Non-liability Health Care where physical activity has been identified by your GP as part of your treatment plan to improve mental health.

Studies show that even small amounts of physical activity done often can improve fitness and cut the risk of heart disease and cancer.

A GP can check there are no concerns due to your medical conditions and medications. They can help you problem solve and can refer you for exercise physiology or physiotherapy services.

An exercise physiologist works with you to create a special exercise plan that takes into account your current physical limitations (e.g. from heart disease, recent surgery, injury or lack of fitness). They will then support you to follow that plan and develop habits to support ongoing physical activity.

A physiotherapist works to improve your physical mobility and movement. They can help you reduce pain, build muscle strength and improve flexibility. They can diagnose conditions and provide a treatment plan. Many physios and exercise physiologists also offer group programs for people with specific physical issues such as knee or back pain. This can be a good place to get physically stronger and connect socially with others.

Happy moving!

Would you take a pill if you were told that taking it regularly would cut the risk of getting cancer, improve your mental health, cut your risk of falls and fractures, decrease pain and lower your chance of dying from heart disease? As a bonus it even improves thinking, learning and judgement?

What if you were told that taken carefully and in correct doses, it has minimal side effects?

There isn't a pill of course, but there *is* something that has all these benefits. It is, of course, physical activity. Harder than taking a pill but *very* effective at treating or preventing a whole range of different health conditions.

The current Australian guidelines for physical activity for 18-64 year olds suggest doing 3.75 to 7.5 hours of a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity activities, spread out over the week. You should have some activity on most days, include muscle strengthening exercises at least 2 days a week, build activity into your day and limit your time sitting down.

For people over 65, it is recommended to do some form of activity every day. This should be at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on most, preferably all, days. Include a mix of fitness, strength, flexibility and balance activities – and limit your time sitting down.

The Veterans' and Families' Hubs network expands across the nation

It's been a big year for the Veterans' and Families' Hubs Program. The recent opening of the Burnie Hub in Tasmania means there are now 8 Hubs operating across the country.

Five years in the making

The Veterans' and Families' Hubs Program aims to provide improved access to a range of services and supports tailored to local needs, including some outreach services to the broader community. Hubs facilitate access to services that aim to improve health, wellbeing, social, housing, employment and economic outcomes.

In 2019, \$30 million was committed to develop a network of 6 Veterans' and Families' Hubs in Perth, Townsville, Adelaide, Wodonga, Nowra and Darwin. In 2021, \$10 million was announced to expand the Hubs network into Southeast Queensland and Tasmania. A further \$2.5 million was provided in late 2021 to expand the Hubs in Tasmania, including \$2.2 million for a Hub in Burnie and \$250,000 to enhance the Launceston Hub.

As part of the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government announced a further \$46.7 million to develop 8 new Hubs, which are now being progressed.

National network established

The Burnie Veterans' and Families' Hub in **Tasmania** was the latest Hub to officially open its doors in June 2024. The Hub offers a range of services with a focus on health and wellness support provided by an onsite General Practitioner.

In southeast **Queensland**, Lives Lived Well has partnered with ex-service organisations to provide wrap-around support for veterans and families from the Caboolture Hub. Further north, Australia's largest veteran community has access to government and community services through The Oasis Townsville Veteran Wellbeing Centre.

The Stuart Park Hub in Darwin, **Northern Territory**, run by Mates4Mates, marked its first anniversary of operating at that site in May 2024. Mates4Mates has been working closely with various organisations to provide services to Darwin's large Defence and veteran community.

In **Western Australia**, the Hub at ANZAC House Veteran Central in Perth has been providing services since November 2020. The Hub offers healthcare, financial, legal, employment support, home care and aged care services.

In Adelaide, **South Australia**, the Hub within the Daw Park Repatriation Health Precinct has brought community services and government supports for veteran health and wellbeing together in one location.

In **Victoria**, the Veterans' and Families' Hub Wodonga in Honour of Tim Fischer AC officially opened in December 2022. With its close proximity

to Gaza Ridge Barracks, Bandiana, the Hub provides services and supports to current and former serving ADF members and their families.

In **New South Wales**, RSL LifeCare officially opened its purpose-built facility in Nowra in December 2022. The facility includes meeting rooms, consultation rooms, an activity hall and an outdoor area, enabling a broad range of wrap-around services to be provided from one location.

Hub funding announcements

The establishment of all of the additional Hubs is now well underway.

RSL Victoria, with its proven track record of providing localised support for current and former ADF personnel, was awarded a grant to establish a new Hub in Victoria's **Surf Coast/Geelong region**.

RSL LifeCare was awarded grants to establish four Veterans' and Families' Hubs across New South Wales in **Queanbeyan**, the **Tweed/North Coast**, the **Hunter** and the **Hawkesbury** regions.

RSL Queensland will collaborate with Mates4Mates to support veterans and families living in **Ipswich**, which has a significant population of current and former ADF members.

RSL WA will lead the development of a **Southwest Perth** Hub, centered in Rockingham. This Hub will use a number of spoke locations to provide services to veterans and families across the region, including ADF personnel at the HMAS Stirling Royal Australian Navy base.

RSL Tasmania was awarded a grant to develop a 'hub and spoke' model across **Tasmania**, including a Hub in Hobart and further development of the Launceston Hub, with spokes to be developed at a number of sub-branches that will feed into a state-wide support network.

Lives Lived Well, already operating the Caboolture Hub, has been awarded the grant to establish a second Hub in **Northern Adelaide**. Located close to RAAF Base Edinburgh, it will expand the Hub network into the city's northern suburbs, giving veterans and families access to improved services closer to home.



Announcement of the grant for the Tweed/North Coast Hub in NSW

The network of new Hubs is expected to be fully established by mid-2026, with services likely to be offered before this time.

Visit the Veterans' and Families' Hubs web page to learn more: www.dva.gov.au/vfhubs.



Minister Matt Keogh opens the Burnie Hub with North West Tasmanian Veteran Welfare Board Chairman Dr Andrew Clarke.

Veterans' and Families' Hubs now operating:

- Adelaide (SA): SA Government
- Burnie (TAS): North West Tasmanian Veteran Welfare Board
- Caboolture (QLD): Lives Lived Well
- Darwin (NT): Mates4Mates
- Nowra (NSW): RSL LifeCare
- Perth (WA): RSL WA
- Townsville (QLD): The Oasis Townsville
- Wodonga (VIC): RSL Victoria

New Veterans' and Families' Hubs being established:

- Hawkesbury region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
- Hunter region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
- Queanbeyan (NSW): RSL LifeCare
- Tweed/North Coast region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
- Surf Coast/Geelong (VIC): RSL Victoria
- Tasmania (hub and spoke network): RSL Tasmania
- Ipswich (QLD): RSL Queensland
- Northern Adelaide (SA): Lives Lived Well
- Southwest Perth (WA): RSL WA

Boosting financial support for care providers

The 2024–25 Budget boosts the funding for Veterans' Home Care and Community Nursing Programs with an additional \$48.4 million to support continued access to services.

The programs support veterans and war widow(er)s to access care and support services to enable them to remain in their own home and reduce the need to enter residential aged care.

This investment will benefit around 45,000 current veterans and war widow(er)s who receive services through the 2 programs, and those who may need to access them in future.

The additional Budget funding reduces the risk of providers withdrawing from the 2 programs in the face of increasing market pressures, particularly in rural and regional areas. It also reduces the risk of DVA clients being unable to access care or experiencing significant disruptions to their care.

This Budget commitment will support providers to deliver high quality care. From July 2024 through to June 2026, providers will receive \$48.4 million in sustainability payments for services delivered to the veteran community.

The Veterans' Home Care program helps eligible veterans and their dependants who need home care services to maintain health, wellbeing

and independence with services such as domestic help, personal and respite care and some home and garden maintenance tasks such as lawn mowing.

The Community Nursing Program funds clinically required nursing and personal care services to veterans and war widow(er)s in their own home by qualified nurses and support staff. Services can include help with medication, wound care, hygiene/showering, dressing and palliative care.

GPs an important access point to DVA services and programs

Veterans can access many of DVA's health programs through their GP.

GPs can provide a Veteran Health Check (see adjacent article) – a one-off or annual comprehensive assessment to help you better understand your health and wellbeing.

Veterans with more complex needs may be eligible for the Coordinated Veterans' Care program, which aims to help them live healthier lives through effective prevention and ongoing management of chronic health conditions.

You can also discuss medication management reviews, access fully funded mental health treatment and counselling services, plus find out more



about rehabilitation aids and appliances, and the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Your GP can also provide referrals to other health providers and specialists as required.

The next time you visit your GP, make sure you tell them you are a veteran, show them your Veteran Card, and ask them to help you access DVA-funded health programs.

You can refer your GP to www.dva.gov.au/providers for more information.



Have you had your Veteran Health Check?

Any veteran who has served at least one day in the ADF is eligible for a Veteran Health Check, fully funded by DVA. The Veteran Health Check is a comprehensive health assessment completed by your GP to help you better understand your health and wellbeing.

The check can help you manage your own health, take action to stay well, address health concerns early and develop a relationship with your GP.

There are 2 types of checks veterans can access:

- An annual check. Veterans who have served at least one day in the ADF and transitioned out of the ADF from 1 July 2019 are eligible for an annual Veterans' Health Check for up to 5 years after transition.
- A one-off check. Veterans who have served at least one day in the ADF and transitioned out of the ADF at any time before 30 June 2019 are eligible for a one-off Veteran Health Check.

Next time you see your GP, ask them to complete a Veteran Health Check for you.

For more information, visit the DVA website. (Search for 'Veteran Health Check'.)



Stay  Healthy

Feel  Better

Get  Connected

To find out more visit www.dva.gov.au/veteranshealthcheck

VETERANS' Health Week

keep connected

Get involved in Veterans' Health Week

Veterans' Health Week events and activities will include trivia nights, physical activities, coffee catch-ups, cooking lessons and more. These events will support veterans to learn the importance of staying socially connected to family, friends and peers, which can have a positive impact on mental health, lead to a longer life, better overall health and improved wellbeing. There is no limit on how many events can be held or attended, and all events are free.

Learning how to access support and taking proactive steps to keep connected is particularly important for veterans and all those in the veteran community.

More information, including on how to register for events, is available on the DVA website at www.dva.gov.au/vhw.



Let's talk about cancer

Did you know that DVA may cover the cost of cancer treatment, even if the cancer is unrelated to your service?

Under Non-Liability Health Care (NLHC), DVA can provide fully funded treatment for cancer (malignant neoplasm) and pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) for some veterans.

Under DVA's NLHC arrangements, we may cover the cost of eligible veterans' cancer and TB treatment without the need to prove that their military service caused the condition.

While the treatment is fully funded by DVA, eligibility is limited to veterans who have performed certain types of Defence Service, generally Operational Service or some types of full-time service rendered between December 1972 and April 1994. This includes National Servicemen who completed their full period of National Service after 7 December 1972. To be eligible, veterans also need to have a formal diagnosis of the relevant condition/s.

You will need to have a Veteran Gold or White Card that covers cancer or TB treatment. White Card holders can apply to have the condition added by lodging form D9215 with the Department or through MyService. DVA can pay for treatment up to 3 months prior to the date a claim for treatment is lodged with the Department.

If your White Card covers cancer and TB, this may include treatment by a general practitioner, medical specialist, oncologist and a hospital.

Your Veteran White Card also gives you access to cheaper prescriptions for the conditions that your card covers. You may be eligible for a Veterans Supplement to help towards the cost of medications, unless you're already receiving an equivalent payment from Centrelink.

More information on cancer and TB treatment, including details about eligibility, is available on the DVA website. (Search for 'Free treatment for cancer and pulmonary tuberculosis'.)

Is your heart healthy?

If you are 45 or over, you are at increased risk of a heart condition.

Risk factors for heart disease include inactivity, poor nutritional choices, existing conditions such as diabetes, alcohol abuse, stress and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep issues, and lack of social interaction.

A heart-related health episode and/or a diagnosis of a long-term heart condition can be devastating. But with healthy lifestyle choices and support from your GP or health-care team, you can better manage living with heart disease.

If you have pre-existing health issues, are new to exercise, or are starting a new activity, DVA always recommends speaking to your GP before commencing your new activity or exercise program.

Eligible veterans can access DVA's 12-month Heart Health Program to help them keep fit and improve their wellbeing by engaging in regular exercise, nutrition and lifestyle management.

To access the program, veterans must not have already taken part in the program and meet one of the following criteria:

- You are a returned veteran or peacekeeper.
- You are an ADF Fire Fighter.

The program aims to improve health and wellbeing through the development of self-management strategies and, importantly, provides participants with opportunities for social interaction and networking with peers.

Call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372) for more information, or visit the DVA website. (Search for 'Heart Health Program'.)

Lost your mojo? I know it's out there somewhere...



DR LORETTA POERIO

Senior Mental Health Adviser
Department of Veterans' Affairs

While it may be tempting to snuggle down under the doona with a packet of Tim Tams and hibernate when life seems overwhelming, this approach needs a warning label.

In small doses, a doona day may restore the spirits. However, if this leads to more and more isolation from others and your connection to the outside world is becoming smaller, then it may be time to rethink your coping strategy.

We know that mental health or illness is not simply a yes/no proposition, but rather a fluctuating state that changes over time. The latest National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that in 2020–2022:

- 1 in five Australians (21.5% or 4.3 million people) had a 12-month mental disorder
- 17.2% (3.4 million people) had a 12-month Anxiety disorder
- 7.5% (1.5 million people) had a 12-month Affective disorder
- 3.3% (647,900 people) had a 12-month Substance Use disorder.

This study, the first undertaken since 2007, indicated that more than two in five Australians aged 16–85 (8.6 million people or 43.7 per cent) have experienced a mental health condition at some time in their life.

A depressive episode is defined as lasting most of the day, almost every day for at least two weeks. This is termed Major Depressive Disorder. Other types of depressive disorders include Dysthymia, which is diagnosed when symptoms are present for most days for at least two years.

Bipolar Disorder is diagnosed in the presence of periods of depressive symptoms that are followed by manic symptoms.

Seasonal Affective Disorder has a seasonal pattern, with cycles of sadness coinciding with the colder, winter months and mood symptoms lifting in spring.

For many people, periods of feeling down can be managed with good self-care strategies (which I have discussed before). These include establishing a good sleep routine, getting regular exercise, eating nutritious food, connecting with friends and family, finding the joy in the day, active problem-solving to tackle the situation that is distressing you, and limiting social media exposure. Exercise, for example, has been shown to be helpful for mild to moderate depression.

Risk factors for depression such as chronic stressors, family history, ageing, personality traits and illness can affect how severe the symptoms are and how long they last. These symptoms range from mild right through to very severe and they can all impact your day-to-day functioning. Common symptoms are a lack of energy, loss of interest in once enjoyable activities, change in sleep pattern, loss or

gain in appetite, feelings of worthlessness, and thoughts about dying and suicide.

If feelings of sadness, low energy and emptiness are prolonged and they interfere with daily life and relationships, then it is important to seek help from a health professional. Seeking help early is a key factor to optimise treatment success. A brief screener called a 'Depression self test' (not a diagnosis) is available on the Black Dog Institute website. If you are concerned, then see your GP for a review and possible referral.

For many people, periods of feeling down can be managed by good self-care strategies

If depression is diagnosed, the type of treatment offered will depend on your individual needs and the severity of the condition, including other conditions diagnosed at the same time, such as anxiety. Psychological treatments can teach people new ways of thinking, coping or relating to others, and can be accessed in person or online.

Psychological therapy, digital health programs (www.headtohealth.gov.au) and exercise work well for many people, such as those experiencing mild to moderate symptoms. There are also a range of antidepressant medications that are available and these can be used in conjunction with psychological therapy. Open Arms is a national service for veterans and families and offers counselling and group programs such as 'Beating the Blues'.

Sometimes these interventions are not effective, or the depression may be severe and persisting. In these cases a referral to a psychiatrist is generally required. Here,

additional treatment options such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), a neurostimulation treatment, may be recommended.

Innovation in recent years has led to new treatment modalities becoming available. These include repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS), and transcranial direct current stimulation, which are both mild and targeted forms of brain stimulation that have been found to be effective with some patients.

Further research is underway to broaden treatment options available for individuals suffering persistent and debilitating depressive conditions. You can talk to your health care provider about treatments that are best suited to your needs.

