

An underwater photograph of two divers exploring a coral reef. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering through from above, creating a shimmering effect. Bubbles are visible around the divers. The divers are wearing full scuba gear, including tanks and masks. They are positioned in the center-left of the frame, looking down at the reef. The reef is covered in various types of coral and marine life.

# Australian Peacekeeper

SUMMER 2013

MAGAZINE

**Navy  
Apprehends  
Alleged  
Pirates**

**Community  
Engaged  
Success in  
Solomon  
Islands**

**PLUS**

**Chinook Mission in Afghanistan Complete**      **Changi Chapel**  
**Assistance with Bush Fire Cleanup**      **Operation Philippines**

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Australian Peacekeepers Magazine attempts to provide insight into the experiences of peacekeepers, Defence members and war veterans and the issues that confront them together with encouraging informed debate regarding issues dealing with but not limited to Commonwealth compensation, pensions, superannuation and occupational health and safety that affect peacekeepers and their families. We welcome input from members and would love to feature personal experiences in each issue. Please email the editor with any stories you would like to see printed. The views expressed in the articles are those of the particular author and not those of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA). The APPVA will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in the articles in this publication.



22 Mrs Patti Lomax at the Changi Prisoner of War Chapel

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### Front Cover:

**Able Seaman Clearance Diver Luke Woodcroft and Able Seaman Clearance Diver Daniel Bird from HMAS Diamantina prepare explosives to destroy unexploded ordnance on the sea floor in the Russell Islands during Operation RENDER SAFE 2013.**



# From the President's Desk

The APPVA held its Annual Conference on the 26-27 October 2013 in Hobart Tasmania with the focus on issues concerning younger veterans and their families - in particular welfare, health and entitlements needs.

The National Peacekeepers Memorial in Canberra was also discussed at length particularly around the lack of support shown by the previous Government to provide the necessary funding to complete the monument.

The Association thanks Senator Penny Wright from the Australian Greens Party who provided the opening address and was able to attend the Peacekeepers Ceremony at Anglesea Barracks in Hobart prior to the Annual Conference. Senator Wright has been instrumental in her role in reminding Parliamentary members the importance of peacekeeping service and why those who had died while performing their roles should be remembered alongside those names that appear on the Australian War Memorial Honour Roll. Veterans' Affairs is apolitical

We had numerous guest speakers from the Australian Defence Force and the Department of Veterans Affairs who provided valuable discussions related to topics such as welfare and health.

Changes to entitlements under the various legislations

were addressed, such as the introduction of the white card under SRCA that will be in place on the 10 December 2013.

I thank all our invited guest speakers for their devoted time. On the 27 October 2013 the new office bearers on the National Executive were appointed and I am privileged to say I was appointed for a second term as your National President. All new appointments to the National Executive are now displayed on the APPVA website.

Our main focus in 2014 will be to campaign to have our National Peacekeepers Memorial built in Canberra as well as the issues concerning MSBS. I would like to conclude by thanking all those who fulfil Executive Roles within the Association nationally as well as our members.

I wish you all an enjoyable Christmas and a safe New Year with your family and friends.

**Allan Thomas**  
**National President**  
**Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association**



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**Able Seaman Clearance Diver Matt Deloraine and Lieutenant Beau Mulraney from Combined Joint Task Force 663 examine a piece of unexploded ordnance left on the sea floor in the Russell Islands during Operation RENDER SAFE 2013**

## Combat experience used to Clear Remnants of War in Solomon Islands

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) techniques that have been developed and refined during operations and conflicts around the world are now being put to good use in the Solomon Islands.

EOD specialists from Australia's Army, Navy and Air Force, along with forces from the United States, Canada and New Zealand have joined together to use skills, share experience and techniques to provide an explosive-free environment for the people of the Solomon Islands.

Operation Render Safe is an enduring Australian-led activity focused on reducing the explosive threat across the Pacific region.

Many areas across the South Pacific are contaminated by the existence of explosive remnants of war, a lethal legacy that remains 68 years after fighting ceased.

Render Safe's Explosive Ordnance Disposal operators are applying their years of experience to work on reducing the threat to local communities in the Pacific region.

EOD operators deployed to Operation RENDER SAFE have gained their experience in operations and conflicts around the world, including Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, Bosnia, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan and a multitude of other conflict zones.

Lieutenant Commander Richard Brickacek, the Commander of Task Group 663.1, responsible to the Task Force Commander for the clearance of ordnance across Guadalcanal, said Operation RENDER SAFE is lucky to have some of the most combat experienced and proficient EOD operators in the world.

"Our operators are now using the skills developed in support of multiple combat operations to focus on the humanitarian task of removal of legacy munitions".

On top of the combat experience of the operators, a significant component of RENDER SAFE has also been the partnership with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force EOD unit.

"The opportunity to bring together operators from four nations and partner them with the professionals of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force EOD unit, acknowledged as one of the best in the region, is invaluable to the task," Lieutenant Commander Brickacek said

In the first week of clearance operations, Operation Render Safe has cleared 2671 individual pieces of ordnance with a combined explosive weight of nearly 1500 kilograms of TNT.

# Recognition Ceremony for Decade of Service

A Recognition Ceremony held in Tarin Kot saw the Chief of the Defence Force, General David Hurley congratulate the more than 26,500 Defence personnel who have contributed to Australia's mission in Afghanistan since 2002.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Defence Minister Senator David Johnston and General Hurley joined representatives from Afghanistan, the United States, Netherlands, New Zealand, France, Singapore and Slovakia for a Recognition Ceremony at Multi-National Base at the end of October.

