

# Australian Peacekeeper

SPRING 2025 MAGAZINE

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*HMAS Adelaide's embarked MH-60R helicopter 'Electra' conducts a Vertical Replenishment with HMAS Hobart as part of Operation Resolute in the Indian Ocean.  
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Page 12 / Phil Laycock



Page 30 / Gary Stone

# CONTENTS

## 20 SPRING

## 25 EDITION

3 ..... Interim Acting Chairperson’s Report / Andrew Jenkins

4 ..... Peacekeeping Through Deterrence

7 ..... CEO Report / Rod Henderson

8 ..... 25 Years of Peace And Hope

10 ..... APPVA: Leading Veteran Reform

12 ..... National Monument in Canberra

14 ..... Korea: The Forgotten War

16 ..... Albert Jacka: Brave hero Up Front

18 ..... Albert Jacka: Poster Boy for Sportsmen’s 1000

22 ..... Padre: Fear Not For I Am With You

24 ..... DVSC Commission drives Reform

28 ..... Gary Stone: From Darkness to Light

34 ..... Everyman’s supporting Talisman Sabre

38 ..... Book Review / Politics of Police Diplomacy

40 ..... UNTAG Honouring Peacekeepers

43 ..... First Nations donned Khaki

*Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people should be aware this publication contains images and names of deceased persons.*

We welcome input from members and their personal experiences in each issue.

Email the editor with an initial 300 word draft you feel would be worth fleshing out to be published in a future edition.

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Australian Peacekeepers Magazine attempts to provide insight into the experiences of peacekeepers, Defence members and war veterans and the issues that confront them together with encouraging informed debate regarding issues dealing with but not limited to Commonwealth compensation, pensions, superannuation and occupational health and safety that affect Peacekeepers and their families.

The views expressed in the articles are those of the particular author and not those of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans’ Association. The APPVA will not be legally responsible in contract, tort or otherwise for any statement made in the articles in this publication.



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# Interim Acting Chair Report

As we open this edition, I want to start with gratitude. On behalf of the Association, thank you to Ian Lindgren for his years of service and steady leadership as Chair.

Ian has invested time, care and courage in steering APPVA through change; we are better for it. With Ian stepping back to an advisory role to the Board, I have stepped in as Interim Acting Chair. My role is to keep the ship steady, maintain momentum, and help the Board complete a smooth transition and appoint a new Chair when ready.

In the short term our priorities are clear: strengthen our Board with additional skills, experience and representation from across Australia; grow our membership - welcoming new members and reconnecting with those who have drifted; and back our CEO Rod Henderson.

Rod has brought much-needed energy and action to the way we advocate and deliver for members. With your support we will keep that pace up for outcomes that matter to you and your families.

We're aligning around a simple rhythm - clear goals each quarter, open communication, and accountability for delivery - so everyone knows what 'good' looks like and how we're tracking.

Our purpose remains constant: to support the transition, health and wellbeing of all who have served in the nation's interest and their families. Our long-term ambition is bold: to be the trusted source of truth and support for veterans, with the most active and engaged membership in Australia.

How you can help: Invite a mate to join; share your story at a local event; and let us know the issues that need attention so we can take



Andrew Jenkins

them up quickly and transparently. Your voice shapes our agenda and ensures we focus on what delivers real value for the veteran and family community.

Thank you, Ian. And thank you to each of you for the way you continue to serve - by looking after each other. I look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

**Andrew Jenkins**

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# Peacekeeping Through Deterrence

*How Australia's Defence, Police and Diplomatic Agencies Prevent Conflict*



## Executive Summary

Australia's peacekeeping has evolved beyond traditional blue-helmet deployments to comprehensive deterrence strategy.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF), Australian Federal Police (AFP), and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and other government agencies now function as peacekeepers through routine activities, preventing conflicts before they require intervention.

## Archipelagic Deterrence

The 2023 Defence Strategic Review introduces 'archipelagic deterrence', (1) shifting from global deployments to regional bastion-building. This strategy denies adversarial maritime access across northern approaches in the Indo-Pacific.

As defence analyst Andrew Carr notes (2), this represents "a strategic move aimed at stabilising the balance of power" through denial rather than confrontation.

The ADF's routine maritime patrols, joint exercises, and forward

positioning serve as continuous peacekeeping activities - maintaining stability through visible capability. Freedom of navigation operations deter maritime aggression while joint training strengthens regional partnerships and provides early conflict warning.

## Regional Capacity Building

The AFP's international deployment programme exemplifies peacekeeping through capacity building. AFP officers in Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Pacific

(1) Carr, A. (2023). Australia's Archipelagic Deterrence. *\*Survival\**, Vol. 65, Issue 4, pp. 79-100

(2) Australian Federal Police. (2024). *\*International Deployment Programme Annual Report\**. Commonwealth of Australia.

*Our peacekeepers may not wear blue berets but their sustained engagement makes them vital to peace*”



nations prevent state fragility that leads to conflict. Their activities include policing partnerships and capacity-building missions deterring transnational crime and violent extremism.

These activities disrupt criminal networks before escalation into broader security threats. Contributions include training local police, strengthening justice systems, combating transnational crime undermining state stability, and building institutional capacity preventing governance failures .

### **Preventive Diplomacy**

DFAT’s diplomatic engagement and development assistance build resilience in Pacific Island states, deterring external interference. This indirect deterrence fosters long-term stability through development assistance addressing instability root causes, diplomatic mediation preventing dispute escalation, and economic partnerships creating peaceful resolution incentives (3).

### **International Alignment**

Australia’s approach aligns with

international trends. Academic literature notes shifts from traditional peacekeeping toward proactive deterrence strategies leveraging routine agency activities. Five Eyes allies adopt similar approaches – the United States and United Kingdom emphasise intelligence-led deterrence and forward-deployed assets, whilst Canada and New Zealand focus on multilateral engagement and capacity-building.

### **Demonstrated Success**

Australia’s deterrent peacekeeping achieves measurable success. Regional stability continues despite strategic competition. Pacific partners have strengthened governance and security capabilities. Transnational crime networks are disrupted before escalating, and diplomatic relationships prevent disputes becoming conflicts.

Success lies in agency integration. The ADF provides capability demonstration, AFP builds institutional capacity, and DFAT creates diplomatic frameworks for peaceful resolution.

### **Future Evolution**

Australia’s peacekeeping through deterrence continues evolving with enhanced agency integration, increased focus on cyber and hybrid threats, strengthened regional partnerships, and new metrics for measuring deterrent success.

### **Conclusion**

Australia’s peacekeeping through deterrence represents mature conflict prevention understanding. Recognising that ADF, AFP, and DFAT and other government agencies function as peacekeepers through routine activities acknowledges Australia’s full contribution to regional peace and security.

Our peacekeepers may not wear blue berets, but their commitment to preventing conflict through professional competence and sustained engagement makes them vital to peace.

**By Ian Lindgren**

**Immediate Past  
Chairperson**

(3) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2024). \*Pacific Partnerships for Peace and Prosperity\*. Commonwealth of Australia.

# National Peacekeeper Day

## Remembrance, Reflection & Connection

Saturday 14 September marks National Peacekeeper Day and the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) warmly invites all veterans, families, and supporters to join us in Canberra for a meaningful day of commemoration, conversation, and community.

## Morning Service

### Honouring Australia's Peacekeepers

The day begins with a Commemorative Service at the Peacekeeper Memorial on Anzac Parade, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM AEST. This annual pilgrimage is an opportunity to pay tribute to all those who have served on peacekeeping missions around the world, including Australian Federal Police and Australian Electoral Commission staff.

## Lunch and Insight

### Peacekeeper Gallery Update

Following the service, guests are invited to Poppy's Café at the Australian War Memorial at 12:15 PM for lunch and conversation. Dr David Sutton from the AWM will share an exciting update on the Peacekeeper galleries currently under development in ANZAC Hall – a behind-the-scenes look into how our peacekeeping history is being preserved and presented.

## Australia's Wartime Past

### Guided Gallery Tours

After lunch, we're off into the galleries of the AWM for a free 80-minute guided tour, led by the always-inspiring volunteer guides. These tours are tailored to your interests – whether it's Australia's involvement in World War I, World War II, or the Cold War, the guides will help bring those stories to life.

Unfortunately, the Peacekeeper Galleries are closed for redevelopment, although this just means you will have to join us for dinner next year to celebrate the grand opening as well! Places for the tour are limited, so please get your nomination in early by contacting our secretary.

## Final Reflections

### Last Post & Fellowship

To close the day, guests are encouraged to attend the moving Last Post Ceremony in the War Memorial's Commemorative Area. For those who wish to continue on, we will finish up with light refreshments and dinner just down the road at the Mercure Inn.



At the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, over 100,000 names are inscribed on the walls at the Roll of Honour; these are the names of people killed in action since 1885. A paper poppy is placed next to each name for relatives or direct descendants.



Australian War Memorial



Poppy's Cafe

## Don't forget:

- All veterans, peacekeepers, peacemakers, families, and supporters are welcome.
- Meals and beverages are pay-as-you-go.
- To secure your spot for lunch and on the guided tour, please contact our secretary Mark Horner as soon as possible. T: 0431 041 181 E: mark.horner@peacekeepers.asn.au

We look forward to sharing this day of remembrance, and camaraderie with you.  
Warm regards,  
Rod Henderson – CEO, APPVA

# From the CEO's Desk



Good day everyone. It's a real privilege to be writing my first piece for our members as the new CEO of the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association. I've been met with a warm welcome and a lot of enthusiasm for what we can achieve together and I'm excited for what lies ahead.

## A Bit About Me

I spent 22 years in the Australian Army with time in infantry with 3RAR, then onto Army Aviation as a helicopter Aircrewman flying in Blackhawks and Chinooks. My service took me on many deployments, including INTERFET and UNTAET and ISF TL, as well as operations in Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Afghanistan.

My service has given me a deep respect for the sacrifices made by those who went before me, and it's shaped my passion for helping veterans in need today both through advocacy and the power of bringing people together through commemoration. These are two things that I would like to bring to the Peacekeepers.

## Where We Are Heading

In the next 12 months ahead, my focus will be on:

- \* Building State Representation by appointing additional State Representatives to work directly with DVA and State Ministers on veterans' needs and assist with local commemorative activities.
- \* Raising a Current Issues Cell by creating a dedicated team to handle claims and urgent member needs more effectively.
- \* Training New Advocates so we can process more claims, faster, and better support our members for assistance with DVA.
- \* Collaboration, not competition by working with other veteran organisations to share resources and fill the gaps, instead of duplicating services.

- \* Having our voice heard with our seat at the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table (ESORT) Table. This will ensure APPVA members have a voice at the highest levels of DVA and Government.
- \* Being member focused and providing the services our members want and not what we tell them we offer. While you think about what you want from your organisation, allow me to tell you about a few other initiatives we are taking the lead on:

## Projects That Matter

### ADF Deaths in Training Memorial

One of my biggest undertakings is leading the creation of a national monument for ADF members killed during training. I feel this is a missing piece in our national commemorative landscape. The business case is in development with Brownstone Consultancy and the RPS Group, and we have strong, unanimous support from ESORT members, General The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC, General The Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC FTSE, Chief of the Defence Force, Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, Mr Matt Anderson PSM at the Australian War Memorial, and more joining every week. Funding for this project is being sort through DVA and the private sector.

### Peacekeeper Return Program

We're also working to help members return to the countries where they served as peacekeepers. Namibia, Timor Leste, Solomons, Cambodia just to name a few. We have seen Vietnam veterans find healing by revisiting the places they served. Our Peacekeeping service is unique and I feel this is what sets our organisation apart from all the other ESOs with their projects. Once funding is secured, we will be putting out a call for nominations so watch this space

### Fundraising Dinner at the AWM

To help fund these initiatives, we're



planning a fundraising dinner at the Australian War Memorial in September next year. It will celebrate the opening of the newly renovated spaces, especially the Peacekeeping Galleries.

## Get involved

It is important to acknowledge that our Chair, the entire board, our state representatives and I are volunteers. No one is getting paid for the work they do, and we are very proud of volunteering our time to help.

