

Veterans Support Centre



4th Edition Nov 2021

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (NSW)
Hastings Manning Macleay Branch Inc.

All Gave Some
Some Gave All.

Though We May
Not Know Them All
We Owe Them All.

Cover picture submitted by Belle Hackney

*They shall grow not old,
as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
We will remember them.*



Image by Tracey

**There are NO COSTS to access the services such as Pensions, Welfare and advice provided by
Veterans Support Centre, Port Macquarie**

*"The Commonwealth has not participated in the research, production or exercised editorial control over the Activity or its contents.
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Mental health - Who do I contact if I, or someone I know, needs help now?



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	000
Port Macquarie Base Hospital.....	5524 2000
Wauchope District Hospital.....	6580 8000
Kempsey District Hospital.....	6561 2600
VVCS (Veteran's 24/7 crisis line).....	1800 011 046
Lifeline.....	13 11 14

Every veteran, ex-Service person who deploys or not, or is injured, deserves a lifestyle and better treatment than is currently available.

Every veteran should be able to successfully attain their rights to pensions with a simple expedient system through DVA. Yet we still have veterans unaware of their rights and entitlements about what they may be entitled to and where and how to apply or file a claim.

Through your will, you have the power to make a difference. Any gift you bequest to our Sub-Branch, HMMVPPAA, no matter how small, can and will assist a fellow veteran by assisting us to continue our services.

DVA Media Releases and Ministerial Speeches

A large number of DVA Media Releases and other publications are available for your information.

A copy of the full text and other less topical releases may be obtained by visiting

<http://minister.dva.gov.au/media.releases.htm>

You can also subscribe to receive all releases to your computer

or Email a request to us at hmmvppaa@bigpond.com

or Phone us on 6581 5230

or visit our office at **Veterans Support Centre** if you require assistance

From the Editor's Desk

President :

Bill Wagner

Vice President :

Bill Starrenburg

Treasurer :

Peter Dorman

Editor :

Jill Opie

Office Manager :

Lyn Hancock

Members Officer :

Trevor Morrow

Compensation Advocate :

Mike Opie

Wellbeing Support

Officer : Peter Millen

Reception :

Volunteers

Q Store :

Committee members

Association Address :

(NO MAIL)

Hastings Manning Macleay
VPPAA Inc.

Unit 30, 35 Merrigal Road,
Port Macquarie 2444

Postal Address:

Hastings Manning Macleay
VPPAA Inc.

PO Box 5330

Port Macquarie 2444

Telephone:

02 6581 5230

Phone/Fax:

02 6581 5509

Email:

hmmvppaa@bigpond.com

Website:

www.veteranssupport.
org.au

Hello,

Your President wanted to remind every veteran of their entitlements under the DVA card system, you will find details of the Gold, White and Orange cards in this issue, current at the time of printing. PLEASE remember to check anything you are not sure about and get up to date information from DVA direct on their website or the Veteran Support Centre Compensation Advocate (Mike) or Wellbeing Support Officer (Peter) on Tuesdays each week, call 6581 5230.



Jill Opie, Editor

After the disgraceful treatment and dishonour heaped on our SAS soldiers, it is just as disgraceful that they are now secretly told that there is insufficient evidence to prosecute them. What about front page news and TV segments telling everyone just that, what about apologies to each and every one of those damaged soldiers - including all who have since resigned, what about our "innocent until proven guilty" laws? Our ADF members deserve better, past and present have shown that they will lay down their lives in service of this country, they should be honoured not dragged through the mud in this way.

One vital role that ADF members are filling presently is each task as requested by the government to assist in covid management and I have included some of those roles in this Newsletter. I have also printed an article about the ADF withdrawal from Afghanistan in August and the vital role they carried out alongside US forces especially at the final withdrawal stage. These articles cover several pages which allows me to give you more detail, I hope you approve.

There are also shorter articles about Vietnam Veterans Day local and archived, the Boxer update, ExTeak Action, RAAF's new Chinook, mindDog to help PTSD sufferers and lots more. I always appreciate your thoughts and ideas, please send them in to the email address on the left side of this page.

Stay well and positive in this strange world we have at the moment and take care of each other,

Have a very Merry Christmas and may we all have a far easier 2022 than this and last year,
Jill Opie

As always - The opinions in this Editorial opening are my personal opinions and may not align with those of others, including Vietnam Veterans, VPPAA, ADF, our supporters and followers.