The ceremony formally acknowledged the contribution of Australia and its Coalition partners to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Uruzgan province.

"Today is about recognising the efforts and achievements of every Australian who has conducted or supported operations in Afghanistan or the Middle East over the past decade.

"I am immensely proud of the work our Defence personnel have done to counter the insurgency and what we have achieved for the people of Afghanistan.

"Since 2005 we have worked in partnership with the Afghans to degrade the insurgency while our training and mentoring has allowed the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade and the Afghan National Security Forces to develop the capability they need to accept responsibility for Uruzgan's security.

"The Afghan people have shown strong support for their own security forces and growing confidence that the Afghan National Security Forces can confront and defeat the insurgents in their own right.

"The ADF and our civilian partners have made a lasting contribution to Uruzgan with tangible improvements that have significantly enhanced the quality of life for the people who live in the province.

"A succession of Australian reconstruction teams have built or redeveloped hospitals and medical centres; schools; and more than 200km of roads and bridges to enhance health and education and to improve vital infrastructure.

"The Trade Training school has been a major success and has taught a large number of Afghans plumbing, carpentry, concreting and bricklaying skills.

"Over the next 10 weeks the ADF will complete its mission in Uruzgan and the majority of our people will begin to return to Australia.

"As this process begins, we reflect on the lasting friendship that has been forged with the people of Afghanistan and ties that we have established with our Afghan and Coalition partners.

"The efforts of the international community in Afghanistan have provided the time, space and opportunity to build and field an Afghan National Security Force and to establish the institutional building blocks for the Afghan people to determine their own future.

"This is the legacy of those military personnel and civilians killed or wounded in the conflict, including more than 260 Australians who were wounded, and the 40 Australian soldiers who were killed in action.

"We will remember them."

Minister for Defence Senator David Johnston chats with local Afghan representatives before attending the Recognition Ceremony at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot.





# Defence Relocations and Housing Managers are there to assist you during your relocation

**By Ken Parks, Acting Assistant Director Operations, Directorate of Relocations and Housing**

Defence Support and Reform Group (DSRG) has a dedicated Defence Relocations and Housing Manager based in each region. At the local level the Defence Relocations and Housing Manager (DRHM) is the primary Defence representative with Defence Housing Australia (DHA) and Toll Transitions. DRHMs are employed to assist Defence personnel and their families by liaising with DHA, Toll Transitions and the Defence Community Organisation (DCO) in each region to make their relocation easier for them and their families. The DRHMs have considerable experience in all aspects of relocations and housing.

The ultimate aim of the DRHM is to ensure that you and your family experience high quality customer service as you undergo a removal or change to your housing situation.

The DRHM network seeks feedback from members on the complete

relocation service. This feedback is used to provide management in Defence and the service providers with information on how members feel about their removal experience but more importantly, the feedback is used to ensure that all removals and future removals are as stress-free as possible. A DRHM may visit you during an uplift or delivery to discuss and assess the standard of service being provided. In some instances the DRHM will contact you after a relocation to discuss whether the relocation met your expectations. In the past, these discussions have revealed region-wide trends or issues which have been addressed with contractors.

If you have an inquiry regarding your housing maintenance/allocation or relocation services, do not hesitate to contact your local DRHM. If you are dissatisfied with the service provided or decision made by DHA or Toll Transitions your local DRHM will assist you to address and resolve your concerns.

DRHM Location	First Name	Surname	Phone	Mobile
Adelaide	Bill	Griggs	(08) 7389 3225	0407 211 389
	Leo	Pope	(08) 7389 3226	0418 801 981
Bandiana	Lea	Gayfer	(02) 6055 2187	0439 452 291
Brisbane	Brian	Gear	(07) 3332 6975	0402 824 035
	Phyllis	Gore	(07) 3332 6992	
Cairns	Merv	Dicton	(07) 4411 7922	0408 457 468
Canberra	Anton	Pecovnic	(02) 6265 8808	0404 823 765
	Treena	Stone	(02) 6265 8809	0404 823 765
Darwin	Alan	Purude	(08) 8935 4346	0408 970 557
	James	Muir	(08) 8935 4224	0458 241 867
Hobart	Tracey	Pannell	(03) 6237 7277	0418 651 744
Hunter	Roger	Lamothe	(02) 4034 6964	0413 728 512
	Neysha	Johnston	(02) 4034 9565	0429 127 082
Liverpool	Carey	Byrne	(02) 8782 4100	0409 125 687
Nowra	Steve	Daley	(02) 4421 3855	0428 441 808
Perth	Allan	Purdue	(08) 9311 2376	0408 970 557
	Cam	Druitt	(08) 9311 2076	0408 978 979
Richmond	Sara	Sullivan	(02) 4587 2314	0408 481 880
Southern Victoria	John	Gaffney	(03) 9282 3667	0407 462 437
Sydney	Greg	Richardson	(02) 9393 2146	0420 308 387
	Carmen	Azzopardi	(02) 9377 2148	0408 972 933
Tindal	Kylie	Henderson	(08) 8973 6594	0429 780 211
Toowoomba/Ipswich	Chris	Gordon	(07) 4631 4414	0419 103 415
Townsville	Merv	Dickson	(07) 4411 7922	0408 457 468
Wagga	Lea	Gayfer	(02) 6055 2187	0439 452 291

## Change to Relocation Model

Defence and Toll have developed, and will implement a new model for the sourcing of removals and associated dates for Uplift of a member's furniture and effects.

