

Australian Peacekeeper

AUTUMN 2024

MAGAZINE

Operation Stabilise



**25th Anniversary of
Australian Service in
Timor-Leste**





APPVA members will be marching in cities and regional centres to commemorate Anzac Day on Thursday, 25 April. Our Brisbane members (pictured) will step off from George St, near Stephen's Lane. As per previous years, the Embassy Hotel has been booked for a refreshing beverage and finger food. For any APPVA member requiring assistance in Brisbane, contact Mark Horner: secretary@peacekeepers.asn.au

COVER PHOTO: OPERATION STABILISE

Medic, Private Tammy Smithson, shelters a baby during a medevac in 'Grotu' located in the mountains of the border area of Southern East Timor. The baby suffering malaria was flown by Black Hawk to medical help in Suai. Photo / ADF Media Unit



CONTENTS

20 AUTUMN 24 EDITION

2	.....	Chaplain's Report – Steve Neuhaus
3	.....	Chairperson's Report – Ian Lindgren
4	.....	Cover Story: INTERFET – A Peacemaking Operation
10	.....	Everyman's A Morale Booster – Ken Matthews
12	.....	Unique East Timor Deployment – Andrew Swinfield
14	.....	Australian veterans honour Anzac Day in Dili
18	.....	Inequity of Tax Treatment
19	.....	Saluting Their Services Grants
20	.....	Heraldry of Australian University Regiments – Martin Hess
22	.....	Veterans Entitlements – The Hon Matt Keogh MP
30	.....	Renville Defined Modern Peacekeeping – Graham Rayner
34	.....	Korean Challenge – Don Hughes
36	.....	Our First Peacekeepers – Graham Rayner

Chairman: Ian Lindgren
ian.lindgren@peacekeepers.asn.au

Editor: Karl Patterson
karl.patterson@peacekeepers.asn.au

Production: Gavin Benson
gavinbenson1@outlook.com

Australian Peacekeepers Magazine is published quarterly by the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (ABN 59 558 194 094) © 2018.
All rights reserved: www.peacekeepers.asn.au

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.



Chaplain Steve Neuhaus RFD, Command Chaplain, 2nd Division, Australian Army reads 'A Prayer for Those Who Suffer Because of War' at the Yass RSL commemoration service on ANZAC Day last year

Fide et Fortitudine By Faith & Courage

Metamorphosis

There is a show I have seen a couple of times on TV where people take items that look like rubbish or should be thrown away and lovingly restore them to like new.

Even though they may look like new often they still have some small marks and scars when you look closely. If you visit Canterbury Cathedral in England, the Chapter House has been restored and looks absolutely resplendent, particularly the intricate ceiling.

When you take time to pause and rest from the stresses and strains of a changing and turbulent world, enabling you to reflect on what God wants you to do and how to do it then He can begin the work of restoration.

"He (Jesus) restores my soul, he guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23:3

Restoration, however, takes time, sometimes it may be quick however it normally you have to work slowly and carefully to ensure that the results are lasting. This may test our patience however if we allow it to occur at Jesus' speed then we find ourselves restored, equipped and prepared for the task ahead, despite any scars we may still carry.

ANZAC Day is a day which for some cause the scars and wounds to ache and hurt however it is also can be part of the healing process as we reflect on ours and others service to this nation and its people. It enables us to put things in to context and perspective.

It is my prayer that wherever you are in your journey of healing that you take the time to first rest, then reflect and finally like a butterfly emerging from its pupa stage be finally transforming into a new creature of grace and beauty able to inspire others around you.

Godspeed

**Steve Neuhaus
Chaplain APPVA**

**Ph. 0403 060 369
Stephen.neuhaus@bigpond.com**

Chairperson's Report



Welcome back to the renewed Australian Peacekeeper Magazine! Following an 18-month break, we warmly greet our new members and express heartfelt appreciation to our long-standing loyal members.

This edition is exclusively available in digital format, with our upcoming June issue set to be released in both print and digital versions.

The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) has consistently maintained a distinct voice in its engagements with the Commonwealth, diverging from conventional representations of the veteran and veteran family community.

From challenging entrenched practices to championing critical causes, our Association remains faithful to the values instilled by our founding members. We call a spade a spade and do not back away from a challenge.

Our strategic trajectory is overseen by a dedicated board of directors, with a steadfast commitment to empowering younger members to assume senior roles. Presently, our primary focus centres on impactful advocacy efforts, entailing governmental lobbying and collaboration with senior figures at the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

Subject to being approved at an extraordinary general meeting on 17 May 2024, we will enhance our board with the addition of three women and two men as directors.

This proactive approach is gradually yielding positive outcomes, including dismantling communication barriers between DVA and the veteran community, ensuring DVA's transparency in publishing claims statistics, spearheading discussions on establishing robust governance, and involving veterans as co-chairs in significant DVA led meetings.

WARNING ORDER. For all veterans who participated in INTERFET or any operation in Timor-Leste, subject to Ministerial approval it appears likely that Australian Peacekeeper Day on 14 September 2024 will signal a week of commemorative activities on the 25th Anniversary of INTERFET. So, bring out the Blue Berets and plan to attend the ceremony and a 1000 seat audience.

This edition delves into INTERFET, a rare peacemaking operation, sharing compelling narratives from participants and subsequent UN operations in Timor-Leste. Our Community continued to suffer losses this year, and we particularly honour Jack Fitzgibbon. Something I felt strongly about following Joel



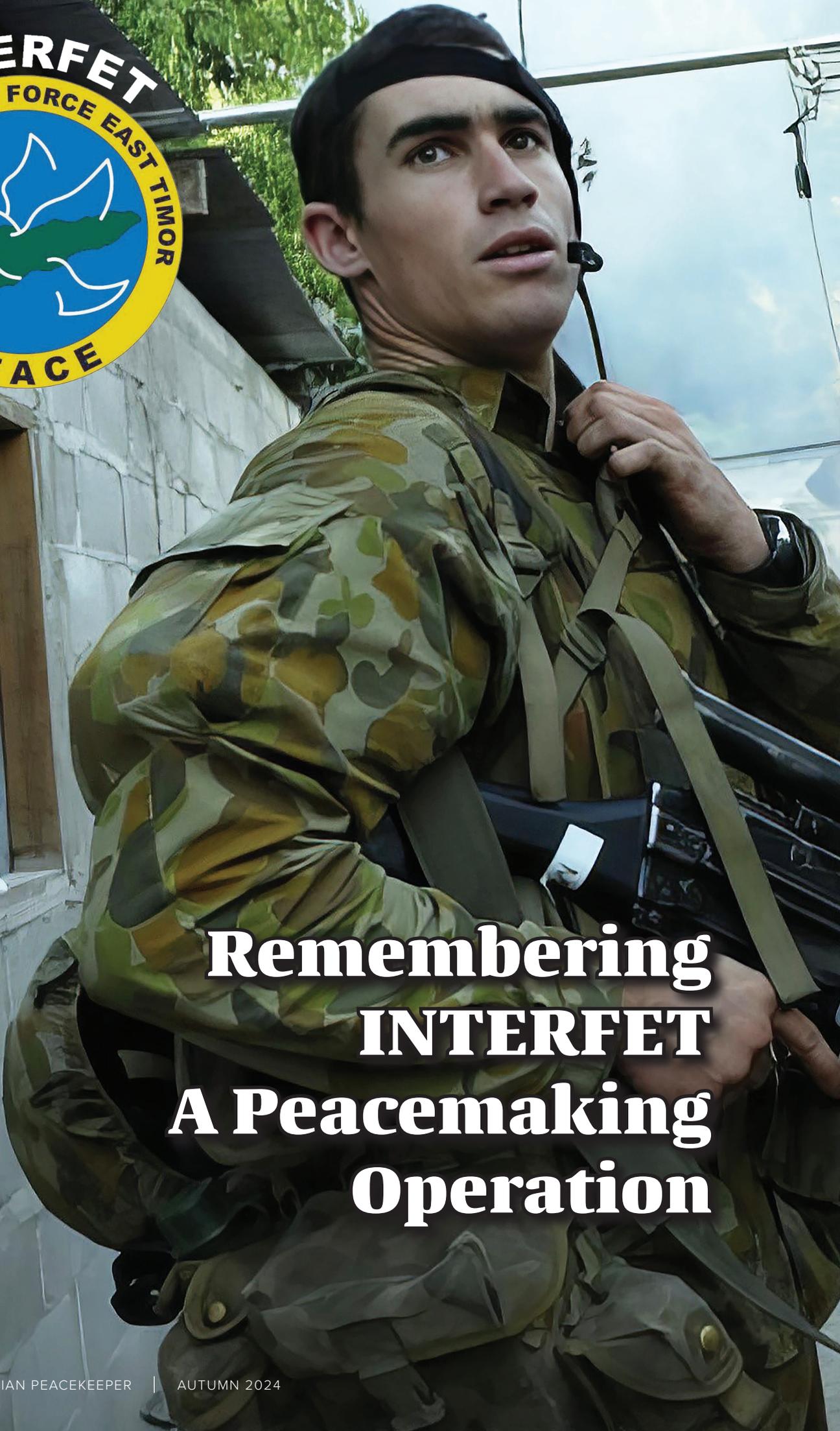
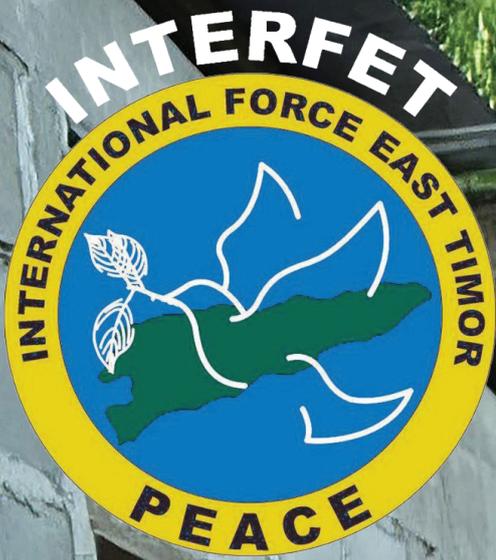
Fitzgibbons' poignant address at Hugh Poate's book launch "Failures of Command: The Death of Private Robert Poate" in 2021.

Our profession is dangerous in training as much as on operations. We thank Cairns RSL Sub Branch for the great support they give Peacekeepers and we also remind everyone about the simplification of veteran legislation with submissions due on 28 April 2024.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the revitalised magazine and explore our new website. In conclusion, we extend our best wishes to Rob Woods. Rob stepped down from the board in February 2024 and for all the time I have known him, he has been a beacon of hope, goodwill, and reason. I miss his advice daily.

To everyone, thank you for being part of our journey as we continue to uphold our core values and make a meaningful impact within the Australian Veteran Community.

Ian Lindgren
Chairperson



**Remembering
INTERFET
A Peacemaking
Operation**



Twenty-five years ago, a pivotal operation unfolded in East Timor (now the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste), which would come to symbolise the spirit of international solidarity and the resilience of an entire nation.

In 1999, after nearly a quarter-century under Indonesian occupation, the people of East Timor faced a future hanging in the balance, their hopes for independence shadowed by violence and instability.

East Timor's struggle to determine its own fate reached a critical junction with a UN-sponsored referendum set to decide its future. The world watched as East Timorese braved threats and outright aggression from pro-Indonesian militia to cast their votes for independence.