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GOLD CARD

The Gold Card - 'DVA Health Card – All Conditions within Australia' and 'DVA Health Card – Totally & Permanently Incapacitated' gives you access to a wide range of public and private health care services, for the treatment, at the department's expense, of all your health care conditions whether war or service related or not.

Aged 70 + ?

You are entitled to a Gold Card even if you have never made a claim for your war or service related health condition if you have qualifying service.

Apply to DVA or talk to Compensation Advocate Mike or Welfare Officer Peter

Ring for an appointment - 6581 5230



The DVA website has Fact Sheets about a huge range of benefits that may be available to you or your partner.

One recent fact sheet is **IS45 - Partner Service Pension** and tells of when a partner may be eligible for a pension income based on your qualifying service. It is income and asset tested for those on low income.

If you need help accessing DVA's website, call the VSC for help



The **VPPAA** is dedicated to the welfare of all Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, ex-service and serving personnel and their families. If you, or someone you know, is ill and you suspect the illness may be a result of military service, please do not hesitate to consult one of our trained volunteers.

We are here to help you and there is no cost associated with our services.



Serving and Supporting the Veteran Community on the Manning North Coast NSW

Shop 5, 1613 Ocean Drive. Lake Cathie.

(02) 6585 5737

Store 119 Horton St Port Macquarie Super Store Phone:

(02) 6583 2134

Shop 8, 100 Ocean Drive, Lighthouse Plaza Port Macquarie

(02) 6582 0914

Shop 3-5, 88 Bold St Haven Plaza Corner of Bold St & Tunis St, Laurieton

(02) 6559 9700

Shop 1, Lakewood Shopping Centre Corner of Ocean Dr & Sirius Drive Lakewood.

(02) 6559 9104



Supporting The Veteran Community in Port Macquarie

Leicht's Tyre and Auto
97 Hastings River Drive
Port Macquarie NSW 2444
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F: 02 6583 4555

E: admin@leichtstyres.com
www.leichtstyres.com

"We don't take your safety lightly"

Serving and Supporting the Veteran Community in Port Macquarie

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"We don't take your safety lightly"

General Business– Your Office

Our office is open weekdays - phone or call in 10am - 2pm

Committee Meetings:

President and Committee may determine a date and time as suits the covid rules at the time.

Annual General Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements are available at the office.

Thank you:

To all donors, supporters and advertisers: Your continued support helps us to keep our doors open for veterans, serving and ex-serving personnel who need our help. Members are encouraged to support businesses whose advertisements appear in this newsletter.

Contributions Welcome:

Please send any letters, stories, questions, comments, poems, jokes, photos etc to The Editor, Contact Front, PO Box 5330, Port Macquarie NSW 2444. All such submissions are subject to copyright laws, may be edited and remain the property of VPPAA Sub-Branch unless otherwise agreed. All submissions received will be considered for publication, but will not necessarily be accepted. No correspondence regarding acceptance or otherwise will be entered into.

PLEASE if you go into hospital, ring us or have someone ring us and let us know.

Even though we do a ring around at least 3 times a year, we have members go into hospital and we don't know. Even if it is an out of town hospitalisation like Sydney we can organise a visit.

THURSDAYS - subject to covid restrictions

Join us on Thursday mornings from about 10am for an informal get -together. Find out what's happening with veteran's issues, catch up with old and new friends or just have a chat over a cup of coffee or tea.

These informal mornings are followed by **OUR FAMOUS \$5 LUNCH**



**Take a
break**

Below is an extract of a longer article about Shayne and his service dog Bella taken from the **Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter - Aug 2021** and I hope it helps if you are considering the benefits of a service dog for yourself.

If you have tried and been unable to obtain the help and comfort of a support dog through other channels, this article below may be of use to you - [mindDog](#)

Gayl O'Grady of mindDog writes -

It is an Australian wide organisation with hundreds of trainers and assessors to support the clients.

To apply for a concession it is \$250 (homeless are free), which includes vests, ID and book, and several visits from your assessor. If you hire a trainer you will need to pay for them separately but at the moment the Minister for Mental Health in NSW is partnered with mindDog to run a program for two years. The government will subsidise 10 sessions with one of our trainers.

After the 12 month training period, you do a Public Access Test (PAT). The cost of this is \$200 for concession and \$0 for homeless. You will be required to do a retest each year for \$150. You get a new ID each year and a new vest. We make sure our dogs are up to the best behaviour standard throughout their working lives. You are also required to get your Vet to fill out a Health Screen when you get the dog's vaccination each year, to ensure the dog is well enough to work for another year. Our priority is for our team and the dogs and to ensure they are living the best lives possible.