The new model is called the Whole of Relocation Cost model (WORC)

The WORC model is based on the premise that substantial savings in relocation costs can be achieved under the following circumstances:

- taking advantage of cost differences in services arising from the day the service is supplied (e.g. generally midweek hotel rates are less than a Friday);

- Sourcing quotes for services within a date range as opposed to a specific date (e.g. a relocation price for an uplift for each individual day in the date range of Monday to Friday);
- Considering all relocation costs across each day of the requested uplift week when making the procurement decision (e.g. removal, accommodation, flights and allowances); and
- Choosing the day of the week which provides the most cost effective combination of costs, unless operational considerations or extenuating personal circumstances dictate otherwise.

The WORC model was successfully trialled in South Queensland from 30 July 2013 -30 Oct 2013.





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# Navy Apprehends Alleged Pirates

Royal Australian Navy ship, HMAS *Melbourne*, intercepted suspected pirates off the coast of Somalia as part of maritime security patrols in Middle Eastern waters for Operation SLIPPER.

The suspected pirates were intercepted on 15 October 2013 after the Combined Maritime Forces received two reports of attempted acts of piracy against two separate merchant vessels during the previous four days.

Under the direction of Combined Task Force 151 (CTF151), HMAS *Melbourne* was appointed as on-scene commander for a multi-national search operation, involving ships and aircraft from the Combined Maritime Forces and European Union Naval Forces to locate and intercept the suspected pirates.

With the assistance of other CTF 151 assets, HMAS *Melbourne* successfully located the suspected pirate vessels.

HMAS *Melbourne*'s highly trained boarding team made the final approach to board and search the skiffs successfully apprehending the nine pirates.

Commander Brian Schlegel, Commanding Officer HMAS *Melbourne* said that the Ship's Company knew what to do and was well trained to ensure a positive outcome.

"*Melbourne*'s success in disrupting piracy activity in the region re-affirms the importance of Australia's ongoing

commitment to Combined Maritime Forces," Commander Schlegel said.

"*Melbourne*'s Ship's Company have worked tirelessly to contribute to a successful outcome for both Combined Maritime Forces and for the wider Maritime Community."

HMAS *Melbourne*'s boarding party provided information about various items located onboard the two vessels that could be used in piracy attacks.

In accordance with the Combined Maritime Forces direction, the pirates were embarked in HMAS *Melbourne* and the skiffs and associated pirate equipment was destroyed with machine gun fire from *Melbourne*'s Seahawk.

HMAS *Melbourne* returned the suspected pirates to Somalia.

The quick, co-ordinated and decisive response to threats in the maritime environment highlights the importance of the continued presence of multi-national forces in the Middle East region.

HMAS *Melbourne* is the 56th rotation to the Middle East Area of Operations since the 1991 Gulf War and the 32nd rotation since 2001.

She is employed by the Combined Maritime Forces under the Tactical Control of CTF151 who is responsible for counter piracy operations within the Middle East Area of Operations.





# Assistance with Bushfire Clean-up

With an early fire season bringing destructive wildfires across NSW, destroying many homes and other buildings, the ADF swung into action with supporting responses.

Dubbed Operation NSW BUSHFIRE ASSIST, eighty diggers from both the Regular Army and the Army Reserve worked with locals in the Springwood area to 'make safe' buildings and trees damaged or destroyed by recent bushfires.

Lieutenant Colonel Rob Lording, Commanding Officer of Task Force Waratah Red, said that soldiers had conducted site recons, making buildings and trees safe.

"We have also conducted a meeting with Springwood Council and the Public Works Department with respect to drain and erosion control."

Lance Corporal Peter Elliott of the Army Reserve's 5th Combat Engineer Regiment at Penrith, and a builder in his civilian job, said local people were pleased to see the Army out in the community helping with the clean-up.

"It's a great honour to be able to help where we can and

really good when people come up to thank us," he said.

"A lady and a small boy just came over from a shop to thank us, and when we sat the little bloke in the Army truck he thought it was great."

Lance Corporal Elliott lives at Springwood himself and has experienced three fires near his home and said this latest fire burnt the fence and a shed at his son's house.

Corporal Lester Meers, an Army Reservist for 30 years, left his job at Young, NSW, at short notice to assist with the clean-up.

"We're trying to assist people who have been devastated by losing their homes, all their possessions and even their pets," he said. "We're helping them try to rebuild their lives."

"Reservists are good at working in local communities because often they are part of those communities."

The Task Force worked closely with the NSW Bushfire Recovery Committee to ensure that a coordinated effort was achieved.





# Defence Inquiry into State Mine Wildfire

The Chief of Defence has ordered an independent inquiry into a large New South Wales bushfire that was sparked by an artillery exercise using live ammunition.

General David Hurley appointed retired Sydney judge John O'Meally to preside over the inquiry.

He told the ABC the inquiry will determine how the fire started, the conditions on the day as well as the adequacy of instructions and procedures relevant to the exercise.

"As the longest serving judge in NSW at the time of his retirement, John O'Meally has a wealth of judicial experience and is very well qualified to preside over this Commission of Inquiry," General Hurley said.