What followed was a wave of violence triggered by the referendum's outcome which resounded across the globe and prompted an unmistakable cry for intervention.

International Response

Yielding to worldwide pressure, Indonesia permitted the influx of foreign peacekeepers, leading to the formation of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET).

Australia spearheaded this coalition with Major General Peter Cosgrove at the helm, signalling an unequivocal stand against the turmoil that had escalated dramatically. The initial boots on the ground faced a grim landscape scorched by conflict, tasked with restoring order to the chaos that enveloped East Timor.

INTERFET was a multinational non-United Nations peacemaking task force, organised and led by Australia in accordance with United Nations resolutions to address the humanitarian and security crisis that took place in East Timor from 1999 - 2000 until the arrival of UN peacekeepers.

INTERFET's duties were herculean by any measure —to secure peace, to ensure the safety of UN workers, and to mobilise humanitarian assistance. The coalition spanned voices from

Commander INTERFET, Major General Cosgrove, joins hands with the new East Timor leadership during a celebration to mark the official handover to UNTAET.



twenty-two nations, with over half of the 10,000 troops hailing from Australia. Veterans and peacekeepers alike would recall the smoldering ashes of Dili, the capital where the promise of peace was reborn from embers of conflict. Their valour laid the groundwork for a peace that would guide East Timor towards sovereignty.

Journey to Independence

With the departure of Indonesian troops in late 1999, an era ended and a new chapter began for the people of East Timor. After INTERFET completed its tasks on 23 February 2000, military command and control responsibilities were formally transferred to the Headquarters of the UN Peacekeeping Force (PKF) as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) culminating in independence in May 2002.

This accomplishment stands as a testament to the fortitude of the East Timorese and the critical role of peacekeeping forces in transitional times.

Reflecting on the Path Trodden

For the veterans, peacekeepers, and all connected to this chapter of history, the anniversary of INTERFET is an echo of past hurdles and the triumphs that follow. Our collective memory honours those who laboured for peace and the enduring legacy they have bequeathed to future generations.

In commemorating INTERFET, we also acknowledge the commitment of the Australian Defence Force, Australian Federal Police, the Department of Foreign



Australian members of International Forces East Timor (INTERFET), talk to a citizen in Dili, East Timor.

Operation Stabilise: INTERFET troops from Three Brigade land on the beach at Suai, in the South West corner of East Timor on October 1999. Hundreds of troops from the Townsville-based Third Brigade were moved from Dili onboard HMAS Tobruk to set up a permanent security presence in the border town. Photo: SGT Bill Guthrie / ADF Media



Affairs and Trade, other Australians who acted in the national interest in this operation and all 22 nations involved whose joint missions continue to shape a world in search of harmony.

This anniversary urges us to reflect on the challenges surmounted and those that lie ahead, reminding us that peace is a precious state - hard-won and

maintained through the relentless commitment of the global community.

- Ian Lindgren

Citing Sources from the Australian War Memorial, The Department of Veterans Affairs, The Guardian and David Dare Parker

OUR PURPOSE

To support the transition, health, wellbeing, and integration into society of all participants in past and present operations, and their families, so that they are valued and can attain happiness after service.



The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association's purpose is to support the integration into society of all participants in past and present operations, and their families, so that they are valued and can attain happiness after service.

Our strategic focus is to:

- hold the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Commonwealth accountable to care for every veteran and veteran family member,
- be the trusted source of information for all veterans and our fastest membership growth is in the 24 to 36 year age group, both men and women.

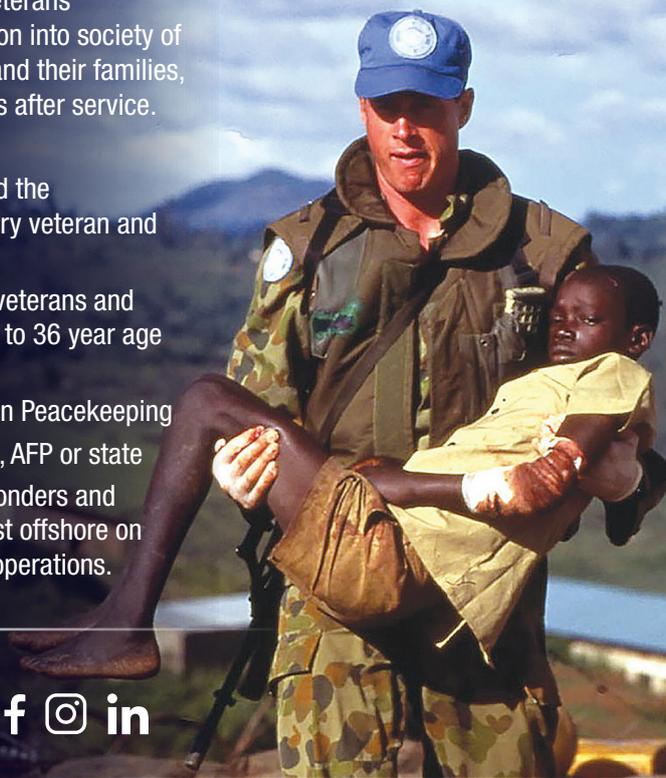
We care for all Australians who have deployed on Peacekeeping operations be they ADF veterans, DFAT personal, AFP or state police, AEC and we extend our care to first responders and anyone who has deployed in the national interest offshore on operations or onshore to support humanitarian operations.

We have fun socially and support families.

0414 245 254

ian.lindgren@peacekeepers.asn.au

www.peacekeepers.asn.au



Unique East Timor Deployment

By Andrew Swinfield

In November 2001, I was deployed to Timor-Leste with the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET).

As part of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) Contingent our task was to perform a range of Policing roles while training and mentoring East Timor Police Service members (ETPS).

My deployment timing was fortuitous and I consider myself very lucky to be stationed in Dili where I enjoyed a variety of unique experiences.

After initial briefings, I performed General Policing Duties at Dili Station followed by a short time in Investigations. These roles fast-tracked me regarding familiarisation of the general area and understanding common crime types.

In General Duties, I became aware Close Personal Protection (CPP) positions in National Security Co-ordination (NSC) would soon become available and I applied. I had considerable experience in CPP and saw the opportunity to perform these duties in a vastly different and unpredictable environment.

I transferred to NSC where I was appointed CPP Team Leader to the Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and became Training Officer to other United Nations Police (UNPOL) and ETPS.

In January 2002, the UN Chief Sergio Vieira de Mello announced the Presidential electoral campaign would start on 15 March and finish on 12 April in the lead-up to Independence on 20 May.

I was chosen to lead a CPP Team tasked to protect Francisco Xavier do Amaral one of the Presidential

Candidates. Our team comprised one member from the USA, two Gambians and three Timorese. – See image opposite.

Francisco Xavier do Amaral was president for 10 days in 1975 serving as East Timor's leader for the short period between Portugal's withdrawal as colonial ruler and Indonesia's occupation.

After a five-day stint in hospital, Mr Amaral's campaign against Xanana Gusmau started in earnest. We commenced long days travelling from his compound in Dili, across the country where he gave speeches in many towns and villages, often in open fields. It was common for attendees to emerge from the fields they were working in, carrying machetes and knives.

One of the founding leaders of pro-independence party Fretilin, Mr Amaral was expelled from his

Swinfield returned in 2006 for Operation Serene



own organisation in 1977 following a dispute over the tactics used to counter Indonesia's invasion. Unwilling to kill him openly, he was jailed by a radical faction of Fretilin who held him in a bamboo stockade to "starve me slowly", he told an interviewer in 1983.

He spent a year dragged, tied and bound, by his captors across the mountains as they struggled to stay ahead of the Indonesian army. Finally, he was abandoned by his Fretilin guards in August 1978 when they were caught in an ambush only to be captured by the Indonesian military instead."

Paraded before media cameras Amaral was flown to Bali where he was placed in the residential compound of the General responsible for East Timor at the time. Moved to Jakarta in 1983, Mr Amaral was a virtual prisoner of Indonesia for 22 years.

During Presidential elections he maintained he expected to lose by a landslide to Xanana Gusmao. But Mr Amaral said that by standing, he was at least demonstrating to the East Timorese people the principle of democracy by preventing a one-horse race.

Following the election, I was appointed to the role of Independence Day Celebrations (IDC) Liaison Officer. Independence Day was a significant event attracting many high-profile foreign Heads of Government. The occasion drew unprecedented attention from media world-wide as East Timor emerged as a new nation.

My role was to plan, co-ordinate and implement the NSC CPP response assisting strategic partners to ensure the safety of attending VIPs. In the leadup to IDC, I trained ETPS officers in order that they could be integrated into visiting AFP CPP Teams protecting key dignitaries.

The 34 AFP CPP members who attended formed part of the largest CPP Operation conducted outside Australia.

ETPS's involvement in the Independence Day Celebrations was an essential part in their



development. The training and experience gained ensured they were prepared with a pool of experienced members assuring the sustainability of CPP prior to the departure of the United Nations.

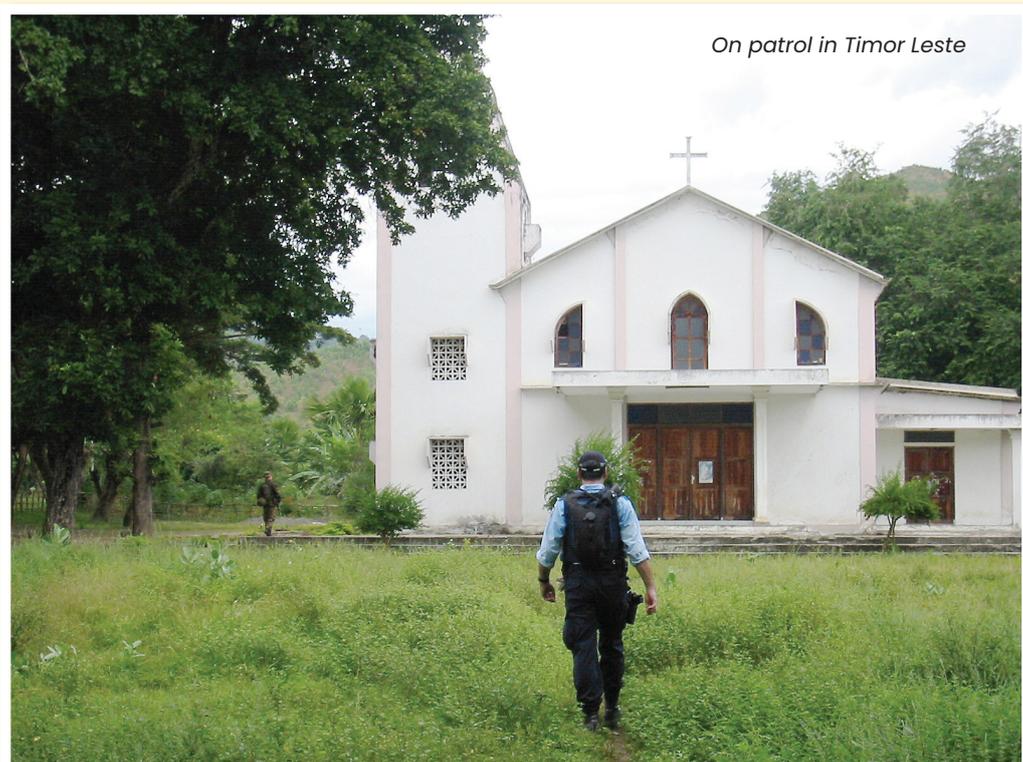
At the conclusion of the Celebrations, I was selected OIC CPP for the new UN Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISSET). As OIC I was responsible for CPP Operations conducted within the country including visiting Foreign Government Officials.