Look mindDog up on their website [**www.mindDog.org.au**](http://www.mindDog.org.au) They would love to have a chat and see if mindDog is the best fit for you.



Image - cutedogs.com

Australians in Afghanistan plucked from suburbs in daring mission to reach Kabul airport - August 2021

Dozens of Australian nationals and visa holders stranded in Afghanistan were plucked from the suburbs of Kabul this week as part of a tense multinational extraction effort to get foreigners into the airport and on board evacuation flights, the ABC can reveal.

At least three buses went to various muster points around Kabul to pick up foreign nationals, including Australians, before making their way to the airport.

Similar missions to extract Australians and visa holders also operated in the following days, the ABC understands, BEFORE Australia's evacuation mission came to an end on Thursday. The ABC has been in touch with two Australian families who took the long and tense bus journey with dozens of others. They witnessed desperate Afghans plead for help from the side of the road, while Taliban fighters beat back other hopeful evacuees.

Like so many, those families were in deep despair after making several attempts to reach the airport for evacuation flights, only to be repeatedly repulsed by massive crowds and violent Taliban guards.

Since the Taliban swept into the Afghan capital, countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France and Germany have all conducted operations outside Kabul airport to retrieve stranded nationals. But Australians, until this week, had to make their own way into the terminal.

The 12-hour bus ride to get to Kabul airport

After making several appeals for help to Australian authorities, the families were told to wait at a designated pick-up point for a bus, which the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said would be "facilitated by local authorities". The trip was slow and laborious. One Australian citizen, Mustafa, who only wanted his first name published due to security concerns, said he and his wife, mother and sister were on the bus for 12 hours as it slowly made its way through thick traffic jams and Taliban checkpoints. At one point, Taliban fighters boarded the bus and removed a man who was dressed as an airport worker, he said.



Left -Since the Taliban took the Afghan capital, several countries have conducted operations outside Kabul airport to retrieve stranded nationals.(both Department of Defence)

Right -Coaches were used to get people to Kabul's airport amid the chaos.(Reuters via Reuters TV)

"Taliban entered our bus and straight away asked the guy, who said he was an airport worker, for documents," Mustafa told the ABC through a series of text messages. "[They] took him and started beating him. The [airport worker] apparently, according to Taliban, was fake, and wanted to get in like thousands who are outside the gate."

Mustafa said an Australian man who the "fake" airport worker sat next to was also taken off the bus and interrogated, but later let back on. Mustafa, who is Hazara, a group historically persecuted by the Taliban, feared for his life. "I was quite worried and thought that there may not be another day," he said. "But I was more thinking of my family at that time."

Mustafa said his bus was one of three and all passengers, about 50 or 60 in total, were taken to a part of Kabul international airport being run by Australian officials. "I could not find out who the person in charge was even though I asked the bus collector many times," he said.

Another source told the ABC his bus eventually joined a convoy of more than a dozen other vehicles although it's not clear if they were all holding foreign nationals or others due to board flights out of the country. The source told the ABC armed Taliban guards were "everywhere" at the entrance to the airport.

Their presence seemed to indicate the operation had at least tacit support from the insurgent group now running the country.

The government has never publicly confirmed it ran Australians to the airport on buses, although Prime Minister Scott Morrison did hint the government was working with other governments with a presence in Kabul to get more people to safety.

Uncertainty over who can access buses

The bus trip might have been long and tense, but it spared those on board from once again running the chaotic gauntlet outside Kabul's international airport.

It wasn't just the crowds and the violent guards. For days, the Federal Government had been warning that terrorists may target those gathering outside the terminal to get on flights.

Early on Thursday, it dramatically escalated those warnings, urging Australians not to go near the airport's crowded entrance due to the "very high" risk of a terrorist attack.

Less than 24 hours later, at least 60 people, including US troops and local Afghans, were killed after a twin suicide bombing at the gates of the airport. Before yesterday, the scramble to get inside the airport was perilous, as local airport security and Taliban fighters used violence, tear gas, and bullets to control and repel the crowds. It has resulted in serious injuries and multiple reported deaths.

Now, there are concerns many Australians and Afghan visa-holders will be left behind as the US prepares to exit the country in just a few days.

Australian forces have already left Kabul airport, having evacuated 4,100 people in the nine days between when the Taliban first entered Kabul and the terror attack.