This also means change will not happen overnight, so bear with us, or even better, reach out to help if you have the capacity and will. We've got important work ahead, and I want to make sure every member knows they have a voice and can get involved.

If you have ideas, concerns, or want to see how you can help, email me at the address below.

We've achieved great things as a peacekeeper community already, although I will also take this opportunity to make this a call to action. Get one of your mates to join up as the best is yet to come.

Cheers

**Rod Henderson**  
CEO APPVA  
[Rod.henderson@peacekeepers.asn.au](mailto:Rod.henderson@peacekeepers.asn.au)

# 25 Years of Peace and Hope



In 2024, during the period 14 September to 20 September Australia commemorated 25 years since Australian service members embarked on one of the most significant peacekeeping missions in our nation's history.

The International Force East Timor (INTERFET) deployment in September 1999 marked a defining moment that showcased Australia's commitment to regional stability and humanitarian values.

The 2024 commemoration also remembered the prior deployment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) which deployed in was established to oversee the referendum to be held on 30 August 1999.

UNAMET consisted of an advance force of AFP officers, Australian military liaison officers (MLOs) deployed under Operation Faber, and concurrently the Australian Electoral Commission deployed officers to develop polling procedures and manuals, and to deliver polling training to UN volunteers.

When violence erupted in East Timor following the territory's overwhelming vote for independence, the international community looked to Australia for leadership. Major General Peter Cosgrove led over 5,500 Australian personnel, the largest deployment since Vietnam, alongside troops from eleven nations.

INTERFET's achievements were recognised globally, and more importantly, the mission laid the foundation for East Timor's journey to independence, culminating in the birth of Timor-Leste on 20 May 2002.



*Dropping stars of reflection into the Well of Contemplation during the 25th Anniversary of Australian Service in East Timor at the ANZAC Memorial in Sydney.*



*RSL NSW President Mick Bainbridge recites the ode during the 25th Anniversary of Australian Service in East Timor memorial at ANZAC Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney last year.*

# Major General Peter Cosgrove led over 5,500 Australian personnel...the largest deployment since Vietnam



The Governor of Western Australian His Excellency The Honourable Christopher John Dawson AC APM and member of Western Australian Police Force prepare to lay wreaths during the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) 25th anniversary service held at the State War Memorial at Kings Park in Perth.



General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, CVO, MC, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel, the Hon Matt Keogh MP, President of Timor-Leste José Ramos-Horta, the Hon. Penny Wensley and Chief of Joint Capabilities Lieutenant General Susan Coyle AM CSC DSM attend the 2024 service commemorating the 25th Anniversary of INTERFET.



# APPVA: Leading Veteran Reform



Ian Lindgren

*A Position Paper by the Immediate Past Chairperson of the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association*

## Introduction

As the Immediate Past Chairperson of the Australian Peacekeeper & Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA), I reflect on the transformative journey our organisation has undertaken over the past five years. This position paper examines where we have come from, what we have achieved, and the challenges that lie ahead under new leadership.

The APPVA has evolved from a traditional ex-service organisation into a powerful advocate for systemic reform, challenging entrenched bureaucratic practices and demanding genuine change for Australia's veterans and their families.

## A New Approach to Veteran Advocacy

Unlike traditional veteran organisations that often work within existing systems, the APPVA has taken a bold stance over the past five years: the current system isn't just broken – it needs complete transformation. Our comprehensive

analysis of veteran affairs reveals an organisation unafraid to call out bureaucratic dysfunction and demand accountability from government departments and agencies.

"We're not interested in tinkering around the edges," reflects the APPVA's consistent message across multiple policy documents developed during this period. "Veterans deserve systems that serve them, not bureaucracies that serve themselves."

## The Peacekeeping Recognition Battle

At the heart of APPVA's mission lies a fundamental belief that has driven our advocacy: peacekeeping operations deserve equal recognition to combat deployments. Through detailed submissions to Senate inquiries and persistent advocacy, the APPVA has highlighted the historical injustice faced by Australian peacekeepers who have served with distinction but received inadequate recognition for their service.

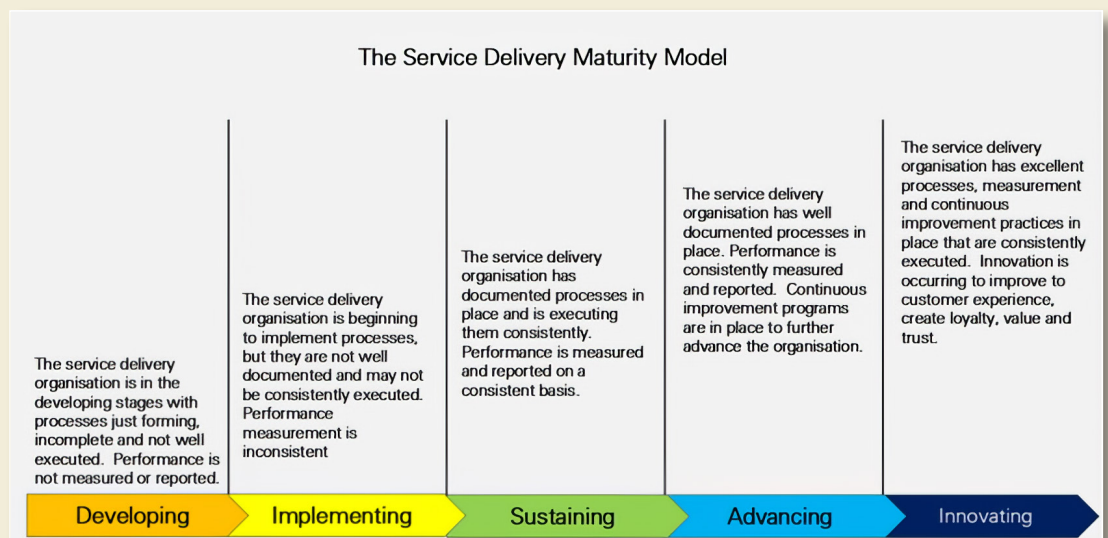
Our organisation's opening statement to the 2024 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Defence Honours & Awards demonstrates our unwavering commitment to this cause. We argue that peacekeepers and peacemakers have made significant contributions to Australia's international reputation and deserve specific recognition categories within the honours system.

## Tackling the Mental Health Crisis

The APPVA's approach to veteran suicide and mental health issues has been refreshingly direct throughout our recent advocacy efforts. Rather than accepting incremental improvements, we advocate for treating mental health conditions as service-related by default – a presumptive approach that could save lives by removing bureaucratic barriers to essential care and support.

Our analysis identifies family support as crucial, recognising that veteran families are secondary victims who

*A base source for a call to action can be drawn from the Service Delivery Maturity Model DVA's current positioning on the Service Delivery Maturity Model indicates that it is still in the 'Implementing' stage, struggling with consistent process execution and continuous improvement – both crucial for its evolution. This limitation hinders the organisation's ability to adapt and respond to the evolving needs of the veteran community.*



need dedicated assistance. This holistic approach sets the APPVA apart from organisations that focus solely on the veteran, acknowledging that healing happens within family systems and community networks.

### Government Failure on Royal Commission Recommendations

Perhaps the greatest disappointment during my tenure has been witnessing the government's failure to implement and fund all 122 Final Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

This failure represents a betrayal of the veterans and families who courageously shared their stories with the Commission, expecting meaningful change.

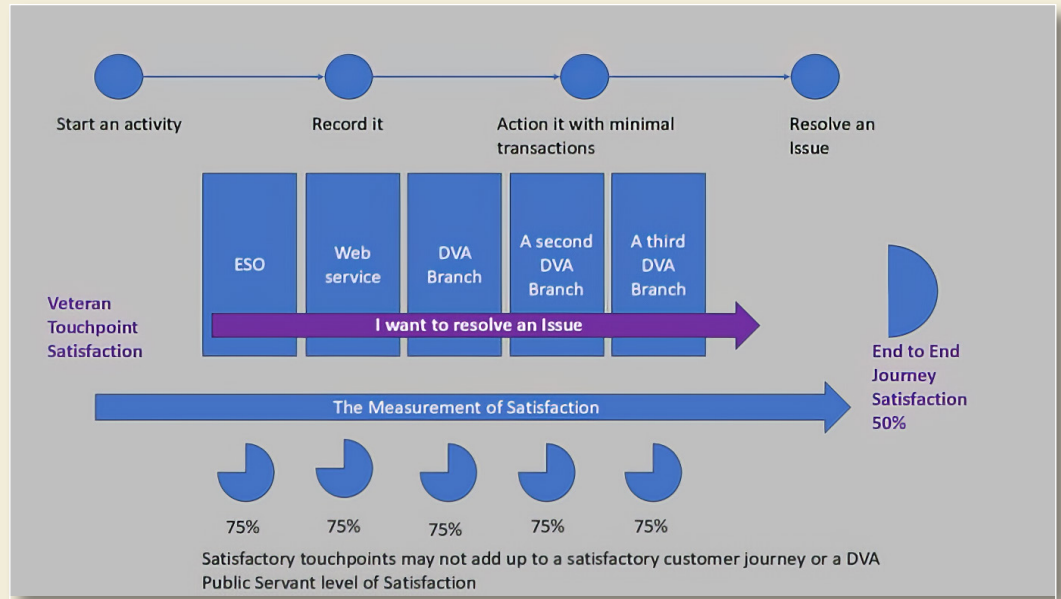
Most concerning is the government's refusal to implement Recommendation 122, which called for a truly independent Defence and Veteran Services Commission. By keeping the fox within the henhouse, the government has ensured that the same systemic problems that led to so many veteran deaths will continue unchecked.

This decision positions the veteran community for another 700 overlooked recommendations and a veteran suicide rate that will continue to increase, particularly amongst women veterans, well into the next 20 years.

The government's selective implementation of recommendations whilst ignoring the most crucial structural reforms demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the crisis facing our veteran community. Without independent oversight, the bureaucratic culture that has failed veterans for decades will persist.

### DVA Reform: A Blueprint for Change

Throughout the past five years, nowhere has APPVA's reform agenda been more evident than in our comprehensive critique of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and our desire to work with DVA.



Change for Veteran Satisfaction

Our detailed proposals for DVA transformation include embedding veteran advocates in decision-making processes, implementing streamlined claims procedures, and measuring success through veteran outcomes rather than bureaucratic efficiency metrics.

Our organisation's 'Opportunities for DVA' dated 7 October 2024 presented a vision of veteran services that prioritises veteran needs over administrative convenience - a radical departure from current practice that could revolutionise veteran care across Australia. The document has only been distributed between APPVA and DVA and is not available to read.

### Building Coalitions for Change

The APPVA's strategy has extended beyond individual advocacy to coalition building. Our work demonstrates our ability to unite over 100 veteran organisations around common goals and shared objectives. This collaborative approach recognises that veteran community fragmentation has historically weakened advocacy efforts.

By focusing on outcomes rather than organisational politics, the APPVA has created a new model for veteran representation that prioritises unity of purpose over territorial boundaries and competing interests.

### Looking Forward Under New Leadership

As Australia approaches 2026, the APPVA's comprehensive policy platform offers politicians a clear roadmap for meaningful veteran reform. Our evidence-based approach, combined with persistent advocacy and coalition building, positions the organisation as a credible voice for transformational change in veteran affairs under its new leadership.

The organisation's willingness to challenge existing systems whilst proposing practical alternatives demonstrates mature leadership in the veteran community. For peacekeepers, peacemakers, and all veterans seeking genuine reform, APPVA represents hope for a future where veteran services truly serve veterans and their families.

Through strategic thinking, persistent advocacy, and unwavering commitment to veteran welfare, the APPVA is not just participating in the conversation about veteran reform—we're leading it with purpose, determination, and clear vision for change. The foundation laid over the past five years provides a strong platform for continued advocacy under new leadership, ensuring that the fight for veteran justice continues with renewed vigour and strategic focus.

# A Solemn Promise...

*To honour those who died in training*

**By Rod Henderson**

**Chief Executive Officer, APPVA**



In August 2023, at Phil Laycock's funeral, I made a promise to his three young sons.