I managed four teams providing CPP for the Chief Minister Dr Mari Alkatiri, Foreign Minister Ramos Horta, President Xanana Gusmao and First Lady Kirsty Gusmao. As OIC I was responsible for 60 members under my command: 28 UNPOL and 32 ETPS, representing 17 different nationalities.

For a few days prior to the end of my UN deployment I performed the role of Acting Deputy Commander of NSC.

Prior to departure from Mission, I conducted a selection process to identify suitable UNPOL members to act as advisors providing ongoing training and mentoring to ETPS post-handover.

In 2006, I returned to East Timor as part of Operation Serene. This was the AFP's response as part of Australia's assistance to combat the deteriorating public order situation. I assisted in the provision of CPP to the Australian Ambassador and Justice Minister Ellison. I also performed patrols of Dili with the New Zealand military in search of looters and weapon-carrying youths.



Everyman's Chief Commissioner

By Ken Matthews

In 1999, Everyman's received a request from the ADF to provide three Everyman's REPs for East Timor. The three REPs were Ray Carnes, Stewart (Stewie) Denson and Allen Pipes.

Initially, in the devastation there, our Everymen were confined to Dili. There we assisted in managing a Rec Centre for the troops who were engaged in the initial clearing of the area. As the months went by, our Everymen were able to finally take the brew-truck out and visit ADF and foreign allies in the Area Of Operation (AO).

By then the Timorese were not so terrified of us Aussies. For them, anyone in uniform had been an object of terror. But once they understood our mission, they were friendly. It was hard for all concerned in those early days seeing so many orphans. This was

a lasting memory for our Everymen and we would throw out bottled water for the locals driving past.

We remembered the glad smiles on the face of our ADF members every time the brew truck pulled up. They were overjoyed in some cases to see the ones who cared for them at home were also in East Timor.

Everyman's trusts to this day, that our visits were a huge morale booster. We had some of our greatest conversations and times of encouragement behind the brew truck.

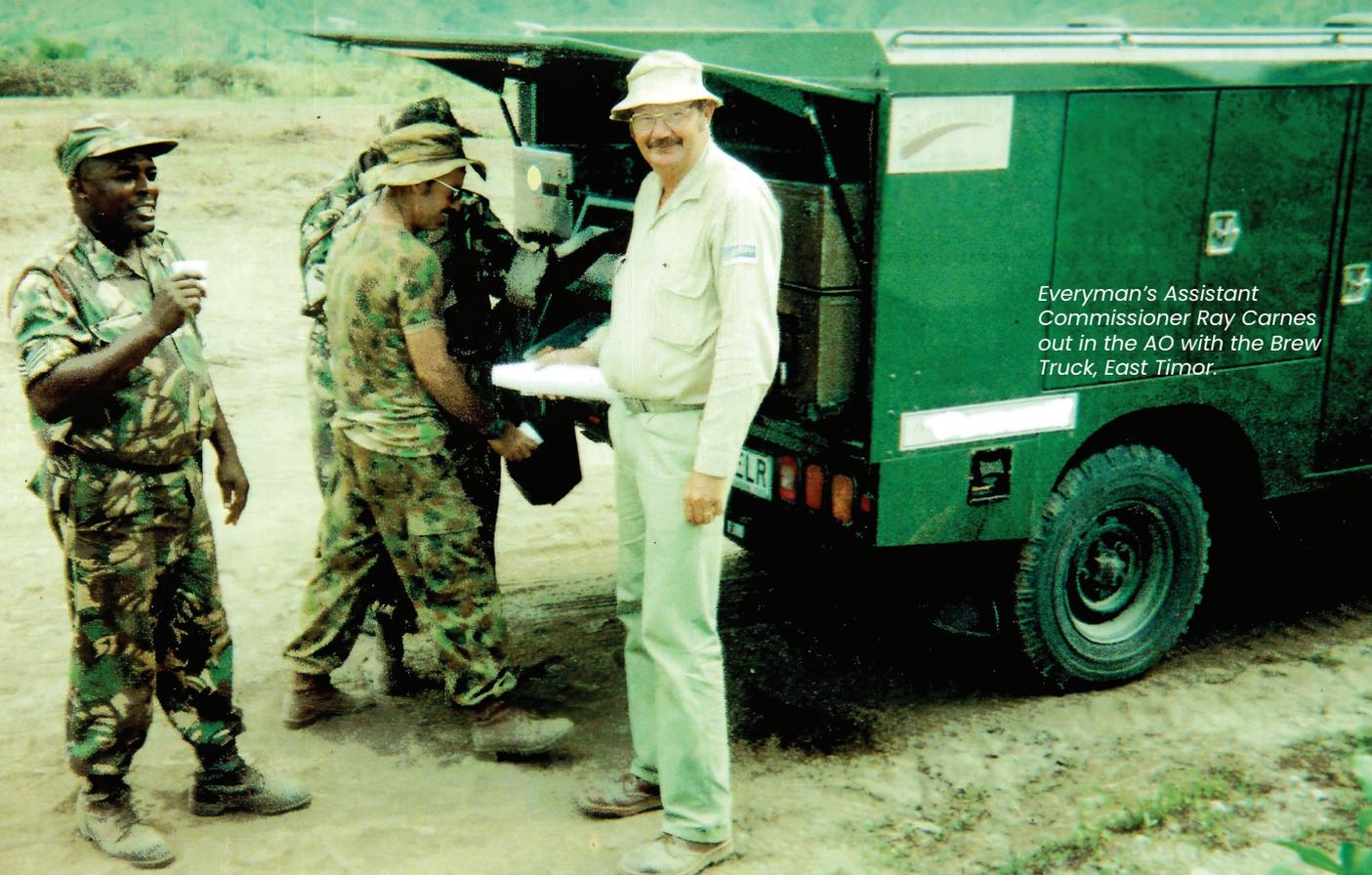
Stewie Denson even got a chance to visit the Oecusse enclave, a separated part of East Timor surrounded by Indonesian Territory. However, safety was becoming an issue and Stewie was pulled out. He



Richard Gibson, Allen Pipes & Ben Ridley

did nonetheless get to interact with ADF members and encourage them before he left.

Our Everymen left with a huge sense of honour we were able to be some morale and encouragement to the ADF in INTERFET.



Everyman's Assistant Commissioner Ray Carnes out in the AO with the Brew Truck, East Timor.



Everyman's staff hold honorary Officer status and wear military uniforms. Representatives work within the military structure as Full-time and Reserve staff.



Everyman's started 2024 with three new Representatives, Claudia Ridley, Bjorn Larsen (ex 8/9), and Troy Murphy. Claudia is the wife of 8/9 Senior REP Ben. Claudia and Bjorn are sponsored there also. We are certainly proud to say our team is growing.

Troy Murphy is at Kapooka. For a number of years now we have simply not had enough Everymen there. Senior REP Warren Clarke has

been doing a sterling job as the only full time Everyman. So Troy's coming is certainly welcome. Warren and Troy also serve the RAAF. They have visited both Army and RAAF recruits at the IRTB ranges. They also go to the RAAF at Forest Hill to "brew them up" for their recruits bush training. It is great for our team at RAAF Base Amberley hearing new Air Force postings giving the Everyman a great wrap for looking after them during their recruit phase.

Our Assistant Commissioner in Queensland Richard Gibson will

head up our Queensland team at Exercise Silicon Diamond in May at Shoalwater. Last year he headed up a team of four brew trucks at the biggest military exercise in our nation's history. There they touched base with a record number of ADF personnel. We are trusting we will have extensive welfare outreach this year also.

Everyman's is currently represented on selected bases in all states except WA and Tasmania. We also have representation in the NT now at Robertson Barracks..

Offering Love & Hope

By Joel Fitzgibbon

Source: www.theaustralian.com.au

Joel Fitzgibbon was the federal MP for Hunter for more than 24 years, serving as Labor's defence minister from 2007 to 2009. On 6 March this year, his son Lance Corporal Jack Fitzgibbon, died in a parachuting accident at RAAF Base Richmond. We remember Jack, just as Joel supported Hugh Poate at the launch of Failures of Command: The death of Private Robert Poate.

When my friend and work colleague lost his young son in a climbing accident last year, people asked me about his welfare and that of his family. I would always respond in part by sharing the view that no parent can possibly imagine what it is like to lose a child unless they've tragically experienced it.

Sadly, with the loss of our son Jack, Dianne and I now know exactly what it's like.

Yet I now find it impossible to imagine the grief of those who lost loved ones in the senseless Bondi Junction tragedy. In particular, a man grieving the loss of his partner and hoping his beautiful baby girl can make it home. Six people were killed after a 40-year-old man went on a stabbing rampage in Westfield shopping centre.

There can be no doubt, the loss of a close loved one changes us forever. There is no hierarchy of grief and we all grieve differently. I was brought to tears yet again when I first heard the news of the Bondi stabbings. While I know the impact on me would have been significant, I doubt tears would've been part of my reaction if I had not recently lost my own son.

The gravity of grief is in the mind of the beholder and we all find our own way of dealing with it. But there are two things I've learned since we lost our beautiful son Jack. The first is that almost every adult has suffered a tragedy at some point in their lifetime. Second, there is always a story that seems more tragic than one's own. Yet it's hard to imagine

something worse than what we saw at Bondi Junction in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

Denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. These are the five stages of grief. They all seem obvious and easy to understand. But not all will experience every stage of them, and the weight and impact of each will vary. I suspect some anger will always be felt, but in my own case it was fleeting. It's hard not to assume it will be intense for the loved ones of the Bondi Junction victims. And rightly so.

Bargaining is the least obvious stage. What does it mean? In grief we look backwards in a desire or promise to do something differently to avert the event and source of grief. In my case I asked myself many questions. Should I have discouraged our Jack from freefalling out of aeroplanes? It brings me comfort that I'm able to tell myself the answer is no.

The community response also brings a smidgen of comfort, particularly from the heroism of those who risked their own lives. Regardless, their lives have now changed forever, just like mine and those of my family. NSW Police Inspector Amy Scott performed remarkably in the shooting of Bondi attacker Joel Cauchi. These are acts of courage and love that restore our faith in humankind.

But what questions can our recent

victims of tragedy ask? Their loved ones were doing something that should have been as close as it gets to risk-free. For them, there seems little to bargain with.

So what might be their source of comfort? As terribly hard as our situation is, my family and close friends are comforted by the fact that our Jack died doing something he loved and was serving his country. He knew the risks and had assessed and calibrated them.

I'm sure I wasn't the only one crying at the weekend for people I don't know. I bet there were thousands of us who did the same.

The wonderful movie *Love Actually* begins with a number of deep thoughts from a UK prime minister played by Hugh Grant. "When the planes hit the Twin Towers, as far as I know, none of the phone calls from the people on board were messages of hate or revenge – they were all messages of love."



Joel and Dianne Fitzgibbon at the St Joseph's Catholic Church funeral service in Cessnock

**Stand down Digger,
your duty is done Rest
easy now,
your battles won Your
bravery and courage,
in history, is set We
promise to honour
your memory,
lest we forget**



Lance Corporal
Jack Fitzgibbon



Veterans honour Anzac Day in Dili

By Michael Bowler / Catholic Leader

The solemnity before dawn was stirred as hundreds arrived for an historic Anzac Day commemoration below Cristo Rei – the giant statue of Jesus that overlooks Timor Leste’s capital, Dili.