Defence has already apologised for the State Mine fire, which started at the Marangaroo Training Area near Lithgow on October 16.

An investigation by the NSW Rural Fire Service found Defence personnel who were conducting an exercise with live ordnance at the time caused the blaze.

In mid-November, the fire was still listed by the RFS as active but under control more than a month later, having so far burned through more than 56,000 hectares of land.

The fire was one of three that caused major destruction in and around the Blue Mountains last month, destroying more than 200 homes.

**Acknowledgement to ABC Online 14 Nov 13**

**Below: Australian Army plant operator, Sapper Jeremy Drummond, from the 17th Construction Squadron, 6th Engineer Support Regiment, demolishes a burnt house during the "Make Safe" program in the fire affected area of Yellow Rock in the Blue Mountains, NSW.**

**Opposite: Army engineer, Sapper Cameron Amri, from the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment, chainsaws a fallen tree as Sapper Ashley Crasto (left) supervises during the "Make Safe" program in Yellow Rock in the Blue Mountains, NSW.**









# Exercise Render Safe in Solomon Islands

More than 200 personnel from the Australian Defence Force, New Zealand Defence Force, United States Navy, Canada and Solomon Islands commenced an Australian-led explosive ordnance disposal operation in Solomon Islands in late October.

Chief of Joint Operations, Lieutenant General Ash Power said the mission, known as Operation RENDER SAFE, would involve the identification, assessment and disposal of unexploded ordnance.

“The Solomon Islands saw some of the fiercest fighting of World War II, so it is hardly surprising that a great deal of unexploded ordnance still litters many of the islands to this day.

“These remnants of war are an enduring and unpredictable threat to the safety of the locals. We are pleased to be able to play an active role in making the Solomon Islands area safer for all,” Lieutenant General Power said.

Commander of the Joint Task Force for Operation RENDER SAFE, Commander Doug Griffiths, RAN said the inclusion of international participants will provide an excellent opportunity for our forces to compare training and skills in a demanding environment.

“The cooperation between the participating nations will provide a great service to the people of Solomon Islands as well as providing Defence personnel an opportunity to work side-by-side.

“Working closely with the local communities to recognise

and identify items of unexploded ordnance will be a key part of the operation,” Commander Griffiths said.

Although the Australian Defence Force has historically conducted explosive ordnance disposal in the South Pacific, including Kiribati and the Marshall Islands, Operation RENDER SAFE is the first enduring operation of its type.

In 2011, Operation RENDER SAFE provided explosive ordnance disposal assistance to Papua New Guinea, including along the Kokoda Track.

The operation was conducted from 29 October to 7 December.



Opposite & above: Explosive ordnance is readied for disposal at a Royal Solomon Islands Police Force facility at Hell's Point.

Below: Operation Render Safe 2013 personnel including Commander Doug Griffiths (right) discuss renovations to the Christian Care Centre with Sister Noreen of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.





# Emotional Trip for Families of The Fallen

It was an emotional visit for the families of Australian fallen soldiers as they stepped off an RAAF C-17 in Afghanistan.

The families travelled to the Multi-National Base in Tarin Kot in early November where they attended a moving ceremony to honour the men they loved.

General Hurley said the journey was about helping the families to heal by giving them an opportunity to experience and understand the country where their loved ones lost their lives.

“This has been a deeply moving experience for everyone involved, especially the families of our fallen.

“They are the ones who bear the true cost of war, yet despite their grief they are able to find comfort in what their fathers, partners, sons and brothers achieved in their service to our nation,” General Hurley said.

Family members laid poppies at the memorial inside Camp Holland and met with Australian troops as they got a glimpse of life on deployment.

**Below: Australian Defence Force personnel and the families of Australian soldiers who died in Afghanistan during a ceremony for the fallen at Multi National Base – Tarin Kot.**





Peter Diddams, whose son, Blaine was killed in 2012 during an engagement with insurgents said it was a surreal experience.

“Because it actually conforms with photographs and with Google Earth, that I’ve looked at, and books that I have read but it’s still an amazing experience to walk out the back of the C-17 and see the mountains around, the dust and the blast walls, the vehicles and the bunkers,” he said.

Kim Duffy, father of Captain Bryce Duffy who was killed by small arms fire during an insider attack in 2011 said the families were grateful for the opportunity to visit.

“I think that for all families, certainly from what I have heard, this is a big closure event for us. Nothing will ever remove the pain and the loss, but just being here is a huge closure chapter, I think for everybody.”

“This is the most important visit I will ever make as Chief of the Defence Force,” General Hurley said.

“I cannot help but admire the courage and strength of these families – it has been a tremendous privilege to make this journey with them.”

