



**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COUNCIL INC.  
AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER & PEACEMAKER VETERANS' ASSOCIATION INC.**

1<sup>st</sup> February 2013

**Joint Approach for Peacekeeper Recognition**

Today the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA) and Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) jointly called for 48 Peacekeepers who have died in service of Australia to be adequately recognised by the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

Both National Presidents, Ron Coxon (VVAA) and Allan Thomas (APPVA), urged the Australian War Memorial Council, Defence Service Chiefs, Government and the Australian public to support the inclusion of Australian Peacekeepers who have died in the service of their country, while providing security and stability to the International community from war, famine and belligerent operations.

Driving force behind the Australian War Memorial, Charles Bean, wanted Australians to remember those who served and died for Australia. Equal in death was Bean's intent but modern operations have seen those who die on peacekeeping (non-warlike), humanitarian and post armistice operations not treated equally along with their families.

Both organisations remain concerned on reports that senior Defence officers are questioning the reasons for those who die by placing a criterion of being killed in combat. Research has been conducted by the APPVA, suggesting that a very large number of those on the Roll of Honour did not die as a direct result of combat. Many died in Australia and overseas from disease and accidents in World War 1 and WWII but are listed on the Honour Roll.

"To undertake such an invasive and insensitive criterion would open a huge can of worms and could only be seen as an attempt to further exclude these 48 members," stated Mr Thomas.

"There should be no question as to how these people died serving Australia overseas. In questioning this, Defence remains insensitive to the families of peacekeepers which it can be criticised as not engaging in the same way as the families of those killed on war-like operations have been."

Mr Thomas said the families of deceased peacekeepers were never informed that their loved ones would not be commemorated at the Australian War Memorial – which he describes as "an appalling injustice."

Mr Coxon stated recent media quotes from him were incorrect with the journalist referring to normal peacetime service within Australia, to which he commented accordingly.

"Peacekeepers who have died on operations overseas should have their names on the Roll of Honour, as those before them are listed." Mr Coxon said.

"We support the inclusivity of Peacekeepers who have been killed overseas. This is a very simple decision to make in the favour of those who served our country, their families and friends – to be forever remembered in the nation's capital".

Meanwhile the organisers of Change.org, have indicated since Channel 10's "The Project" went to air on Wednesday evening, the petition has seen a spike in signatories from 20,000 to almost 31,000 and are calling on the public to visit the site and sign the petition: <http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/war-memorial-council-recognise-my-son-and-other-fallen-peacekeepers-equally>

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**VVAA - MR. RON COXON 0412 264 346    APPVA - MR. PAUL COPELAND 0419 355 226**