Among the assembled as the sun rose over a stunning tropical landscape were a visiting group of 50 veterans and currently serving Australian and New Zealand defence personnel.

Two decades ago, many of these veterans – men and women – helped forge South East Asia’s

newest, independent nation after 24 years of struggle against Indonesian occupiers.

Now these highly-respected Anzacs raise money and support the families of Timorese veterans who have never received compensation for the guerrilla war they fought.

Many Timorese veterans have never reintegrated into town or village life, and never sustained work that could support their families.

“I’m speaking for many soldiers when I say we felt a huge burden of sorrow, grief and moral injury that we came too late,” former Australian army major Michael Stone said

at last year’s commemoration, reflecting on the arrival of Anzac troops in Timor in 1999 after Indonesian soldiers and militia had carried out a “scorched earth” withdrawal – leaving 1500 Timorese dead, 300,000 displaced and 80 per cent of buildings destroyed.

About eight years ago Mr Stone and his father Deacon Gary Stone, also a former Australian army officer and chaplain, together with a small group of supporters, set up the Veteran Care Association (VCA).

The association has a dual role – to help Australian veterans get back to living healthy, normal lives

Michael Stone and his father Deacon Gary Stone



Jesus’ most basic command was love our neighbour...and the Timorese love us. They want to be good friends and neighbours.

Deacon Gary Stone



after military service, and to help Timorese veterans and their families through fundraising and good works.

VCA has hosted hundreds of ex-service personnel on a program called Timor Awakening – a 12-day visit to Timor to complete a holistic health and well-being routine underpinned by spirituality.

Many of the veterans and their families have experienced immense suffering since the Timor campaign, including post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression.

“Probably the biggest issue that a lot of veterans experience is the injury that you can’t see – mental health – carrying trauma, carrying shame, carrying guilt,” Mr Stone said.

After returning from Timor Awakening, many veterans have poured their energies into fundraising and supporting VCA projects. “Our major project is an

institute we’ve built at Same, a town in the mountains of Timor Leste,” Deacon Stone said.

“It’s part of our Veterans Education Training Scheme (VETS) – requested by Timorese veterans. People from remote rural areas can come to a boarding school and learn English and learn life skills. The school also provides education in health care, construction and agriculture.

“But English is the main one... young Timorese want to learn English, come to Australia, or New Zealand or other places as casual workers.”

Deacon Stone said the Veterans Care Association had a strategic vision to replicate the institute in same by building similar schools in three or four other districts across Timor Leste. Veterans who have already completed the Timor Awakening program have also been sponsoring the children of Timorese

veterans to attend a vocational trade school in Dili.

Another project supported by veterans is a training centre, mainly for women, who have suffered domestic violence and abuse. Through fundraising they have managed to refurbish an old hotel in Dili.

“It contains crisis accommodation for women and families, and then the hotel is also functioning as a normal hotel and restaurant for a reasonable rate and as a training school where some of these women can learn to become a chef or a steward, learn beauty therapy or even make chocolate,” Deacon Stone said. “It’s an exciting project because from our hearts we want to help the poorest of the poor and those most in need.”

Deacon Stone also said veterans raised \$200,000 last year to assist programs in Timor Leste.

Veterans mark ANZAC Day in Dili, Timor-Leste



Cairns honours Australia's

Peacekeepers & Peacemakers

Army veteran Paul Walker talks about the importance of peacekeeping and peacemaking. By Courtney Adams

Paul Walker is a Waanyi man from the Gulf of Carpentaria on his mother's side and he served in the Australian Army Signals Corps from 1996 until 2003.

His father migrated from Scotland to Australia in the 1960s along with

his grandfather, who served in the British Army. "I joined the military as a young, shy man," Paul recalled. "I was in limbo through labouring jobs when I saw a TV ad for the Army. I went to the Cairns RSL Sub Branch, met with a recruit officer and signed up. I was sworn in at Townsville and

then went down to Kapooka in the middle of winter just a couple of weeks later."

Paul's work formed part of the intelligence community trades, with most of his service based at 7th Signals Regiment (EW). In 1998,

Unveiling the plaque: Cairns Mayor Bob Manning OAM, Paul Walker, Cairns RSL Sub Branch President Nathan Shingles and Councillors Amy Eden, Cathy Zeiger and Kristy Vallely.



he was posted to Bougainville with the Peace Monitoring Group, then to East Timor in 2000 until 2001 with the United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET).

"I did some amazing things during my time in the Army," Paul says recalling his days as an electronic warfare operator in peace monitoring and peacekeeping roles. "I learned Morse code and five different specialist languages as part of my trade. I became paraqualified and at that time trained to support the 3rd Parachute Battalion and special forces."

Today, Paul volunteers as Treasurer of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch, and as the Far North Queensland representative of the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA).

"I'm very new in my roles as I only joined up last year, but I'm honoured to be part of the RSL and APPVA. They definitely keep me busy and are very close to my heart."

"It feels surreal to be in these positions after serving for seven years some time ago. Meeting all the members, the veteran community, and anyone involved with the Sub Branch has made for a fantastic experience."

In September 2022, Paul attended the nation's 75th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping

commemorative service in Canberra. The anniversary sparked an idea that would be brought to life through the Department of Veterans' Affairs' Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program: a new plaque commemorating peacekeeping and peacemaking, to be installed at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch.

"Peacekeeping is a display of the diversity of our services," Paul explained. "I think it's great that peacekeeping is spoken about more often; it's a huge part of what we have done between major conflicts, and as part of the transition from conflict to peacetime as well,"

Over six months, the plaque was brought to life with assistance from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Cairns RSL Sub Branch Board, APPVA, the Cairns Regional Council, and Hanby Welding and Engineering, which provided its services free of charge.

The commemorative plaque was unveiled on International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers at the Cairns RSL Sub Branch located on the corner of Florence Street and The Esplanade.



Paul Walker

As a peacekeeping veteran who helped facilitate the project, Paul played a special part in the unveiling ceremony. "I was honoured to be invited by the Board to personally unveil the plaque. It was a privilege to talk about my story of signing up to the Army from that very building."

"I got to reflect on my own service and pay my respects to Australian peacekeepers of the past 75 years."

The ceremony was attended by more than 50 people, including Mayor Bob Manning, Cairns Regional Councillors, and members of RSL Queensland, the Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, Queensland Police, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, HMAS Cairns, the RAAF, and 51 Far North Queensland Regiment.

"It was a very warm, welcoming event. Everyone was taking photos and congratulating the Sub Branch on the unveiling. It was empowering to have older veterans, especially from the Vietnam era, providing encouraging words."

Members from HMAS Cairns





THE INEQUITY OF TAX TREATMENT FOR ADF VETERANS: A CALL FOR CHANGE

IN A NATION THAT PRIDES ITSELF ON FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY, the stark reality of inequitable tax treatment for Australian Defence Force (ADF) veterans and their families is nothing short of a national disgrace. The disparity in tax treatment of Invalidation Benefits between members of the Military Superannuation and Benefits Scheme (MSBS) and those serving beside them under the ADF Cover scheme highlights a glaring injustice that demands immediate attention.

For ADF members facing medical discharge and likely never to work again, access to Invalidation Benefits is crucial for their financial security and that of their families. However, the current tax regime these veterans, places an unfair burden on ADF Cover veterans and their families, penalizing them for circumstances beyond their control.

Consider this: two ADF members of the same age, with the same length of service, same pay, and same medical condition, would receive approximately the same Invalidation Benefit regardless of whether they are covered by MSBS or ADF Cover. However, the tax treatment differs significantly. While the tax on a \$2000 fortnightly Invalidation Benefit under MSBS is a mere \$10, the same benefit under ADF Cover incurs a staggering tax of about \$250 - a difference of approximately \$6300 more tax per year.

This discrepancy not only exacerbates the financial strain on medically discharged veterans but also perpetuates a cycle of inequality that disproportionately affects their families. In the tragic event of a veteran's death, the same unjust tax treatment extends to reversionary pensions and allowances for their children and surviving parent, further compounding their hardship.

Furthermore, the legislative intent behind Invalidation Benefits - to provide financial support to veterans incapacitated by physical or mental conditions - is undermined by the uncertainty surrounding periodic reviews by the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) up to retirement age. This uncertainty adds an additional layer of stress and instability to the lives of already vulnerable veterans and their families.

The intent of successive governments to ensure equitable treatment for medically discharged veterans, regardless of the superannuation scheme they were covered by, has been overshadowed by the complexity of military superannuation and tax legislation. The result is a system that fails to uphold the principles of fairness and justice upon which our society is built.

The inequitable taxation of Invalidation Benefits not only perpetuates financial hardship for younger ADF veterans and their families but also acts as a deterrent for recruiting new members, undermining efforts to increase the size of the ADF and address critical undermanning issues.

As a nation, we cannot turn a blind eye to the injustices faced by those who have sacrificed their health and wellbeing in service to our country. It is time for meaningful reform to ensure that all ADF veterans are treated equitably and with the dignity and respect they deserve. The time for change is now.

The only way a change can be affected is by Parliament passing the necessary legislation. DFVA is running a campaign to gain all party support. We need your support to achieve this.

For more information go to www.dfwa.org.au/adfcovertax

**This article reprinted courtesy of the
Defence Force Welfare Association**

Saluting their Service Grants



The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Ninety community organisations, ex-service organisations, schools, and councils across Australia will receive a share in more than \$1million in grants through the latest round of the Albanese Government's Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants Program.

These grants support essential local projects that commemorate the enduring service and sacrifices of our veterans and preserve Australia's rich military history.

Grants have been awarded to large-scale projects such as the Australian National Veterans Arts Museum, which will host a commemorative art exhibition for the veteran community, through to local activities such as renovations and upgrades to the Soldiers Room at Mount Morgan Citizen's Club.

Saluting Their Service is an ongoing national program. Applications for the next grant round are now open until 20 June, encouraging ongoing community participation in honouring our veterans.

A wide range of organisations can apply for grants, including ex-

service organisations, community groups, schools, and local councils. Two grant categories are available:

Community Grants

Up to \$10,000 for local, community-based commemorative activities.

Major Grants

Between \$10,001 and \$150,000 for significant commemorative projects with national, state, territory, or regional impact.

To find out more, or apply for a grant, visit: www.grants.gov.au

The Hon Matt Keogh MP: Minister for Veterans' Affairs said many older communities around Australia have cenotaphs and memorials dating back to World War I, but as an ever growing country we need to ensure Australia's history is understood, and modern conflicts, and the service of modern veterans is recognised.

"Saluting Their Service grants support local communities undertake projects that recognise and commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Defence personnel, veterans and their families. "Australia's service personnel come

from all corners of our vast nation, this program ensures that the stories of local heroes are known, and recognised."

"There are several significant commemorations in 2024, including the 25th Anniversary of INTERFET and the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. I would encourage anyone thinking about a project commemorating these two significant events in Australia's military history to apply."

The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP: Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs said the quality of the latest applications reflected a genuine commitment to commemoration, blending respect, creativity, and innovation. "Community projects help ensure Australia's veterans' service and sacrifices are eternally remembered. We thank everyone who dedicated themselves to applying for grants. Your efforts to honour our veterans are truly appreciated."

"For those interested, submit your applications in the next round and contribute to the lasting legacy of our veterans."