#### Following page

**Top left: An Australian Army soldier holds the hand of Mrs Jennifer Jones, the mother of Army cook Lance Corporal Andrew Jones who was killed on 30 May 2011.**

**Below left: The parents of Australian Army soldier Private Thomas Dale, who was killed by an improvised explosive device on 20 August 2010, console each other after the ceremony to the fallen at Multi National Base – Tarin Kot, southern Afghanistan.**

**Right: Image 2: Peter and Cate Diddams display the medals of their son Sergeant Blaine Diddams, who was killed in action with the Special Operations Task Group on 2 July 2012.**













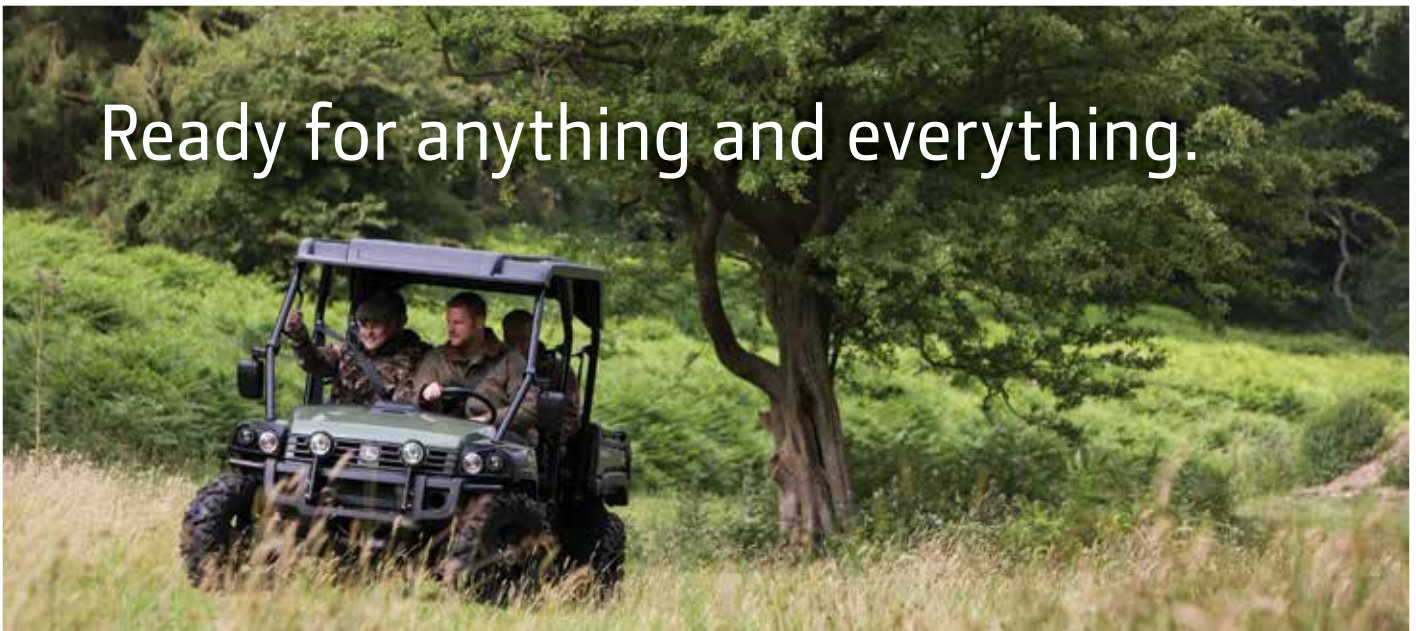
# ANZAC Flag Presented

Recently Chief of Army Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO (2nd from left) and Regimental Sergeant Major – Army Warrant Officer Dave Ashley (right), OAM received the Australian national flag that was flown during the ANZAC Day dawn service at Multi National Base - Tarin Kot, Afghanistan in 2013.

The flag was presented by Colonel Simon Stuart (3rd from left) and Warrant Officer Class One Wayne Hay (left) on behalf of Combined Team Uruzgan rotation four on Remembrance Day 2013 in Canberra.



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# Community Engagement Key to Mission Success in Solomon Islands

Months of careful planning in partnership with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, the Australian Federal Police, and Australian Defence and Consulate staff in Honiara, along with a well thought out community engagement program, have been an integral part of Operation RENDER SAFE 2013.

Operation RENDER SAFE 2013 is a Navy-led, multinational taskforce of more than 150 members tasked with removing unexploded World War II munitions from local communities in Solomon Islands.

In the months leading up to RENDER SAFE on 29 October, a broad suite of communications activities were planned and developed to support the operation. These ranged from commissioning bilingual posters and flyers down to decisions about the working dress of task force members.

The head of Combined Joint Task Force 663, Commander Doug Griffiths,

said that the community engagement and communications activities of the taskforce were key elements of Operation RENDER SAFE, without which the rest of the mission would not be possible.

“Operation RENDER SAFE is all about local communities being able to live normal, safe and secure lives. We have

shared interests in the safety and security of the local community with the AFP and the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force in the Solomon Islands,” Commander Griffiths said.

“As such, all members of the taskforce have been working with local communities in distinctive RENDER SAFE branded uniforms, handing out community engagement information in the form of stickers and flyers that reinforce the message of unexploded ordnance safety throughout local communities.

“Members of our Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams have spent time working with local communities, meeting with community leaders and members of the local clergy because we need their assistance to convey the message that RENDER SAFE is here to assist the good work of Royal Solomon Islands Police Force EOD staff in reducing the explosive hazards in Solomon Islands.”

“This may mean distributing flyers at local markets or visiting local villages, but certainly community engagement is a core element of our mission and the results to date indicate our Task Force members are approaching this task with great enthusiasm and commitment,” Commander Griffiths said.

Standing from left, Able Seaman Combat Systems Operator (ABCSOMW) Joshua Leavy, Midshipman Hamish Mclean, Able Seaman Marine Technician Luke McLennan Joseph Wao; bottom row: ABCSOMW Michael Burgess, Agnas Mahete and Patricia Toro hold up explosive ordnance disposal awareness pamphlets as part of Operation RENDER SAFE at Honiara Central Markets in Solomon Islands.