A guide to what works for depression can be downloaded from the Beyondblue website (www.beyondblue.org.au). The guide also provides an indication of the level of evidence for the intervention. This is important to take note of as there are many activities that may purport to be a treatment that have little evidence, or significant side effects. The intervention may make you feel better in the moment, but may confer very little long-term benefit.

Being mindful of evidence-based treatment can assist people to make decisions that support their treatment and recovery.

What we know is that people recover well with the right care and support. For others, care and support is required over a longer time period, or at particular times. Remember, mental health and mental illness are not static, they fluctuate for all of us during our lifetimes, and need to be seen as part of our ongoing commitment to self-care.

There are many things we can do to help ourselves, you just need to take the first step.

Open Arms to help more Tasmanian veterans

Open Arms is expanding its assistance to Tasmanian veterans and veteran families through a series of locally led initiatives specifically designed to better support those living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

Offered for the first time in Australia and being trialled in Tasmania before being rolled out nationally, these programs will be complemented by an initiative to identify veterans needing mental health assistance and connect them directly with Open Arms.

The first offering is the new, 8-week Stress, Resilience and Functioning (SRF) Program, part of the groundbreaking PTSD Trauma Recovery Program, which includes an additional 4-week trauma component for those veterans requiring further support.

The veteran-specific SRF program will be delivered in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, and is designed to help those who have served to be aware of, and manage, potential adverse impacts of service on their mental health and wellbeing.

It was developed by DVA Chief Psychiatrist, Associate Professor Jon Lane, a Tasmania-based veteran who has experienced his own mental health challenges after undertaking active duty overseas.

Professor Lane said the highly personalised SRF program was focused on helping veterans to reflect upon the ways they react to stress and to help them to develop practical skills to reduce the impact of stressful situations.

'Stress can lead to distress, which is a longer term change that can

be serious enough to result in the development of disorders including anxiety, depression and PTSD,' Professor Lane explained.

'The SRF program will help veterans to better understand service culture, to recognise stress and potential emotional triggers, and learn how to develop coping mechanisms and stress management techniques.'

The SRF program is complemented by specialised support that directly assists the families of veterans. A third statewide initiative is underway to better identify veterans needing mental health assistance through Enhancing Mental Health Service Access for Veterans and connect them directly with Open Arms.

Open Arms National Manager Leonie Nowland said the introduction of the SRF and trauma programs, support for families and connecting more veterans with Open Arms' specialised support would all prove enormously beneficial to Tasmanian veterans.

'Under the Enhancing Mental Health Service Access for Veterans, veterans are directly identified in the state-based mental health intake service,' Ms Nowland said. 'As part of DVA's commitment to improving mental health support for Tasmania's veterans, we can now connect them with Open Arms through the assessment and referral phone service.'

'The primary platform for this is the Centralised Intake and Referral Service, which can be accessed directly by both veterans and general practitioners.'

Open Arms is located in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport and has proudly supported the mental health and wellbeing of former and current ADF personnel and their families throughout Tasmania since 1982.



L to R: Lived Experience Peer Shane Morgan, Minister Matt Keogh, Tasmanian Minister for Veterans' Affairs Guy Barnett, Open Arms National Manager Leonie Nowland and DVA Chief Psychiatrist Dr Jon Lane

Two new Open Arms offices open in Brisbane



Former Assistant Minister Matt Thistlethwaite, Regional Community Engagement Coordinator Emma Griffith and Leonie Nowland

Open Arms recently expanded its mental health support offering for the 60,000 veterans who call Greater Brisbane home.

In April, the then Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Thistlethwaite opened two new Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling offices in Stafford and Mount Gravatt. The offices are providing local defence personnel, veterans and families with improved access to free counselling, group programs, and peer support.

'Brisbane is home to one of Australia's largest veteran communities and Open Arms is Australia's leading specialist mental health service for veterans and their families,' Minister Thistlethwaite said.

'Our veterans sacrifice much in the service of this country, they put their lives on the line to protect the rest of us. This is an unpayable

debt, but veterans can rest assured that Open Arms is there for them when they need support.

'I would like to thank Open Arms staff for their unwavering support of veterans and their families.'

Specialist staff trained to provide military-aware and trauma-informed care are employed at the new offices. Many Open Arms staff are veterans themselves or from veteran families.

Open Arms was established by Vietnam veterans as the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service. Since 1982, Open Arms has provided more than 2 million free mental health sessions to more than 300,000 veterans and their family members.

To see the locations of the new South Queensland Open Arms offices, visit www.openarms.gov.au.

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

If you, or someone you know is struggling, Open Arms' trauma informed and military-aware support is available any time, day or night. Call 1800 011 046.

UK connections: War Widows Pen Pal initiative



AUSTRALIAN
WAR WIDOWS
QUEENSLAND

A message from War Widows Queensland

Australian War Widows Queensland (AWWQ) has recently partnered with the War Widows Association in the UK to establish a Pen Pal Program for war widows across the two nations.

This collaborative effort presents a beautiful opportunity for war widows in both countries to share support and forge meaningful connections, whether through email or traditional mail.

The primary objective of the Pen Pal Program is to enhance social connections, provide support for those experiencing isolation, and cultivate enduring friendships among the participants.

The idea for the program emerged initially in response to the onset of COVID-19, recognising the isolation experienced by many war widows living alone. It provided a platform where war widows who couldn't leave their homes could still connect, share experiences and find companionship.

The program includes war widows from all age groups: presently, the eldest participant is 98 years old. Participants within Queensland currently reside in Brisbane,

Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville, with interstate participants located in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

A 90-year-old war widow has been exchanging letters with another war widow in her 50s for the past four years. Their connection has blossomed and they offer each other comfort and wisdom that bridges the gap between generations.

Recipients have shared how receiving a letter from their pen pal brightens their day. One lady remarked: 'It has been truly wonderful; I've formed a close friendship with my pen pal, and both of us have greatly benefited from this initiative.'

Words have the power to heal, to comfort, and to inspire. They can mend broken hearts and bridge vast distances - Heather Vogel Frederick

Interested war widows Australia-wide can register by emailing lindy@warwidowsqld.org.au or calling the AWWQ Head Office on 07 3846 7706.

We encourage you to enrol in this program, bridging hearts across the continents.

War Widows Day is coming to the Territory



Legacy war widows and Defence widows gathering in Darwin, Northern Territory; image courtesy of Legacy NT

A message from Australian War Widows Inc.

War widows in the Northern Territory will commemorate War Widows Day 2024.

Australian War Widows Inc. (AWW) has been working closely with a small group of Northern Territory war and defence widows, and the Northern Territory Government, to have 19 October 2024 recognised as War Widows Day.

It has been wonderful to form a connection with war widows in the NT and we are thankful to everyone who has been working with us to achieve this positive outcome. AWW does not currently have a branch office in the Territory but a small group has been meeting in the Darwin area and is very excited

War Widows Day 2024 - Wangaratta, Victoria

War widows and Defence widows in the Wangaratta and surrounds will commemorate War Widows Day 2024 with an afternoon tea to be held at the Wangaratta RSL, 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm on Saturday 19 October. We are truly grateful to the Wangaratta/Myrtleford/Bright Legacy Group for organising this special day and for the support of Wangaratta RSL and the Wangaratta RSL Women's Auxiliary.

If you are a war widow/defence widow in this area and would like to be part of the celebration, please call the Wangaratta/Myrtleford/Bright Legacy Group: Kay (0417569247) or Lois (0488677797).



Lois Knox and Kay Adams

about being part of a national War Widows Day celebration.

The Northern Territory government has been approached to host the inaugural event in the Territory. With assistance from other NT-based ex-service organisations, we anticipate that events will be hosted in the main regional centres throughout the Territory.

If you are a war widow(er) living in the NT and would like to participate in celebrating and acknowledging War Widows Day in October, please contact the AWW Office on 0427 735 871 or wwidowsnat@bigpond.com. We will advise you of the date and time of events in your region and provide the contact details of the local organiser.

Family and domestic violence I challenge you to be a part of the solution

COMMISSIONER GWEN CHERNE

Veteran Family Advocate

 Gwen Cherne VFA  @gmcherne  Gwen Cherne  vfacommissioner_gwencherne



The way we are approaching family and domestic violence (FDV) is creating a divide between genders and generations. We know that violence against women is wrong, that it happens to men and that abuse takes many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and economic.

We now have laws against coercion and control in some states. Violence is a national crisis that affects men, women and children every single day from every walk of life, including those in the Defence and veteran community who experience FDV at higher rates than the general public.

Sadly, statistics do not resonate with people when they feel villainized or are struggling in the moment, even ones as clear as 'every 9 days one woman in Australia loses her life to family and domestic violence', or 'one in three women since the age of 15 have experienced physical violence'.

These aren't just numbers, they are people like me - I am one of those statistics.

Growing up as the daughter of a Vietnam veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder, my life was marked by significant violence. My father, like many in the military, brought a command-and-control mindset into our home, resulting in emotional abuse, coercion, and physical violence. This environment was my reality, it shaped my understanding of relationships and conflict.

As a young adult, I experienced sexual violence and then later intimate partner violence with my late husband. Both my father and husband were good men caught in cycles of violence, feeling a constant need to impose control over their lives. This need for control, often stemming from their own traumatic experiences, manifested in harmful ways.

It's a painful truth that many perpetrators of domestic violence were once victims themselves, and one in 3 children who experience domestic violence grow up to become perpetrators. This cycle of violence is not just statistics, it's a heartbreaking reality.

My late husband, who was also a veteran, struggled with his violent tendencies and the shame that accompanied them. He wanted to heal and be forgiven but felt unable to seek help due to stigma. The weight of his contradictory nature - being admired in his community yet inflicting pain at home - became too much for him, and he tragically took his own life. I share this story not to excuse his actions but to highlight the urgent need to understand and address the root causes of domestic violence and the consequences of not getting it right.

When I became a mother, I found myself too easily ready to resort back to the learned behaviours of my childhood. In high-stress environments, my fight response is like a superhighway: a survival mechanism from my past. But with 2 young children, I knew that following this pattern would only perpetuate harm.

Getting help and learning the skills needed to redirect my automatic responses was hard. I was nervous about taking that first step because I feared judgment. But having gone through the process, I now



Paying tribute to my late husband with my family at the Australian War Memorial.

understand that stigma and shame are significant barriers to ending domestic violence and healing.

It's crucial for victims, and those who have been able to change their learned behaviours, to speak out. Working against your hard-wired responses is challenging, and it's something I still work at every day to set a better example for my children.

To end domestic violence, we need men to be part of the conversation. They need to feel they are not being lectured to or villainized. They need to feel like they can come forward and seek support without fear of judgment or shame. While punitive action is right and necessary in many cases, there must also be space for rehabilitation, healing, and self-improvement. Without creating a space where people feel they can seek help and share their stories, we will not end domestic violence and the cycle will repeat.

We need to focus on educating men and women alike about the foundations of healthy relationships, which involve honesty, trust, respect, boundaries and open communication between partners.

These relationships require effort and compromise from both people, with no imbalance of power. Partners must respect each other's independence, make their own decisions without fear of retribution or retaliation, and share decision making equally. Asserting control over others is a form of abuse, while controlling oneself is empowering and healing.

Encouraging participation in Behaviour Change programs is also essential. Following strengths-based approaches offers opportunities to engage perpetrators, provide valuable insights, and motivate positive transformation in abusive or violent behaviours that can lead to lasting change.

Addressing domestic violence requires a comprehensive approach. It's about tackling interconnected issues like employment opportunities, substance abuse, addiction, financial independence, education,

access to support, judicial duty of care, child abuse, societal stigma, victim-blaming, and vilification. By understanding these issues and committing to systemic change, we can build a foundation for future generations to end violence in our homes.

Today, we understand more about these issues, their causes and how to address them than we did in the past. When I look to the next generation, I have hope. Our children are quicker, brighter and more agile than we were. They have access to information we never did, and they want to be engaged. If we can have the conversations our parents never could, we can create a foundation to take further steps and truly end domestic violence in their generation.

We must keep this conversation going and take action every day. My story, rooted in the Defence and veteran community, is just one among many, but it speaks to the urgent need for advocacy, support, and systemic change.

My story also holds hope for those of us who fit the bill of being perpetrators and are not so young anymore. There are ways to rewire our brains, undo learned behaviours and be in healthy relationships with others. My partner is a veteran and he and I have committed to kindness, care and mutual respect. It is not easy, but the most important thing I learned in my parenting after a FDV course was that we hurt in relationship *and* we heal in relationship. There is hope for all of us.

Domestic violence is everyone's problem, so we all need to be a part of the solution. Together, we can end domestic violence. What will you do?

If this story has raised any concerns for you, please call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732), a national, professional family violence and sexual assault counselling service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or visit www.1800respect.org.au.

More information about preventing violence against women and children is available from Our Watch at www.ourwatch.org.au.



Members and friends of the new Families of Veterans Guild

A new brand in service of defence families

A message from the Families of Veterans Guild (formerly Australian War Widows NSW)

The Families of Veterans Guild, a new brand name for our organisation that has been known as Australian War Widows NSW, was formally launched on 23 April 2024.

The Families of Veterans Guild is an inclusive not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to provide the defence and veteran family community with a voice, facilitate access to services and entitlements, and support its social and emotional wellbeing.

With more than half a million families of veterans in Australia, and only a small segment currently eligible for

support, we are filling existing gaps in the veteran support landscape. We do this by offering a place and support to those who are not eligible elsewhere: e.g. families who are not bereaved or parents of veterans.

We advocate for the inclusion of all families of veterans in the system of support and seek to ensure that, from the moment a veteran puts on a uniform, they know that their families will have a home and a voice regardless of what their future holds.

We know that service in the Defence force and its impacts have changed significantly since our beginnings in 1946, and we are responding to those changes and community expectations. Our

brand change is not about forgetting our war widows, it is about ensuring ~~their legacy continues~~ and that war widows remain seen, heard, supported, and that Australia never forgets.

As our founder Ms Jessie Vasey CBE OBE said almost 70 years ago: *We are now becoming an older women's group and I feel that if we remain as such the organisation will die. We must become an inclusive group...*

It takes a village to provide holistic and quality support to the families of our veterans throughout their entire life journey. It is only when we as a community work together that we can fill existing gaps and improve the lives of the families of our veterans.

We all have a role to play in supporting those who stand behind those who stand for us.

Are you a veteran's family? A defence family? A war widow? Do you want to help, support or learn more?

Visit our new website (www.familiesofveterans.org.au) or email us at guild@fov.org.au and join our movement today.



Vietnam veterans' families supported to pursue dreams

More than half a century since Australian troops withdrew from Vietnam, their legacy lives on, including through wonderful initiatives like the Long Tan Bursary (LTB).

Over the months of May and June, 37 children and grandchildren of Vietnam War veterans were celebrated at ceremonies held across the country where they were awarded a 2024 bursary. They will each receive up to \$12,000 over 3 years to help with tertiary education expenses.

The LTB is named after the Battle of Long Tan, which is a well-known encounter fought by Australians during the Vietnam War. The battle was Australia's most costly of the war, with the highest number of Australian casualties in a single engagement.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh congratulated all of this year's recipients of the bursary. 'Last year we marked 50 years since the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, but our commitment to supporting the families of Vietnam veterans does not end there,' Minister Keogh said.

'I truly believe that no matter who you are or where you're from, all Australians deserve access to a good education. I hope this bursary will help students from across the country access the education and skills they need to thrive.'

Recognising the intergenerational impacts of conflict, the LTB was born more than 20 years ago. It followed Vietnam veterans advocating for their descendants to be supported with costs related

to tertiary education if they need it. To date, the bursary has supported 967 children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans to further their education by providing monetary assistance towards tertiary education expenses.

Financial aid provided by the LTB has helped produce doctors, teachers, lawyers, artists, mechanics and many other professions. All have gone on to make valuable contributions to their community and

our country. This year's recipients' chosen fields of study include commerce, psychology, law, medicine/surgery, teaching, science, occupational therapy and more.

We extend our congratulations to all of the recipients of the 2024 Long Tan Bursary.

Applications for the 2025 LTB will open on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August 2024. For more information visit the DVA website. (Search for 'Long Tan Bursary'.)

What do you think of this newspaper?

Your views matter for the future of *Vetaffairs*.

Please give us your feedback through a 5 minute survey at: www.dva.gov.au/vetaffairs-survey





Sailing On sets up in Sydney

Sailing On's Gun Runner yacht.