I gave each of them, and their mum, a poppy from the Australian War Memorial, a small token to help remember their father, who lost his life in the MRH crash in the Whitsundays.

I told them that one day, a monument would stand in honour

of their dad, and all the men and women who have lost their lives in training accidents while serving in our Defence Force. Two years later, I'm proud to share that this promise is moving closer to reality.

The MRH90 Taipan chopper ditched into the ocean south of Hamilton Island during a night training mission. Its crew comprised Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Max Nugent, Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph 'Phil' Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs.

Recently, I met with Alison McLaren, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, to discuss our proposal to build a national monument on Anzac Parade in Canberra, dedicated to ADF personnel who have died in training.

I want to thank DVA for organising this meeting and for their willingness to explore how they can support this project, including financially. This is just the beginning, the first step, but it is a significant one.

**DVA also wrote to the National Capital Authority and advised that an application for a Saluting Their Service grant may be an appropriate avenue to seek funding support.**

Please share this message to help spread the word about the efforts underway to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice while training to serve our country. Every \$30 membership goes directly toward making this monument a reality.

If you would like to support the project, you can donate through our website.

[www.peacekeepers.asn.au](http://www.peacekeepers.asn.au)

We are a 100% volunteer-run organisation, with no salaries or luxury travel, your contribution goes exactly where it's needed. This project is for the entire ex-service community. Even if you weren't a peacekeeper, we represent all veterans and their families. So please, stand with us and show your support.

*Anzac Parade looking towards the Australian War Memorial*



# How Can You Help?

A National Monument to those who died in training will endure. So must the stories behind each name.

Like Joseph 'Phil' Laycock.

Phil had an early interest in aviation and that was fostered through the Australian Air Force Cadets growing up in Dubbo, NSW. He enlisted in 1999 as a combat engineer and was subsequently deployed to Timor-Leste as part of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

Laycock retrained as an Army Aviation Loadmaster in 2004, serving in turn with 5th Aviation Regiment's A-Squadron, 171st Aviation Squadron at 6th Aviation Regiment, and the Army Aviation Training Centre.

In 2014, he was named Army's Aviation Corps 'Soldier of the Year' for his performance as Squadron Aviation Aircrewman Instructor.

He also received the Conspicuous Service Medal in 2016 for 'meritorious achievement in the performance of duty as the Squadron Aviation Aircrewman Instructor in the 171st

Aviation Squadron, 6th Aviation Regiment'.

His story - like so many others - deserves a place in our national memory.

Currently, there is no comprehensive, publicly accessible record of these fallen. That's why we're building a community-led database to:

- \* Record names and stories of ADF members who died in training or preparation
- \* Honour their full humanity - not just their service numbers.
- \* Ensure they are publicly and permanently recognised.

This is personal. During my own RAAF training, I lost a classmate. Later, I served on the B707 Board of Inquiry, where five aviators died during a training flight in 1991 off the



Gippsland coast in Victoria.

These experiences never leave you. And they've shown me every name matters. To remember them is to respect them. To share their stories is to ensure they are never lost to time.

If you know of someone who died in non-warlike service - during training - please share their name or story to Rod Hutchings [rod.hutchings@peacekeepers.asn.au](mailto:rod.hutchings@peacekeepers.asn.au)

*To remember them is to respect them*



Taipan Crew (L-R) Daniel Lyon, Max Nugent, Phil Laycock & Alexander Naggs.



APPVA CEO Rod Henderson (left) with Members of the TPI Association, War Widows Association and RSL laying a wreath on behalf of our members and all peacekeepers that served after the Korean armistice. Photo / ABC

# Korea: The Forgotten War

*The Korean peninsula still divided along the 38th parallel*

By James Tugwell & Lily Nothling / ABC

## Stanley Starceвич says many Australians forget the Korean War but he cannot.

The 94-year-old remembers trudging up steep mountains, through fields of rice paddies and dense forests. He remembers digging into frozen ground, icy winters, and hot, humid summers.

He remembers the sound of enemy gunfire, the fear of hidden landmines, and he remembers learning about true bravery and courage. "We experienced all the emotions," he said. "Tension, fear, confusion and the brutality of warfare."

Starceвич arrived in Korea in May 1951 as a 20-year-old from Esperance in Western Australia along with other young men who grew up fast. "They were good blokes and could make you laugh even when the situation was really dire," he recalled. "We didn't know what was happening around us most of the time."

The Korean War had started five years after World War II on June 25, 1950 when North Korean forces invaded South Korea. Australia was quick to join the US-led United Nations army in support of South

Korea in its attempt to halt the spread of communism.

Australian troops played a pivotal role throughout the conflict, particularly in defending the fall of Seoul in 1951 in the Battle of Kapyong.

The conflict remains ongoing with the Korean peninsula still divided along the 38th parallel.

More than 18,000 Australians served during the Korean War and the post-armistice period. While the war officially ended in July 1953, the last Australians did not return home until 1957.

In total, 340 Australians lost their lives while 42 have no known grave. When those who survived returned



A Korean War orphan salutes Corporal Edward Dowell from the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. Photo: Australian War Memorial.



Stanley Starcevich drove from Esperance to Canberra to commemorate 75 years since the start of the Korean War.  
 Photo: Ian Cutmore / ABC News

home, they did not receive the hero's welcome afforded those veterans from World War I and World War II.

The past president of the Korean Veterans Association of Australia (KVAA), John Munro OAM, said the local RSL rejected him becoming a member when he returned after the conflict. "They said it was only a peacekeeping operation. Well, it wasn't. I can assure you of that."

He departed his hometown of Swan Hill as a 19-year-old en route to Korea and cannot forget his experience of the brutality of war and the rejection he and his comrades received. "When I first came home and took the uniform off ... no one knew I had even been to Korea. That happened to a lot of us."

Both Mr Munro and Mr Starcevich spoke at a commemorative service held in Canberra to mark 75 years since the start of the war. Mr Starcevich drove more than 3,000km from Esperance in the Western State's Great Southern to attend the event because he believes remembering is important.

Mr Munro's granddaughter Macey Rye said it was important the war was remembered and the veterans celebrated. "Everyone gets recognition, except these guys. They

just seem to be forgotten. I have friends that have got no idea."

She said her grandfather shared stories of the mateship of war including fun times away from the front but kept the horrors to himself.

Her mother and KVAA secretary Debbie Munro helped coordinate 17 veterans from around the country

attending the ceremony. She tears up thinking about the fact that many won't make the 80th anniversary.

"They are forgotten," she said. They feel it all the time. They feel it every Anzac Day. It's disheartening and we've got to do what we can while we can while they're here. It's about them."



John Munro OAM



ALBERT JACKA

**Captain Albert Jacka was the first Australian soldier to be awarded the Victoria Cross in the Great War and he was also honoured with the Military Cross and Bar.**

He was born on a dairy farm near Winchelsea in Victoria, on 10 January 1893, the fourth of seven children to Nathaniel Jacka and his English-born wife Elizabeth. The family moved 200km north to Wedderburn where Albert attended the local school before working with his father as a haulage contractor.

Before his enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force he was an employee of the Victorian Forests Commission. He left Australia, aged 21, with the 14th Battalion and saw his first fighting as a private on the heights of Gallipoli.

From the outset he displayed a disregard of danger and a capacity for overcoming difficulties that earned him the respect and trust of his comrades in the ranks as well as of his officers. Many stories are told of his heroism, but it was his deed at Courtney's Post on May 19 in 1915, that first earned him enduring fame.

Then a lance-corporal, he was holding a section of Australian trench with four other men. The position was heavily attacked by Turks. All Jacka's comrades were

# ALBERT JACKA:

## Brave Hero up Front

killed or rendered helpless by wounds, and seven Turks entered the trench.

Jacka attacked the raiders single-handed, and after a desperate struggle killed every Turk in the trench - five by rifle fire and two with the bayonet. He beat off further attacks upon the trench, and held the position until he was relieved. For this achievement he was awarded the Victoria Cross and his name became better known to his fellow countrymen than that of many generals.

Many times afterwards Jacka's heroism was mentioned in reports from the front and he gained promotion rapidly. When Gallipoli was evacuated and the Australian troops went to France he was a lieutenant.

In that capacity he led a counter-attack after a strong enemy offensive at Pozieres on August 7 in 1916, and he was awarded the Military Cross for what was described as "the most dramatic and effective act of individual audacity in the history of the Australian Imperial Forces."

The action is well described by Charles Bean in the Official History of Australia in the War.

"Inside the Australian lines an unusual situation had developed," Bean wrote. "For some minutes the Australians on the northern flank of the attack had maintained a constant fire on the right flank of the German advance.

"As the Germans penetrated beyond the old German lines they became visible to the whole semi-circle of Australian supports in Centre Way, Tom's Cut and Tramway Trench. There followed, within the sight of many of the onlooking troops, an incident of which there remain numerous descriptions.

"The easy attitude of the Germans on the hill gave the impression that they had overcome the local opposition and were about to settle down or reorganise. Suddenly, a party of no

more than eight Australians led by an officer, was seen to spring from a fold in the ground and charge them from their rear.

"An immediate change came over the battlefield; other Australians apparently resumed the attack, and the slope in rear of the old German line became the centre of an extraordinary aggregation of separate hand-to-hand conflicts.

"What happened was this," Bean continued. "Lieutenant Jacka, who was commanding the southern platoon of the 14th Battalion, had gone up at dawn to the Tramway Trench and found the bombardment still falling heavily.

"He had not long returned to the underground chamber, which was still intensely dark, when his men were roused by a deafening explosion at the foot of the stairs.

"The attacking Germans had reached the dugout entrance and had rolled a bomb down the shaft. Jacka fired two revolver shots at the enemy and, at once rushed up the stairway, followed by his men who had to scramble over two of their groaning mates that were maimed by the bomb.

"The enemy had swept past and could be seen in large numbers between their dugout and the village of Pozieres. Jacka instantly lined up all the sound men he could find, seven or eight in number, and to dash through the enemy back to Pozieres.

"His men had hardly been drawn up when he saw the column of the 48th Battalion's prisoners and their escort returning towards him. He let them come to within 30 yards and then jumped out of the back of the trench and charged. About half the German guards threw down their rifles but the rest opened fire and every man of Jacka's small party was hit with rifle bullets.

"Seeing Jacka's movement, Lance Sergeant Cyril Hurst Beck of the 48th Battalion charged forward to his assistance with a small party some of whom seized rifles off their guards.

"Jacka and his surviving men plunged into the thick of it and other Australians from most of the unattached portions in the surrounding area automatically began to make towards the struggle.

"A German machine gun crew had established itself in a shell-hole 200 yards down the slope towards Tramway Trench, and the advancing Australians had to observe some caution; but the forward movement was continuous, determined looking men silently making forward on all sides from shell-hole to shell-hole.

"Some were shooting point-blank and others were fighting with bayonets, this being one of the few occasions when bayonets were crossed face-to-face.

The Germans included a number of bombers and some were fighting from shell-holes. Jacka dived in among them, killing and capturing a number while receiving a wound which nearly killed him. The gallant Beck was killed but the appearance of platoons commanded by Lieutenant Appleton and Lieutenant Dobbie's settled the issue and the Germans surrendered.

Eight months later, at the disastrous battle of Bullecourt on April 11, 1917, Jacka added a Military Bar to his Military Cross for a daring nocturnal investigation of the enemy position inside the German wire entanglements, and for the subsequent capture of a German officer and his orderly.

After his repatriation Captain Jacka became associated with an importing business, however, like companies throughout the nation, it suffered heavily during the Depression. He decided to enter municipal life and, a year after being elected to the St. Kilda Council, he was named Mayor in 1931.

Due to ill-health, he was forced to relinquish that position and died at the Caulfield Repatriation Hospital in on 17 January 1932. His last words, said to his father, were 'I'm still fighting, Dad.'

Over 6,000 mourners filed past Albert Jacka's coffin when it lay in state in Anzac House and a Herald and Weekly Times appeal raised enough money to buy a house on Malvern Road in Glen Iris for his widow Frances and daughter Betty.