**Left - Australian Army soldiers escort Afghan evacuees onto the flight line of Hamid Karzai International Airport
Right - There are concerns many Australians and Afghan visa-holders will be left behind in Kabul.
(both Department of Defence)**

Mustafa told the ABC his sister, mother and wife, who are not Australian citizens, were all registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but only he and his wife were initially granted approval to board the bus.

This did not become a problem, Mustafa said, because the driver did not have a list of approved passengers, and let everyone board who had an email showing their registration.

At the airport, Mustafa said Australian officials only had his name as a passenger, but the whole family was allowed to board the evacuation flight after showing registration documents.

Continued next page

Australians in Afghanistan plucked from suburbs in daring mission to reach Kabul airport - August 2021 CONTINUED



Our 'fixer' can't reach the rescue planes

An Afghan journalist who has been crucial to ABC Investigations stories on alleged war crimes has an Australian visa, but can't get into the airport at Kabul.

"

Others have not been so lucky.

One interpreter, who is in Australia as a permanent resident and did not want his name published due to security concerns, said about 10 Afghan families with visas he was in contact with had not been given the opportunity to board a bus.

"A lot of interpreters are calling me saying, 'what's happening, there are busses that are taking other country people but not us,'" he said.

"They see them. They have spoken to the bus driver. [The bus driver] says, 'we can't take you inside.'"

Mustafa is now in the United Arab Emirates awaiting a flight to Australia.

"I am happy for my family that are out of Afghanistan, but I can't express how sad I am for the people of Afghanistan," he said.

"The chaotic scenes of the airport, the faces of people outside on the streets, the fear women have when outside and many more. This will stay with people forever."

Time is running out

A sense of dread has set in for many left behind facing the reality of missing the evacuation flights, while others are desperately clinging onto hope.

The not-for-profit Forsaken Fighters, which helps interpreters and other staff who served with Australian forces, said it had been helping about 200 Afghans.

The organisation's founder, Jason Scanes, who served in Afghanistan in 2013, estimates less than a dozen of his contacts and their families had been granted a visa in the past week but were still unable to get out.

Mr Scanes, who previously worked for a Labor senator, blamed a lack of coordination and communication from the government.

"We could have got a lot more out," he said. "We've literally abandoned hundreds of them overseas. They won't forget this."



Left - Defence assists the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with locating Afghan Australian visa holders attempting to enter Kabul airport Right - Some families have made several attempts to reach Kabul's airport for evacuation flights.(both Department of Defence)

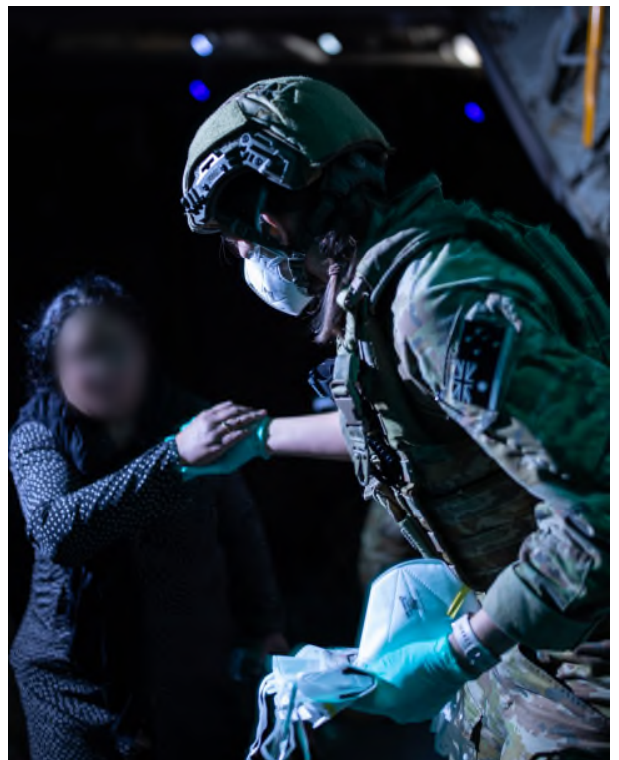
Former army captain Sulwyn Leech, who spent six months in Uruzgan province in 2010, had been trying to get two interpreters secure visas for family members, but had struggled to get any meaningful response from Home Affairs.

"We're going to have a small generation of Afghan kids in Australia – potentially – whose grandparents, aunties and uncles have been butchered overseas," he said.

"At least within their families, it would be good for their parents to be able to tell those children the Australian government did all it could to help."