Retired Major Guy Mewburn set up Sailing On to help former and current ADF personnel improve their mental health by teaching them how to fix and sail boats, and through bonding with other members. Sailing On now boasts 64 members and 6 keelboat yachts.

'With 25 years in the Regular Army, I knew only too well the stresses on service people and the terrible suicide rate,' Guy says. 'I wanted to do something to help ease those stresses and came up with the idea by combining the two ingredients of teamwork and mateship through sailing.'

First established in Western Australia, Sailing On has now set up base at the Royal Australian Navy Sailing Association at Darling Point in Sydney. They have also recently bought the yacht *Gun Runner* from the Army, a previous entrant in 3 Sydney to Hobart races.

Sailing On is a tri-service organisation for veterans and serving members of any service, with any level of sailing experience. 'We have

members from beginner sailors to the very experienced,' says Guy. '*Gun Runner* now gives us the opportunity to start up in NSW as well as provide competitive ocean sailing for our more advanced members.'

They sail every Wednesday afternoon and at twilight, as well as on Saturdays when skippers are available, and qualified people can sail any time of the week. For only \$65 a year, you could learn boat repairs, get free training with all the safety gear, and a yacht to sail any time you want. And if you don't want to get your feet wet, there are plenty of skills to learn on dry land, including boat maintenance, fibre-glassing and rigging. Visit www.sailingonwa.org.au or email chair@sailingonwa.org.au for more information.

Helping veterans get a good night's sleep

A message from Mates4Mates

Australian veterans' charity Mates4Mates is boosting support to serving and ex-serving Defence Force personnel, delivering an Online Sleep Program to raise awareness of the benefits of sleep health.

Sleep is our internal reset button, and for veterans sleep can ease psychological symptoms, stabilise mood, reduce chronic conditions, improve the ability to cope with pain, and assist with processing emotionally charged memories.

A study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, it was found that as many as 89% of Australian service personnel and veterans suffer from reported sleep disturbances, compared to only 42% of the general public.

Mates4Mates Psychologist Jonathan Moscrop said the Online Sleep Program helps veterans and families explore sleep from a physiological, psychological and practical perspective.

'Sleep is a crucial component of mental and physical wellness,' Mr Moscrop said. 'Veterans are exposed to chronic stress during military service due to training,

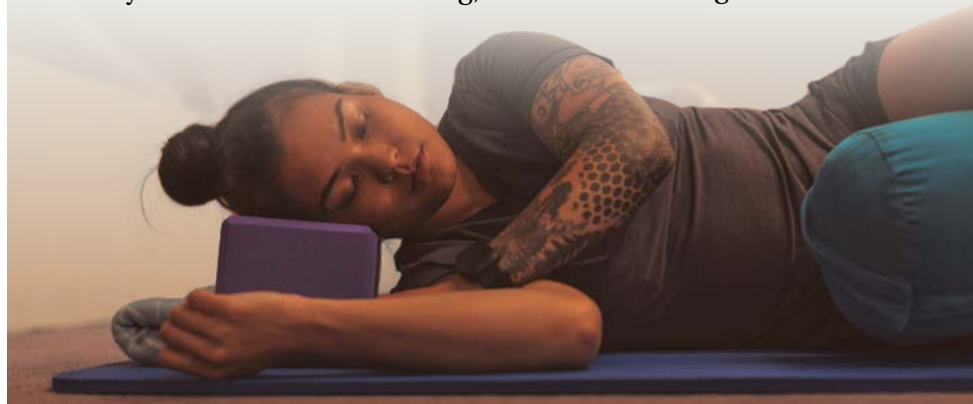
deployment and return to civilian life, and this all can impact sleep.

'Our Online Sleep Program aims to help participants develop healthier sleeping behaviours and positively impact their overall wellbeing.'

The program aims to teach veterans and family members skills and strategies for improved sleep, as well as explore and understand sleep from various perspectives. Facilitated by Mates4Mates counsellors and social workers, the next program will be delivered over a four-week period in October. Expressions of interest are now open for registration in the program.

Mates4Mates offers a safe and supportive environment for veterans and their family members to find health solutions. With exercise physiologists, psychologists, social workers and counsellors available in centre and via telehealth, there are multiple pathways to consider when treating your sleep health.

To find out more about Mates4Mates services, make the call that makes a difference on 1300 4 MATES (62 837) or visit our www.mates4mates.org.



People who volunteer are happier

A message from Disaster Relief Australia

It's official: volunteering with Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) is good for mental health and wellbeing! It also saves lives. While we already knew this, we wanted to test the theory and put some science behind it.

After two years of research with 786 DRA volunteers through the Project Wellbeing Study, we now have evidence that proves that what we do, and how we do it, makes people happier. Now it's time to share the findings far and wide.

Since DRA's inception, our volunteers have told us that service makes them happier - that helping others through volunteering gives them a sense of purpose and, in some cases, has saved their lives. But we wanted to know more, so we launched Project Wellbeing in 2022 to scientifically validate the benefits of DRA's volunteering program and identify opportunities for enhancement.

In collaboration with the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and funded by Movember Foundation, DRA asked its volunteers to participate in a wellbeing pulse check survey or interview at key points during the training and deployment portions of their volunteering journey. SAHMRI did this regularly over 12 months using specific and carefully crafted questions designed to give valuable insight into the volunteer experience.

Through the collection of nearly 700,000 data points they learned that, on average, DRA volunteers showed significant improvements in mental wellbeing which were sustained over the long term. Volunteering with DRA had the greatest impact on



Former Assistant Minister Matt Thistlethwaite with former DRA CEO Geoff Evans at the report's launch.

vulnerable volunteers. It made them feel useful and helped them regain a sense of purpose, often when they felt they had few options left. Ultimately, it reduced the risk of suicide for many.

At DRA we do things differently. We discovered our volunteering activities support wellbeing, in turn leading to improved mental health outcomes through:

- active volunteering - being physically active and helping others in times of need
- connection - socialising with like-minded people and connecting to positive role models
- development - formal and informal upskilling leading to improved self-worth
- recognition - experiences that provide a sense of importance and purpose
- supportive conversations - allowing wellbeing officers and volunteers with a high wellbeing literacy to detect early warning signs.

Taken together, this is why DRA's volunteering model works so well. Visit the DRA website (www.disasterreliefaus.org) for full details about the project.

New law in place for overseas work

Former personnel may need Defence approval to work for foreign militaries and governments, following the *Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Act 2024* coming into force on 6 May 2024.

The requirement lasts one, 5 or 10 years after discharge depending on someone's Defence role and the sensitivity of information they worked with. There could be exceptions for jobs with Five-Eyes countries, Australian Government activities or UN work.

'You will need to fill in the online form, then we'll assess if the work raises any national security issues,' said Defence's Chief Security Officer Peter West. 'I think in most cases there will be no issues, but if we think there's a risk we may deny the authorisation or give you one with conditions attached.'

The requirement also applies to former personnel working for foreign militaries or governments as a contractor. The new law also applies to Australian citizens or permanent residents training in military tactics and use of software or technology with military applications.

The legislation doesn't exclude any specific types of work, so generic services such as cleaning could still require authorisation. The focus is the end beneficiary of the work, not necessarily who is doing the hiring. It does not apply to enlisting in foreign militaries, which is covered by the Crimes Act and has exemptions for officially recognised foreign militaries.

Mr West said his team did not want to stop people using their Defence skills to get jobs overseas and would try to make the process as quick as possible.



First directed-energy weapon put to the test

At a Puckapunyal range, where tanks and explosions are commonplace, a new type of weapon system has been put through its paces.

The ADF's first directed-energy weapon, called the Fractl Portable High Energy Laser, is powerful enough to burn through steel and can track objects as small as a 10-cent piece travelling 100 km per hour a kilometre away. It's silent, virtually motionless and soldiers can be taught to use it in minutes.

Corporal Patrick Flanagan was given a 'soldier's five' before he successfully shot down a drone. 'You push a button to track the drone and the computer takes over, then you push another button to 'pull the trigger' just like in a video game,' he said.

Melbourne company AIM Defence designed the suitcase-sized laser that works like a blowtorch travelling at the speed of light. It can burn a hole in a drone using less power than it takes to boil a kettle.

At the Puckapunyal demonstration, the team 'hard killed' a drone at 500 m with a deployable prototype. The laser's strength is limited by the power supply and AIM Defence has successfully engaged drones at 1 km in past tests.

Directed-energy weapons are one way Defence is embracing emerging technology to counter off-the-shelf, small multi-rotor uncrewed aerial vehicles.



Second World War bomber crew found and farewelled

Having positively identified a Second World War 100 Squadron Beaufort aircraft (A9-186) in Papua New Guinea, the Air Force farewelled 2 of its 4 crew members during a combined funeral and memorial service at RAAF Base Amberley on 26 April.

First reported missing in 1943, the aircraft was recently discovered by an Ocean Ecology Pty Ltd dive team working for Dr Andrew Forrest after a difficult mission in the waters south of Gasmata. The challenging wreck site meant identifying the remains of the aircraft took considerable time, effort and teamwork.

The RAAF's specialist team collated the evidence and a Defence Identification Board identified the remains as those of Warrant Officer Clement Batstone Wiggins and Warrant Officer Russell Henry Grigg. Unfortunately, no remains of the other 2 crew members, Flight Sergeant Albert Beckett and Flight

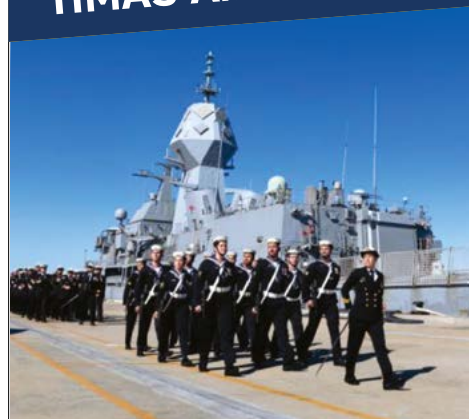
Sergeant Gordon Lewis Hamilton, were recovered.

Delivering the eulogy on behalf of the Grigg family, Henry Grigg's daughter, Mary Peden, expressed gratitude to Andrew Forrest and his team for discovering A9-186, found in 43 metres of water while searching for A9-188, piloted by his uncle.

'Our family can only express our extreme gratitude to Andrew for this discovery of our dad, and sorrow for him with the disappointment of not finding the plane of his uncle before his dad died,' Ms Peden said.



HMAS Anzac farewelled after 30 years



Navy frigate HMAS *Anzac III*, the first of her class, was decommissioned on 18 May after nearly 3 decades in service, at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia.

Commissioned on May 18, 1996 under the command of then Captain (now Commodore) Les Pataky, who was on hand to watch the ceremony, the Anzac-class helicopter frigate FFH 150 was named in recognition of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and attended

both the 90th and 100th remembrance services in Gallipoli.

'Anzac has served an exceptional tenure and is the hallmark vessel for its numerous operations, deployments and commemorative activities,' said Commander Barton Harrington. 'Today marks the completion of her time as the First Lady of the Fleet.'

Anzac served at the centre of some of Australia's most important international engagements, she conducted operations in fisheries protection, peacekeeping, and 3 deployments to the Persian Gulf.

Her accolades include: Battle Honours for East Timor 1999, Persian Gulf 2001-03, Iraq 2003 and Middle East 2007-13. Her most notable award was a Meritorious Unit Citation for naval gunfire support provided during the Battle of Al Faw.

A renewed Veteran Employment Commitment

DVA launched the renewed Veteran Employment Commitment (VEC) in April 2024, introducing a multi-level model to support employers of all sizes to create workplaces where veterans can thrive.

This new approach gives practical support and resources to encourage organisations to provide greater employment opportunities and assistance for those who have separated from the ADF. It empowers employers to publicly demonstrate the importance their business places on the skills, values and experience that veterans bring to civilian workplaces.

Employers who sign on to the renewed VEC can be recognised at one of 3 levels:

- Veteran Employment Supporter
- Veteran Friendly Employer
- Veteran Employer of Choice.

An organisation's level is determined by the veteran employment activities it undertakes across 3 categories: Recruitment; Support and Retention; Leadership and Public Commitment.

To assist employers to implement the VEC activities, a range of guidance materials and practical tools is available from veteranemployment.gov.au.

Members of the VEC receive a logo identifying their VEC level and a profile on the portal to link potential veteran recruits to their website.

The 'veteran employment supporters' search function has been updated to allow veterans to search for VEC members in their local region. The search function also allows users to filter by industry type, company size and veteran-specific employment supports such as employment programs, mentoring or veteran employee networks.

Army veteran Matt Evans, who works in the mining industry, has first-hand experience trying to find an employer that's a good fit. When Matt heard about the renewed VEC, he gave it his tick of approval.

'Being able to search for employers who are veteran-friendly is a massive step in the right direction!' says Matt. 'The renewed VEC will bring that and I hope many more veterans can use this tool to make their journey more successful. I struggled for a long time to find a job that



Army veteran Matt Evans

gave me meaning and recognised my skills and experience, so I am really excited that the Government is leading the way in setting a benchmark.'

All organisations that sign onto the VEC will receive access to employer support and resources from DVA on how to better recruit, retain and support veteran employees. Each level of the VEC offers additional benefits, which may

include invitations to exhibit at ADF Transition Seminars, opportunities to be showcased and present at forums and networking events.

To sign up, visit the Veteran Employment Program website and submit an application form providing documentation that demonstrates your activities to support veteran employment.

If you have previously signed the VEC, you are encouraged to re-apply and have until 30 November 2024 to complete the new application form and upload your supporting documentation before the old VEC signatories are removed from the website. This can be as simple as providing your website address and screenshot images.

By re-applying, you will ensure your organisation remains one of the growing number of Veteran Employment Commitment supporters and continues to receive the benefits this offers. Don't hesitate – sign up today to show your support for veteran employment!

Job hunting just got easier for young veterans

CivStart is a free, one-stop mobile companion for younger veterans looking to translate their military skills to the civilian job market.

There are currently 31,000 veterans in Australia aged 15-34. Miroma Project Factory (MPF) developed the *CivStart* app to support these young veterans as they navigate the transition from military to civilian employment.

In collaboration with the Defence Force Welfare Association, MPF consulted young veterans on the common challenges they face when searching for civilian jobs.

Many young veterans reported feeling overwhelmed by the transition information they received, but were unwilling to share their apprehensions. They also felt that their skills from service did not match those called for in civilian job advertisements.

Kat Robinson, CEO of MPF, says she is immensely proud of *CivStart*'s

role in supporting young veterans to overcome these obstacles.

'Our collaboration, innovative technology and design make *CivStart* a vital tool,' Kat says. 'We're excited about its continued positive impact and are dedicated to supporting our veterans' new career paths.'

The simple, self-serve nature of the app, with action-focused directions and guidance, supports young veterans to transition independently and at their own pace.



Kat Robinson, Gopal CEO, Miroma Project Factory

CivStart has 4 main features:

- *My Skills* helps young veterans identify the soft and hard skills they have developed during their service, based upon their military rank and their results from a skills questionnaire.
- *Job Search* takes users step-by-step through the job-seeking process, including writing a CV and cover letter, and cultivating a professional online presence.
- *Tips* help in networking, interviewing and creating CVs and cover letters.
- A *Resources* tab links transitioning veterans to further information and services available.

MPF has previously worked on other projects supporting veterans, including Soldier.ly, a smartwatch app founded by an Australian veteran to detect and manage stress, and Blesma: Military Charity for Limbless Veterans, a non-profit charity in the UK.

CivStart was funded by a Supporting Younger Veterans grant from DVA.



CivStart can be downloaded Australia-wide for free on Apple and Google Play. The app is completely anonymous and does not collect personal data.

Growing awareness of **MORAL INJURY**

Dr Nikki Jamieson tragically lost her 21-year-old son Daniel Garforth to suicide in 2014. A Private in the Army, Daniel was struggling with the way he was being treated at work.

As a result of his death, Dr Jamieson became a suicidologist and now works on suicide prevention at the Department of Defence. She believes that while suicide is very complex, moral injury (MI) may have contributed to her son's decision to take his life.

Dr Jamieson was among several grieving parents who pushed for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, at which she also gave evidence.

'We shouldn't be losing so many veterans to suicide,' she says. '[But] I'm looking forward to the final recommendations and the positive change they will bring, and I hope that at least one will have a focus on moral injury.'