*A Victorian newspaper hails a Local Hero*

*His last words, said to his father, were 'I'm still fighting, Dad.' ”*

*Captain Albert Jacka VC examines a map in preparation for the battle of Messines in June 1917*





# LAST POST


# The Sportsmen's 1000

This article first appeared here:

[https://issuu.com/kirstiewyatt/docs/tlp\\_-\\_edition\\_35\\_anzac\\_day\\_2025](https://issuu.com/kirstiewyatt/docs/tlp_-_edition_35_anzac_day_2025)



The goal of the campaign was spelled out in capital letters:  
JOIN TOGETHER, TRAIN TOGETHER, EMBARK TOGETHER, FIGHT TOGETHER.

*The campaign needed a poster-boy and there was no better choice than Albert Jacka* 

**The worlds of sport and war have often been closely linked. When the First World War broke out, and Australia was keen to raise a fighting force of its brightest and best young men, it was natural that attention turned to the sporting field.**

In fact, fighting a war was often portrayed as the ultimate sporting test: one team versus another, on a field requiring maximum commitment and endurance, where the stakes could not be higher – literally life and death.

Captains of rugby teams, tennis stars, top-scoring cricketers – who else to better represent Australia on this greatest of world stages? There was a strong belief that skills honed on sport fields would make for greater fighters on the battlefield.

Military recruiters recognised that men were more likely to enlist if they could serve alongside others from similar localities and occupations, so they formed military units to foster this spirit of comradeship.

Battalions were raised in specific regions, so that men could serve alongside their own townfolk, occupational groups were encouraged to enlist together, leading to an influx of postal and rail workers, and more creative links were sought to encourage new recruits to feel like they would be fighting alongside like-minded men.

The system was similar to the 'Pal's Battalions' that were being raised by communities throughout the United Kingdom, albeit encompassing much larger geographic areas in Australia. In this environment, it was almost inevitable that a sports-inspired battalion would be created, and in 1917 a dedicated campaign was launched to lure sporting types into the military.

The campaign needed a poster-boy and, quite literally, the key promotional tool of the recruiting campaign was a series of posters calling on young men to enlist and there was no better choice than Albert Jacka.

Jacka had earned Australia's first Victoria Cross of the war at Gallipoli and was a legend in the Australian Imperial Force. Recruiters were quick to seize on his fame, and he became the face of the 'Sportsmen's 1000', a campaign that vaguely (and misleadingly) implied that a thousand rugged sporting types who signed up would get to serve with Jacka.

Posters promoting the scheme featured Jacka front-and-centre with an eclectic range of sportsmen depicted in the background, from golfers, cricketers, and footballers, to lawn bowlers and rowers.

Crucially, there was a boxer depicted as well – a key part of the Jacka narrative was that his skills as a boxer before the war had led directly to his success during it. It was at least partly true – Jacka was certainly a brawler, and had earned his VC for single-handedly taking on a dozen Turks in an isolated scrap of trench.

Class distinction was also important – the depicted sports were decidedly upper-class, and the whole concept seemed designed to encourage the upper classes to join a unit where they wouldn't have to serve alongside working class riff-raff.

At the end of the day the concept turned out to be more of a marketing ploy than a military manoeuvre. No battalion bearing the 'Sportsmen's 1000' banner was ever formed, and men who responded to the campaign were enlisted into whatever battalion most needed them.

Nevertheless, the concept worked to a degree and encouraged men who saw themselves as fit and capable to join up. Jacka went on to earn other bravery awards at Pozieres and Bullecourt and survived the war but he paid a high price for his service. For the rest of his life he suffered from war wounds and died in 1932 aged only 39.



Mat McLachlan is one of Australia's leading war historians and battlefield guides and has spent two decades following in the footsteps of Australian troops on battlefields around the world. Mat hosts leading history podcasts Living History and BattleWalks, produces Pete & Gary's Military History podcast, and his 'Living History' YouTube channel has over 5 million viewers a year.

He has written four books: Walking with the Anzacs, Gallipoli: The Battlefield Guide, The Cowra Breakout and Krithia: The Forgotten Anzac Battle of Gallipoli.

In 2008 Mat launched Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours which has grown to become Australia's most successful battlefield tour company, sending thousands of Australians to battlefields around the world each year. To follow in the footsteps of the Anzacs, visit: [www.battlefields.com.au](http://www.battlefields.com.au)



Serving everyone connected to Defence.

## SERVING EVERYONE CONNECTED TO DEFENCE

For 70 years, Navy Health has proudly supported those who serve – and those who stand behind them. From our beginnings focused on Navy personnel, we’ve grown into a private health insurer embracing the full breadth of Australia’s Defence community – including a growing number of families from the Army, Air Force, and Defence Industry.

### Comprehensive Health Insurance for Navy, Army & Air Force

Many of those who serve in the Navy, Army, or Air Force – and those thinking about transitioning into civilian life – have the same question about private health insurance – what is it?

It helps to think about it as 2 halves – Hospital and Extras.

Hospital cover allows you to access medical treatments as a private patient in a private hospital, avoiding the long waiting times common in public hospitals. Whether it’s for surgery or emergency treatment, it helps ensure you receive care when you

need it most, so you can get back to doing what you love sooner.

Extras cover provides benefits for regular out-of-hospital healthcare services such as dental, optical, physiotherapy, and more. If you need routine check-ups, wear glasses, or regularly see a physiotherapist, Extras cover helps reduce out-of-pocket expenses or sometimes fully covers these essential services.

Navy Health offers both Hospital and Extras options which aim to meet the needs of current and former ADF members – and their loved ones.

### A Truly Whole-of-Defence Health Insurer

Navy Health is committed to supporting the wider ADF community. If you’re part of the Defence Industry and work for a company that supplies the ADF, you’re also eligible to become a member. This includes current or former civilian employees, Defence public servants, and past or present staff of companies with

ADF contracts. By joining, you can access excellent health insurance benefits – and your extended family, including your partner, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren – can join as well!

### Why Join Navy Health?

- **Not-for-profit Health Fund:** As a not-for-profit, members-first health fund, we exist solely to benefit our members. That means our focus is always on delivering better value, higher-quality service, and smarter health cover.
- **Genuine Service:** Our committed, Melbourne-based team understands the Defence lifestyle – because it’s in our DNA. When you get in touch, you speak with real people who know what matters to you.

Want health cover that serves you? Call 1300 306 289 or click here <https://navyhealth.com.au/> to speak with our Member Services team and explore health insurance options for your needs.

# Cowboys cheating Veterans



Unscrupulous fee-for-service 'cowboys' are cheating veterans and giving the industry a bad name but key activists maintain good-faith advocates still provide a valuable service when veterans are confronted by shortcomings in the entitlement system.

This comes after the Department of Veterans' Affairs laid bare how half a billion dollars in spending by the Albanese government had unintentionally fuelled a parasitic industry of dodgy advocates trying to rip off veterans and milking taxpayer funds.

The DVA said funding and the increase in DVA processing capacity has to some extent encouraged the 'development of advocacy business models and behaviours of concern'.

Experienced advocate Rod Thompson, a Gulf War navy veteran who now does pro bono work but had previously worked in both the free and fee-for-service sectors, told The Australian Newspaper good-faith fee-for-service advocates catered for "tens of thousands of veterans who have been let down by organisations that offer limited services with limited skills and have no professional standards."

He said a commission model incentivised advocates to work harder to get better outcomes for their veteran clients. "If you want to pay for your service, knowing that you're going to be able to be represented all the way through, knowing that that person, you've signed a contract, so if they don't deliver on it, they can also be held to account.

"I have taken a couple of veterans who have been absolutely smashed



**Jacquie Lambie**  
Photo: Mark Horstman / Tasmanian Inquirer

through that system to try and get some recompense because the advocates ruined their case with the DVA, and it was rejected.

"The responsibility has to be borne by the department and the ex-service organisations for allowing this circumstance to arise, and now trying to jump up and down and shut the gate after the horse has bolted."

Tasmanian senator Jacqui Lambie – a veteran and an impassioned advocate – said the advocacy system was "broken" and declared she would use her time in the next term of parliament to focus on this issue even more.

"It's about time (the advocacy system) was properly regulated and

the advocates are properly trained and fully supported. They've got enough public servants in there – there's no excuse not to train them properly.

"I don't have the balance in this next parliament, which will give me even more to time to focus on fixing the DVA and the defence personnel and the leadership."

Veterans' Affairs Minister Matt Keogh said the government established a Senate inquiry to get to the bottom of all the concerns raised. "My primary concern is that veterans are provided good service, are not ripped off, and have their claims processed properly and promptly."



# Padre's Ponderings

*Fide et Fortitudine* By Faith & Courage

## Fear Not

**F**ear not for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10

As humans we all experience distressing or deeply disturbing experiences as we journey through life, I have had my fair share over the years. Despite the inference on the daily news feeds traumatic experiences are not something new. Isaiah speaks of it, the Old Testament prophets speak of it, King David in his Psalms records some of his depression, anger, fear, and despair as he cried out to God, even Paul had his moments of doubt and despair.

However, they all, once they had cried out to God, vented and shook their fist, be it physically or spiritually, all remembered that God was there sustaining them and helping them. He is the light at the end of the tunnel which at times seems to go on forever without end.

In *A Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, he, a former soldier in Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth Army, wrote about this when Christian and Hopeful are locked up in Doubting Castle.

Christian contemplates suicide however Hopeful encourages him to hold fast and that there is always Hope. Christian then remembers that he has a key called Promise hanging around his neck that will open every door in the Castle. They were able to escape and continue their pilgrimage.

Jesus is the light that shines into our souls bringing light, hope and relief from the crippling darkness of depression and despair. I have always found focussing on Him when I am down enables me to look up, to look out and to live.

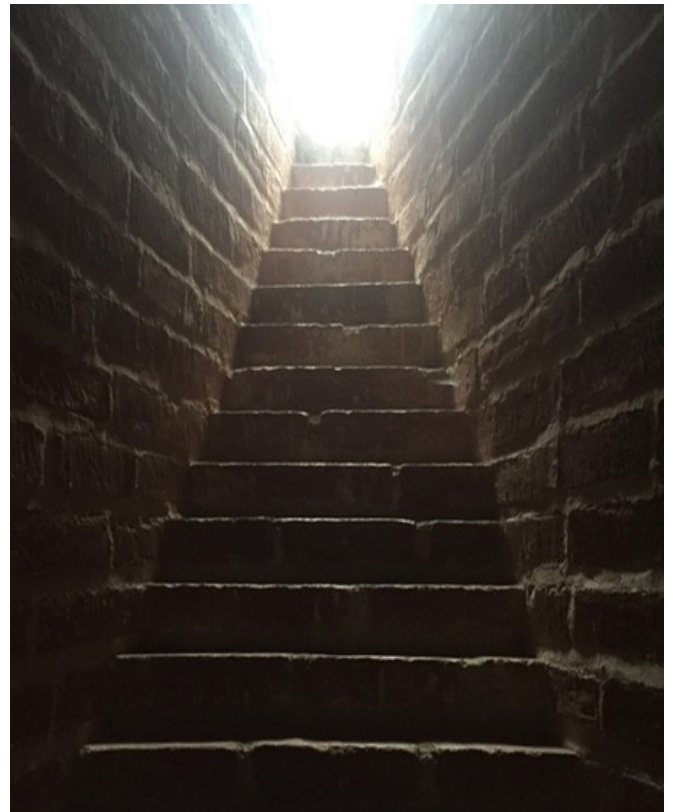
Some years ago, I wrote a poem speaking of this it is produced below.