The interpreter the ABC spoke with said some Afghans had incorrectly filled out their visa application, due to the last minute panic, and stated the number of dependents rather than listing names. As a consequence, he said, some partners and children had not been granted visas and subsequently barred from entering the airport. "They've been told they can only include people on the list," he said. "They've been going, 'oh my god, we can't leave our children.'"

A spokesperson for Home Affairs said it could not detail how many visas had been approved or how many had been received due to the ongoing security concerns.



And so it ends like this for America and its patient allies: in terrorism, sorrow and regret.

After 20 years, the mission in Afghanistan is over, finished in a bloodied disastrous mess that threatens to spawn a nastier strain of global jihadism.

The bravery of the last few soldiers who plucked the desperate from a rancid sewer at Kabul airport was the final act of honour in a tale of strategic incompetence and moral blunder.

The new landlords of Afghanistan are the old ones. Worse, the Taliban are now in contest with a new adversary, a locally-brewed affiliate of ISIS.

Report by foreign affairs reporter Stephen Dziedzic and South Asia correspondent James Oaten for ABC
Images previous pages from Department of Defence
Images this page from Joint Operations Command

VETERANS

Wellness Programs

Entitled Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients may be referred for clinically necessary Exercise Physiology treatment by their General Practitioner on a valid D904 referral form.

GOLD CARD HOLDERS are entitled to clinically necessary treatment covered by DVA's health care arrangements for all health conditions.

WHITE CARD HOLDERS are entitled to clinically necessary treatment for an accepted disability ie: an injury or disease accepted by DVA as service related.

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Vietnam Veterans' Day 18 August

On 18 August, we commemorate Vietnam Veterans' Day on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan in 1966. We remember the sacrifices of those who died and say thank you to almost 60,000 Australians who served during the 10 years of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

Australians and the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was Australia's longest military engagement of the 20th Century.

The arrival of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in South Vietnam during July and August 1962 marked the start of Australia's involvement in the war.

By the time the war had come to an end, almost 60,000 Australians served during a decade of conflict between 1962 and 1972. Tragically, 521 of them died and 3000 were wounded.

Battle of Long Tan

The Battle of Long Tan was a significant moment in Australia's war in Vietnam.

On 18 August 1966, in a rubber plantation near the village of Long Tan, Australian soldiers fought one of their fiercest battles of the war.

The men of Delta Company, 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, faced a force of some 2000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. The battle was fought in wet and muddy conditions during a heavy tropical downpour.

By the end of the day, 17 Australians had been killed in action and 25 were wounded, one of whom died a few days later. This was the largest number of casualties in a single operation since the Australian Task Force had established its base at nearby Nui Dat the previous April.

On this day, we commemorate all the battles fought by Australians in Vietnam, from large-scale operations to platoon and section-level encounters. We remember the sailors of the Royal Australian Navy who supported land operations, and members of the Royal Australian Air Force who served in combat and transport roles.

A day to say 'thank you'

On Vietnam Veterans' Day, we pause and reflect on the bravery, teamwork and endurance that Australians displayed throughout the war.

It's a day when we recognise all who served in Vietnam. We honour those veterans who:

- lost their lives during battle
- returned home wounded, ill or injured
- lost their lives in the years since they returned
- still carry the physical and emotional scars of their service

We also pause to reflect on the impact of service on our veterans' families.



Above Left - Royal
Australian Navy

Above Right - Army

Below - Royal Australian
Air Force

Vietnam Veterans' Day 18 August

Commemoration of our Vietnam veterans

Some veterans didn't feel properly honoured for having served their country in Vietnam. In 1987, veterans received the welcome home parade that some felt had been denied them when they returned from war. Around 22,000 Vietnam veterans marched through Sydney, in front of a crowd of some 100,000 Australians. The book 'Homecomings' by Bob Greene recounts those experiences.

The Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra was officially dedicated on 3 October 1992. It commemorates all the Australian Army, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force and associated personnel who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Legacy of Australia's veterans

Vietnam veterans have helped to establish support systems for those in the ex-service community.

Open Arms - Veterans & Families Counselling

Originally known as Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service, Open Arms has been operating for more than 35 years. It's a life-saving service that provides those in the ex-service community with free and confidential counselling, group treatment programs, suicide-prevention training, a community and peer network to support mental health and wellbeing.

Source - ANZAC Portal DVA

Honouring those who served in the Vietnam War

Every year on 18 August is Vietnam Veterans Day, a day to commemorate those who fought in the Vietnam War.