#CheckYourMates

Why check your mates?



Checking in with your mates will connect you with what is going on in their lives and if they are having a tough time, your simple act of calling can make a difference.



The Defence community can sometimes make up more than 10% of the local community.



We challenge you to check on five mates. Those going well, challenge them to check on five more mates. Those who are not, encourage and support them to see help.

nt.gov.au/operation-thrive

Heraldry of Australian University Regiments

By **Martin Hess**

This is the first in a series about the heraldic link between the coats of arms of the six 'sandstone' universities and their affiliated University Regiments.

The sandstone universities are an informally defined group comprising Australia's oldest tertiary education institutions.

Most were founded in the colonial era, the exceptions being the University of Queensland (1909) and University of Western Australia (1911). All the universities in the group have buildings constructed primarily of sandstone, hence the name.

Membership of the group is based on age. Sandstone universities can be taken to be either universities founded before World War I, or the oldest university in their respective state.

The label 'sandstone university' is not completely synonymous with membership of the Group of Eight, which includes the Australian National University, Monash University and the University of New South Wales, but not the University of Tasmania.

Nevertheless, the connotations (prestige, a focus on research, and curricula that have a strong emphasis on theory rather than practice) are much the same for the two groups.

Most university regiments have adopted and adapted the coat of arms of their affiliated university into their military badges, with the addition of a Crown, which has been customary for all military badges until relatively recently, where some attempts have been made to replace it with a stylised Federation or Commonwealth Star.

In turn, many of the universities, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, University of Western Australia,



NSW Coat Of Arms | The stars change, the mind remains the same

take their designs directly from either their state flag or coat of arms.

All with the exception of the Queensland University Regiment (QUR) and the Western Australia University Regiment (WAUR) have incorporated the Southern Cross into both the university coats of arms and the university regiment badges.

The oldest university in Australia is the University of Sydney, founded in 1850, closely followed by the University of Melbourne in 1853, just after the Colony of Victoria separated from the Colony of New South Wales in 1850.

Melbourne University Regiment (MUR), however, tracing its antecedents to a Company of the Mount Alexander Rifles, in 1884 predates its nearest rival Sydney University Regiment (SUR), established in 1900, by 16 years.

Only two university regiments, MUR and SUR predate both the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars, the remainder being raised in the post 1945 period. Neither MUR or SUR deployed as formed units, but did, however, field



Sydney Uni Regiment | Newly risen how brightly you shine

several distinguished officers and men to the AIF in both conflicts, which in turn inspired the formation of other university regiments in other states.

The Sydney University Regiment, University of New South Wales Regiment (UNSWR), Queensland University Regiment, Adelaide Universities Regiment (AUR), University of Tasmania Company, Melbourne University Regiment, Monash University Regiment and Western Australia University Regiment are currently all part of the Royal Military College - Australia.

Some of these regiments also have detachments or companies in universities other than those for which they are named.

Role and Purpose

The University Regiments assume the role in the delivery of the Army Reserve officer and soldier training for the Brigades of the Australian Army's 2nd Division

Under the command of the Royal Military College of Australia, the

University Regiments play a critical and successful role in the training of young officers for the Army Reserve through the conduct of elements of the First Appointment Course.

This series is about the heraldic link between the coats of arms of the six 'sandstone' universities and their affiliated University Regiments. It is not a comprehensive history and space does not allow full discussion

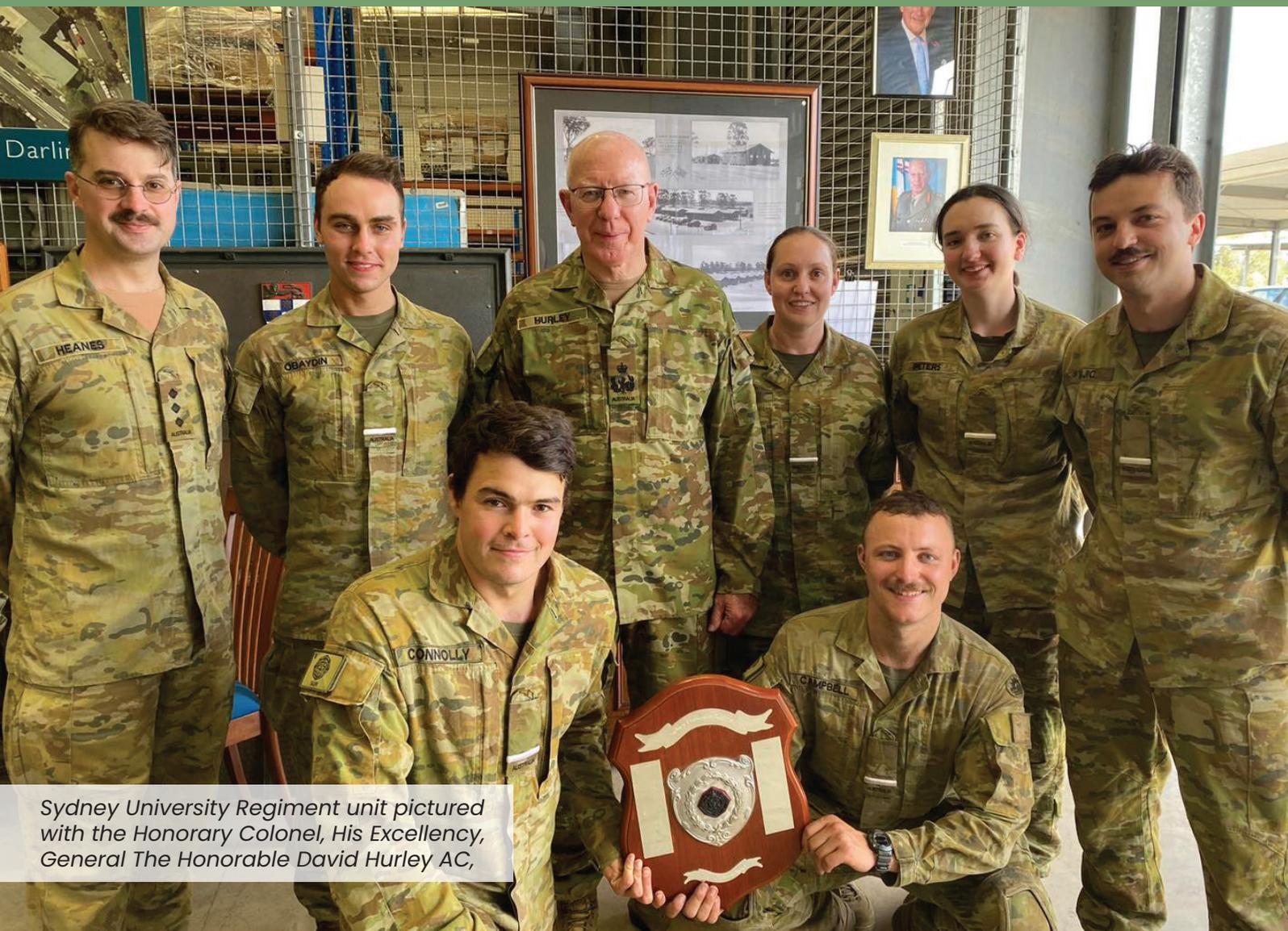
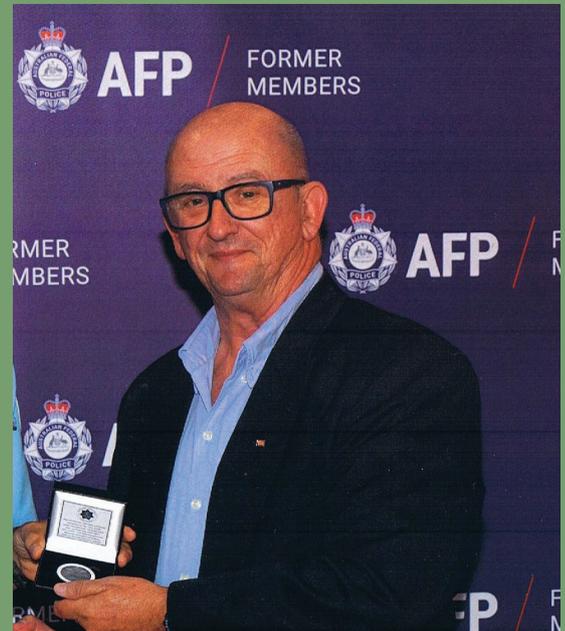
of companies affiliated with other universities, such as Monash University with Melbourne University Regiment, the Australian National University with Sydney University Regiment etc.

About the Author

Martin Hess was born in Sydney and joined Melbourne University Regiment in early 1979. In 1988 he joined the Australian Federal Police and was posted to Melbourne. In 1992 he transferred with the AFP to Cairns in Far North Queensland. He transferred his Army Reserve duties from MUR to the Far North Queensland Regiment where he served with A Company based in Cairns. In 1996 he deployed with the AFP for United Nations Service in Cyprus and again in mid-1999 with UNAMET in East Timor.

This mission preceded the ADF-led INTERFET mission. He was awarded a Group Bravery Citation for service with UNAMET. In 2010-11 he deployed to Afghanistan with AFP Op Illuminate. He completed a Bachelor of Economics (Monash), Grad Dip Criminology (Melbourne), Master of Defence Studies (UNSW), Master of Leadership and Management (Charles Sturt) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Australian National University).

Hess lives in regional NSW just south of Canberra and is currently a reservist with the AFP after retiring in mid-2021



Sydney University Regiment unit pictured with the Honorary Colonel, His Excellency, General The Honorable David Hurley AC,



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 – Exposure Draft

**Creating a simpler, easier
to use system for the
veteran community**

Message from the Minister



The Australian community rightfully expects that Defence personnel, veterans and their families are well looked after. This is an important task and responsibility of government – a solemn commitment and one we take very seriously.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has called for the simplification and harmonisation of veteran compensation legislation. This has been both agreed and pursued by the Albanese Government. We want to get this right.

The Australian Government recognises that the veteran compensation system is overly complicated. It can be difficult to understand, stressful to navigate and complex to administer, resulting in delays, backlogs and confusion for veterans and families.

The Government recognises that reform is needed to simplify and harmonise legislation governing compensation, rehabilitation and other supports for veterans and families so they can get the support that they need and deserve.

In 2023, the Australian Government engaged closely with the veteran community on a proposed pathway to simplify the veterans' legislative framework, to better support veterans and their families in the future.

This draft legislation has been developed taking into account the views of veterans, families and ex-service organisations.

The draft legislation seeks to simplify the veteran compensation system, with all claims to be considered under **a single Act**, transforming the veterans' entitlement scheme to one solid foundation instead of three.

Moving to a single Act will make it easier for veterans and families to understand their entitlements and receive the support they need, when they need it. This will also contribute to streamlining and speeding up claims processing within the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

Critical safeguards will be in place including grandparenting existing arrangements so there is no change in compensation payments currently being received by veterans and to ensure that current payment rates are maintained and indexed as they would be under the current system.

This is without a doubt, the biggest improvement of veterans' compensation and rehabilitation laws for more than a century and it is important our veterans and their families help guide the decisions that impact them.

I encourage you to join one of our consultation sessions, which will be promoted on the DVA website. Take the time to understand what this change means for you (www.dva.gov.au/scenarios) if the legislation is approved and provide your feedback to help us shape the veteran entitlement support system for future veterans and their families.