Mental health professionals worldwide are taking an increasing interest in MI. The ADF defines it as a trauma-related syndrome caused by the physical, psychological, social and spiritual impact of grievous moral transgressions, or violations



Dr Nikki Jamieson



Professor Andrea Phelps

of an individual's deeply held moral beliefs and/or ethical standards. It can be caused by an individual perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about inhumane acts that result in the pain, suffering or death of others.

MI can also be caused by betrayal by trusted individuals in legitimate authority, as well as systems and bureaucracies.

MI manifests in symptoms such as shame, guilt, self-loathing, sadness, anxiety and disgust; beliefs about being bad, damaged or unworthy; loss of faith in people; avoidance of intimacy; and loss of religious faith, or loss of faith in humanity or a just world.

Professor Andrea Phelps, Deputy Director of Phoenix Australia - Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, has also conducted research into MI. She notes that the increasing interest in MI is in part due to recent wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan. 'The nature of those insurgency operations meant that military personnel were faced with many moral conflicts and ethical dilemmas,' she says.

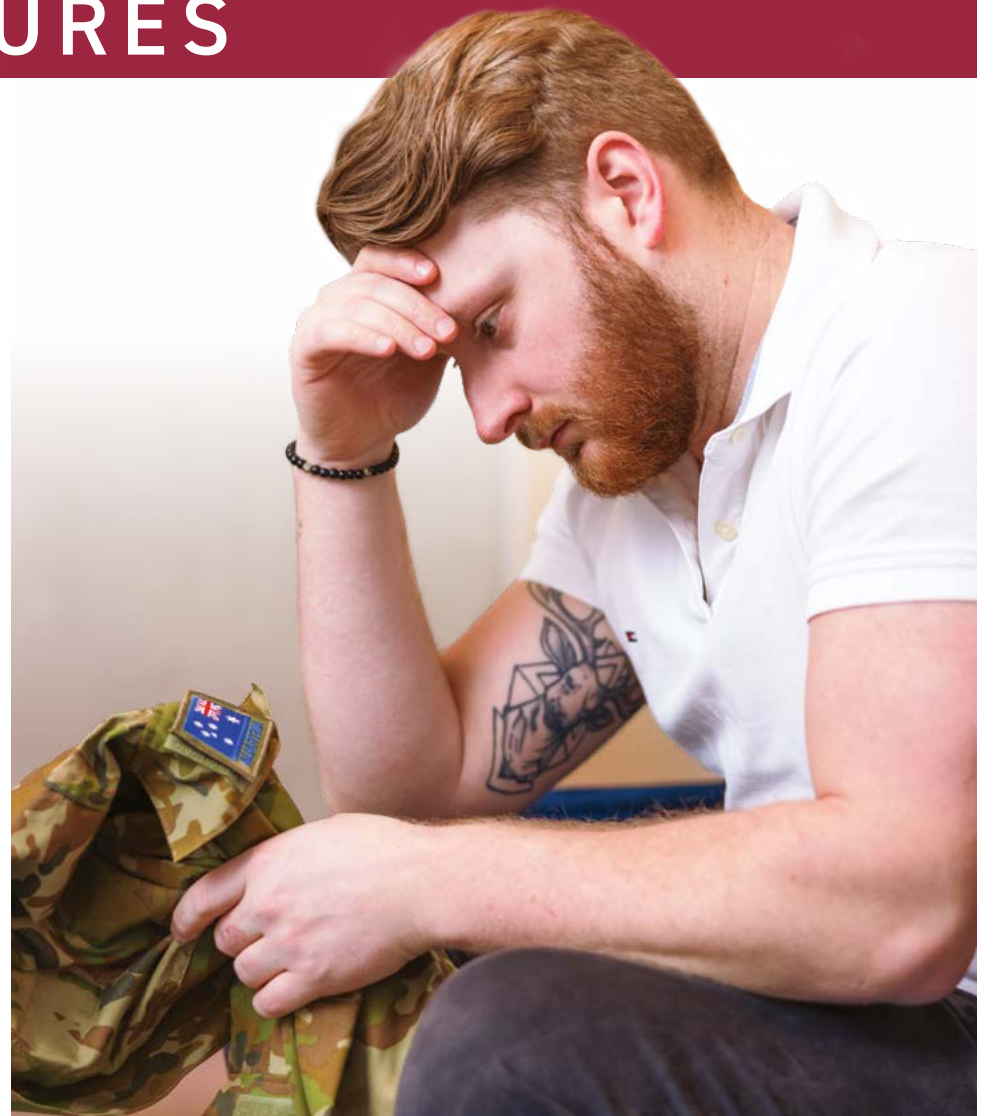
This view is shared by Repatriation Commissioner Kahlil Fegan DSC AM who in a recent speech pointed out that 'Moral injury is becoming increasingly recognised as something anyone providing services to veterans needs to properly understand.'

MI was first noticed in the 1980s by American psychiatrist Jonathan Shay who treated Vietnam veterans. It was he who coined the term. Research tells us there is a definite relationship between MI and suicide-related behaviour. And PTSD can increase the symptoms of MI, some of which overlap with PTSD.

Dr Jamieson points out that MI is often misdiagnosed as PTSD, which means affected veterans are not always getting the most suitable treatment and support.

'PTSD is built around a fear-model,' adds Professor Phelps. 'What's become increasingly recognised is that that's only one component and that in many cases there's a moral dimension. What we don't know is the extent to which MI is associated with PTSD versus the extent to which it's stand-alone.'

So, research is key. Recently, Professor Phelps took part in an international collaborative project



the Australian element of which was funded by DVA. It led to the creation of the Moral Injury Outcome Scale (MIOS), which is available on the Open Arms - Veterans & Families website (openarms.gov.au and search for 'moral injury').

'Treating moral injury is about supporting people as they learn to deal with and manage their new normal, and to help them make meaning and purpose from their experience.'

She says the MIOS is a reliable diagnostic tool and measure that will be useful for future research, and is pleased that it's getting traction throughout the mental health community.

Meanwhile, treatment for MI is available. Dr Jamieson explains that there are 2 main treatments in Australia. One is called acceptance/commitment therapy and the other is adaptive disclosure therapy.

'Treating moral injury is about supporting people as they learn to deal with and manage their new

normal, and to help them make meaning and purpose from their experience,' she says. 'The treatment offered to people with MI ... helps validate their experience and to forgive themselves and others. Defence is doing some really great work and the Royal Commission will help us in further shaping some of that work.'

We do not know how many serving and ex-serving ADF personnel suffer from MI, though ADF chaplains, and Veterans' Chaplains as part of the Veterans' Chaplaincy Pilot Program, now receive MI skills training that includes a focus on the pastoral or spiritual elements of MI.

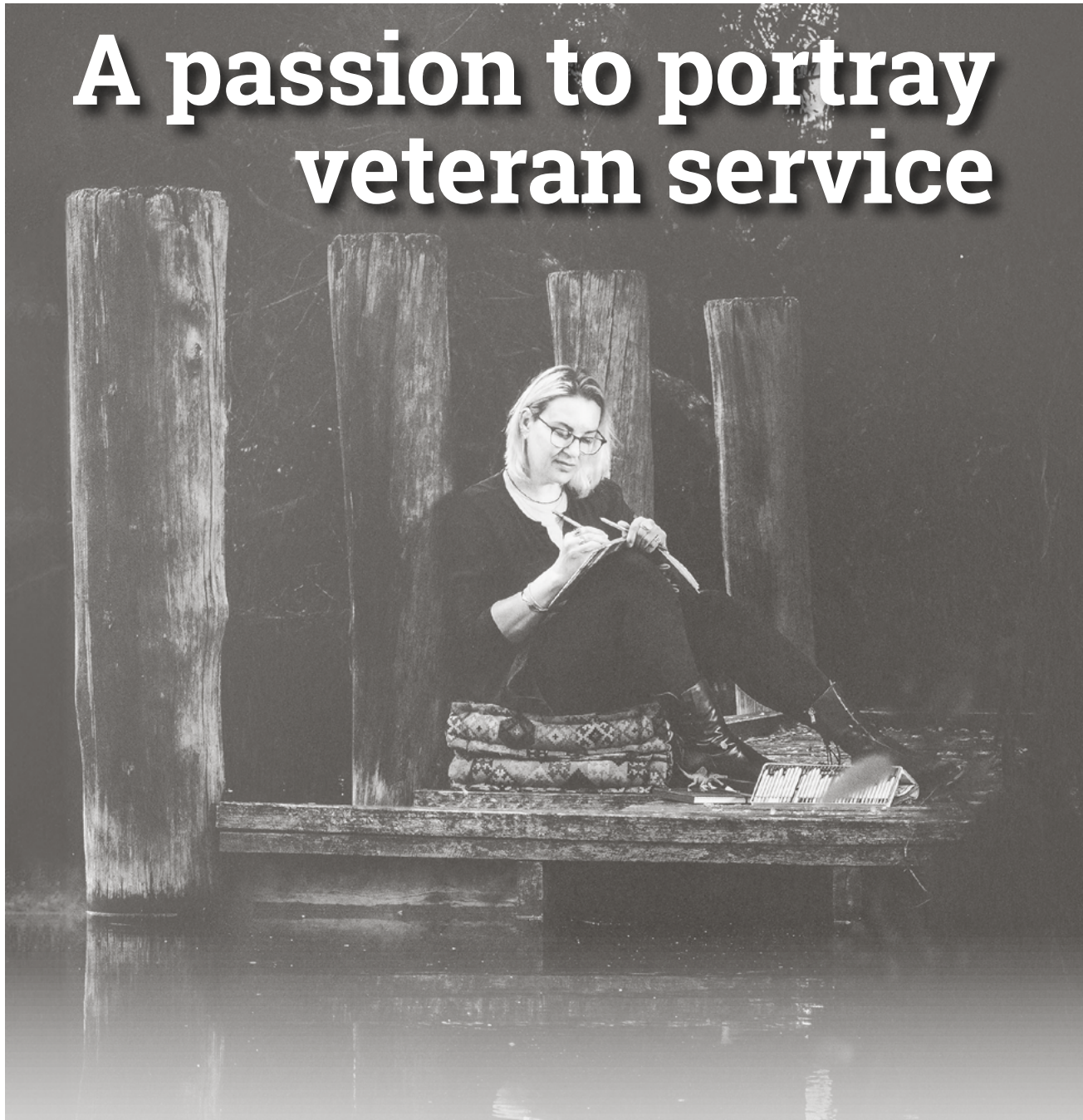
'We're talking "spiritual" in the broadest sense,' says Professor Phelps. 'For some people that will involve religious beliefs, for others it can change their understanding of the nature of humanity, or more broadly the meaning of life. This focus on spirituality sets moral injury apart from other mental health disorders, and may need a different approach to treatment.'

MI will be incorporated in future action plans under the soon to be released *Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029*, which is being developed by DVA and Defence.

If you are experiencing distress, contact Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling on 1800 011 046 (24/7). Open Arms clinicians can provide effective interventions for the treatment of MI.

Dr Jamieson's views are her own and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Australian Government or the Department of Defence.

A passion to portray veteran service



Three and a half years, 101 veterans, 36,000 kilometres, over 6,000 production hours... It may be strange to begin describing a work of art with a set of figures, but they capture what photographer and author Jenani Therone has devoted to bring her fine art publication – *Of Service* – to life.

‘Through *Of Service* I want to contribute toward the prevention of veteran suicide – suicide in general for that matter – and inspire the community by portraying not only their selfless service and sacrifices, but also their life after service,’ says Jenani.

‘It gives an opportunity to our society to recognise, respect and humanise our veterans as individuals instead of segregating and estranging them collectively. It’s the least we could do for those who have fought and made immense sacrifices for the freedom and democracy we enjoy.’

The outcome is a collection of 101 conceptualised veteran portraits from across the nation. They span people aged 27 to 102, from all walks of service, and deployments from the Second World War to Afghanistan.

Jenani started her professional life as a dietician and saw patients who experienced issues with their mental health. Her concept for *Of Service* is unique in approach and execution, meant to ignite meaningful conversations about veterans and their wellbeing in our society.

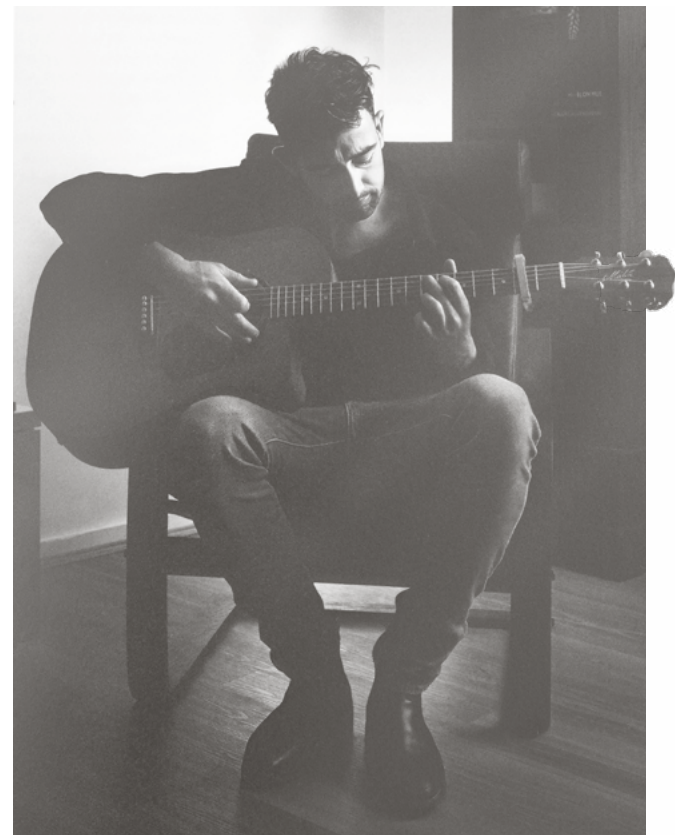
‘I wanted to humanise and individualise our veterans by projecting them with living portraits in a familiar context and sharing their stories,’ she says. ‘As an artist, I wanted to see how I can offer solace, offer hope.’

One of the veterans featured is former Lance Corporal Luke Stewart, whose self-awareness, compassionate outlook on life, and profound transformation journey astounded Jenani. ‘I think it is important that my role in *Of Service* is to get up and be as vulnerable, and speak as much truth as I can,’ Luke told her. ‘As time unfolded, I was able to unpack all the trauma I have not only gone through in the military, but have been avoiding my whole life.’

‘I think a lot of people feel discarded. This brings everyone back together: Hey, we know it is hard, we have been through this, we know you guys are struggling, but your suffering will end. There is light at the end of the tunnel.’

Jenani says the veterans wanted to be part of this project not to share their achievements or medals, but to help others by sharing their story. ‘There are veterans in this book who have tried to take their lives not once, but three or four times,’ she says. ‘When I started meeting each person, they started to share... and not in the sense of their service stories, but their vulnerability.’

Another volunteer for the project is former Leading Seaman, Cook and Submariner Racheal Bingham, who was one of the first 6 females in the world to qualify for the Collins-class submarine. ‘I always knew in high school, year ten even, that I was joining the Navy, I was leaving, I was going to bring myself up, and I did,’ Racheal said.



Above: Luke Stewart, Left: Racheal Bingham

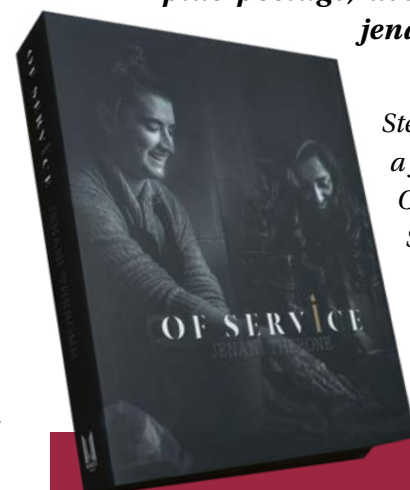
‘Rach’s path was filled with impediments and tears flowed freely during my time with her,’ Jenani recalls. ‘Words could not capture the overwhelming emotions that coursed through me as I realised the profound impact she intended to make.’

Her artistic approach was to try and connect with each individual to create the portrait. The works are natural, nothing is posed, and took place in spaces that were meaningful to the subjects and made them feel comfortable.

‘It’s an image we created together, in that raw spontaneous moment, on that day, that reflects the conversation, our connection, and how they perceive and want to portray themselves. I wanted to capture the positive spark that comes from within that veteran.’