### **The Fall of Fear**

*Fear, that tyranny, from the bowels of hell,  
Exacerbated by the tolling worrisome bell.  
Fear, the soulmate of despondent anxiety,  
The worry of all things with no proprietary.*

*Fear, that brings cavernous darkness into one's heart.  
Striving to snuff out the Hope spark,  
Of life, love and all things spiritual,  
Fear that focusses one's mind on things temporal.*

*The castle giant of despair and doom,  
With club and chains and dungeons of gloom.  
Binds the spirit and strives to restrain the soul,  
Wrestling it towards the deep black hole.*



*But wait, a thin ray of light,  
Rapier like pierces the darkness and deep night.  
Hope glimmers weak then stronger still,  
The shadow of the Cross looms from across the crucifixion hill.*

*A flash of light and with thunderous voice clear,  
The King on his white horse rides in to conquer fear.  
A flaming two-edged sword slices the darkened place,  
Fear falls before the Heavenly onslaught of Grace.*

*The sinner falls, repentant to his knees,  
Cries out 'Lord, save me please!'  
A pierced Heavenly Hand reaches out,  
And lifts the penitent to stand about.*

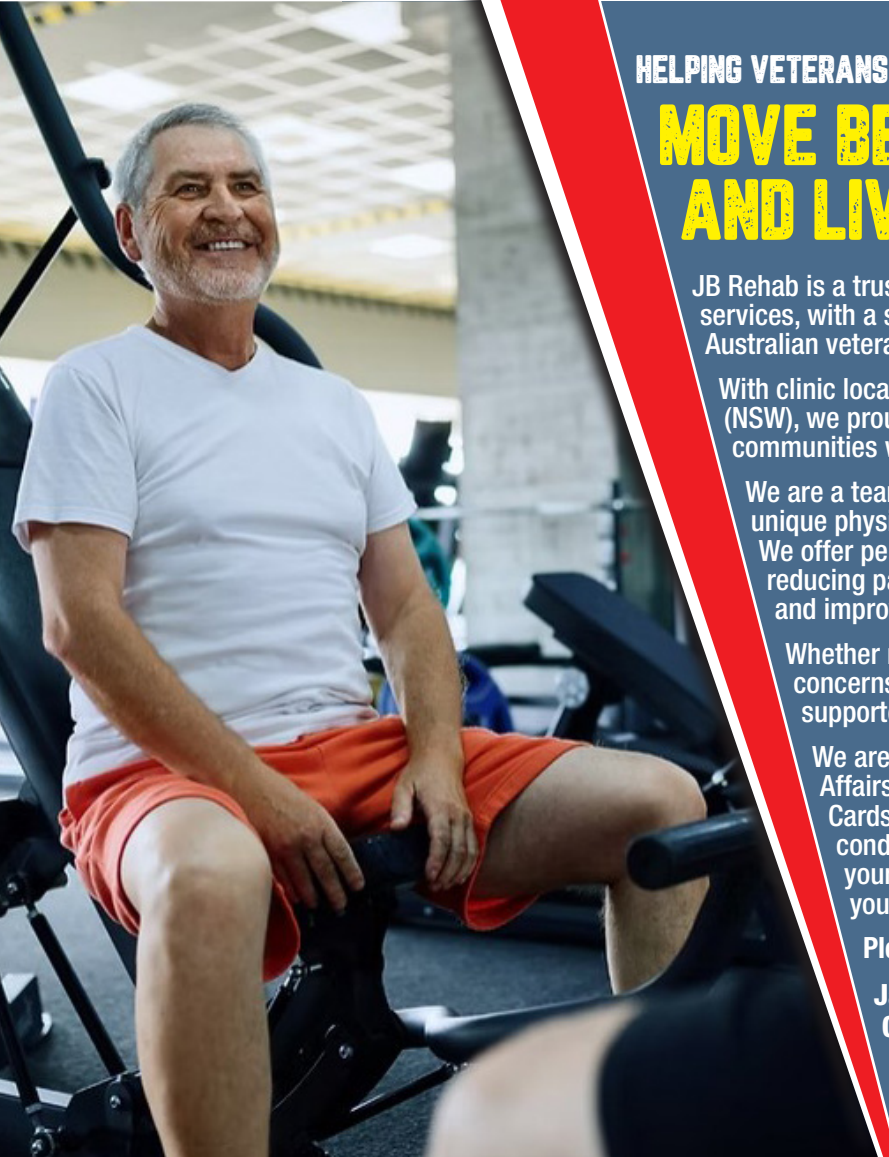
*The rescued soul is stood upon the Rock,  
Fear banished from heart to sock.  
Replaced with love, hope and charity,  
Feet firmly placed on the Way with clarity.*

**Godspeed**

**Steve Neuhaus**

**APPVA Chaplain**

**0403 060 369**



HELPING VETERANS IN CANBERRA & QUEANBEYAN...

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JB Rehab is a trusted provider of Exercise Physiology and Physiotherapy services, with a strong focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of Australian veterans.

With clinic locations in Fyshwick (ACT), Queanbeyan, and Jerrabomberra (NSW), we proudly serve the Canberra region and surrounding communities with accessible, veteran-focused care.

We are a team of allied health professionals who understand the unique physical and psychological demands of military service. We offer personalised, evidence-based treatment plans aimed at reducing pain, restoring movement, managing chronic conditions, and improving overall quality of life.

Whether recovering from injury, managing long-term health concerns, or looking to maintain physical resilience, veterans are supported every step of the way.

We are fully registered with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and offer services under both Gold and White Cards. Importantly, if you hold a White Card for mental health conditions, you are still eligible to access our services when your physical health concerns are related to or impacted by your mental health.

Please go to: [www.jb-rehab.com](http://www.jb-rehab.com) to get started

**Jack Murray**  
Owner & Exercise Physiologist  
0432 213 777

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With 12+ years of hands-on experience, Brenton knows his way around injury rehab and movement optimisation. Whether it's massage, dry needling, mobility work or strength-based rehab, he focuses on getting you back to peak condition.

Owner & Senior Exercise  
Physiologist - Jack Murray



For the past 6+ years, Jack has helped clients manage and recover from injuries, chronic conditions, and post-operative rehab. His tailored exercise programs ensure long-term strength, mobility and resilience.

Senior Exercise Physiologist  
David Cox



With 6+ years in rehab and performance training, David specialises in designing structured exercise plans that are both practical and progressive. He works with clients of all backgrounds, from everyday movers to elite athletes.

# DVSC Commission drives Reform

The response and implementation of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide Report will result in significant changes to the culture, systems and processes supporting Defence personnel, veterans and veteran families.

A foundational recommendation was for the establishment of the Defence and Veterans' Services Commission

(DVSC), which will provide independent oversight and drive system reform to improve suicide prevention and well-being outcomes for serving and ex-serving ADF members.

Michael Manthorpe PSM is the Interim Head of the DVSC. He served in the Australian Public Service for 37 years, including as the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Defence Force Ombudsman from 2017 to 2021.



Michael Manthorpe

## Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support Act 2025



Taskforce leader Teena Blewitt

This Act brings together the three current systems governing veterans' entitlements under a single Act, as well as establishing the DVSC in legislation to commence on 29 September 2025. Mr Manthorpe is leading a team in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) to support the full establishment of the DVSC.

The Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee reviewed the legislation establishing the DVSC and made its report as this

edition of *Peacekeepers Magazine* went to press.

A Taskforce has been established within PM&C to support the implementation of the Government's response. The Taskforce will draw on expertise from across Government to consider and advise on the detail of implementation.

DVA has appointed Deputy Secretary Teena Blewitt to lead a taskforce within the Department to deliver on recommendations 87 and 89, focusing on the co-design of the new agency on well-being and the national peak body for the veteran community.

The veteran community was invited to co-design the implementation of the above recommendations with DVA. The first co-design discovery sessions commenced recently.

There was also an opportunity to share views via a survey and online submission process. Further information will be available

via the DVA website and other communication channels.

Tabled twelve months ago, the Royal Commission's recommendations provide a foundation for change, we recognise that creating meaningful and lasting improvements requires more than policy directives. What's needed are the lived experiences and first-hand insights of veterans, their families, and others directly impacted.

Sharing unique perspectives will help us better understand the real challenges and develop practical solutions to create genuine, lasting change for the veteran community.

DVA is fully committed to implementing the Government's response to the Royal Commission's Final Report. It will continue to work in partnership with Defence, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, other federal agencies, the states and territories, and the veteran community to ensure real and meaningful change for those who have given so much.



# Saving lives the focus of Inquiry

*“The problems contributing to this national tragedy...must be dealt with, once and for all.”*



Commissioners Dr Peggy Brown, Nick Kaldas and James Douglas

After a three-year inquiry involving more than 5,800 submissions, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide handed down its final report, with a key proposal of establishing a permanent, powerful oversight body to monitor the implementation of its recommendations and maintain a keen focus on these issues.

At least 1,677 serving and former Defence Force personnel died by suicide between 1997 and 2021 – more than 20 times the number killed in active duty over the same period. On average, there have been three deaths of serving and former Defence members by suicide every fortnight.

Commissioners Nick Kaldas, Dr Peggy Brown and James Douglas delivered the report to the Governor-General in September last year and it contained 122 recommendations to improve the health and wellbeing of serving and former Defence personnel and save lives.

The seven-volume report was the culmination of 12 public hearings with evidence from more than 340 witnesses, including more than 60 people with lived experience of suicide and suicidality, with almost 900 private sessions conducted.

The inquiry examined cultural, structural and systemic issues contributing to alarming rates of

suicide and suicidality among Australia’s Defence and veteran population.

Mr Kaldas, the Commission Chair, said the final report was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to save veterans’ lives. “This government and future governments must take note of, and accept, the huge amount of evidence revealed through this royal commission,” he said.

“The problems contributing to this national tragedy are now undeniable and must be dealt with, once and for all.”



# New Aged Care Act

By Geoff Rowe



Geoff Rowe is CEO of ADA Australia, the Queensland member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network. Geoff's career in the human services sector spans 40 years, including senior and executive positions in the Queensland Government, and in the not-for-profit sector. Geoff has a strong interest in social justice, human rights and inclusion.

The Statement of Rights in the new Aged Care Act will give legislative power to a fundamental shift in the way we deliver aged care.

As the start of the new Aged Care Act fast approaches, there is a lot of consternation in the aged care sector about what the changes will mean, and the readiness of providers and systems.

On some levels this is understandable, however, as an aged care advocate, I am concerned about the expectation that everything should be perfect and in place before we start to make changes which will see the rights of older people be the focus of our aged care system.

If we wait for everything to be perfect, we will never start. The human rights of older people are now enshrined in the Aged Care Act through a Statement of Rights. This will replace the previous Charter of Aged Care Rights, which did guide service delivery by aged care providers, but held less weight.

Whether you are receiving aged care services at home or in a residential aged care facility, service providers will have a positive duty to understand and deliver their services in line with these rights. It means that service providers must have practices in place to ensure that services are delivered in accordance with the Statement of Rights.

These Rights must be taken into consideration under the functions of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner, and the Complaints Commissioner. The Statement includes rights like independence and autonomy, respect for privacy, safe and quality care, and the right to raise issues without fear of reprisal.

But what it really means is that self-determination and choices of older people should guide their aged care. It is a change in the current ways of thinking and working. No more doing what 'is best' for the older person or imposing overzealous safety measures.

Providers can start with practices which embrace those fundamental rights that all of us hold. The elements of an ordinary life - being listened to and making choices - what to eat, when to shower, what to do, where to go or who visits.

Embracing human rights in aged care doesn't need to be difficult, it is first a change of perspective, and one that the aged care sector now has to make.

*If you feel like you are being shut out of decisions about your life, call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600. Available Monday to Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 10am-4pm.*





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

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**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 Invalidity 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 Invalidity 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 Invalidity 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 Invalidity 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 Invalidity 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 Invalidity 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. DFWA 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](http://www.dfwa.org.au/adfcovertax)

# Moving from Darkness to Light

By Padre Gary Stone OAM



Gary and Michael Stone

*A renewed passion  
for living life to the  
full in practical acts  
of ongoing service*



## **How can we veterans contribute to a better future for our veteran community following the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide (RCDVS)?**

I've just returned from our 31st Timor Awakening program after celebrating an ANZAC Day Dawn Service in collaboration with the Australian and New Zealand Embassy staff, uniformed members of our Defence and Police Cooperation Programs, other Aussie and Kiwi veterans and many interested Timorese.

The venue was the new headquarters for the Timorese veterans association, co-incidentally the location of the Australian led UN Hospital from 2000 to 2004 and proximate to where our 2/2nd Commando Coy resided the Japanese invasion in 1942.