Australian veterans deserve the best, and this important reform seeks to simplify the complexities of the current system to make sure veterans and their families receive the support they need and deserve. I look forward to hearing your views so that we can move towards creating a system that delivers a better future for our veterans and families.

A handwritten signature of Matt Keogh in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

The Hon Matt Keogh MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Minister for Defence Personnel

Do you want to know more?

There are several ways you can find out more information or get involved in the consultation process for legislation reform.

Information Sessions

- Webinars will be conducted to provide an opportunity for veterans and their families, individuals who have provided feedback previously, and the general public to hear more about proposed legislative changes and ask questions. Visit www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform for further details.
- Meetings will be held in all State and Territory capitals, and Townsville with ex-service organisations and other key stakeholders.
- DVA will also engage with the ex-service community through regular National Consultation Framework scheduled activities.

What's next?

At the end of this consultation process, feedback on the legislation will be reviewed, and the draft legislation will be finalised for introduction into Parliament.

How you can provide feedback

It is important that we hear from veterans and their families, and other key stakeholders, about the proposed legislative changes. Comments on the draft legislation may be made anonymously and will not be published without your permission. [Comments close on 28 April 2024.](#)

Website

You can submit your feedback via the DVA website during the consultation period. Scan the QR code or visit www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform-feedback.



Email

You can submit your feedback via email to legislation.reform@dva.gov.au.

Download

To download a copy of this information booklet, visit www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform.

Post

You can submit your feedback via post:
GPO Box 9998 Brisbane QLD 4001

Translations

If you require translation services, please contact the Translation and Interpreting Service (www.tisnational.gov.au/en) on 131 450. It's a free service. Just provide our name (DVA), the 1800 VETERAN phone number (1800 838 372) and your DVA file number, if you have one.

OPEN ARMS
Veterans & Families Counselling 
1800 011 046 OpenArms.gov.au

Defence
Family
Helpline 

1800 624 608

Defence
All-hours
Support Line 

1800 628 036

New legislation to benefit Veterans

The Government is seeking comments on the exposure draft of the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment & Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Bill 2024 that, if passed by Parliament, would implement a new model for veterans' compensation commencing on 1 July 2026.

What is the purpose of the Bill?

The Bill would implement the single Act model proposed in the Veterans' Legislation Reform Consultation Pathway, shaped by the feedback provided by the veteran community in 2023.

The core elements of the model are:

- An improved *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) where all new claims for compensation and rehabilitation will be considered under the improved MRCA; and
- Closing the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) to new claims for compensation and rehabilitation, with grandparenting of already approved VEA/DRCA compensation payments.

Benefits of the Bill

Moving to a single ongoing Act will provide greater clarity for veterans and their families regarding their benefits and entitlements and address the perception of the inequitable treatment of veterans under the different Acts. Adopting an improved MRCA as the single ongoing Act will mean veterans are treated equitably and not disadvantaged because of when they served. The approach will provide greater accessibility to rehabilitation and compensation entitlements in recognition of the unique nature of Australian Defence Force service.

Veterans currently with MRCA only coverage would continue to have their compensation and rehabilitation benefits governed under the improved MRCA.

Veterans with previous coverage only under the VEA may now become eligible for incapacity compensation payments, which were not available under that Act. Incapacity compensation payments are paid to veterans under pension age who are incapacitated for service or work due to service related conditions, and are calculated based on pre-injury earnings. Under the new arrangements, veterans with VEA eligibility may also be eligible to receive compensation in respect of impairment/functional loss paid as a lump sum under the MRCA. Previously this was not possible under the VEA.

Partners of deceased VEA veterans whose death is due to service would also benefit, as they would have

the choice to receive compensation as an age-based lump sum and receive increased compensation, compared to claims made under the VEA.

DRCA veterans would also be potentially eligible for increased incapacity compensation payments (i.e. income replacement payments), as incapacity payments under the MRCA include a remuneration loading and are not reduced by a notional superannuation amount. DRCA veterans may also become eligible for the Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP) and the Gold Card under certain circumstances.

The draft legislation also proposes that DRCA veterans would be able to appeal adverse decisions to the Veterans' Review Board (VRB). The draft legislation would also streamline the administration of the legislation through merging of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission (MRCC) into the Repatriation Commission (RC), removing duplication of responsibilities, and providing greater administrative clarity about governance matters.

Over time, the changes proposed in the draft legislation would reduce the burden on veterans and their families, advocates and DVA, associated with submitting and processing claims ensuring better service for veterans' and families.

How your feedback on the Pathway influenced the draft legislation

A vital part of ensuring we get this legislation right, is making sure it meets the needs of the veteran community. The 2023 consultation process has shaped the proposal you see in front of you today.

Your submissions helped the Government to respond to the issues you told us are of most concern to you. A summary of the feedback and the submissions received during the consultation process are available at www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform.

Addressing recommendations from the Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission's 2019 inquiry report – *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, made a number of recommendations relating to legislative reform. If approved, the draft legislation achieves, either fully or in part, the following recommendations of the Productivity Commission.

Recommendation	Outcome of recommendation if legislation is approved
8.1 Harmonise the initial liability process	Fully achieved
10.2 Single review pathway	Fully achieved
13.1 Harmonise the DRCA with the MRCA	Fully achieved the part of the recommendation that was agreed by Government through the move to a single scheme
14.3 Interim compensation to be finalised after two years	Fully achieved
14.10 Harmonise the funeral allowance	Fully achieved
15.2 Simplify and harmonise education payments	Partly achieved
15.4 Remove and pay out smaller payments	Partly achieved with current payments grandparented
15.5 Harmonise attendant and household services	Partly achieved
15.6 Harmonise vehicle assistance	Partly achieved
19.1 Two schemes for veteran support	Achieved in a simpler way with one scheme

The Productivity Commission also recommended the creation of a Ministerial Advisory Council (11.4). This was one of the further improvements to the veteran support system that were considered under the Veterans' Legislation Reform Consultation Pathway. The Terms of Reference for a Ministerial Advisory Council will be considered as part of the consultation that will occur soon on DVA's National Consultation Framework. With respect to the part of recommendation 13.1 of the Productivity Commission's report (above) that proposed not extending Gold Cards to those with eligibility under the DRCA, the Government did not support such approach to the new Single Ongoing Act.

What the changes mean

Single ongoing Act – amendments

The key objective of this Bill is to simplify and harmonise the legislation governing rehabilitation and compensation for veterans. This will be achieved by adapting the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) so that it is the 'single ongoing Act' for veterans' rehabilitation and compensation.

The *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988* (DRCA) and the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) will be closed to new liability and compensation claims from 1 July 2026. The MRCA will be open to claims arising from service prior to 1 July 2004, which previously would have been determined under either the DRCA or the VEA.

Various provisions which had previously operated differently across the MRCA, the DRCA and the VEA will be standardised. This includes retaining war widow/er auto-grants, and posthumous grants of Permanent Impairment compensation [Schedule 1].

Single ongoing Act – enhancements

Proposed changes will see the MRCA enhanced for various entitlements. Enhancements include:

1. The introduction of a new Additional Disablement Amount (ADA), similar to the Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) available under the VEA. Like EDA, the ADA would compensate veterans who are Age Pension age or older and who have a high degree of incapacity due to service-related conditions.
2. The introduction of 'presumptive liability' which means the Repatriation Commission would be able to specify injuries and diseases that can be determined on a presumptive (in other words – automatic unless proven otherwise) basis where they are known to have a common connection with military service.
3. Consolidation of household and attendant care, travel for treatment, and retention of automatic granting of VEA funeral benefits in the MRCA.
4. An increase to \$3,000 for funeral allowance for previous automatic grant categories under the VEA, and the availability of reimbursement of funeral expenses up to \$14,062 for all service related deaths.

5. The availability to all veterans of the higher travel reimbursement amount, regardless of kilometres, when a private vehicle is used to travel for treatment.
6. Standardisation of allowances and other payments, including: acute support packages, Victoria Cross and decoration allowances, education schemes, prisoner of war ex gratia payments, and additional compensation for children of severely impaired veterans.
7. Enhancement of the Commission's ability to grant special assistance to veterans and their dependants [Schedule 2].

Review of compensation decisions

An important benefit of this reform would see the review of compensation decisions standardised across the three Acts. This includes aligning appeal pathways for decisions under the DRCA, to the MRCA. This means that from commencement, initial review of decisions made under the DRCA would be through the Veterans' Review Board (VRB), rather than the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) [Schedule 3].

Merging commissions

It is proposed that the powers and functions of the Repatriation Commission and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission are consolidated, with the Repatriation Commission (originally established in 1920) continuing. This change would give administration of all veterans' rehabilitation and compensation legislation to the Repatriation Commission [Schedule 4].

Repatriation Medical Authority and Specialist Medical Review Council

To enable the change, governance of the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) and the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC) would need to be transferred into the MRCA. Importantly, there would be no change to the functions or powers of either body [Schedule 5].

Disability compensation payments

When a veteran receiving a disability compensation payment (DCP) dies, the payment and allowances stop at the end of the fortnightly pay period before the date of death. Schedule 6 changes the final date of payment of DCP (and associated allowances) to be the veteran's date of death [Schedule 6].

Application and transition

The interaction between the law now, and the law as it will be once reforms commence, are contained in Schedule 7. In addition, transitional provisions are also included, which help the transition from one set of rules to another. For example, the transitional provisions outline how undetermined claims on the day of commencement will be handled [Schedule 7].

Consequential Amendments

'Consequential amendments' are changes that need to be made to other Acts as a result of the reforms being made to veterans' legislation. These changes ensure that existing laws are aligned with and support the implementation of new legislation [Schedule 8].

You can read more about what the changes mean on the DVA website. Scan the QR code or visit www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform.



Examples of how the changes work

To find out how the proposed changes may impact you, the following scenarios have been prepared. While certain scenarios may be commonly encountered, they will not apply to all, as individual circumstances are unique. For more scenarios and further information visit our website at www.dva.gov.au/scenarios.



Scenario 1



Greg, 60 (deceased)

- Passes away from service-related condition
- Leaves behind partner and 16-year-old child

Greg's partner lodges a claim

Current VEA		
GREG'S PARTNER	GREG'S CHILD 16YO	
\$1,116 f/n VEA War Widow(er)'s Pension life ✓ 	\$399 f/n VEA education allowance ✓ while in full time education 	\$2,000 Funeral Benefit 

Under MRCA		
GREG'S PARTNER	GREG'S CHILD 16YO	
\$1,116 f/n MRCA OR \$664,986 Wholly Dependent Partner Aged-based lump sum \$152,908 Additional Death Benefit life ✓ 	 \$104,291 lump sum \$346 f/n MRCA compensation payment ✓ while in full time education 	 \$399 f/n MRCA education allowance Funeral Benefit up to \$14,062

Scenario 2



Erin, 62

- Previously received \$321,000 PI payment for service-related conditions
- Erin's service is DRCA only

Lodges new claim for shoulder injury

Current DRCA

\$43,067
lump sum

Under MRCA

\$48 f/n MRCA
OR
\$21,270
Aged-based lump sum

life

Scenario 4



Matthew, 68

- Receives \$304.00 f/n 50% Disability Compensation Payments

Lodges claim for worsening conditions

Matthew's new assessment is 70 impairment points with a lifestyle rating of 6

Current VEA

\$933 f/n VEA
Extreme Disablement Adjustment DCP

life

Under MRCA

\$933 f/n* MRCA OR **\$488** f/n* MRCA + **\$149,056** lump sum

life OR life

*Includes grandparented DCP \$304 and the new Additional Disablement Amount \$184

Scenario 3



Gabby, 47

- Full-time service (prior to 1 July 2024)
- Stops work due to service-related conditions

Lodges claim for incapacity payment for lost wages (based on rank and pay)

Current DRCA

\$2,008 f/n DRCA **5%** notional super contribution deducted

Under MRCA

\$2,962 f/n MRCA

life **\$366** f/n MRCA
Includes Remuneration Allowance

~~**5%** notional super contribution deducted~~

Scenario 5



Bruce, 68

- Receives \$244.74 f/n 40% Disability Compensation Payments

Lodges claim for worsening conditions

Current VEA

\$363 f/n VEA
60% Disability Compensation Payments

Under MRCA

\$370 f/n* MRCA OR **\$244** f/n* MRCA + **\$42,083** lump sum

\$42,083 lump sum

*Includes grandparented DCP \$240

*Civilian and military observers
pictured working for UNSCOB on the
Greek border. They were deployed
in January 1948 and hence were the
second group of UN peacekeepers
after those working in Indonesia.*



Renville Agreement defined modern peacekeeping



The truce agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of The Netherlands in January 1948 was the first document to describe the role of an international peacekeeper in the modern era.