‘It’s been healing for me as a person, and I want that for other people as well: to live your life to your fullest potential. To ask, in those moments of despair, why not give it another go?’

***Of Service* was launched at Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance on 20 June 2024, exactly 3 years since the day Jenani met her first veteran. All profits from the sale of the first edition will be donated to registered charities that align with the purpose of the artist and the project. 656 pages, \$279 plus postage; available from www.jenanitherone.com.au.**



Stephanie Fraser, a former Petty Officer Combat Systems Operator – Underwater (left) appears on the cover of *Of Service* with Jenani Therone.

Indigenous veterans unite

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Association (ATSIVA) is Australia's first national organisation dedicated to supporting Indigenous veterans living in isolated, remote or rural locations.

Australia is a vast land, and while the majority of us live in a big city, there are countless communities dotted across the country, from the Top End to Tassie, from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian. Beyond the black stump, services can be patchy, the internet unreliable, and as a result fostering a sense of community among geographically dispersed veterans can be difficult.

A gap exists, and ATSIVA is working to fill it.

Established in February last year, ATSIVA is a new ex-service organisation (ESO) that works to support and improve the wellbeing of Indigenous veterans and their families. An ESO with this aspiration has never existed before.

ATSIVA was founded when Dr Joseph West, and a couple of his mates, realised unconnected veterans could benefit from access to information, services and camaraderie. Joe was spurred to establish ATSIVA after he was called to present evidence at the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

'I was asked what support services were making a positive impact for Indigenous veterans, and the question stumped me,' Joe says. 'It was then I realised there were no active organisations at the national level.'

Rather than accept the status quo or bemoan its absence, Joe decided to establish an organisation himself.



Australian Army soldiers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait descent conduct the Honouring Warrior Spirits ceremony during the Centenary of the August 1915 Offensive on Gallipoli, 6 August 2015. (Image: Defence)

As a proud Murrawarri man who grew up north of Bourke and served in the Australian Army for more than 20 years, Joe understood what it meant to be an Indigenous veteran, and what living in a remote region was like.

'One of our objectives is to get support staff on the ground where veterans live,' says Joe. 'This includes trained advocates who understand the services and supports that are available. It means partnering with Indigenous veterans, people who are culturally sensitive and understand the concerns and needs of veterans living on country or in remote areas.'

Getting advocates to far-flung locations comes with its own

logistical challenges, so ATSIVA also hosts virtual catch ups, creating connections and building a sense of community between people with similar experiences, but who are otherwise isolated.

By creating greater connections between veterans and advocates, ATSIVA aims to serve as a conduit, linking isolated veterans to other ESOs and DVA services. Although ATSIVA is still the new kid on the block, they have already had a positive response, with enthusiastic attendance at a number of virtual meetings.

'In the six months since our website went live, several veterans in distress have reached out to us for support, and we were able to connect them to vital services,' Joe says. 'Without ATSIVA acting as a trusted point of contact, those veterans may not have received that support at all.'

ATSIVA has potential for significant future growth.

'Australia wide there could be as many as 7,000-10,000 Indigenous veterans who could benefit from connecting with ATSIVA,' Joe explains. 'Over the coming year, we will be looking to expand. This means engaging more volunteers willing to donate their time to reach into these isolated communities, make connections and bring services to veterans who have previously been unsupported.'



DVA's 2024 commemorative poster portrays Private Frederick Prentice of the 12th Australian Infantry Battalion and 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion.

If you believe you have the expertise, cultural knowledge and, most importantly, the time to donate, ATSIVA wants to hear from you. You can find out more about ATSIVA's work via its website (www.atsiva.au). And of course, if you are an Indigenous veteran living in a remote location and would like to connect with ATSIVA you can email Joe at ceo@atsiva.au.

'But ATSIVA is a broad organisation,' Joe adds. 'If you're an Indigenous veteran living in a city, or a non-Indigenous veteran in an isolated community and you would like to reach out, ATSIVA will happily welcome you to the mob.'

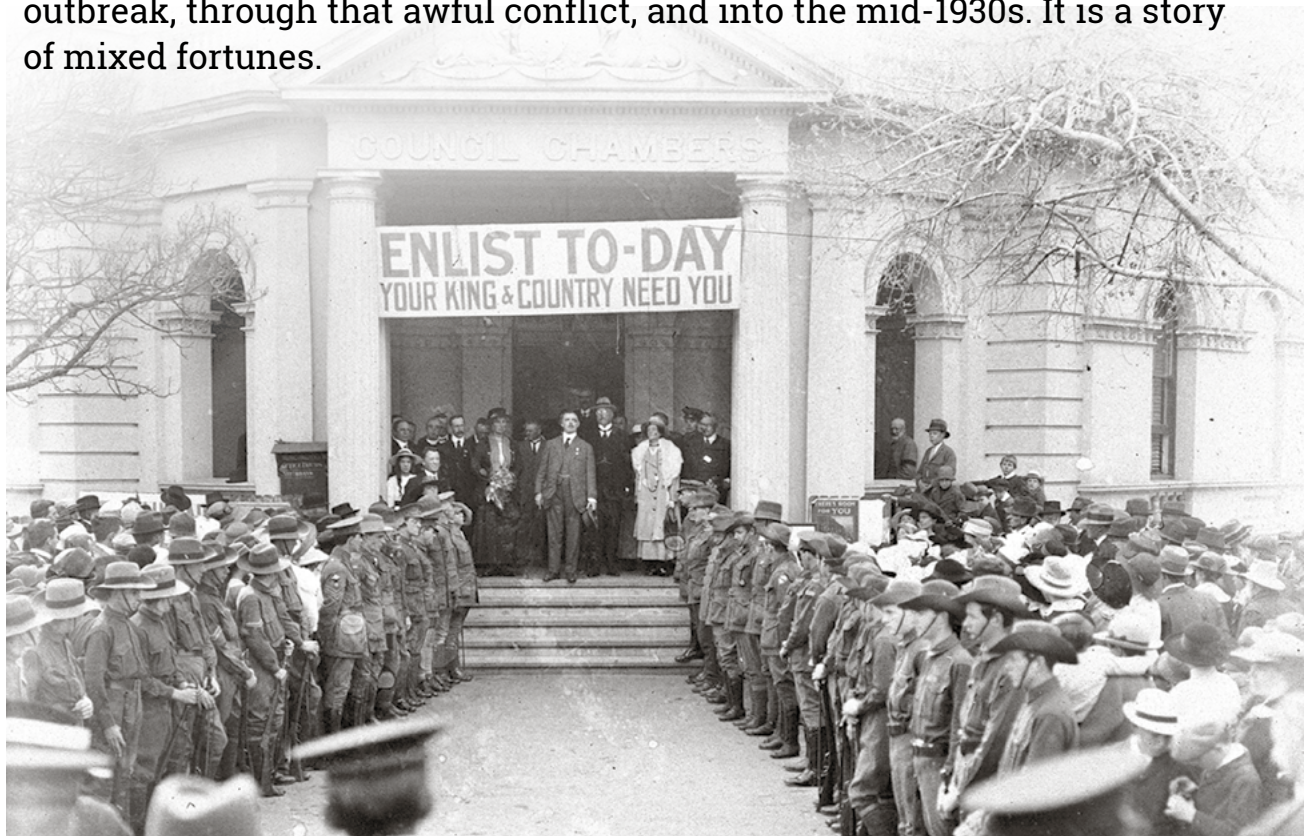


ATSIVA CEO Dr Joseph West preparing to move in Afghanistan.

Stories of Wagga's veterans reveal country Australia after the Great War

Reviewed by Dr Dale Blair

In *He belonged to Wagga*, Ian Hodges, the Senior Historian at the Department of Veterans' Affairs, weaves a deft tale that traces the lives of Wagga Wagga's volunteers of the First World War, from the days before the war's outbreak, through that awful conflict, and into the mid-1930s. It is a story of mixed fortunes.



Mayor Edward Collins (centre) welcomes the Governor of New South Wales to 'the capital of the Riverina' from the steps of the Council Chambers during the 1918 Wagga Wagga Show. Before him stands a guard of honour made up of returned soldiers and much younger boys.

The war profoundly affected men in diverse ways. Poor health, unemployment and disillusionment became the lot of many, while others prospered and went on to live normal lives.

The popular narrative of the First World War leans toward returned soldiers falling on tough times and suffering the double indignity of war and then the Great Depression. Calamitous as these events were, Hodges challenges this perception and reveals that many men and their families rose above the difficulties to get on with their lives.

Hodges accepts that the war did not cease living in the veterans' memories but argues that most were able to withstand them, reintegrate into the community, and engage in local recreational, commercial and political activities.

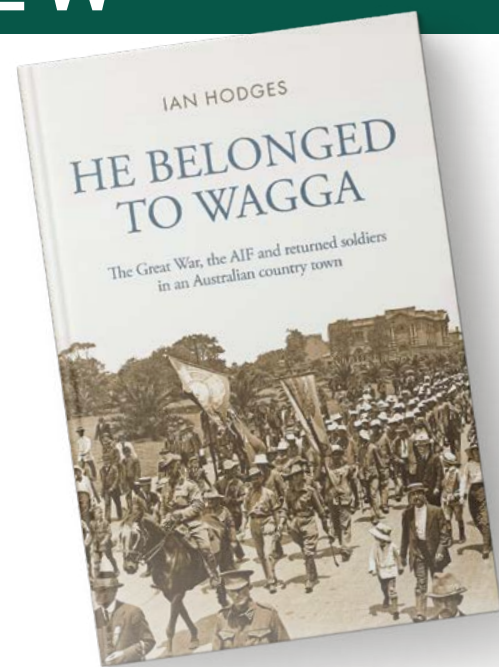
Harry Gissing, a trained pharmacist who served with the 1st and 14th Field Ambulances during the war, is one citizen held up as an exemplar of getting on with life.

Gissing was president of the Wagga Cricket Association and the Australian Imperial Force cricket club, an alderman and mayor, ran a successful pharmacy and launched Wagga Wireless Distributors. Moreover, he helped establish the town's ambulance service and station, was a prominent figure in the boy scouts and Rotary Club, and was involved in the local Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia, as well as many fundraising activities. Harry Gissing was a beacon of exceptional positivity.

The book's heart is derived from sources gathered from historical societies, newspapers, the regional archive at Charles Sturt University, and the repatriation files of returned soldiers. Through them, the tensions of private and town life are revealed and measured against a multitude of civic considerations. These tensions, however, never derailed efforts to support returned soldiers, around which the town maintained a unified fidelity.

One humorous example of town division involved the selection of the town's citizen band over its brass band to lead the Armistice Day march. The brass band had been more associated with the Australian Imperial Force throughout the war and the prevailing opinion was that it should have been selected. On the day, the brass band turned up and the crowd voted with their feet by following it and putting an end to the formal commemorations.

Hodges succeeds in capturing the broad perspective of life in Wagga through stories that tap into the varying pedigrees of its citizens. It is a story that reveals a sense of pride in town, state, country and Empire, and how the town navigated difficult and troubled times.



By Dr Ian Hodges. Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2022. 310 pages; \$44.



Wagga volunteers, many from the Red Cross League, packing Christmas Bilies for the men on Gallipoli. A typical billy might include tinned food, playing cards, cheese, chocolates, tobacco and often a letter from the person, usually a woman, who packed it. The job was completed on 9 October 1915, when almost 400 bilies were despatched.

Residents of Wagga Wagga and the wider Riverina district ought to read this book if they wish to gain a richer understanding of how the First World War affected local people's lives.

Wagga's story, however, is the story of many regional communities throughout Australia and Hodges has provided a wonderful template for regional historians to use to explore their own town's First World War experience.

Dr Dale Blair is an historian currently working for DVA. He Belonged to Wagga won the NSW Community and Regional History Prize in the 2023 NSW Premier's History Awards.

Harry Gissing, on his right arm 5 overseas service chevrons, the 'A' for Anzac, and above his left breast pocket the ribbon of the Meritorious Service Medal earned for 'conspicuous devotion to duty'.



BOOKSHELF

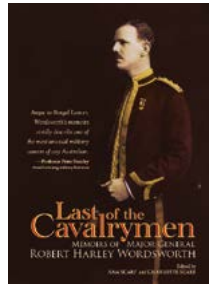
The following books, often self-published, have been written by, for and with veterans. The books and their descriptions are submitted by authors and readers. DVA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of their content or the opinions expressed in them.

Last of the Cavalrymen – Memories of Major General Robert Harley Wordsworth

Edited by Ana Scarf and Charlotte Scarf

Robert Harley Wordsworth (1894–1984) led an extraordinary life, beginning as a junior officer at Gallipoli, later transferring to the Indian Army, rising to Major-General of the 1st Armoured Division in the Middle East in the Second World War. Back home, he forged another career in public service as a Senator for Tasmania and as Administrator of Norfolk Island. This book is a compilation of transcriptions of recordings 'Wordy' made, which have been organised, edited and supplemented with images and explanatory footnotes by his daughter and granddaughter. It is superbly illustrated with photographs of the era.

- **Pages:** 288
- **Cost:** \$49.95
- **To Buy:** Abbey's Bookshop, Petrarch's Bookshop, Fullers Bookshop, and others

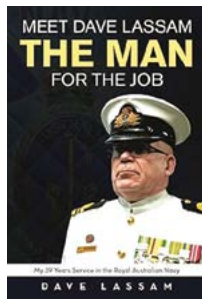


Meet Dave Lassam – The Man for the Job

By Dave Lassam

Lieutenant Commander Dave Lassam joined the Navy in 1978 and was discharged in late 2016 after almost 39 years of service. He served as a medic and medical administration officer. He shares his memories of an awesome career and covers many subjects from his attendance at car accidents, reviving people who had heart attacks, working in disaster zones to give humanitarian aid and many other stories. This book also covers his diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and prostate cancer, which ended his career.

- **Pages:** 300
- **Cost:** \$4.99 (e-book) – \$45.99 (hardcover)
- **To Buy:** Amazon, Xlibris Publications or via www.davelassam.com

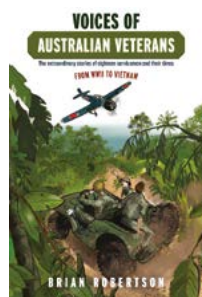


Voices of Australian Veterans

By Brian Robertson

The extraordinary stories of 18 Australian veterans – from the Second World War to Vietnam – are contained in this book. One describes having breast milk squirted in his face, another tells of having his hands held behind his back as a knife is put to his throat. One brave individual describes incidents in the brothels of Malaya, another suddenly realises that the little girl he has just met has had her foot blown off by a mine. For some, such experiences made them true believers, for others it had the opposite effect. In addition, 5 chapters are devoted to world affairs from an Australian perspective, from 1939 to the mid-1970s.

- **Pages:** 451
- **Cost:** \$30 plus postage and handling
- **To Buy:** www.booksbybrian.com.au, Booktopia and other book sellers

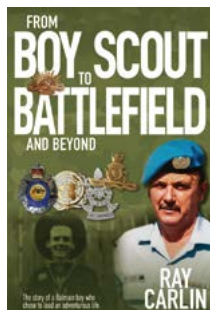


From Boy Scout to Battlefield and Beyond

By Ray Carlin

This is a story of a bloke who's been there and done it, and sometimes done it twice. Vietnam veteran and former federal agent Ray Carlin has written about his extraordinary life, from a lad growing up in impoverished Balmain in the 1950s, right through to four overseas Australian Federal Police deployments. The book features more than 100 photographs, the majority in colour, with each chapter highlighting a separate part of his amazing life. It also shows what you can achieve if you put in enough effort.

- **Pages:** 379
- **Cost:** \$45 plus \$10 postage
- **To buy:** www.fromboyscouttobattlefieldandbeyond.com or email raycarlin@bigpond.com.

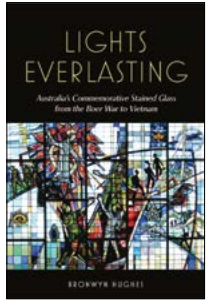


Lights Everlasting – Australia's Commemorative Stained Glass from the Boer War to Vietnam

By Bronwyn Hughes

Stained glass windows tell us stories of Australians at war. Unlike the stone soldier marking the country crossroads or local park, commemorative windows are hidden in plain sight within religious buildings, hospitals, school chapels and civic buildings, where they can be forgotten or lost as decades pass. This book is largely about remembrance. It seeks to illuminate the men and women who fought and died for their faith and their country, to reveal those that designed and made the windows, and to rediscover the artistic and architectural heritage of stained glass. Through the tragic beauty of its illustrations, *Lights Everlasting* adds a new perspective to an overlooked art form and encourages understanding of a neglected aspect of commemoration.