In our ANZAC gathering, the Timorese veterans are fascinated by the 'Togetherness' we have - their word

*We veterans must let go of past grievances. We need to trust and be open to dialogue*



TA31 Group at the memorial outside Timorese Veterans Centre (Site of UNPKF Hospital 2000-2004).

is Hamutuk - and the friendly and mutually supportive sense of purpose that we share in not only getting our own veterans healthier, but at the same time helping their poor and most needy people in extensive humanitarian work.

My contribution to the Dawn Service as the Padre was to reflect upon the movement from darkness to light, from the eerie sadness of the Last Post to the upbeat rousing of Reveille and for us to both ponder and honour the death, suffering and sacrifice of those gone before us.

Then to go out from the service with a renewed passion for living life to the full in practical acts of ongoing service.

As a demonstration of that, after coffee and breakfast on site, our group then headed out to the mountains to the WW2 Commando HQ

location of Same, where we spent two days refurbishing the Veterans Education and Training School. We built and operate it for children of Timorese veterans and the rural poor.

We need to make 2025 a year of action now that the RCDVS recommendations have been approved. But I wish to reinforce that it's not just Defence and DVA that need to be active. We veterans need to proactively take our part.

Indeed, with a potential volunteer workforce of up to 500,000 we have much to offer and have many complementary contributions that can be merged with the offerings by DVA and Defence.

Quite a lot of us in the veteran community have had the expectation that DVA or Defence having total responsibility for putting us back together. Clearly they have a responsibility in this space, but



Gary Stone

as I have reflected on this after over 48 years in uniform and 30 years in chaplaincy, I've come to realise that we as a veterans have co- responsibility with government agencies to address those needs.

Moreover, I have come to see the most dramatic improvement in any veteran's health and wellbeing has come from veterans, as individuals and in groups, using their own initiative and taking a lead in helping their mates get healthier.

Clinicians and clinical treatments certainly play a part but invariably they are reactive - not proactive - and only accessed when the veteran is in crisis or acutely ill. Up until now, disease prevention and early intervention has had little funding and little attention.

In response to these gaps, and the reluctance of veterans to engage in health and wellbeing, in recent years a plethora of groups like Disaster Relief Australia, Trojans Trek , PTSD Resurrected have got moving and have saved the lives of many veterans and got them engaged in a journey of healing.

These results are backed up by solid psychometric evidence. The Timor Awakening program that my veteran son Michael Stone has developed and delivered, with very little government support, has seen dramatic improvement in the lives of 1,000 veterans and their families.

Many of them were previously suicidal but are now engaged in purposeful mentoring and leadership roles in ex-service and community organisations. The bottom line is that all of us can play a part in this space. We don't need to be passively waiting for others to do something for us. Embracing a life-giving purpose is life-giving in so many ways.

Broadly, in the past , veteran activity has been at arms length from Defence and DVA. In many cases we have had adversarial relationships. But this year I have seen a shift from the institutional responses we have had in the past.

In the past few months I have had positive and encouraging dialogue with Repatriation Commissioner Kahlil Fegan DSC AM, Deputy Repatriation Commissioner Mark Brewer AM CSC and ADF lead in veteran matters Brig Mel Cochbain CSC.

They are all very experienced veterans themselves and are absolutely committed to open and engaged dialogue into how we may all move forward together. This year commenced well with DVA staff facilitating stakeholder workshops in a 'co -design' approach over the establishment of a Veterans Wellbeing Agency.

Work is also progressing in the development of a transition program for veterans upon discharge from full-time service. A DVA - Veteran assembly offering co-responsibility is now on the table.

But we veterans must let go of past grievances with our institutions - as justifiable as they were in the past - and move forward by an attitude of co-responsibility





*Veterans Mick and Jodie Lay, both VCA mentors, lay a wreath in Dili*

and Hamutuk. We need to trust and be open to dialogue. We also need to be realistic.

There will not be massive additional government financial injections into DVA. But we can engage collaboratively in how we can better use the funding that DVA does receive.

For example, DVA is spending 'gazillions' of dollars on acute care in psychiatric hospitals. Investment in much cheaper veteran-led health and wellbeing programs could see many fewer people needing hospitalisation. Together, with a unified purpose of improving veteran health and wellbeing, we can improve the lot of our veteran community.

There are many issues in the veterans space needing action. I honour those that are addressing matters relating

to entitlements, compensation and pensions. My own experience and expertise is in health and wellbeing, and my final point in this article is on how we veterans can individually do life better.

Like most of our readers I've had my own battles with disease, injury and disability and the bureaucratic processes that accompany these areas. But in 2012, after too many battles with post-traumatic stress, cancer and peritonitis, I realised that I needed to take more responsibility for promoting my own health and wellbeing in a holistic way, and not relying on others to fix my problems.

I also came to realise that I had become focused on my problems rather than contributing my energies to finding solutions. We will all do better to shed identities of being victims, of being broken, of having need to be fixed by someone

else. Then we can embrace the reality that we can get healthier by education in holistic health and get more involved in the wonderful quest of helping others get healthier at the same time.

There will continue to be those who whinge and gripe about the past but a new day has dawned. Continuing to drink the poison of resentment will only keep us in the darkness.

In the last ten years I have witnessed massive personal transformations when veterans decide to LET GO of their past traumas and resentments and choose to move forward into the light. Even better, if we do that Together - Hamutuk.

St Paul once said; "Only three things abide forever - faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love".

May we all be agents of love for our veterans and families in need.

# A Celebrated Australian Story



**Gary Stone was born and educated in Brisbane prior to entering the Royal Military College at Duntroon in 1970.**

He had a career as an Infantry Officer for 22 years commanding troops in 8/9 RAR, 6 RAR and 1 RAR in Malaysia 1974-75, the Fiji Coup in 1987 and Peacekeepers deployed to the Iran - Iraq war in 1989. He also served as an Intelligence officer; Exchange instructor at RMA Sandhurst 1978-80 and Land Operation Officer HQADF during the First Gulf War 1991.

He's a graduate of the Australian Command and Staff College 1983 and the Joint Services Staff College 1990.

Gary was ordained in the Catholic Church as a married Deacon in December 1994 for chaplaincy to the Army seeing operational service in Timor and Bougainville. He was asked to also take on Chaplaincy to the Australian Federal Police in the Asian Tsunami and numerous deployments to Timor and Solomons 2005-2012.

Both Gary and his son Michael featured in ABC Australian Story episodes in 2007 and 2009 for their

work in Timor and their particular role in saving the life of President Jose Ramos Horta.

In 2001, Gary founded 'Friends and Partners of East Timor' delivering over \$1.50million in aid over 18 years and facilitating health and education in remote rural areas of Timor. The RSL awarded him with their National Peace Prize to FPET in 2005.

Gary currently serves as chaplain for ex-service people and their families in South-East Queensland. He founded the Veterans Care Association in 2014 to facilitate the delivery of holistic health education which includes spiritually-based pastoral care to rehabilitate veterans and support their families.

In 2016, Michael Stone developed for the Veterans Care Association a Rehabilitative Programme called Timor Awakening for both Australian and Timorese veterans. It involves nine months of engagement and a two-week educational experience in Timor and the Gold Coast.

A total of 34 programmes each including 30 veterans and family members have now been delivered.

And we've just completed our first one in Perth, our 12th at the Gold Coast and have our 35th in Timor in October focused on SASR participants.

These are the first programmes of their kind in Australia to also embrace healing of moral injury as a component of the holistic healing and rehabilitation of Veterans.

In 2018, Care provider Bolton Clarke invited Gary to assist in the development of the Veterans Families Toolkit series of 'Hope Filled' videos that have now been shared internationally.

Gary and Michael and their team live out the words of Jesus in Luke 10: "Bringing good news to the afflicted, new sight to the blind and liberty to captives."

In the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list, Gary was awarded the Medal of The Order of Australia for his services to the veterans community.



*The Veterans' Care Association team of Deacon: Gary Stone, Michael Stone, Kirsten Wells and Dianne Rogers*

# A family's shared sense of service

By Mark Bowling / The Catholic Leader



Gary Stone and family.

**When Gary Stone stepped up to receive an Order of Australia Medal at Queensland's Government House for his charitable work supporting veterans and their families, he wanted his own family to be recognised, too.**

After going the extra mile with the army and police in numerous overseas conflicts through the Veterans Care Association for veterans and their families, Gary is sure it's largely due to his own family's shared sense of service.

He said the OAM belonged not to him alone but to his entire family. "My wife Lynne has been the bedrock of the family. She had to move home many times during my military career and accompanied me on numerous trips to East Timor doing humanitarian work. And for many years she was a volunteer aged-carer at Centrecare's Enoggera facility.

Michael served 20 years in the army before working full-time in the Veterans Care Association. Catherine relocated to Canberra to live and offer support when Gary was reassigned to chaplaincy work at Duntroon and Christy provided the HR support to establish Veterans Care's personnel systems for paid and volunteer staff.

Youngest son Paul was a long-term volunteer in Timor and was also deployed there in 2012 and was later the adjutant of the 9th Battalion Royal Queensland Regiment.

Like many other veterans Gary and Michael experienced post-traumatic stress as a result of their military service. This too impacted on the whole family when Gary was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 and



he almost died from undiagnosed peritonitis.

"While both boys were deployed in Timor, I lay dying in Greenslopes Hospital with excruciating pain that doctors could not fathom," he recalled. "I would not be alive today had Lynne and the girls not been at my bedside praying and pouring love into me when I had no energy left.

"Miraculously Lynne received a word of knowledge – 'peritonitis' – which she did not know the meaning of but which triggered a bowel specialist to be called who undertook emergency surgery to repair a ruptured bowel and extensive infection."

Gary later learned from his surgeon that his organs had already gone into arrest and he was within 10 minutes of dying. Only Lynne's action saved his life.

The Stone family received hundreds of messages of support on social

media from across Australia and Timor for the initiatives they have shown in seeing a problem needing a response and then finding a solution.

He insists they were simply following the example of Jesus who engaged the marginalised, wounded, ill and injured. "Jesus didn't seem focused on building a church but rather inspiring people to engage in mission to the marginalised.

"Of course we need a church community but it must exist primarily for the support of God's mission and not become a comfortable holy huddle. Mission is God's main game. If we are not constantly seeking out, caring for and supporting those in need, we are not responding to God's call.

"We all need a mission mindset. People won't care how much we know until they see how much we care."

*People won't care how much we know until they see how much we care*



*Everyman's reps supporting...*

# Talisman Sabre



## *Everyman's provides 'Welfare with Purpose' and this mantra has never changed.*

It was an extremely busy time for our Reps supporting our troops - from Sydney and Adelaide to Darwin and Brisbane to Shoalwater north of Rockhampton - during the largest military exercise for the ADF; Talisman Sabre.

We would have driven an estimated 10,000 plus km to provide support. Our Adelaide Reps supported the drive up and back while our Sydney Rep had his brew truck shipped up and then boarded a flight with the units to provide on-ground support.

Our Brisbane Reps played a vital role giving consistent support across Rockhampton and the Shoalwater area throughout the exercise.



Phil Marshall

*Our Sydney Rep had his brew truck shipped up and then boarded a flight with the units.*





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The amazing reality is that this has been happening through the generous hearts of people, concerned for our military personnel, concerned for their holistic well-being.

The founder Len Buck had a statement he used; Everyman's provides 'Welfare with Purpose' and this mantra has never changed throughout the years. Len was a man before his time.

The corporate world is understanding the reality and importance of people's welfare. And although our modern era is

waking up to this fact, Everyman's has always known it and stood firmly upon it.

It is no secret our volunteer population is in decline. The pace of modern life continues to accelerate, and the rising cost of living is compelling many individuals to reassess how they allocate their time and resources.

At Everyman's, we understand that times have changed. The pressures of contemporary life have not gone unnoticed, and, as a result, we find ourselves needing to adapt in order to remain effective and relevant within the context of current societal ideology and expectations.

Unfortunately, as is often the case, change inevitably comes with increased financial demands and that's something that remains one of the greatest challenges for a not-for-profit organisation like ours.

Throughout our 85 years, our great God has faithfully provided working through individuals and companies across this wonderful country. I am confident that His provision will continue as we move forward.