In the midst of the critical health issues we are facing, Kempsey Shire Mayor, Liz Campbell, took a moment on Wednesday to honour and remember all the men and women who served in the Vietnam War, laying a wreath at the Kempsey-Macleay RSL Sub-Branch memorial in Kempsey.

"In gratitude from the Kempsey Shire Community." Lest We Forget.



Source - Kempsey council news



Archive photo of Peter Millen, Welfare Support Officer, Veterans Support Centre in 2017 on Vietnam Vets Day - NEWS DSPY 1



The Veteran Gold Card can be issued to:

Australian veterans who meet one of the following criteria

You are a veteran who:

- is aged 70 years or over and has qualifying service
- is an ex-prisoner of war
- served in Japan between 16 August 1945 and 30 January 1946
- served as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force between 31 January 1946 and 28 April 1952; or
- participated in the British Nuclear Test program in Australia

You receive a Disability Pension:

- at 100% of the general rate or higher
- that includes an additional amount for specific disabilities
- that was granted for pulmonary tuberculosis before 2 November 1978; or
- at 50% of the general rate or higher and you also receive a Service Pension

You receive a Service Pension and:

- you are permanently blind in both eyes
- you have a permanent impairment under MRCA of at least 30 points from your service-related injuries or conditions; or

- your income and assets are below certain limits. These rates are current between 1 July and 1 January, 2021:

- If you are single, the income limit is \$440.40 per fortnight and the asset limit is \$311,750 for home owners, or \$526,250 for non-home owners.
- If you are partnered, the combined income limit is \$767.60 per fortnight and the asset limit is \$477,000 for home owners, or \$691,500 for non-home owners.
- If we work out your pension using old rules from before 20 September 2009, these amounts will be different.

You are a veteran, including reservists and cadets, and you:

- have a permanent impairment under MRCA of at least 60 points from your service-related injuries or conditions; or
- are eligible for the Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP)

Commonwealth and Allied veterans who meet one of the following criteria

You lived in Australia immediately before your enlistment, you have qualifying service, and you are:

- a veteran who served with a Commonwealth or Allied force during the Second World War
- a veteran who served in certain operational areas, during specified periods, after the Second World War, for example Korea, Malaysia or Vietnam; or
- a mariner who served on a Commonwealth or Allied ship during the Second World War

Australian civilians who meet one of the following criteria

You are an Australian Mariner who served in Australia's Merchant Navy between 3 September 1939 and 29 October 1945, and you are:

- aged 70 years or over and have qualifying service ; or
- an ex-prisoner of war
- You were an Australian civilian British Nuclear Test participant who was:
- directly involved in the nuclear tests; or
- not directly involved in the nuclear tests but entered a nuclear test area at a relevant time

You were a member of the surgical and medical teams employed in Vietnam by the Department of External Affairs between October 1964 and December 1972 as part of a SEATO aid program to South Vietnam.

Dependents of veterans who meet one of the following criteria

You are:

- receiving the War Widow/er's Pension
- a wholly dependent partner, eligible young person or other dependent who is eligible for compensation for the veteran's death under MRCA
- eligible for the Orphan's Pension
- a dependent child of a deceased veteran whose death is not accepted as war-caused, if the veteran had operational service and you are not being cared for by your remaining parent

Contd next page

**NOTE - THIS INFO IS ONLY FOR GUIDANCE, PLEASE CHECK WITH DVA OR COMPENSATION
ADVOCATE FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON CLAIMS AND ENTITLEMENTS**

What you can receive

The Veteran Gold Card covers you for clinically required medical treatment in Australia for all medical conditions.

Treatment may include:

- treatment at a hospital or day procedure facility
- treatment provided by an allied health professional
- treatment provided by a general practitioner (GP) or specialist
- treatment provided by a dental or optical professional
- medications at the cheaper concession rate
- community nursing; and
- pathology and medical imaging

Medical treatment is usually free if you see a provider who accepts your Veteran Gold Card. There may be some out of pocket expenses for high cost dental items.

When buying prescription items, you will need to pay \$6.60 for each item until you reach your Safety Net Threshold for the calendar year.

You may also be able to receive some services and support, including:

- counselling
- home help
- medical aids, equipment and modifications
- travel to and from medical appointments; and
- care services

Services and support are free or low cost. Some co-payments apply if you receive help at home through our Veterans' Home Care program.

An Energy Supplement is automatically payable if you do not already receive it because of another card or qualifying payment.

Your Veteran Gold Card may also entitle you to receive concessions or discounts, and a Lapel Pin.