- **Pages:** 256
- **Cost:** \$79.95
- **To Buy:** Through www.scholarly.info or the author drbronwynhughes@gmail.com

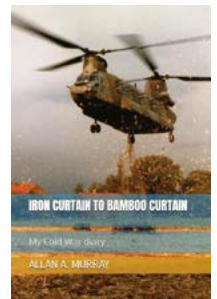


Iron Curtain to Bamboo Curtain: My Cold War Diary

By Allan A. Murray

Time with the Gurkhas in Hong Kong; a trip into China's Pearl River Delta; a deployment with NATO forces in West Germany, passing through Checkpoint Charlie; supporting the Operational Deployment Force in Townsville; a year as '95A' with 5th/7th Battalion, RAR (Mechanised). This war diary offers an Australian perspective on regimental life in the last decade of the Cold War. This is a story of simmering tension, risks, high preparedness and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

- **Pages:** 173
- **Cost:** \$3.99 (ebook) \$32.99 (paperback)
- **To Buy:** Amazon

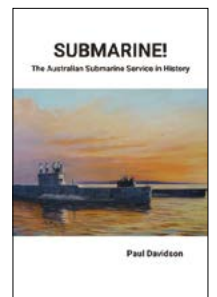


Submarine! The Australian Submarine Service in History

By Paul Davidson

This book details the Australian Submarine Service against the general history of submarine warfare, from the two world wars and the Cold War to the present challenges of acquiring nuclear-powered submarines. It reviews the boats operated by various navies and the Australian experience of the Oberon and Collins classes. Included are reflections by former and serving captains on submarine command and the Perisher course. The author is an academic and reservist commander who served as a member of the directing staff at the Australian Defence College.

- **Pages:** 231
- **Cost:** \$50.35 (hard cover)
- **To buy:** Booktopia or Connorcourt Publisher

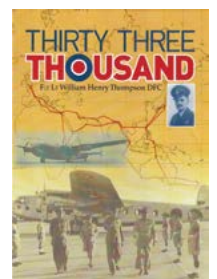


Thirty-Three Thousand

By William Henry Thompson DFC

William Thompson was in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He served in Bomber Command as a wireless operator/air gunner on Hampdens and Lancasters. Towards the end of the war, William served on the King's crew, flying in Winston Churchill's own aircraft 'Ascalon' and assigned by Transport Command to fly Lord Allenbrook, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, on a tour of the Army bases located in the Middle and Far East, which included Australia and New Zealand. His story was written as an observation with a rather philosophical presentation and includes a Foreword by Oswald Morris OBE DFC AFC BSC.

- **Pages:** 116
- **Cost:** \$25
- **To buy:** Chris Thompson on ducati@adam.com.au.



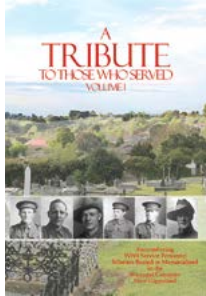
BOOKSHELF

A Tribute to Those Who Served (Volumes 1-5)

Compiled by volunteers of the West Gippsland Genealogical Society Inc.

These five books are dedicated to First World War service personnel buried or remembered in West Gippsland cemeteries; Warragul, Drouin/Drouin West, Neerim and Yarragon. The aim of the books is to honour these people's contribution to local communities in West Gippsland by acknowledging their service to their country and to tell of their life and family before and after their war service. Included are brief details of the names from local war memorials and some honour boards. Indexes of the names featured are available on the website.

- **Pages:** 32 to 164
- **Cost:** from \$10 to \$40. Postage is \$14.90 per book or for multiple books
- **To Buy:** www.westgippslandgenealogy.com

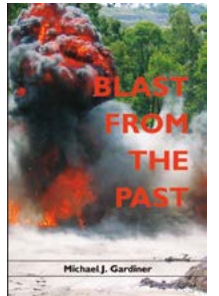


Blast from the Past

By Michael J Gardiner

Queensland has a fascinating history of bomb-related incidents, from murder to attempted armed robbery, disgruntled persons, domestic violence, experimentation, misadventure, and mental illness. Sergeant Michael Gardiner joined the Queensland Police Service after leaving the Army in the late 1980s and is one of Australia's longest serving Police Bomb Technicians. All profits from every book sold go directly to supporting Queensland Police Legacy and its dedicated work in caring for the families of our fallen.

- **Pages:** 160
- **Cost:** \$26 + \$6 postage and packaging
- **To buy:** Contact mickjg@bigpond.net.au



A Mother's Worry - Young Bagzar

By Ian Stiles OAM, JP

Ian Bagzar Stiles joined the Australian Army in 1964 aged 17, passed SAS selection at 18 and then was sent to New Guinea to train to fight the Indonesians in Borneo. On discovering he was too young for active service, Ian was posted to 3 Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron and sent to Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, he was discharged, re-joined the Army in 1968 and went straight back to 3 SAS. On his second tour of Vietnam, Ian was promoted from Private to Sergeant in less than 12 months. Using SAS patrol reports held by the Australian War Memorial, this book gives an insight into SAS tactics in Vietnam.

- **Pages:** 278
- **Cost:** from \$30.74
- **To Buy:** Amazon and Austin Macauley Publishers

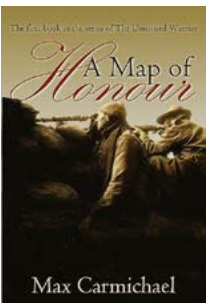


The Uninvited Warrior series

By Max Carmichael

The three works, *A Map of Honour*, *A Comet of Revenge* and *In His Kingdom's Great Defence* are historical novels set in the First World War with the main character, Robert Green, a man of Aboriginal descent. Green manages to avoid the early ban on men of colour enlisting in the AIF and becomes a consummate soldier. His skills are recognised by General Monash who ensures they are employed to best advantage. However, when Monash loans Green to British intelligence he is confronted with desperate battles, political assassination, frantic searches, espionage, murder, kidnapping, romance, and other situations that test him to his limits.

- **Pages:** average of 300
- **Cost:** \$34 (including postage and handling)
- **To Buy:** Amazon, or via max.carmichael@bigpond.com



The Clock Keeps Ticking

By John White

Having to throw a lot of punches for protection was a way of life in the Navy! Survival depended on how willing I was to stand up to a culture that left many unable to defend themselves. My experiences in the Navy taught me about not backing down and letting others walk over me. Of course, this comes at a price, mentally, physically and emotionally. I had to create ways to not only survive, but to prosper. This book is about coming from nothing and ending up in a reasonably good place. Read this book and learn how I survived, what drove me and how I kept moving forward.

- **Pages:** 261
- **Cost:** \$30.75
- **To Buy:** Booktopia and Amazon

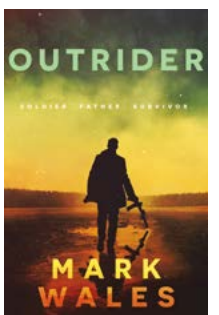


Outrider - Soldier. Father. Survivor

By Mark Wales

A violent civil war. An unstoppable enemy. One road to freedom. In the wake of a global conflict, foreign forces occupy part of Australia, quashing all but a few pockets of local resistance. The tense stalemate ends in 2034, when Jack Dunne reignites the war. Dunne is an Outrider, one of the last elite special operations soldiers in the Resistance. As the enemy prepares to eliminate the freedom fighters once and for all, he is tasked with his final mission. If Dunne and his 11-year-old son achieve the impossible and survive, they'll secure their future across the border in Free Australia. But the road to victory will be bloody.

- **Pages:** 368
- **Cost:** \$34.99
- **To Buy:** All good bookstores



Australia's Lost Heroes - Anzacs in the Russian Civil War 1919

By Damien Wright

This extraordinary book is both an engaging military history and an enthralling mystery. *Australia's Lost Heroes* tells the astonishing, little-known story of the Australian soldiers who fought the Red Army in Russia in 1919 and the personal odyssey to locate and identify the lost grave of Victoria Cross hero, Sergeant Samuel Pearse VC MM. Follow the author's journey to a remote corner of Russia with his grandson in the hope of identifying the grave. Guided by a Russian battlefield archaeologist, he discovers an astonishing clue which may resolve the mystery of an Australian hero missing for more than 100 years.

- **Pages:** 420
- **Cost:** \$32.99
- **To Buy:** Simon & Schuster

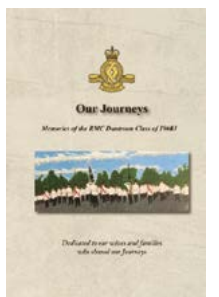


Our Journeys: Memories of the RMC Duntroon Class of 1960-63

Edited by Fred Fairhead, John Hemphill and Herbie O'Flynn.

Eighty-two New Zealanders and Australians 17-19 years of age entered Duntroon in 1960 with 56 of us graduating as lieutenants in the Australian Army. Some were soon off on active service during the Borneo and Malaysian Confrontation. Nearly all the class served in South Vietnam and one, Tony Danilenko, was killed in action on Anzac Day 1968. Returning from active service, we continued to serve in various Army postings in Australia and overseas. By the time we retired, we had collectively produced 9 colonels, 6 brigadiers and one major general (Piers Reid as Chief of Staff of New Zealand Army).

- **Pages:** 279 with name and subject indexes
- **Cost:** \$55 (soft cover) plus postage and handling
- **To buy:** hoflynn@bigpond.com



If you have a book for a subsequent edition, please email vetaffairs@dva.gov.au. Please provide the following: title, name of author, blurb (short description that we reserve the right to edit), price, how to buy it, and image of the front cover. Submitting a book does not guarantee publication.

Surrender Point Memorial re-opened

The iconic Surrender Point Memorial on Labuan Island, Malaysia, has re-opened following significant refurbishment works.

Located in a small beach-side park overlooking the South China Sea on the western side of Labuan Island, the Surrender Point Memorial is one of four memorials in Malaysia commemorating the trials endured by Australians and Australia's ultimate triumph.

On 10 September 1945, Major General George F Wootten, Commander of the 9th Australian Division, accepted Japan's unconditional surrender from Lieutenant-General Masao Baba, Commander of the 37th Japanese Army, at Surrender Point, one of several such ceremonies concluding the war in the Pacific, subsequently ending the Second World War.

The Surrender Point Memorial was constructed on the site of the surrender.

The story of Surrender Point is etched both into the memory of many Australians and on the surface of the granite panels mounted on the memorial's curved wall.

The panel combines a specific Australian granite, used in similar commemorative designs and official Australian buildings, with local Malaysian stone, retained and re-used from the original memorial. Such complementary elements reinforce the symbolic link between Malaysia and Australia and honours those who served and gave their lives in the pursuit of victory and the peace that followed.

The original memorial required significant refurbishment to adhere to the quality and standard of other Australian official overseas memorials. In August 2021, DVA appointed Architects Guida Moseley Brown to undertake the refurbishment design. The old memorial's demolition was completed in early October 2022, with construction of the new memorial beginning shortly after.

The Australian Government is grateful to the Labuan Corporation and the people of Labuan for their support during the refurbishment and the ongoing preservation of this important site.

To learn more about Australian commemorative memorials in Malaysia, visit the DVA website. (Search for 'Memorials Asia Pacific Malaysia'.)



Remembering the Cowra Breakout – 80 years on

Eighty years ago today, a lone bugle cut through the frosty morning air of No. 12 Prisoner of War Compound in Cowra, New South Wales. Sounded by fighter pilot Toyoshima Hajime – the first Japanese airman captured on Australian soil – it was a call to arms that would begin the only Second World War land battle to be fought on Australian soil.

With a loud cry of 'Banzai', 1,104 Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) rushed the barbed-wire fences and set fire to the camp buildings.



Private O. O. Treacy in a guard tower of the Cowra POW camp. (AWM 064350)

Privates Ben Hardy and Ralph Jones of the 22nd Garrison Battalion pushed through the prisoners and manned one of the camp's Vickers machine guns. They fired it until they were overwhelmed, knifed and clubbed to death by prisoners. It is believed that Hardy managed to disable the gun in the final moments of his life so it couldn't be turned on his mates. Hardy and Jones were posthumously awarded the George Cross.

Private Charles Shepherd, also of the 22nd Garrison Battalion, was killed during the breakout as he emerged from a guardroom. Lieutenant Harry Doncaster, of the 19th Australian Infantry Training Battalion, was killed while trying to catch some of the escaped prisoners in the days after the breakout.

During the breakout and in the 9 days that followed, 234 Japanese prisoners died, 108 were wounded, and more than 300 were recaptured.

Those who took part in the break-out had no expectation of getting back to Japan. Many were angered by the planned move to the internment and POW camp at Hay and the subsequent separation of NCOs and privates. Some were driven by the code of Bushidō, which demanded that they regain the honour they had lost by being captured. Many were willing to die rather than remain a prisoner. Toyoshima Hajime took his own life the moment he got over the fence.

In 1952, Cowra RSL Branch President and Second World War veteran Albert Oliver decided it was time to heal old wounds and began looking after the neglected Japanese war graves, which are still cared for in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Albert later travelled to Japan to raise funds for the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre, an enduring sign of peace between Australia and Japan.

New Battle of Crete memorial unveiled

On 11 May, a new war memorial commemorating the Second World War Battle of Crete was unveiled in Perth's King Park.

The memorial honours the almost 800 Australians who were killed or wounded and more than 3,000 who were captured defending the Greek island, which German forces invaded in a massive parachute assault in May 1941.

While it was a major defeat for the Allied forces, many Australians escaped with the help of Greek civilians, who put themselves at great personal risk.

The memorial was unveiled by Western Australian Premier Roger Cook, Greece's Ambassador to Australia Stavros Venizelos, the Battle of Crete Memorial Committee of WA, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh.

'One of those killed was 24-year-old stretcher bearer Private Laurence Colin Keogh, my great uncle,' Minister Keogh said.

'So many Australians and members of the Greek community have similar stories of family and friends lost in the battle, but it's that battle that helped form the close friendship between our nations.'

Arthur Leggett, the oldest surviving veteran of the Battle of Crete, was present for the dedication ceremony. The 105-year-old veteran was taken captive by German paratroopers and spent more than 4 years as a prisoner of war.

The memorial itself was created by Smith Sculptors, a team that specialises in memorials and previously made the HMAS Sydney II memorial in Geraldton. The new monument is the first in Australia specifically dedicated to the battle and was jointly funded by the WA Government, the Anzac Day Trust grant program, and Lottery West.



COMMEMORATIONS



Top: Bombing of Pointe Du Hoc by A-20 Havoc bombers of the 9th Air Force

An Australian's D-Day from the skies

In the early morning of 6 June 1944, Royal Australian Air Force Pilot Officer Bill Purdy and his crew took off from Lincolnshire for the French coastline in their Lancaster bomber.

Their target was a German naval gun battery at Pointe Du Hoc, which had a commanding position over the beaches of Normandy.

'We knew there were five naval guns there and they had to be taken out,' Bill recounts.

He had no idea he was taking part in one of the greatest turning points of the Second World War.

Bill was 16 when war was declared. He remembers the intense patriotism coursing through Australian society at the time and, like many young people, he thought of the war as a bit of an adventure.

Keen to enlist and because he had a fondness for the flying adventures depicted in the *Biggles* novels, Bill joined the RAAF as soon as he turned 18.

'I couldn't imagine myself sloshing around on the ground with the Army,' he chuckles.

After earning his wings at RAAF Base Point Cook, Bill and most of his fellow trainees found out they were being posted to England.

About 10,000 Australians were seconded to the British Royal Air Force (RAF) Bomber Command during the war, working as pilots, navigators, engineers, bomb-aimers, gunners, wireless operators and ground crew.

Australians flew side-by-side with their Allied counterparts and there were two Brits in Bill's aircrew.

Life in Bomber Command was a harrowing ordeal, with just a one-in-three chance of surviving a tour of 30 operations.

Throughout the war, some 4,000 Australian airmen were killed while serving with Bomber

Command, accounting for almost 10 per cent of all Australian combat deaths.

Bill remembers distinctly the uneasiness he felt when he heard he was going on an operation.