Their bloody conflict over sovereignty of the Indonesian archipelago would continue for another two years but it was an important step towards settlement and it was also the first to be brokered by the fledgling United Nations.

The Indonesian Question (as it was called by the UN) included reference to 'military assistants' to help monitor the conditions of the ceasefire accord. They were military officers from six countries, including Australia, who had been in country since September 1947 supporting the work of the UN.

Together, these military assistants established the principles of working as peacekeepers for the United Nations which they documented in a directive promulgated in March 1948 and used until the UN's involvement came to an end in April 1951.

The involvement of the UN General Assembly

The UN was established in the dying months of the Second World War, with its Charter coming into force on 24 October 1945. The Charter describes the primary purpose of the UN as to promote, maintain and, if necessary, force international peace and harmony among nations.

It also describes the functions, powers and responsibilities of the main organs of the UN: The General Assembly; The Security Council; The Economic and Social Council; The Trusteeship Council; The International Court of Justice; and The Secretariat.

The early work of the General Assembly was focused on the myriad administrative issues to be addressed in the setting up of the world organisation, leaving the Security Council to focus on peace issues.

There were several peace issues to be addressed by the General Assembly in 1947. The first was in relation to the Security Council's report into the Greek border incidents, whereby the General Assembly established a Special Committee (UNSCOM) to observe compliance with its recommendations (Australia was a member of UNSCOM).

The second issued addressed by the Assembly focused on the troubles in Palestine. By the time the General Assembly was addressing these issues, the Security Council had already been actively involved in the conflict in the East Indies (Indonesia).

In July 1947, the Indian and Australian Government representatives to the UN wrote separately to the Secretary General bringing to his attention the hostilities in progress on the islands of Java and Sumatra in the East Indies. The Australian government proposed that the Security Council call upon The Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia to stop fighting and to commence arbitration in accordance with the Linggadjati Agreement.

The Indian government, two weeks from its formal independence from its colonial master, considered that the situation endangered international peace and security and requested the Security Council to take measures provided under the UN Charter to end the conflict.

The Security Council acted very quickly. At a meeting in August 1947, the Council called upon both parties to order a ceasefire and to settle the dispute by peaceful means (Resolution 30). Later that month, the Council established



Squadron Leader Reg Hackshall RAAF with his UN jeep on the Status Quo Line in western Java, circa late 1948. The two soldiers are members of the Indonesia army.

by the UN, however the parties also discussed the sovereignty issues that were at the heart of the conflict.

Whilst detailed agreement on the sovereignty question could not be

achieved, the parties agreed to a set of 'political principles' on which further discussions and action would be based. Meanwhile, the main agreement, signed on 17th January 1948, was focussed entirely on the ceasefire and became known as the Truce Agreement or the Renville Agreement. The political principles were signed on 19th January and included as an addendum to the agreement.

As well as the ceasefire, the agreement called for both parties to honour the boundary lines drawn up by the Dutch governor of the East Indies, Herbert van Mook, in August 1947 in regard to the Linggadjati Agreement.

Colloquially referred to as the Van Mook Line, it was officially called the Status Quo Line and signposted as such along the line.

The Truce Agreement laid out the details of a demilitarised zone either side of the line and how, pending any political settlement, the 'security of life and property will remain vested in the civil police forces of the respective parties.'

Furthermore, the agreement stated that UNGOC would place at the disposal of both parties its military assistants who will be instructed to assume, in the first instance, responsibility for determining whether any incident requires enquiry by the higher authorities of either or both parties'; and

'The Committee's military assistants will be available to advise the appropriate authorities of the parties and to serve in such other proper capacities as may be requested. Among others, they should (a) call upon pools of police officers established by each party in its demilitarized zone to accompany

the military assistants in their endeavours and moves throughout that demilitarized zone, and (b) promote cooperation between the two police forces.'

The agreement went on the state that the parties give 'full opportunity for observation by military and civilian assistants...'

In effect, the Truce Agreement crudely defined the role of the military assistants as monitoring the implementation of the agreement and assisting both sides to adhere to the conditions stipulated in the agreement. Peacekeeping by any other name. It was shortly after the signing of the agreement that the terms 'military observer' or 'military assistant' first appeared.

The first guide to the work of peacekeepers

The observer group's initial work to assist the Consular Commission in its remit to report back to the Security Council had largely been completed by the time the members of UNGOC arrived in country. The UNGOC was quick to realise the usefulness of the group however, to act as independent advisors to both the UNGOC itself and to the belligerent parties (later reflected in the Truce Agreement), and hence the group was officially directed to act for the UNGOC.

Thereafter, although the group was administratively accountable to the Consular Commission, its day-to-day work was directed by the UNGOC. In either case, from the time of its inception, the military observer group was under the direct control of the United Nations.

The senior military officers from each of three of the countries represented on the GOC were formed into a Military Executive (MILEX) Board reporting to UNGOC. In mid-March 1948 the MILEX Board convened a conference involving as many of the

the Consular Commission at Batavia (Jakarta) directing it to report on the situation, and a Committee of Good Offices to help find a resolution to the problem (Resolutions 31 and 32).

The Consular Commission consisted of the consuls of each UN Member State already represented in the East Indies, and the Council's Committee of Good Offices was formed with three members, one august person from each of Australia (proposed by Indonesia), Belgium (proposed by the Netherlands) and the USA (agreed to by both parties).

The Consular Commission held its first meeting on September 2 and decided that it needed the help of military officers to report on the military and security situation, and each of the countries with consuls on the Commission sent a small team. The Australian team was the first to arrive, on September 13 and the first to deploy into the field, the next day.

The Committee of Good Offices (UNGOC) was slower off the mark, holding its first meetings outside Indonesia before arriving in country on December 5. Both The Netherlands and the Republic had agreed to work with the UNGOC but could not initially agree on the venue where talks would be held.

The United States offered the use of the USS Renville as neutral territory and talks got underway on December 7 while it was anchored in Batavia Harbour.

The Truce Agreement and the Status Quo Line

The initial discussions centred on the terms and conditions of the ceasefire that had been called for



military observers as possible to discuss their mission, their roles and the issues that affected their work.

The outcome was summarised into a document which was issued in March 1948 by the MILEX Board as Directive 4 and, without doubt, these were the first instructions on how an international group of peacekeepers was to operate in the post Second World War era.

General Instructions for Military Observers

It described the management and control of the observer group with an organisation chart (somewhat obligatory in most military instructions). It also included an important statement that the officers so employed are in fact representatives of the United Nations and work under the operational control of MILEX.

Their general mission was to assist local commanders of both sides to reach agreements on these matters and to report to MILEX their observations, actions and recommendations on the above and such other matters as may be specifically assigned by MILEX.

They were also cautioned not to appear to give orders (having no authority to do so) but that

“observers can best serve their duty by emphasising that their function is to assist in bringing both parties into agreement through the use of initiative, a sense of fair play, ingenuity and common sense”.

Observers were cautioned to wherever possible spend equal time and attention to both sides of the Status Quo Line and maintain open communication between parties. Directive 4 remained in force throughout the UN’s involvement in Indonesia, being updated where necessary because of changes in observer deployments (reflected in one of its annexes) and after January 1949 when the Security Council abolished UNGOC and created the UN Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) – Resolution 67.

End of the role for the military observers

Negotiations between the Republic and The Netherlands finally reached an agreement in late 1949 whereby sovereignty of the East Indies (with the exception of West New Guinea) would pass from The Netherlands to the Republic of Indonesia.

This was enacted in the parliaments of both countries and the transfer was effected on December 21, 1949. The UN brokered the final agreement made on November 1 at The Hague,

as well as interim agreements after the Truce Agreement nearly two years earlier.

The military observer group was retained throughout 1950 to monitor the implementation of the terms of the Hague Agreement which included the disbandment of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (60,000 strong) and the repatriation of the 70,000 members of the Royal Netherlands Army who had been deployed to the East Indies. The last of the observer group left Indonesia in early 1951.

It is difficult to gauge from the public record, but at any time there were between 40 and 50 military observers in the field in Indonesia during 1948 and 1949, with numbers tapering off in 1950 until all had left by April 1951. The total number of military observers provided by the six member states is again, not clear. The US and Australia appear to have provided the most (~60 each) with the UK (~20), France (~15), Belgium (~15) and China (5).

This would indicate that in total approximately 175–180 officers from the six nations served as UN military observers, or in the modern parlance peacekeepers. They were the first UN peacekeepers and should be recognised as such by the United Nations.



Mr Paul van Zeeland (Belgian member of UNGOC) speaking during discussions between representatives of The Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia on the aft deck of USS Renville.



Flight Lieutenant
Joonhee
Wang

Forgotten War remains a

Korean Challenge

By Don Hughes

Often referred to as the 'Forgotten War', the Korean conflict (1950–53) was caused by both local issues and tensions amongst the great powers.

Despite the passage of 70 years, Korea remains a divided country and small numbers of Australians continue to participate in this United Nations Command (UNC) mission including within the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.

A Gruelling Conflict

Not long after the end of World War II, this conventional, gruelling, and limited war centred along the 38th Parallel saw thousands of young Australians deploy into combat operations. Against a skilful, courageous, and numerically superior enemy, their exploits at the battles of Kapyong (Gapyeong) and Maryang San were epic.

The United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) was established at the end of the Korean War in July 1953. Initially, six members of the Australian armed forces served in this mission.

The Australian contribution is enduring with personnel committed to the UNC mission, and additional personnel supporting training and operations such as Operation Linesman. A total of 68 have served.

Dangerous Strip of Land

Heavily mined and observed by both sides, the zone is considered by some as 'the world's most dangerous strip of land'. Almost forgotten, the hidden remnants of war still lie buried beneath its soil. This includes unexploded ordnance and the remains of fallen soldiers.

Coupled with the ongoing security and diplomatic roles of the UNC, difficult challenges are being tackled by a new generation of peacekeepers.

Operation Linesman

As part of Australia's Operation Linesman today, a small team of

Australian Peacekeepers operate in the Demilitarised Zone. They monitor a range of projects including construction, security, clearance of explosives and the recovery and repatriation of human remains.