What is the Orange Card

The Orange Card gives you access to prescription medicines, wound care items and nutritional supplements at a concession rate. Your card cannot be used for medical or other healthcare treatment.

The Orange Card is being redesigned and will be known as the Veteran Orange Card.

Who can receive it

You may be eligible if you are a Commonwealth or Allied veteran or mariner and you:

- have qualifying service from the Second World War; and have been a resident of Australia for 10 years or more

What you can receive

The card entitles you to a concession rate on prescription items, including medicines, wound care and nutritional supplements, at pharmacies in Australia.

When buying prescription items, you will need to pay \$6.60 for each item until you reach your Safety Net Threshold for the calendar year.

If you choose a non-generic brand, you may need to pay an additional amount. Talk to your pharmacist to find out more about the costs associated with medicines.

If you have an Orange Card, you may receive the Veterans Supplement. You do not need to apply.

How to get your Orange Card

If you qualify for the Orange Card and you receive a payment from us, we will automatically send you an Orange Card.

If you are not receiving a payment, complete the claim form and send it to us.

How you use it

If you visit your doctor for a prescription, show them your Orange Card so they can prescribe your items through the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS).

You also need to show your Orange Card to pharmacy staff when you take your prescription to the counter.

If you do not show your card, you may be charged more, and the purchase may not count towards your Safety Net Threshold under RPBS.

CONTD NEXT PAGE

White Card details on next page

**NOTE - THIS INFO IS ONLY FOR GUIDANCE, PLEASE CHECK WITH DVA OR COMPENSATION
ADVOCATE FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON CLAIMS AND ENTITLEMENTS**

What is the Veteran White Card

The White Card is a treatment card that can provide you with medical treatment for:

- accepted service-related injuries or conditions
- all mental health conditions (for veterans with continuous full-time service or certain reserve service)

If you are eligible the White Card can also provide you with medical treatment for:

- cancer (malignant neoplasm) covered under non-liability health care
- pulmonary tuberculosis covered under non-liability health care

You can also access a range of services and support.

The White Card is being redesigned and will be known as the Veteran White Card.

Who can receive it

You may be eligible for a White Card for your service-related injuries or conditions if you are:

- a current or former Australian Defence Force (ADF) member, including reservists and cadets, with a service-related injury or condition accepted by us; or
- a Commonwealth or Allied veteran with a service-related injury or condition accepted by your country of service

You may be eligible for a White Card to cover treatment for any mental health condition if you:

- have at least one day of continuous full-time service (CFTS) with the ADF; or
- are a reservist and have completed disaster relief service, border protection service, or were involved in a serious service-related training accident

You may be eligible for a White Card to cover treatment for cancer (malignant neoplasm) or pulmonary tuberculosis if you have:

- a diagnosis of cancer (malignant neoplasm) or pulmonary tuberculosis; and
- certain types of service with the ADF

The eligibility criteria for free treatment for cancer and pulmonary are not the same as for mental health coverage. Not everyone who can get the White Card for mental health conditions is eligible for free treatment for cancer or pulmonary tuberculosis. For more information you can check our cancer (malignant neoplasm) or pulmonary tuberculosis page or contact us. .

What you can receive

The White Card covers you for clinically required medical treatment in Australia for your accepted service-related injuries or conditions. It may also cover treatment for mental health conditions, cancer (malignant neoplasm) and pulmonary tuberculosis, if you meet the eligibility criteria for treatment for these conditions.

The medical treatment may include:

- treatment at a hospital or day procedure facility
- treatment provided by an allied health professional
- treatment provided by a general practitioner (GP) or specialist
- treatment provided by a dental or optical professional
- medicines at the cheaper concession rate
- community nursing; and
- pathology and medical imaging

Medical treatment is usually free if you see a provider who accepts your White Card. There may be some out of pocket expenses for high cost dental items.

When buying prescription items for the conditions covered by your White Card, you will need to pay \$6.60 for each item until you reach your Safety Net Threshold for the calendar year.

You may also be able to receive some services and support for your conditions on your White Card. Services and support can include:

- counselling
- home help
- aids, appliances and modifications
- travel to and from medical appointments
- care services

Services and support are free or low cost. Co-payments will apply if you access help at home through our Veterans' Home Care program.

If you are an Australian veteran, the home help and care services provided through Veterans' Home Care are not limited to the conditions on your White Card.

If you are a Commonwealth or Allied veteran, what you receive may be different to what Australian veterans receive.

Your White Card may also entitle you to receive concessions, and a Lapel Pin.