## Defence established **OPERATION PHILIPPINES ASSIST** to support international Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan.

A Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster and a C-130 J Hercules departed Darwin on Wednesday 13 November to support the deployment of a civilian Australian Medical Assistance Team (AusMAT), provided by the Department of Health. The heavy lift aircraft transported the 36 strong civilian AusMAT and some 22 tonnes of associated equipment. The RAAF aircraft were

supported by a RAAF Mobile Air Load Team (MALT), an Aircraft Security Operations Team and Aeromedical Evacuation specialists. These personnel were responsible for enabling the delivery of the medical specialists and their equipment to the Philippines.





# Changi Chapel Receives a Special Visitor

Serving alongside Australian diggers, British POW Eric Lomax suffered a torturous existence working on the Death Railway in Thailand during WWII.

Mr Lomax passed away last year at 93, but the moving story of his time at war, his struggle with PTSD and the amazing forgiveness he showed towards a Japanese interpreter was revealed in his autobiography *The Railway Man* in 1995. The story has now been made into a film starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth that will be released on Boxing Day.

Mr Lomax's wife Patti made a special trip to RMC – Duntroon on November 18 for an emotional visit to the Changi Chapel, which was brought to Canberra after the war.

“Eric would have gone to this chapel in Changi I'm sure,” Mrs Lomax said. “And because my husband can't be here today I wanted to visit it for him.”

Mrs Lomax spent an overwhelming morning visiting the Australian War Memorial to lay a wreath in memory of her husband and his fellow POWs, during her whirlwind week in Australia for the film's premiere.

She said she hoped the film would help veterans, military members and their families know the sacrifices made are not forgotten and are respected.

“I hope the film reminds people of what happened over there. I've been told there are 300 veterans from the Thai-Burma Railway alive here in Australia,” Mrs Lomax said.

“The *Railway Man* is not just about Eric and me, but about the consequences of war. Veterans often don't know they're affected by PTSD and if they don't open up then their families go through Hell.

“Most people have some connection to the military, be that family or a neighbour or friend, and so I hope this film spurs those suffering to get help.”

Mr Lomax was a 21-year-old signals officer who loved trains, and while the film features gut-wrenching scenes from prison camps and soul-destroying times

depicting Colin Firth struggling with demons, Mrs Lomax wanted to remind audiences the story has a powerful and happy ending.

“I remember Eric's meeting with the Japanese interpreter Takeshi Nagase when we travelled to Thailand to find him,” she says.

“We were overlooking all those white graves with the names and ages of those killed – they were just young boys. It really struck me that maybe we were being disloyal being there with Mr Nagase, but Eric looked at me and said ‘Patti, sometime the hating has to stop’.

“It shook me. I have had that engraved on Eric's headstone – it shows just what he was really like.”

ADF personnel requiring further support and treatment can contact local Defence Health Facility or call 1800 IMSICK after hours (1800 467 425).

Mental Health All Hours Support Line 1800 628 036 is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services that can be accessed include psychology, medical, social work and chaplains.

ADF personnel who have deployed are eligible to self refer to the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046. It provides counselling and group programs to veterans, peacekeepers and eligible family members and is a free call, open 24/7.



**Mrs Patti Lomax at the Changi Prisoner of War Chapel at Royal Military College Duntroon (RMC)**



# Australia's Chinook Mission in Afghanistan Complete

Rotary Wing Group - Eight (RWG-8), the Australian Army Aviation Detachment, has completed its five-month mission in Afghanistan.

RWG-8 marked the End of Mission during a ceremony at Kandahar Airfield (KAF) on 14 September.

The KAF-based RWG consisted of two CH-47D Chinook medium lift helicopters operating throughout the Afghan summer months as part of the American-led Regional Command South Aviation Task Force.

Australian Army Aviation Task Groups have completed 11 tours in Afghanistan starting in 2006 as the Aviation Support Element. It was renamed Rotary Wing Group in 2008 and went on to complete eight rotations between 2008 and 2013.

Lieutenant Colonel James Brown, Commanding Officer RWG-8, said the RWG's contribution was substantial.

"The men and women of RWG-8 achieved 780 flying hours over 90 missions from 2 April to 4 September 2013," Lieutenant Colonel Brown said.

"We carried more than 3400 passengers and approximately 373,000kg of cargo to dozens of Forward Operating Bases in southern Afghanistan.

"Australian RWG detachments have made a significant contribution to the International Security Assistance Force every year since 2006.

"It has been a privilege to support NATO and Afghan troops on the ground as they work to get Afghanistan on the path to stability."

Australia's Middle East Area of Operations Commander, Major General Michael Crane, said the RWG operated steadfastly alongside their American allies.

"The Army Aviation's detachment, assigned under Operational

Control to American Combat Aviation Brigades over the past eight years has provided a meaningful enhancement to Australia's strategic US alliance," Major General Crane said.

Over the 11 rotations of Army Combat Aviation (three by Aviation Support Element and eight by Rotary Wing Group) Army Chinook helicopters flew in excess of 6000 combat flying hours, carried almost 40,000 personnel and transported in excess of 3600 tonnes of military cargo.

Numerous decorations have been awarded to Australian aircrew over the various deployments including the Medal for Gallantry, Distinguished Service Medal, the Meritorious Unit Citation for the 5th Aviation Regiment, several US Bronze Stars and multiple US Air Medals.