If you believe there may be an opportunity to open a door for me to share our story, please don't hesitate to reach out. I would be truly grateful, and I know our troops would be deeply thankful.

I hope you enjoy the photos of the recent exercise and look forward to hearing from you.

Phil 'Snowy' Marshall

Chief Commissioner & National Relations Manager  
Everymans Welfare Service  
[www.everymans.org.au](http://www.everymans.org.au)  
[philmarshall@everymans.org.au](mailto:philmarshall@everymans.org.au)

# Engraved clue from the Grave

Barry Wong Sue with the anonymous ring and his father Jack Wong Sue (inset). Photo / Andrew Ritchie.



For 80 years it lay anonymously among dusty World War II memorabilia belonging to celebrated Australian soldier Jack Wong Sue.

Now, an international search is under way to find the rightful home of the silver ring Sue gently slipped off the finger of a dead Allied serviceman in 1945.

Sue, who died in 2009, and his comrades from the Z Special Unit, a precursor to the SAS and Commando regiments, had stumbled upon the cannibalised corpse of the prisoner of war while on patrol in Borneo late in the conflict.

He pocketed the tarnished ring, bringing it home to Perth when Japan surrendered and he was discharged from service.

Sue's son Barry is determined to find the family of the ring's owner so he can return it to them. It would be a needle-in-a-haystack mission were it not for two clues - inscriptions on the band and a small piece of dog-eared cloth.

The words 'Iraq' and 'Egypt' are engraved on the ring, which Mr Sue believes could refer to theatres of war in which the soldier fought before being captured by the Japanese in South-East Asia. And the cloth, which the POW appears to have wrapped around the band to wedge it onto his emaciated finger, could hold DNA.

"This is something I feel I need to do," Mr Sue told the *West Australian Newspaper* reporter Ben Harvey. "It is something Dad would have wanted."

Jack Wong Sue was one of seven Australian special forces

soldiers who were secreted into Japanese-occupied Borneo by an American submarine in March 1945. Surrounded by enemy troops, the Z Special commandos teamed up with head-hunters to wreak havoc on the 3,000 Japanese who were retreating across the island.

Historians from the Australian War Memorial who examined the ring believe that if the engraving refers to countries the soldier served in then it is unlikely the owner was Australian. Tens of thousands of Diggers were dispatched to Egypt after 1939 but no Australian units fought in Iraq.

Initial research shows British tank and artillery regiments served in Iraq and Egypt and the Imperial War Museum in London is now set to comb its records. It will focus on those soldiers who were transferred to the Pacific theatre and subsequently taken prisoner.

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# The Politics of Police Diplomacy: The Australian Experience



**Serving both international good citizenship and the national interest, the Australian Federal Police has engaged internationally in various capacities over a sixty-year period in UN, multi-lateral and bi-lateral efforts aimed at peace and justice-based solutions.**

The Politics of Police Diplomacy: The Australian Experience reviews many of these efforts through a diplomatic lens and argues that, as an effective instrument of preventative and restorative diplomacy, the AFP has earned a place as a legitimate participant in foreign policy considerations, and that these efforts serve as an example of how international policing can be done and why it merits its own diplomatic track.

This book offers a comprehensive overview of the various types of international engagement involving the Australian Federal Police and the operational theatres where they have been deployed over a 60-year period since Cyprus in 1964.

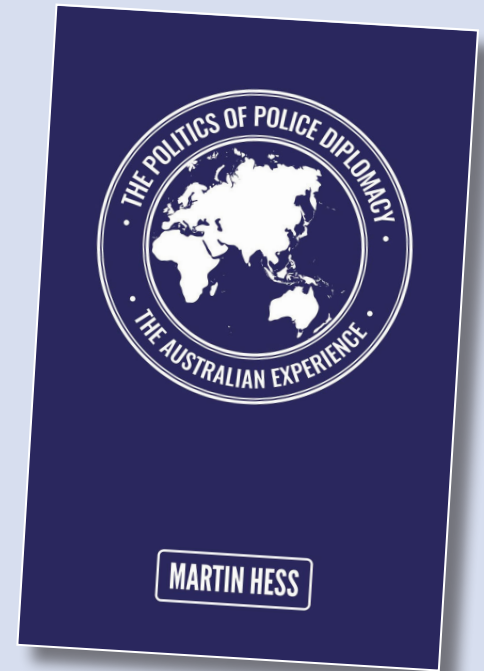
Notable examples include the 2002 Bali bombings, the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over

Ukraine in July 2014, and Australia's police peacekeeping and capacity-development roles in Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and the South West Pacific.

AFP operations and missions require high levels of international co-operation and depend heavily on extensive on-the-ground diplomacy. This book provides a thorough examination of these contributions, highlighting a form of Australian international engagement that has received significantly less attention than it warrants.

If, as some suggest, we are in the foothills of another major conflict, it is worth remembering that one of the objectives of the United Nations remains to 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war', by promoting peace operations.

If peace is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, then international policing plays a vital role in the pursuit of the international justice-based outcomes which underpin peace. Serving both international good



**Publisher: Australian Scholarly Publishing**

citizenship and the national interest, the Australian Federal Police has engaged internationally in various capacities aimed at peace and justice-based solutions.

This is our AFP story and we should be as proud of our AFP efforts as agencies like the ADF are of theirs.

*AFP members outside the ruins of the Sari Club in Bali*



# AFP operations...depend heavily on extensive on-the-ground diplomacy”



## About the Author

Dr Martin Hess has a long career in the Australian Federal Police working in various operational capacities, including police intelligence, investigations, surveillance, close personal protection and general community policing, in Australia, and in extensive international engagements.

He deployed to Cyprus with UNFICYP in 1996, to East Timor in 1999 with UNAMET and to Afghanistan in 2010-11 with AFP Operation Illuminate. He has also undertaken duties with the AFP Ministerial area and with the Policy and Governance area in relation to Australia's Non-Permanent Seat on the United Nations Security Council 2013-2014 and was a member of the AFP International Deployment Group from 2007 until 2017.

The Politics of Police Diplomacy: The Australian Experience was launched at the Australian War Memorial and Director Matt Anderson PSM noted it was an historic event as the first book launch in the new AWM bookshop set beside the stunning new entrance to the War Memorial.

He also emphasised the substantial input the book provides to our understanding of peacekeeping, and the key role of police in these missions. “I would encourage you to all to grab a copy of this important contribution to our understanding of what Members of the ‘thin blue line’ have done, and continue to do, to shape the world in which we live – and certainly the neighbourhood in which we seek to thrive cooperatively.”



Dr Martin Hess (left) with ANU Professor Bill Maley

# #CheckYourMates

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[nt.gov.au/operation-thrive](http://nt.gov.au/operation-thrive)

# UNTAG

*Honouring Peacekeepers at  
the Australian War Memorial*

# Remembered

By Mark Horner



Members of APPVA UNTAG at the Peacekeeper Monument.

**Each year on May 29, the world pauses to honour the courage, sacrifice, and service of United Nations peacekeepers.**

This year, the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was commemorated in solemn style at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra, with a poignant Last Post Ceremony that paid special tribute to the Australian veterans of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) deployed to Namibia in 1989.

Among those in attendance were proud members of the 17 Construction Squadron, a unit instrumental in Namibia's historic transition to independence after 23 years of conflict under South African rule.

These veterans, many of whom were deployed during Namibia's first democratic elections in November 1989, helped pave the way for peace after decades of war.

The day began with a morning service organised by the United Nations and Overseas Policing Association of Australia (UNOPAA)

with our CEO Rod Henderson acting as Master of Ceremonies.

Special recognition was given by Mr Antonio Gelonesi, Honorary Consul General of Namibia, who laid a wreath in tribute to the 19 UNTAG personnel who lost their lives during the mission.

## Then and Now

Following the morning service, veterans gathered for a networking lunch at Poppy's Café which is located within the AWM precinct. Conversations flowed freely as past and present service members reflected on the challenges faced in the field, and the bonds that endure long after deployments end.

One of the highlights of the day was a behind-the-scenes tour of the AWM's Mitchell storage facility, where we explored an extensive collection of vehicles and artifacts from past missions.

Of particular significance was the original Land Rover used by our 17 Construction Squadron (Workshops) during the Namibia deployment – soon to be part of the revamped Peacekeeping display which is set to open with the Memorial's redevelopment in 2026.

The contrast between the lightly equipped 1989 Land Rover and the heavily armoured vehicles



Members of the APPVA UNTAG at the AWM Annex.

used in more recent conflicts like Afghanistan was striking. “We went into the field with no kevlar, no mine protection and limited communications,” one veteran remarked. “But the mission was clear: secure peace, clear the mines, and support the birth of a nation.”

Indeed, Australian and New Zealand personnel played critical roles in clearing unexploded ordnance, lifting minefields, constructing infrastructure, and providing security to election officials and UN staff.

In total, 604 ANZAC peacekeepers served across two rotations in Namibia – laying down the

foundation of stability for what would become a proud African democracy.

### **Last Post: A Moment of Reflection**

At 4:30pm, the day’s commemorations reached their emotional peak as the Last Post Ceremony commenced at the Memorial’s forecourt. As the haunting bugle call echoed across the grounds, members of the UNTAG stood quietly, acknowledged by name in the service’s official broadcast.

Mr Antonio Gelonesi and AWM Director Matt Anderson PSM laid

wreaths on behalf of the Namibian Government and the 17 Construction Squadron Association, symbolising the enduring gratitude and friendship between Namibia and Australia.

As the sun dipped low over Canberra, it was clear this was more than just a ceremony – it was a living testament to service, resilience, and the profound impact of peacekeeping. For the veterans of UNTAG, May 29 was a chance to remember their contribution to history, reconnect with their comrades, and ensure that the lessons of Namibia live on.



*Last Post ceremony.*

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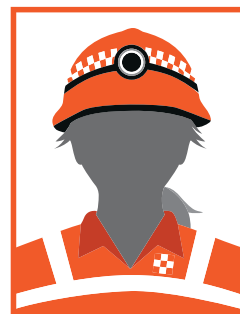


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# First Nations donned khaki

**The Canberra dawn service last year saw Prime Minister Anthony Albanese call for more recognition of First Nations soldiers.**

"It must be acknowledged that we have not always honoured those who have fought in our name as well as we should," he said. "Likewise, we must acknowledge the truth that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who donned the khaki fought harder for Australia than Australia was sometimes willing to fight for them."

It is documented that at least 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people served in the First World

War, and thousands more in World War II. They fought for their country despite laws that prevented their enlistment, discrimination, social exclusion and violence.

Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers even had to deny their Indigeneity in order to enlist.

Although fighting side-by-side with other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers weren't considered citizens at the time. Many found military service to be their first experience of equality.

Indigenous women also played a big role in the second world

war, filling a variety of roles in the auxiliary forces.

While the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers is an important part of truth-telling, many continue to call for the Frontier Wars to be recognised on Anzac Day.

The Frontier Wars refer to the conflict between the British settler colony and First Nations people. Research shows the Frontier Wars led to at least 10,000 Indigenous people being killed in 416 massacres between 1780 and 1930.

*Pte George Leonard, left, and Pte Harold West of the 2/1st Battalion*



# BLAMEY

## *The story of Australia's greatest general*

**From Gallipoli to Kokoda and beyond – this is the story of our greatest general and the power, politics and tragedy of command.**

General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-Chief of Australian Military Forces during World War II, was our highest-ranking soldier, and arguably our most controversial.

Blamey has been the subject of three biographies, two by John Hetherington. The first was published in 1954 and the second was released in 1973. The third by David Horner was released in 1998. He has been the subject of numerous books and magazine articles and is also the subject of two sculptures. The first by Daphne Mayo was commissioned by the Australian War Memorial in 1948 and the second, by Ray Ewers, was completed in 1960.

Blamey was an abrasive and shrewd commander, who could act both decisively and brutally, creating

enemies within and outside the military. That reputation, encouraged in the years after the war by his rivals, has followed him ever since and, unlike many other military heroes, his contributions to Australia's defence have been downplayed.