'The stomach started to rumble a bit, because we all knew what the odds were of coming back,' he recalls.

He spent his day preparing and testing the aircraft, packing his belongings, and writing a final letter home to his mother.

But once the wheels were up, there was no time for fear. Bill focused on his job and making sure his crew made it home alive.

Bill had several close calls throughout the war. On one occasion, his plane was hit three times by flak and then strafed by an enemy fighter.

'The poor old aircraft was like a colander. It was filled with holes, here there and everywhere.

'My bomb aimer had a little strip taken off the back of his neck. The navigator had a piece that came down through the roof, straight through his book of charts, and buried in his desk.'

So, it was with a measure of caution that Bill approached Pointe Du Hoc, accompanied by dozens of other bombers.

Each of the aircraft dropped fourteen 1000-pound bombs, devastating the headland.

'We left one big hole in the ground', Bill says.



Commandos wading ashore from landing craft onto the beaches of Normandy.

However, Bill later learnt that the German naval guns had been moved to a different location in the months before the bombing.

On his return home across the English Channel, his Lancaster burst from low-hanging cloud and Bill was confronted by the greatest armada in human history.

More than 6,500 ships and landing craft, carrying more than 130,000 troops, were steaming towards the five landing beaches of Normandy.

'As far as the eye could see, there were ships,' Bill recalls. 'You could have put your wheels down and taxied home.'

Bill realised in that moment that D-Day had finally arrived. He had just landed one of the opening blows in the Allied invasion of German-occupied France.

About 3,200 Australians took part in the D-Day landings, with our main contribution made in the air.

Thirteen Australians were killed on 6 June: 11 airmen and 2 sailors. Hundreds more airmen would perish in the campaigns of the following months.

Bill flew a total of 37 operations with Bomber Command, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

When we asked about his achievement, Bill humbly downplayed his own role and praised the work of the dedicated aircrews and ground crews.

However, towards the end of the war, two of his crew told Bill that they sought him out as their pilot when he first landed in England.

'They told me, "We went through all the other pilots in that place and we reckoned you were the only one who was going to bring us back alive",' he says.

Bill never knew why they had that intuition, but bring them back alive he did.

Pigeons of war

By Suzanne Curry

Associate Member, Northern Tasmanian Lighthouse Troop

In the two world wars, carrier pigeons of the Racing Homer breed were used to carry messages. Pigeons are intelligent and displayed great agility and tenacity in extreme conditions, saving tens of thousands of lives.

The pigeon is best known for its ability to return 'home' from long distances. The dovecote (loft) has played an essential role in the domestication of pigeons. Pigeons are housed and bred within these structures and it is this 'home', as messengers, that they return to.

The instincts that allow them to find their way home are not well understood. Magnetoreception (a sense that allows an organism to detect a magnetic field to perceive direction, altitude or location) may play a part, as may a pigeon's ability to identify landmarks.

Pigeons have numerous advantages in wartime. They are easy to transport, eat little and are not easily distracted from their task. If captured, there is no evidence of their origin or destination. They are faster than a

runner, cyclist or man on horseback, flying at up to 100 km per hour.

Pigeons were used most often to send messages from the front-line trenches or advancing units and were also carried in aircraft and ships. Though difficult to estimate, at least 500,000 pigeons were used by the Allies during the two world wars. Pigeons commonly carried their messages in special containers attached to their legs, or small pouches looped over their backs.

One example of a short message from a downed airplane in the First World War read: 'On water attacked by 3 hunts'. Knowing the airplane flight path, its planned destination, the arrival of the pigeon in the loft, and taking account of wind direction and inhibiting factors such as oil spillage on the pigeon's feathers, the



A messenger of the 6th Australian Carrier Pigeon Section, Hobart, 1943. (AWM 051114)

Royal Air Force was able to approximate where the plane went down.

In 1941, Australian troops used pigeons to carry messages during the Syrian Campaign. To ensure that the pigeons would not be bruised while being carried by dispatch riders, they were carefully strapped into elastic hammocks which swung freely in baskets. In December 1941, the Australian Corps of Signals Pigeon Service was born, to which Australians donated over 13,500 messenger pigeons.

It was during this time that 2 Australian pigeons were the first in our history to be awarded the Dickin Medal – the highest award any animal can receive while serving in the military.

Today, military pigeon forces are all but a thing of the past, but the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the French Land Army still maintain small pigeon forces in the event of communications being thwarted by electronic warfare.

A journey of healing for descendants of Australian POWs in Japan

A message from RSL Australia

As RSL Deputy National President Duncan Anderson lay a wreath in remembrance at the Yokohama Commonwealth War Cemetery in Tokyo, he took a long breath and felt a deep sadness.

'There is something about Australian men and women laying in another country as a result of their service,' he said. 'Three unknown soldiers...'

Duncan was visiting Japan as part of the 2024 Japan-Australia Grassroots Exchange Program, which aims to provide descendants of prisoners of war (POWs) with an avenue for healing and understanding.

Accompanying him from RSL Victoria was Joy Derham, daughter of Lance Corporal John 'Jack' Lonsdale, who was a POW from 1942 to 1945, and Trent Beilken from RSL Queensland whose grandfather, Private Robert Rolls, became a POW six weeks shy of his 16th birthday in 1942.

Each year, the Japanese Embassy in Australia works with RSL Australia to find suitable participants for the program. More than 120 POWs and descendants of POWs

have taken part in the program since it began in 1997.

The group spent eight days touring Japan, visiting sites including the Hiroshima Peace Memorial – the epicentre of the atomic bombing.

At the memorial they spoke with Soko Yahata, an 87-year-old Japanese woman who survived the atomic bomb. She described the exact moment of the explosion and the vivid memories that haunt her to this day. She finished by saying 'In war, perpetrators are also victims and victims are also perpetrators', leaving a lasting impression on the group.

'We were all taken aback by the experience at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial,' Duncan said. 'We were privileged to lay a wreath at the place where the 340,000 names (a list that grows each year) are recorded of those who have died as a result of the atomic bomb.'

The group attended an event at the POW Research Centre which included a thought-provoking Q&A session.

'We learned that the Japanese Self Defence Force is also facing issues of PTSD and loss of life to suicide amongst its men and women,' said Trent Beilken. 'These tough topics



L to R: RSL Deputy National President Duncan Anderson, Joy Derham, Trent Beilken, and Japan's Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Masahiro Komura

were faced head on and the questions did not shy away from harsh realities. And our relationship between our countries is better for it. There is a lot more that unites our countries than divides us.'

They had opportunities to meet with the Japanese people, experience the culture and strengthen the bonds that have developed between Australia and Japan.

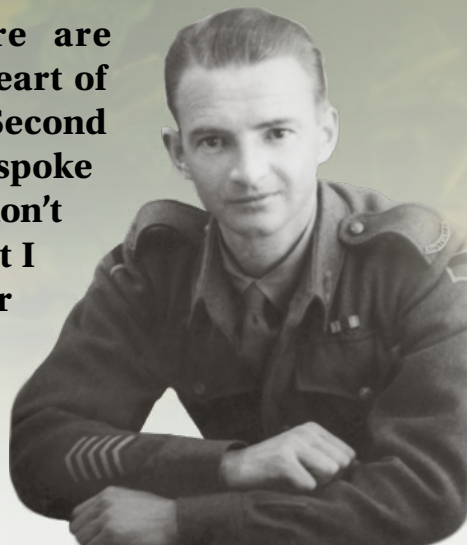
Duncan Anderson describes the trip as an incredibly humbling

experience: 'Australia and Japan have been allies for much longer than we have been adversaries. We should never forget the past but must focus on the future for shared peace and prosperity. Let us never make the same mistakes again.'

RSL Australia would like to sincerely thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for providing this opportunity to continue to promote post-war reconciliation and goodwill.

Honours for Australian who fought with Polish Resistance

For Jennifer Gorrie, there are enduring mysteries at the heart of her father's service in the Second World War. 'My dad never spoke about the war very much – I don't think many of them did – but I always knew he was a prisoner of war,' she says.



'One story he did tell is that when he was shot and wounded on Crete, a German paratrooper was coming towards him and he thought, "I'm a goner". But apparently the German just handed him a cigarette and moved on...'

How the late Private Harvey Frederick Gorrie then made his way from Crete to Stalag XXa, a German POW camp in Toruń [Thorn], Poland, is just the first mystery in his extraordinary journey through war-torn Europe. That journey began with early enlistment in the City of Sydney Regiment, followed by service in the 2nd/1st Battalion in the Middle East, Palestine, Libya and then eventual capture in the disastrous Crete campaign.

When researching her father's history, Jennifer 'stumbled across' the Stalag XXa Facebook page. Through this, she got in touch with wartime history guide and Toruń local, Paweł Bukowski, who located the farm where Mr Gorrie had hidden after escaping from the camp with 2 English soldiers (who were later recaptured) in September 1943.

In an essay penned for *The Last Post* in 1978, Harvey Gorrie recalled that just 30 minutes after seeking shelter with the friendly farmers 'our peace was shattered by a great knocking on the door... I felt that this, indeed, was IT'.

It turned out that the well-dressed men with guns were from the Polish Underground. They gave Private Gorrie and the Englishmen a choice: We will give you documents, money and supplies, and you can try to escape through the port of Gdańsk [Danzig] – or you can throw in your lot with us.

Harvey Gorrie chose to stay and fight with the partisans.

Following Poland's rapid defeat by the combined German blitzkrieg and Soviet invasion in September 1939, hundreds of thousands of servicemen who evaded capture were reorganised into the Polish Home Army. The army formed the core of a fierce national resistance which culminated in the failed Warsaw Uprising of August-October 1944.

Harvey Gorrie, who went by the alias "Henryk" given to him by the partisans, ended up serving as a Sergeant with a rural unit of the Home Army for 18 months, one of only a handful of Australians known to have fought with the Poles. Years later, he reflected on his service:

Our raids yielded a rich harvest of weapons, ammunition, clothing, food and bicycles, and I think we sowed a crop of fear and anxiety in the minds of our victims and the German population generally.

In May last year, Jennifer took her research to Lloyd Brodrick, former Australian Ambassador to Poland, who submitted an official enquiry. Not long after, she received a call from the ambassador telling her that, after 80 long years, her father was to be formally recognised by the Republic of Poland.

Only a few months later, Jennifer returned to Warsaw and on 1 September 2023, at the official annual ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Sergeant Harvey "Henryk" Gorrie was posthumously presented 2 medals initially awarded by the Polish authorities in London: the Cross of the Home



Above: the Guard of Honour carries the Australian Embassy's wreath, flanked by Jennifer Gorrie and Australian Defence Attaché Colonel Paul Graham.

Army, and the Army Medal for War 1939-1945.

'The Guard of Honour was very impressive,' Jennifer recalls. 'We laid a wreath on behalf of the Australian Government with Ambassador Brodrick and Colonel Paul Graham, Australia's Defence Attaché. My dad also has the France-Germany Star – of which he was particularly proud – not many Australians have the star because not many actually fought in Europe.'

When the Soviets liberated Poland, Harvey Gorrie endured yet another near-death experience when they refused to believe he was Australian rather than Austrian. He eventually made his way to the Ukrainian port of Odessa – exactly how is another mystery... But he boarded a ship



Private Gorrie's medals; the 2 Polish awards are on the far right.

and made it to London in time for Victory in Europe Day.

Years later Mr Gorrie, who passed away in 1988, travelled back to communist Poland to look for something – something he had buried and left behind. He was greeted by a changed landscape and suspicious authorities, and came home disappointed.

'My dad would go to the RSL every Friday – and I think for those guys it was very therapeutic – but most of the time they just tried to forget,' Jennifer reflects. 'I'd like to know what he was looking for when he went back to Poland. I'd like to know if his was the longest time any Australian fought in a resistance movement, or for another nation.'

Jennifer Gorrie's palpable pride in her father's decision to stay and fight with the Poles fuels her continuing quest to unravel the mysteries of his wartime service.

(Images courtesy of Jennifer Gorrie and the Polish Office for War Veterans and Victims of Oppression.)



Harvey Gorrie in German POW camp Stalag XXa

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



'G for George' moving to new Bomber Command gallery

The Australian War Memorial has released a new image and further details of the new Bomber Command gallery at the Memorial.

The centrepiece of the gallery is "G for George", the Lancaster bomber that completed 89 missions with No 460 Squadron RAAF over Germany and occupied Europe between 1942 and 1944. Part of the Australian War Memorial collection since the end of the Second World War, "George" was put in storage in 2021 during construction of the new Anzac Hall.

'George is one of the Australian War Memorial's most popular collection objects,' said Australian

War Memorial Acting Director, Anne Bennie. 'We thank the people of Australia for their patience as the development project builds a new home for our Australians in Bomber Command gallery.'

Around "George" will be displayed hundreds of objects, artworks and images that reflect the personal experiences of hundreds of individual Australian servicemen and servicewomen. Many of the objects will be displayed for the first time, and among them are collection items that have only recently been donated to the Memorial.

'Bomber Command was one of the most dangerous theatres of operations for Australians in the Second World War,' said Senior Historian Lachlan Grant. 'Over 4,100 Australians were killed serving in Bomber Command.'

'Reflecting such a high casualty rate, the exhibition features stories of loss, and the impacts on families at home, as well as stories documenting the experiences of the wounded and those captured as prisoners of war.'

"George" is currently in storage and preparations for its return to the display will begin when the new Anzac Hall is completed in late 2025.

'The development project will increase our gallery space by 83 per cent,' said Anne Bennie. 'This has given us the opportunity to explore more deeply not only the history of Bomber Command, but also modern conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq.'

ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE MEMORIAL SHOP

Miniature mementos

Though small in scale, these copper-plated *Digger on a penny* miniature figurines represent the immense sacrifice made by our military service personnel.

Expertly crafted and finely detailed, each serviceman (approx 10 cm tall) stands atop a genuine Australian penny, positioned at 'reverse arms' or 'in action'.

Made in Australia by Pennies From Heaven, they are a fitting gift for current or former service personnel.



Digger on a penny figurines
\$11.99 each + postage

Available in two designs
(each sold separately)



Visit shop.awm.gov.au to explore our range of military giftware and more.

Buy online or call the Memorial Shop team on (02) 6243 4555 to place an order.

NOTICEBOARD

REUNIONS

12 Squadron Reunion

6-7 September 2024,
Maroochydore RSL, QLD

A reunion of squadron members, family and friends will be held to recognise 35 years since the disbandment of the squadron. A commemorative service will be held in Maroochydore Rotary Park on the evening of Friday 6th and a reunion dinner on Saturday 7th. To register your interest, please email John and follow the reunion on Facebook.

Contact: John Flannery

✉ flanz1961@gmail.com
🌐 www.facebook.com/groups/1612715732340928

21 Engineer Support Troop Vietnam Nui Dat 1966-1972

9-13 September 2024,
Hervey Bay, QLD

All members and partners are welcome. Please join with your brothers in arms and enjoy - meet and greet, whale watching, formal dinner, commemorative service, plus much more in this week-long adventure.

Contact: Johnny Pole

☎ 0409 324 626 / 0457 500 142
✉ vpole@bigpond.net.au

Airborne Platoon Royal Australian Regiment

20-21 September 2024,
Twin Towns Services Club, QLD

Many soldiers kept the airborne esprit de corps alive from early 1950 to mid-1974. As the precursor of D Coy 6RAR Parachute Group & 3RAR Parachute Battalion, we intend to have an informal gathering on the 20th, followed by the reunion dinner on the 21st.

Contact: Robert Brandt

☎ 0407 216 516
✉ brickrjc@outlook.com

The RAQ Sunshine Coast Annual Luncheon

21 September 2024,
Maroochy RSL, QLD

All serving and ex-serving members, and friends of RAEME, are invited to attend. Further details are available online.

Contact: Ross Grant

🌐 www.qld.raeme.org.au

RANKIN OCT 66 Reunion (58th Anniversary)

18-21 October 2024, HMAS Cerberus,
Hastings, Frankston, VIC

Those listed in the October 1966 intake, and their partners, are invited and encouraged to attend our annual 58th reunion. Further details can be found in the Facebook group, RANKIN OCT 66 REUNION.