RWG personnel were drawn from across the Army Aviation community, though the majority deployed from the 5th Aviation Regiment in Townsville, home of Army's Chinook capability.

The aircraft will return home to Australia by Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft in the coming month.

The Chinook, a tandem rotor cargo helicopter with a maximum all-up weight of 22,727kg provides significant lift capability in high density-altitude conditions, making it well suited to operations in Afghanistan's harsh environment. Soon to be upgraded to a newer model, the Chinook will continue to provide the Army with a critical capability.

**Warrant Officer Class Two Jason Walker folds the Australian flag after the Rotary Wing Group - Eight after the end of mission ceremony.**





# The Tasmanian Veterans Advisory Council

The Tasmanian Veterans Advisory Council (TVAC) plays an integral role in giving a voice in Government to those Tasmanians who have served, or are serving, in conflicts around the world.

"The Council provides advice and direction to Government on the issues affecting our veterans community," said Tasmanian Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Scott Bacon. "TVAC has already been involved in a range of important initiatives, including the review of the ANZAC Day Observance Act 1929; the Lt Col Harry Murray VC Scholarships; the State Government Reception for service personnel who have been deployed during the calendar year; the Government's War Memorial Repair and Maintenance Grants Program; and concessions for ex-serving men and women."

"It's essential we work to support our veterans community and promote a strong understanding of our military history."

Minister Bacon said through the Lt Col Harry Murray VC Scholarship Scholarships, TVAC was working to ensure Tasmanians maintain that connection to and understanding of the State's rich military history, while supporting research that promotes a greater understanding of the issues facing current veterans.

Research funded through the most recent round of scholarships includes a study into the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on sleep quality, and another

study looking at the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on the memory performance of veterans in their everyday cognitive functions.

"The annual reception for service personnel during the calendar year is another important way to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of our serving personnel," the Minister said.

The Tasmanian Veterans Advisory Council meets four times a year, and regularly travels around the state to ensure ex-serving men and women in regional areas can meet with Council members. Prior to each meeting, the Council holds a 'meet and greet' session which allows members of the veterans community to speak directly to Council members and raise any issues of concern.

"The Council's work is important in ensuring we can honour the memory of those servicemen and women who have served in conflicts past, while at the same time ensuring we can help support those people who are currently serving, or have recently returned from serving in conflicts around the world."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Veterans Advisory Council for their important work to date, and I look forward to working with them into the future to better support our veterans community."

**Minister Scott Bacon with Jenni Smith and APPVA Member Alex Thomson**





## NSW Branch Gets Active

Much has happened in NSW / ACT over the past twelve months and APPVA NSW/ACT are back in full swing with the mission to support the greater veteran community.

The Branch held an annual general meeting, electing a new committee with the following members holding the executive positions: Peter Matthey- President, Bruce Relph-Vice President, Alanna Luvisi-Secretary, Peter Vidler- Treasurer.

The pension team has picked up with Paul Smith successfully completing a level 3 advocacy course, Pauline Maczkowiack , Sandra Vidler, Tony Allen, Brian O'Neil and Peter Vidler.

During October the Branch held a function at the Alstonville RSL Sub Branch, titled Healthy Exercise and Healthy Eating with approximately 25 members of the public attending. Activities were appreciated by the attendees, with follow up exercise classes given free by the personal trainer. He demonstrated exercises to help with getting

in and out of bed as well as sitting and standing which participants thought were very helpful. (photo 1)

John provided his services for free and the Branch thanks him for donating the time, looking forward to the extra training that he is providing to the members free for three months. The members of the public who joined in the lifestyle exercises enjoyed the session although a few of them were a little sore for ware after the session. (photo 2)

Healthy food was served after the session with salads, fish on the BBQ and cooked and fresh prawns (photo 3).

The Branch would like to make a special thanks to John, Sandra, Pauline, Alanna. Special thanks is extended to Brian Hill for cooking the BBQ, who is the Secretary and Treasurer for Alstonville Sub Branch and Beth who is the partner of our National President, who assisted with the exercises as well as helped healthy cake on the day. (photo 4)





AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER &  
PEACEMAKER VETERANS' ASSOCIATION  
**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**



(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)  
ABN 59 558 194 094  
APPVA  
P O Box 480, Boronia Vic 3155  
Phone: 03 9761 0468  
Email: secretary@peacekeepers.asn.au  
Website: www.peacekeepers.asn.au

**Contact Details**

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr (Rank)) ..... Address .....

Last Name ..... City .....

Given Name(s) ..... State ..... Post Code .....

Date of Birth...../...../..... Country .....

Name of Parent/Partner/Child ..... Email.....  
(Complete only for Affiliate Membership)

Phone ..... Mobile .....

**Service Details**

Service (Navy, Army, Air Force, AFP etc) ..... Operation name..... Country.....

Service Regt Number ..... Dates deployed ..... to .....

Current / Former Rank..... Operation name..... Country .....

Post Nominal ..... Date deployed ..... to .....

**Missions** (Attach separate sheet if necessary)

I apply for either Full, Associate or Affiliate Membership to the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA). I agree to abide by its Constitution, rules and regulations. By signing the document, I authorise the APPVA to verify my stated Service or that of my partner or parent / child. I understand my details as supplied on this form, will be kept on record by the National Executive and my respective State or Territory Branch.