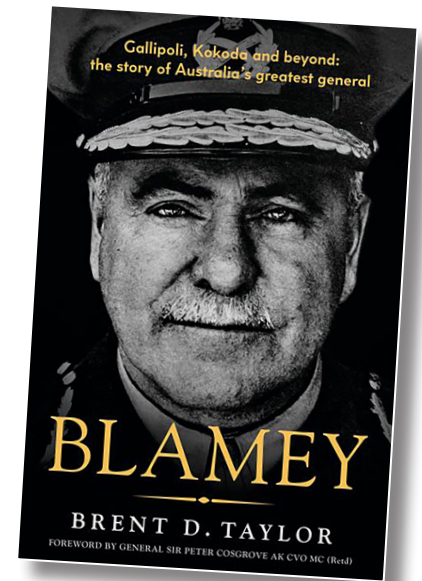
In this re-evaluation of our most senior military commander, Brent Taylor dispassionately applied modern business benchmarks to calculate Blamey's success as a leader: How many battles won? How many lives saved? In Taylor's estimation, more than 30,000 Diggers.

Without glossing over Blamey's prickly character or the controversial incidents he was involved in, Taylor questions whether Blamey – schooled in battle under John Monash – was the right man to deal with the towering political and military leaders of the day, including a domineering General Douglas MacArthur, and lead

Published: July 2025  
ABC Books: 400pp  
By Brent D Taylor



BOOK REVIEW



Australian troops to success while also keeping them safe.

In challenging the popular view of Blamey as a testy, aloof man out of touch with, and disloyal to his troops, Taylor declares him a hero who always stood up to foreign command to get the best outcomes for the Diggers and his country.

*General Douglas MacArthur and General Thomas Blamey in New Guinea 1942 / Photo: Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.*



# WW Bloody Timor

*It's O'Hanlon's honesty that makes the book feel real and grounded.*



BOOK REVIEW

Published: April 2022  
Big Sky Publishing: 380pp  
By Peter O'Hanlon

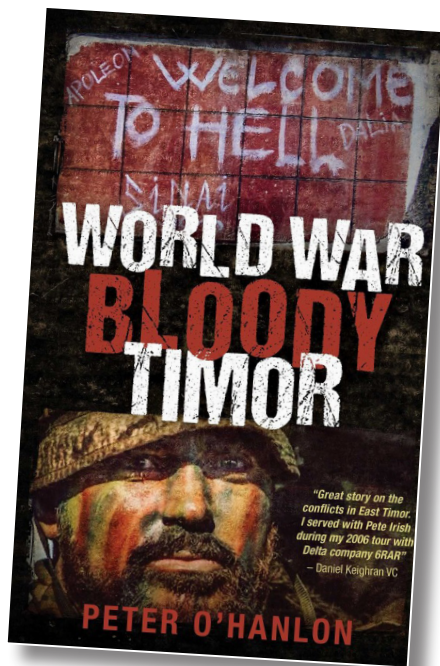
**World War Bloody Timor by Peter O'Hanlon is a powerful read that blends the challenges of family life with the reality of military service, all set during Australia's military involvement in East Timor.**

It's a well-structured story that shines a light on a chapter of our military history that often doesn't get the attention it deserves. O'Hanlon's writing is vivid and really draws you into the tough terrain and political chaos of Timor before it became Timor-Leste.

O'Hanlon shares the human experience of being a soldier on peacekeeping campaigns in a way that's honest, sometimes funny and often deeply relatable.

His first-hand account of the INTERFET operation, especially through his role as the section gunner in the 2nd Battalion during those early days at the port, is detailed and gripping. You get a clear sense of what it was like on the ground in September 1999, not as a general but as a soldier.

He tells it like it is: the living conditions, the relationships between soldiers in his section, and the mix of military and humanitarian work they were involved in. It's a valuable perspective and adds depth to our understanding of the mission and the people who carried it out.



O'Hanlon is upfront about the challenges of soldiering on peacekeeping operations, but he also finds moments of humanity and even humour in the chaos. It's this honesty that makes the book feel real and grounded.

If you're into military history, or just stories about people facing tough situations with resilience, *World War Bloody Timor* is worth your time. O'Hanlon doesn't write to impress, he writes to tell it how it was. And in doing so, he offers something raw, personal, and thought-provoking.

The title feels fitting: it's not just about the soldiering that occurs overseas but also the battles going on inside.



Peter O'Hanlon is known to everyone in the military, from the lowest digger to the highest officer, as 'Irish'. "You won't see me, or the service men and women like me, featured in the latest blockbuster, but our service lives include drama, laughs and accounts of deep turmoil that are worth telling," he says. "I was a member of the Australian Army for 11 years and during my deployment as part of the INTERFET force, serviced three very impacting tours of East Timor.

What was it like, as a 19 year old to land at the Dilli Airport in Australia's largest deployment since Vietnam? What are the little-known battles and obstacles that cause unseen scars through a deployment? What are the impacts on re-integrating into the civilian community?

This is my story, an ordinary soldier; the juicy yarns, the laughs, the battles, the devastating lows, the soaring highs, the blood, sweat and tears we give in service every day. It will make you laugh and may make you cry. It's the cold hard truth about the impact of a different type of war fought by many who deployed to Timor



# Jackals hijack Jim Molan Cup

**Teammates at the Brisbane Veterans Rugby League Football Club always make it their mission to look out for each other on and off the field.**

According to team coach Hammer, helping fellow players to stay on top of their game both physically and mentally is part of their unique and lifelong connection through ADF service. "The Brisbane Jackals is all about the wellbeing of its footy recruits, family members and supporters," he explained.

"We are mates on and off the field. It is really rewarding to be part of a team where you have each other's backs."

The Jackals have certainly taken it to their opposition this season, finishing third out of 22 teams

in the recent Vegas 9s Rugby League Festival.

They also took out the inaugural Jim Molan Cup defeating the Bellingen Valley - Dorrigo Rugby League Football Club. The charity match was played in honour of fallen comrade Sgt Matthew Locke who was fatally wounded by the Taliban in 2007.

Hammer is a former captain of the Army's Thunder football team and he's driven by a continued passion for the game and his desire to help his fellow veterans. "I was a physical training instructor with the Army and over the years I have helped NRL teams and players to up their fitness military style," he said.

"I had the background to help and I have found it personally very

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rewarding. I made lifelong friends in the Army and you can't get that kind of camaraderie anywhere else. It's the same feeling with the Brisbane Jackals, it boosts your morale."

Hammer says the team of 'banged up veterans' are always on the lookout for new recruits. If you would like to get in touch with the team; email [bvrlfc@gmail.com](mailto:bvrlfc@gmail.com)

# Vickery helps hidden Victims



**Helping his fellow veterans to recover from trauma has been a lifelong mission for Vietnam Veteran Brian Vickery whose continued service over the years has truly made a difference.**

Whether you are at the beginning of your mental health recovery journey or feeling well enough to help others, Brian is a great example of the rewards that community service can bring.

For the past three decades, Brian has stayed on active duty as a strong advocate for his fellow veterans living with PTSD. The retired Army Lieutenant Colonel was recently awarded life membership of the RSL

for his dedication and commitment to the Kingscliff sub-branch.

After his 22-year military career ended, Brian helped set up the NSW branch of the 9th Battalion RAR Association to support members of his former regiment.

“After the Welcome Home Parade in 1987, we could see that there were veterans who weren’t as well as we were,” Brian recalled. “The Association was a way for people who hadn’t seen each other in years to reconnect and to help them lose some of the bitterness they felt.

“We had lost almost a whole generation of Australians who

*“Almost a whole generation... weren’t settled when they came back from Vietnam.”*

weren’t settled when they came back from Vietnam.”

As Association President, Brian encouraged veterans to be proud of their service and to attend Anzac Day events. “It was connection and communication for them, they were having conversations about shared experiences.”

Now in his late 70s, Brian still continues to reach out to veterans to chat about their lives and help them to recover from trauma. “I call them the hidden victims of war. I’ve met people over the years who are now very good friends. I’ve tried to make a difference to their lives.”

## Instant kinship at Families Program

Being in a room with the partners and spouses of veterans was a turning point for ADF widow Annette who now feels back in control of her life.

She says she felt an instant kinship with her fellow participants which continued throughout the 8-week Open Arms Building Strong Partnerships Families Program. “Even though I didn’t have my husband, it was like being around family. We had all been through the same things and had all experienced the same issues as a result of service.

“The program takes you back to the basics and makes you realise that only you can make positive changes in your life when it comes

to relationships with your family and friends, or, in a work situation.

“I feel that I have got my confidence back and am now able to stand up for myself more, in a polite way.”

She recommends to anyone thinking of joining the program to go in with an open mind. You have to realise that you are part of the problem and when you start opening up, you feel so much better.”

The Building Strong Partnerships Families Program is open to partners of veterans.

To express your interest in the program; **Call (03) 6221 6777**

**Email:**  
openarms.tasmania@dva.gov.au



*“When you start opening up, you feel so much better.”*



## APPVA – JOIN NOW

Experience a new generation of veteran organisation that you can comfortably trust as your source of truth and will represent you and all veterans, veteran family members and the wider veteran support network such as the medical community.

We respect the contributions made by participants in modern operations and demonstrate this by appointing young veterans to representational positions.

By uniting like-minded individuals and organisations, including all those who support our community we are transforming the veteran and veteran family landscape for the greater good.

Our promise is to provide an unwavering commitment to all veterans and their families because no veteran or veteran family should ever feel isolated or under represented.

**Register here to join Now**

<https://peacekeepers.helloclub.com/register>

# Australian Peacekeeper MAGAZINE

**Our Summer Magazine will be  
published on December 8**

**Deadline for contributors  
and advertising by November 11**



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## 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.**



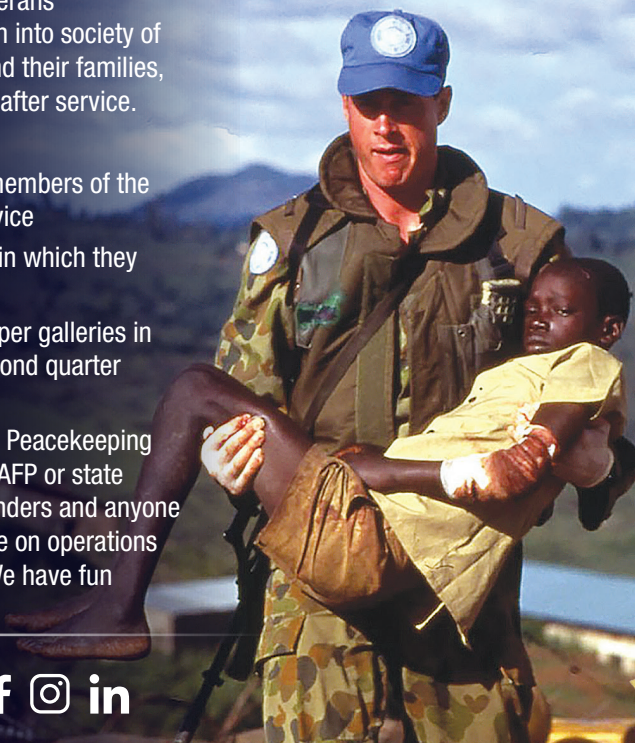
The Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association's purpose is to support the integration into society of all participants in past and present operations, and their families, so that they are valued and can attain happiness after service.

Our strategic focus is to:

- To establish a monument dedicated to those members of the ADF killed while in training for operational service
- To return our members to the operation areas in which they served for commemoration and healing
- To celebrate the opening of the new Peacekeeper galleries in the Australian War Memorial with a dinner, second quarter next year.

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.

[rod.henderson@peacekeepers.asn.au](mailto:rod.henderson@peacekeepers.asn.au)  
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“ Our purpose...

FrontLine exists as a profit for purpose social enterprise, providing post-service training and employment opportunities to our Defence Force & Emergency Service Veterans.

We deliver domestic services supporting our injured and ill Veterans in their homes, right through to commercial services to the broader Defence Industry.

We support organisations such as the Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Association (APPVA) who are passionate about supporting our service personnel during and especially after their service to our country.

”



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