These projects resulted from the Comprehensive Military Agreement signed by both Koreas in September 2018. They provide a good example of the challenging and varied activities facing peacekeepers today.

For example, Flight Lieutenant Joonhee Wang, a RAAF pharmacist, returned to her birthplace as a member of Operation Linesman in July 2022. Joonhee, now 30, moved to Australia from South Korea as a teenager.



Standing in Korea's Demilitarised Zone, she finally had the chance to ask her grandparents about their wartime experiences. "My parents never heard any war stories. It was just unspoken of because their parents didn't want to share their sorrowful history." (Oaten, p.56).

Delicate & Risky Work

Working alongside other Australian Defence Force (ADF) peacekeepers, Joonhee's mission is to uphold the delicate armistice allowing South Korean troops to enter the Demilitarised Zone to retrieve the bodies of fallen soldiers.

Landmines and other unexploded ordinance litter the ground and need to be carefully removed. This allows the delicate work to continue. The work is risky. Remnants of the Korean conflict seem frozen in time.

Captain Tarni Preston, recently the Operations Officer for 22 Engineer Regiment in Victoria, and an explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) technician, also deployed to Korea in 2020. She was given a unique insight to the remnants of this devastating conflict from the middle of last century.

"The DMZ and the associated activities and conditions, highlighted the enduring yet temporary nature of its existence," Tarni recalled. "Its sobering to experience that the outcomes of the Korean War are still evident and seemingly 'forgotten' only to those who do not inhabit or visit the peninsula."

Operation Linesman personnel rotate after about five months. To date, nearly 500 bodies have been recovered. Many still wear identification tags. Complete recovery is a daunting task with an estimated 10,000 bodies still laying silent in the Zone.

Some 42 Australians remain on the Korean Peninsula recorded as Missing in Action (MIA).

Seeking a solution

As in numerous deployments both at home and abroad, Australian Peacekeepers invariably find themselves facing fresh challenges, or revisiting old ones. Often, in completely new circumstances.

Whatever the case, the innate training and ethos of the Australian Peacekeeper is to seek out a solution and adapt it to meet the mission at hand. Sometimes, we can only plant the seed for others to follow.

Some 42 Australians MIA on the Korean Peninsula



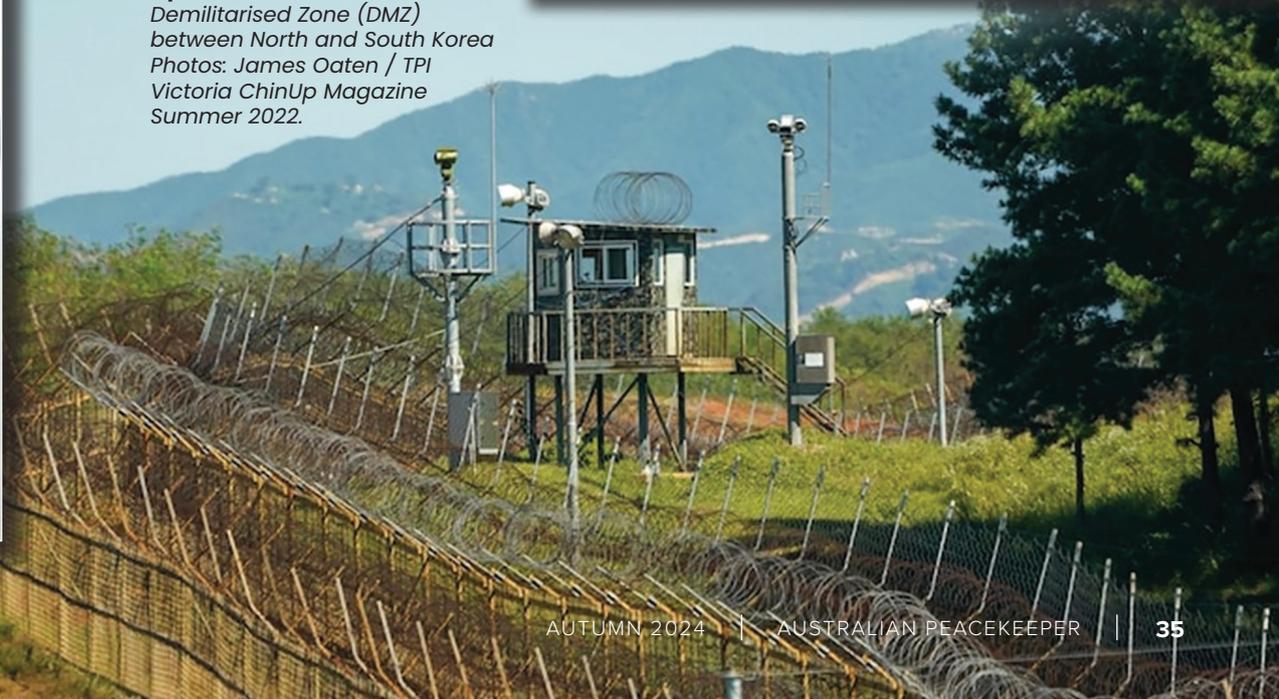
Bibliography

DVA (Department of Veteran Affairs) (2002), *Australian Peacekeepers in Korea since 1950*, DVA Anzac Portal, 15 January 2023

Oaten, James, *How a team of Australians go into the world's most dangerous strip of land to recover the remains of dead soldiers*, TPI Victoria, *ChinUp* magazine, Summer 2022

O'Neill, Robert, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume 1: Strategy and Diplomacy*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra 1981

Operation Linesman:
Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)
between North and South Korea
Photos: James Oaten / TPI
Victoria *ChinUp* Magazine
Summer 2022.



Our First Peacekeepers

By Graham Rayner

The first peacekeepers from Australia and the United Nations were military officers who deployed to Indonesia between September 1947 and April 1951 to support the work of the United Nations as 'military observers'.

Sixty five ADF officers served the UN during this period: 38 Army officers, 25 from the RAAF and 2 from the RAN. They joined colleagues from the US, UK, Belgium, France and China, forming a military observer group. Australia and the US provided most of the observers.

The work of the observer group was not without risk. Over 50,000 Indonesians, Dutch, British, Indians and Chinese were killed in the conflict and this presented an atmosphere of constant tension for the observers.

Surprisingly only two observers were wounded in the course of the UN's involvement in Indonesia – a British LTCOL was seriously wounded and his colleague a USAF LTCOL received minor wounds when their white painted UN jeep was ambushed in central Sumatra in February 1949.

They would have been killed had it not been for the bravery of their Dutch escort officer who was seriously wounded in the engagement with a group of Indonesians. He was later awarded The Netherlands' second highest medal of valour, the Bronze Lion.

There was no immediate recognition by Australia or the UN of the service provided by these officers. Eventually, on 22 February 1995, the Australian government created the Australian Service Medal 1945-1975 for peacekeeping and non-war-like circumstances. Service supporting the UN in Indonesia was deemed to be peacekeeping and attracted the award of the ASM: nearly 50 years after the service!

The UN however, has never formally recognised the service of the military observers in Indonesia. In 1959 it created the UN Medal for service by military personnel to the UN and identified several UN missions prior to that year as



Australia's Minister for External Affairs 'Doc' Evatt signs the United Nations Charter in San Francisco, 1945.

warranting the award of the medal, but not Indonesia.

Australia is leading the campaign to correct this anomaly with a formal approach to the UN and is seeking the support of the other countries which deployed military observers.

If the UN promulgates the award of the UN Medal to the military observers of the Consular Commission at Batavia and the Committee of Good Offices, then the Australian government, following previous practice, should issue the medal to the observers or their closest relatives on behalf of the UN.

As most if not all of the ADF observers will have died, it will be important for their families to be aware of their potential eligibility and entitlement if the UN promulgates the award.

Australia has a long and proud tradition of peacekeeping, beginning with our Minister for External Affairs 'Doc' Evatt's leading role in establishing the United Nations, our wartime Minister for the

Navy Norman Makin chairing the first meeting of the Security Council, and our military providing the UN's first peacekeepers.

A formal recognition by the UN of the contribution made by our military personnel during what is essentially the UN's first peacekeeping mission will be very appropriate.

The Australian War Memorial will be improving its exhibition of the history of Australia's involvement in peacekeeping in the new exhibition building. It is believed that the Indonesian mission, our first, will feature prominently. It is hoped that the display will include the images and stories that the families of the veterans might provide.

Do you know any of those ADF personnel or their families? If so, please contact or invite the veteran or his family to contact Graham Rayner at: service.UN1947to51@gmail.com

Army officers and RAAF personnel posted to Indonesia in the service of United Nations between 1947 and 1951 can be viewed here.

Canal conflict the catalyst for..

Blue Beret

The blue headwear of the United Nations came into use during the Suez crisis of 1956-57.

In July 1956, the Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, previously a joint British and French enterprise, in response to the cancellation of western financing of the Aswan High Dam project.

International tension over the future of the canal escalated while tension between Arabic countries and Israel had already increased when Israel invaded Egypt. Britain and France became more belligerent and began bombing Egyptian airfields and other targets as a preliminary to invasion. The canal was effectively closed for five months with a number of ships stranded along its length.

In early November 1956 the UN stepped in to try and stop the escalating conflict which was involving at least four countries, both by negotiation and by a show of force. Thus, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was created, and quickly, with six countries contributing military personnel. Ten countries ultimately contributed forces.

With so many and varied military uniforms 'on the ground' almost identical to the British, one of the decisions taken in establishing UNEF was to clearly identify its members to the warring parties and the choice of the blue beret was made.

The UN had already adopted blue as its signature colour, with the General Assembly having authorised the UN flag in October 1947, and blue headwear would make the wearer highly visible amongst the grey/brown/green of most military field uniforms.

With little time to order blue berets, opportunity was made to spray paint readily available US combat helmet liners, including buying some from the ships stuck in the

blockaded Suez Canal, which just happened to have them as cargo.

By the end of the year supplies of berets began to arrive. Meanwhile it became obvious that spray painting the helmet rather than the liner was a better solution and it quickly became the norm.

- Graham Rayner

Ref. Urquhart, B; A life in Peace and War, Norton, New York, 1991, p134



*Egyptian
President Nasser*

MEMBERSHIP TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPER AND PEACEMAKER VETERANS' ASSOCIATION IS OPEN – JOIN NOW FOR CONTINUED MAXIMUM ACCESS TO OUR WEBSITE

Join or renew your membership between by 30 May 2024 and go into the draw to win a unique Peacekeeper Figurine modelled on Australian Peacekeepers at the Kibeho massacre in Rwanda on 22 April 1995. See on the page opposite for an indication of the realism of this memorabilia. You will also win one 75th Anniversary of Australians on Peacekeeping Operations Commemorative coins that fit neatly in the base of the figurine.

A further 10 people will each win one 75th Anniversary of Australians on Peacekeeping Operations Commemorative Coin.

[Click Here to Join Now Online](#)



Create account for The Australian
Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans'
Association Ltd

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member. These steps will guide you through the sign up process.

*If you already have an account with APPVA,
please [sign in](#) using that account instead.*

CONTINUE

OR

BACK TO SIGN IN



**LOOKING TO
TAKE THE
NEXT STEP?**

**WALK
THROUGH THE
GREEN DOOR**

- Intelligence and security focused recruitment
- Veteran recruitment
- Specialist consultancy services



**A leading provider of intelligence,
security and recruiting services**

GreenDoor

Call us: 1300 311 605
pathways@greendoor.com.au
www.greendoor.com.au