Signed ..... Dated .....

**Membership Payment Options (due 1st of July annually)    \$25 Renewal    \$35 New**

**Credit Card**

Send application with completed details to: APPVA PO Box 480, Boronia Vic 3155

Please charge my credit card for the amount of:     \$25 (renewal)     \$35 (new)     Visa     Mastercard

**Credit Card No** \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_    **Expiry Date** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Name**..... **Signature**.....

**Cheque of Money Order**

Send application in mail with cheque or money order payable to APPVA

**Direct Credit - Internet Transfer**

*For Def Credit account holders:*

Account: APPVA    BSB: 803 205    Acc: 20638827    Member No: 153601  
Lodgement Reference Field: include your name and or membership number (if known)  
Surname: Enter AUS (1st 3 letters of acc name), then enter amount required  
Enter Member No: 153601 (if required)

*For All other Financial Institutions:*

Account: APPVA    BSB: 803 205    Acc: 20638827    Member No: 153601  
Reference field: Include your name and or membership number (if known)

**Membership Type - Please select criteria**

- Full Member**  
Open to any member or ex member of the Australian or New Zealand Armed Forces, Police Forces, Government Organisations or Defence Civilians who have Served on Warlike Operations; Peacekeeping or Peacemaking Operations; or Non-Warlike Service. In addition, Peacetime serving and ex Serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Full voting rights
- Associate Member**  
Open to members of other National Armed Forces or Police Forces who have served in War, Peacekeeping or Peacemaking Operations. Persons who have served with Non-Government Organisations. No voting rights.
- Affiliate Member**  
Open to all persons who have not been discharged for reasons of discipline, War Widows / Widowers, Defence Widows / Widowers, Partner(s), Parents and Children of an APPVA Veteran. No voting rights.

Persons applying for membership as a member or ex-member of an Armed Force, Police Force or, as a Defence Civilian meeting the above criteria for Full or Associate Membership, are required to complete the Service Details above. Persons applying for Affiliate Membership as a Parent, Partner or Child of a current APPVA member are required to complete the "Parent / Partner / Child" section in the Contact Details area above, to confirm the membership of the APPVA Member.



AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER &  
PEACEMAKER VETERANS' ASSOCIATION  
**MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM**



(INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA)  
ABN 59 558 194 094  
APPVA  
PO Box 480, Boronia Vic 3155  
Phone: 03 9761 0468  
Email: secretary@peacekeepers.asn.au  
Website: www.peacekeepers.asn.au

MERCHANDISE	QUANTITY	OPTIONS – Please Circle	COST	SUB TOTAL
Navy Blue Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Light Blue Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Putty Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Choc Brown Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Pink Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Black Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
White Polo Shirt		S M L XL XXL MENS/WOMENS	\$40	
Long Sleeved Chambray Shirt		Neck:      cm Chest:      cm	\$55	
Short Sleeved Chambray Shirt		Neck:      cm Chest:      cm	\$55	

MERCHANDISE	QTY	COST	QTY	MERCHANDISE	QTY	COST	SUB TOTAL
APPVA Cap		\$20		Stubby Holder		\$8	
APPVA Sticker		\$6		APPVA Magazine issue:		\$8 ea	
Book - COMBAT MEDIC		\$29					
Book - SOLDIERS' Tales		\$19					
Book - Aussie SOLDIER		\$29					
Please Note – GST, Postage and handling included.							<b>TOTAL \$</b>

**CREDIT CARD**

Send order form with completed details to Merchandise - APPVA PO Box 480, Boronia Vic 3155

Please charge my credit card for the amount of:.....  Visa  Mastercard

**Credit Card No** \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ **Expiry Date** \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**Name**..... **Signature**.....

**CHEQUE OR MONEY ORDER** - Send order in mail with cheque or money order payable to APPVA PO Box 480, Boronia Vic 3155

**DIRECT CREDIT - Internet Transfer**

*For Def Credit account holders:*

Account: APPVA (AUS) BSB: 803-205 Account: 20638827 Member No: 153601  
Include your name and the word "Merch" in the reference field and mail the order form.  
Enter Member No 153601 (if required)

*For All other Financial Institutions:*

Account: APPVA BSB: 803-205 Account: 20638827 Member No: 153601  
Include your name and the word "Merch" in the reference field and mail the order form.  
Enter Member No 153601 (if required)

**DELIVERY DETAILS**

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr (Rank) ..... Address .....

Last Name ..... City .....

Given Name(s) ..... State ..... Post Code .....

Email..... Country .....

Mobile.....

The Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) will accept returned products / merchandise where:

- The product is faulty, or not fit for the purpose
- The product does not match the sample or description

Proof of purchase (APPVA merchandise receipt) must be provided in order to:

- Obtain a refund (if paid by credit card, the credit card will be credited), otherwise a cheque will be provided, or
- Re-issue a like article

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

The APPVA will take the utmost care in packaging; however, we will not accept any responsibility for goods damaged in transit.

The APPVA will not accept returns where the product or merchandise is ordered specifically for an individual (e.g. Montage, clothing, etc).

All queries for return of merchandise must be received within 30 days from date of purchase and directed to APPVA Merchandise Officer at merchandise@peacekeepers.asn.au. Item returns will be at the discretion of the APPVA Merchandise Officer provided the above criterion is met in the first instance. Please choose carefully as APPVA cannot accept returns due to change of mind.