Contact: Steve "Yogi" Yovan / Pat "Ringo" Ringold

☎ 0434 890 113 / 0409 726 487
✉ sgyovan@gmail.com / patrick.ringold@bigpond.com
🌐 www.facebook.com/groups/261872548771680

10 Force Support Battalion IFET 25 Year Reunion

28-29 September 2024, Townsville
Ross Island Barracks and
Townsville RSL, QLD

Anyone who was part of 10 FSB IFET (including attached units) is invited. Day 1 will include a BBQ lunch at the Ross Island Facility, then informal individual/unit/Corps catch-ups that evening. Day 2 will include dinner at the RSL. Members and partners who supported from Australia are also invited. Pricing is \$125 per head; visit the website to book tickets.

Contact: Mark Cockerell

☎ 0448 882 461
✉ mark.cockerell@westnet.com.au
🌐 www.trybooking.com/CSKPS

Navy Physical Training Instructors 100 year Reunion

4-7 October 2024, Adelaide, SA

Open to all current serving Navy PTIs, PT Officers, retired Navy PTIs and PT Officers and families. The Event Grande will be held at Adelaide Oval on Friday 4 October. A Barossa Valley winery tour, barefoot bowls and Par 3 golf are also part of the weekend festivities.

Contact: Tony Cocks CSM

☎ 0435 153 722
✉ sydneyunique@bigpond.com

Air Force Health Services Association

5 October 2024, Tocumwal, NSW

Contact: Ron Heptinstall

☎ 0408 802 952
✉ rheptinstall@me.com

Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps SVN

11 October 2024, Albury, NSW

Some fellow veterans and I are arranging a reunion. Please make contact if you would like to attend.

Contact: Rob Patterson

☎ 0417 278 470
✉ robpatterson60@yahoo.com.au

RAAF Catering Reunion

25-27 October 2024,
Wagga Wagga, NSW

RAAF Catering personnel, serving and ex-serving. RSVP by end of August 2024.

Contact: William Sullivan (Sully)

☎ 0417 218 579
✉ sullivanw.n@bigpond.com

All Navy Reunion

17-20 October 2024,
Maroochydore, QLD

Visit the website for all the details.

Contact: Bill Hayward

☎ 0411 024 985
🌐 www.allnavyreunion.com

Operations Room Association

18-20 October 2024, Rydges
Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, WA

Calling all RDF/RP and CSOs. Come along and enjoy catching up with old mates, making new ones and

soaking up the maritime history of Fremantle and surrounds. Visit the website to register.

Contact: Nicola Carson

☎ 0419 386 965
✉ n.carson@curtin.edu.au
🌐 www.opsroomassociation.org.au

Airman Aircrew Reunion

25 October 2024, Mandurah, WA

A meet & greet will be held on Friday 25th, followed by a semi-formal dinner on Saturday 26th. All Airman Aircrew and associated mustering are welcomed.

Contact: Peter Luck or Skip Antony

☎ 0411 742 899 / 0412 602 353
✉ aaa_reunion_2024@airmanaircrew.com.au
🌐 www.airmanaircrew.com.au

1st Armoured Regiment Association

21-24 November 2024, Adelaide, SA

All regiment veterans are invited to attend, and march with, the regiment at the Cambrai Day Parade on Friday 22nd. Interested veterans and all former members of the Regiment, as well as other 'black hats', are very welcome to attend any of the reunion events - no need to be a member of the Association. Please make contact if you would like to attend.

Contact: Russ James

☎ 0419 331 401
✉ sarep@paratus.org.au / secretary@paratus.org.au
🌐 www.paratus.org.au

Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force and D&E Platoon

21-25 November 2024, Adelaide, SA

A commemorative lunch will be held on the 23rd at the Bespoke Restaurant in the Adelaide Oval Hotel. The lunch will be preceded by a Dedication Service at the Pathway of Honour (Adelaide War Memorial) where our own Memorial will be unveiled. Our Commemorative service will follow the Dedication (1115 hours - 1150 hours). Both services will be open to the public.

Contact: John Verhelst

☎ 0437 212 121
✉ jeverhelst@gmail.com
🌐 www.hq1atf.org

WRAAC OCS 1984 Class Reunion

30 November 2024,
Georges Heights, Mosman, NSW

All course participants and staff are invited to attend. We have planned a fun day, including a tour of the old campus, a group lunch, and a kick-on at the pub for the more adventurous. Don't miss out on this chance to celebrate our shared history, celebrate 40 years of memories, and create new memories.

Contact: Ioanna Markham or Sharon Woolmer

✉ i.markham@bigpond.com / sharonwoolmer61@gmail.com

MEDALS LOST AND FOUND

LOST

559759 Pte Robert MacIntyre

My partner is seeking the WWI medal of her grandfather (16th Battalion/London Regiment, Queens Westminister Rifles): the British War Medal 1914-20. Last location unknown.

Contact: Rod Timmins

☎ 0423 071 233
✉ dandr11@aapt.net.au

John Verdon Leslie Harrison - 314037

Looking for my father's Vietnam medals - 1st Field Hospital.

Contact: Michael Harrison

☎ 0437 987 896
✉ michael.harrison@intrax.com.au

1203462 R J Dennis

His daughter is trying to locate his Vietnam Medals. Last known location was in the Emerald/Bundaberg region around 2003.

Contact: Ian

☎ 0419 329 912
✉ icjrca@gmail.com

Sergeant Harry Dutney

I am searching for the following WWI medals issued to Harry (4977) who was KIA in France 30/9/1918: British War Medal (59132) and Victory Medal (58051). No idea what happened to these medals following the death of Harry's father in the 1920s.

Contact: Deb Freeman

☎ 0401 634 978
✉ maryanddeb@tpg.com.au

Robert Barr Windlow, Service No. 1263

Seeking WWI medals of Robert, my great uncle. He served with the 14th Australian Field Artillery Brigade and was KIA in France in 1917.

Contact: Neroli Ferguson (nee Windlow)

☎ 0427 140 451
✉ anferg@bigpond.net.au

John Morley and Alexander Campbell

Seeking return or information on the location of the following medals: John Henry Morley RAN 19663 (father) WWII and Alexander Charles Campbell 630 1st M.G.Battn (Grandfather) WWI.

Contact: John Andrew Morley

☎ 0428 669 017
✉ johnmorley7@bigpond.com

FOUND

141 Charles William Cooper

I have a set of medals that belong to Charles. His wife is Kathleen Cooper. I would like to return these medals to family.

Contact: Brett Niemann

☎ 0412 342 536 (wife Judy)

Pte F O Sheehy

I have a 1914-18 medal issued to 1986 Pte. F. O. SHEEHY 40 Batt. I would like to return to family.

Contact: R B Docking

☎ 08 8331 8280

Russell G Witts 197 Bombardier

WWI medal found during home renovations.

Contact: Duncan Mackenzie

☎ 0475 139 303

Hailstones, Francis 23160

I have in my possession The Atlantic Star belonging to Francis. Any family member can contact me with relevant information, to satisfy the forwarding of same.

Contact: Denis Mulvihill

✉ djmulvi@gmail.com

Private William Neville Poulton NX5656924

Medals have now been returned to NOK.

Contact: Bev

✉ wombatlodge2@gmail.com

Robilliard, Charles Sutcliffe

WWI medallion handed to me on 8 March 2024 - ROBILLIARD, CHARLES SUTCLIFFE, 24451. His unit could be the 3rd Australian Divisional Ammunition Column. I am a member of the Caroline Springs RSL Sub-Branch.

Contact: Murray Lewis

☎ 0429 850 005 (8am - 10pm)
✉ burnsidemurray@yahoo.com.au

Pte John Joseph Benedick Taylor NX114608

I have a 1939-45 Star issued to Pte Taylor. I would really like to return this medal to his family.

Contact: David Flatt

☎ 0431 675 993
✉ dk.flatt1@gmail.com

These notices have been provided by readers of Vet Affairs. DVA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information they contain.

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

NOTICEBOARD

NAVY

Seeking Bret Strickland

Bret was a mechanical fitter at the Toyota Altona Plant in the 1990s. I was his Engineering Electrical Supervisor. Bret was the face on the Collins Class Submarine entering the Australian Naval Fleet PR DVD.

Contact: Bill Day - Mandurah, WA
☎ 0409 528 312
✉ wday6@iinet.net.au

July 72 ETC Jaw and Cookie

Would like to catch up with J A Williams and Nick Cooke from July 72 first salstruc mobi intake.

Contact: Paul
✉ paul.derek.matthews@gmail.com

HMAS Perth National Association

All members and friends of the association are cordially invited to attend the AGM, to be held in Canberra on Saturday 19 October 2024. Details of venue and times may be obtained by visiting the association website or emailing the Secretary directly from the website.

Contact: Warwick Luttrell
🌐 www.hmasperth.asn.au

Project: 'WRANS - Where They Rest'

In April 1941, the first women started working for the Navy as members of the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps, which later became the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS). A handful from WWII are still alive. Of those that have left us, where do they rest? We need your help to record the resting place of our sisters. This project includes ALL Australian Navy Women from 1941 until the current day. If you know of the death of any WRANS/RAN service women, and hopefully their burial place, please make contact.

Contact: Lorrae
✉ NWQld-Treasurer@bigpond.com

Looking for CPO Ted Norris

Ted served on HMAS *Vendetta* in 1969.

Contact: Murray Turner
☎ 0408 415 524
✉ murrayturner49@optusnet.com.au

Waller Division, September 1966

Seeking to make contact with all September 66 Waller Div recruits. Hoping to organise a future reunion. Where are you? Please make contact, even if it's just to let me know that you are still around.

Contact: Len Brown
☎ 0412 118 667
✉ lenbrown@optusnet.com.au

Navy Women (WRANS-RAN) Qld Sub-Section

We meet at the Geebung RSL Club on the second Sunday of each month, except for May when we meet on the third Sunday. All Navy women welcome to join us for morning tea before the meeting, and subsidised afternoon tea afterwards. You do not have to be a member to join our functions. We usually wear our black shirts to our meetings, but they are not required. Our Facebook group has details of our other events.

Contact: Lorrae Johnson
☎ 0409 638 865
✉ Treasurer@nwqld.org.au
🌐 www.nwqld.org.au
🌐 www.facebook.com/groups/118436646770769

ARMY

1 Australian Logistic Support Company - RAASC soldiers

Having produced two books about RAASC soldiers and their work in Vietnam, I am keen to collaborate with those, not exclusively RAASC, who served in 1 ALSC, HQ 1ATF and HQ 1ALSG in those formative and early years. The aim is to produce a book with lots of stories, photos etc.

Contact: Russ Morison
☎ 0408 947 935
✉ seascout59@yahoo.com

History of the 11th Field Company Australian Engineers of WWI

I will pay for a copy of the original version of the book. Must be in readable condition.

Contact: George Hulse
☎ 0412 341 363
✉ georgehulse42@gmail.com

Seeking family of 3891 W01 Thomas Patrick Banfield - Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

Served with the AIF 1946-1947, Interim Army 1947-1948, Australian Regular Army 1948-1976. I have a number of personal and military items belonging to Thomas and would dearly like to return them to their rightful home.

Contact: Shane Crotty
☎ 0403 617 147
✉ trailape1@hotmail.com

1st Field Ambulance Association

The association is seeking members (past and present), family and friends of the following Army Units: 1st Aust FD Amb 1st AIF, 1st FD Amb 2nd AIF, 1st FD Amb Med Coy 8 BASB, Med Coy 8 CSSB, and D Coy 2nd Hlth Bn. It is 110 years since the unit was formed.

Contact: Stu Jones
☎ 0412 410 019
✉ 1fdambassoc@gmail.com
🌐 www.raamc.org.au/web/1fda

Seeking Major Phil Rule

RAAOC Centre 1981.

Contact: WO1 Michael Cooper or Chris Coates PMG
☎ 0477 887 726 / 0407 486 767
✉ mcooper88@bigpond.com

Seeking 3RAR friends

Grant Roberts is seeking his Army buddies. Grant, known as 'Robo', was based in Adelaide in the 1970s. Army number 425159, RAAF 413152.

Contact: Christine Roberts
✉ Robertsgrant46@gmail.com

AIR FORCE

Seeking RAAF friends from 1983

Wanting to catch up with Darren Lane (transport driver) and Sharon Wilson [?] (orderly room clerk, Fairbairn).

Contact: Steve Napper
☎ 0458 438 149

COMMS STAFF at Pearce Air Base WA 1971-1988

Seeking staff that served with Sgt Allan Brian COX. MUFS 19/06/1988, due to total blindness, Cryptococcus gaita meningitis - air borne and river borne virus from river gums, common in Australia. Squadron Leader Flt Lt Hall, Allan's Divisional Officer, posted from Pearce Air Base WA 1988/1989[?]. Allan served in Butterworth, Penang, Southeast Asia for 2.5 years, then to NSW, then back to Pearce Air Base WA. SMO Petersen was the Senior Medical Officer at the time.

Contact: Andrew
✉ andola@bigpond.com

Seeking Cpl Dennis Gordon Johnson 2/24th

He was based at RAAF Townsville in 1984. I have a photo and identity disc belonging to Dennis who served with my uncle at Tarakan.

Contact: Diane Strub
☎ 467and463raafsquadronsqld@gmail.com.au

MISCELLANEOUS

Mullumbimby RSL Sub-Branch

The Sub-Branch is now manned regularly and is seeking new members. Contact Sub-Branch Secretary.

Contact: Stephen Williams
☎ 0458 045 019
✉ MullumbimbySB@rslnsw.org.au
🌐 www.mullumexservices.com.au

Nuclear Tests Medal

I have recently received the Nuclear Tests Medal from the British Ministry of Defence and I would like to ensure that any other surviving members of that experience are aware of their entitlement. I have details on how best to apply.

Contact: George J Knox
☎ 0451 797 068
✉ gjknox5@hotmail.com

Velocity SimLab online racing team supporting veterans

As part of rehab and mental health support, I have found a great bunch of people in sim racing team Velocity SimLab which race online in Slim Racing World (SRW) national series. SRW has a wide range of categories where teams or individuals race. There are currently 3 veterans in the team who all suffer from different health challenges. The team members all fully support serving members and veterans.

Contact: Martin Walker
☎ 0417 445 843
✉ velocitysimlab2024@gmail.com
🌐 www.facebook.com/Velocitysimlab
🌐 www.youtube.com/@SRWTVlive

Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital

A project in the form of a book containing stories from nurses and patients at the Heidelberg Repat Hospital from the Vietnam era has commenced.

Any stories would be gratefully received from patients, family and nurses.

Contact: Newton Reynolds
☎ 03 9879 1002
✉ nc.reynolds@bigpond.com

Brisbane State High Alumni

We are updating the honour roll and board, post-World War II. Please make contact if you know of past students who died in the service of their country during this time.

Contact: Col McCowan OAM or Ian Alcorn
✉ bshalumni@gmail.com

Bundaberg Legacy needs you

Do you have time to spare? Do you want to give back to your community? If so, Bundaberg Legacy needs you. We need volunteers to look after our widows, widowers and children of veterans who have given their lives or health in the defence of Australia. Give us a call or drop

in and see us at 11 Williams Road, Svensson Heights. We are open from 9 am to 3 pm weekdays.

Contact: Len Gordon, President
☎ (07) 4152 5958
✉ secretary@bundaberglegacy.com.au
🌐 www.legacy.com.au/bundaberg

Memorial for Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation

A National Memorial to these conflicts in the Australian War Memorial's Sculpture Garden is entering the design phase. We are seeking further donations and expressions of interests from veterans and their family members to join the foundation and become involved in design selection.

Contact: Ian Davenport, President, Far East Strategic Reserve War Memorial Foundation Inc
☎ 0427 225 670
✉ maindav@bigpond.com
🌐 www.fesrmemorial.org.au

Seeking Vietnam Vets

Adelaide High School is seeking old scholars of the school and also of Adelaide Girls High School who served in the Vietnam War in a military or civilian capacity (i.e. Red Cross nurses, civilian medical teams, regular Army, Navy or Air Force, or other areas).

We are hoping to honour these students by recording their names on an Honour Board to be placed in the school. Please email the name of the person who served, their date of birth and their service number (if known).

Contact: Amy or Trish
✉ Amy.Worswick180@schools.sa.edu.au or Patricia.Mibus63@schools.sa.edu.au

Seeking David Lane Beynon

We are seeking to locate our brother David Lane Beynon, DOB 4/12/1945, Service Number 2412180, who served in Vietnam between 3/06/1965 and 5/06/1966 in the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, as a matter of some urgency.

Contact: John Beynon or Peter Beynon
☎ 0419637258 / 0432326783
✉ babsbeynon@activ8.net.au

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