NOTE - THIS INFO IS ONLY FOR GUIDANCE, PLEASE CHECK WITH DVA OR COMPENSATION ADVOCATE FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON CLAIMS AND ENTITLEMENTS



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PARTNERS OF VETERANS ASSOCIATION Port Macquarie HASTINGS GROUP

The Partners of Veterans PMQ Hastings Group meet for Lunch at 12.30pm onwards on the Third Wednesday of each month

Partners of Veterans from all conflicts are always welcome.

For any further information contact
Tineke Dalton on 6586 3461

SAS gets 'command and control' overhaul following Afghanistan war crime allegations

Australia's most elite military unit is being overhauled, with a more senior officer to soon command the Perth-based SAS to prepare for a "challenging decade" ahead. Nine months after the release of the damning Afghanistan war crimes inquiry, leadership of the regiment is being elevated to a Colonel (Marine) to ensure "sufficient capacity and appropriate oversight" for future complex missions.

In November, the Brereton report recommended 19 special forces soldiers be investigated by police for the "murder" of 39 Afghan prisoners and civilians. At present, the Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) which sits inside the Australian Army's Special Operations Command, is led by a Lieutenant Colonel (SASR).

Defence Minister Peter Dutton says "historic" changes to the 57-year-old regiment will improve its accountability as Australia braces for more complex "grey zone" warfare missions. "This is a critical reform to prepare the SASR for future conflict, getting them back to basics and focused on the challenges ahead," he said. "We have seen the skill and acts of bravery of the SAS in just the last week from the work that they have done in Afghanistan. Those men and women who serve in the SAS are an incredible asset to our country."

On Tuesday, Assistant Defence Minister and former SAS captain Andrew Hastie visited the regiment's Campbell Barracks headquarters to discuss the changes to serving members. "These are important and historic changes that will ensure the regiment's leadership is mature, experienced and better qualified to command sensitive strategic missions," Mr Hastie said. "This is a new era for the SASR, making it stronger and ready for the challenges ahead. SASR command reform will modernise the regiment for the demanding strategic challenges of the coming decade," the Afghanistan war veteran added.

Appearing via a video link, the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Rick Burr, also addressed the elite unit about the historic changes, praising its dangerous work in Afghanistan during the war and this month's evacuation. "As our operations in Afghanistan conclude and the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks approaches, let me begin by specifically acknowledging the SAS's contribution to the defence of Australia over the past two decades," Lieutenant General Burr said. "I know too well that this has been a difficult time for many people. I acknowledge the toll on individuals and families, and thank you all for your support to each other."

Without mentioning last year's Brereton report, the Army Chief said the overhaul would "ensure that the SAS operating model is assured and future-proofed. These arrangements recognise the organisation's span of responsibility and the sensitive nature of its capabilities," he said. "This does not mean the SAS regiment will be more independent or self-contained – quite the opposite. With more expected of it, these enhancements recognise its geographic location and ensure that the SAS is more connected, more enabled and more accountable as part of the Special Operations Command's suite of capabilities."



Left - Mr Hastie served in Afghanistan in 2013. (Supplied: Andrew Hastie)



Above Left - SAS leadership is being elevated to a colonel to ensure "sufficient capacity and appropriate oversight" for future complex missions. (Dept of Defence)

Left - The United States says its war in Afghanistan is over, after the last plane carrying US troops left Kabul airport this morning.

Source - Article by Defence correspondent Andrew Greene, images by Defence where shown

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Meeting Law of supply and demand on operation (2020)

Captain Jess Law is keeping ADF personnel in the Middle East well supplied on Operation Accordion as the operations officer for Force Support Element – Rotation 13.

This is the first operational deployment for the former student of **Mackillop Senior College at Port Macquarie** who commissioned into the Australian Army in 2016.

She said she was motivated to maintain uninterrupted support for the ADF's operations across the region, including operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"My job plays a really important part in ensuring the comfort and safety of troops across the Middle East who are supporting Australia's national interests," Captain Law said.

"We provide logistical support to our troops, so by managing that capability, I am playing my part in keeping our troops appropriately kitted.

"This includes their weapon systems, ammunition and ration packs – everything they need to complete their mission."

The Australian Army Catering Corps officer said the management and leadership skills she gained through her ADF training and experience meant she could adapt according to the situation.

That adaptability has come into play as the joint operational environment of Operation Accordion, which includes Navy, Army and Air Force, is a new experience.

"My role means that I work closely with the logistics cell at headquarters Joint Task Force 633, which encompasses people from Joint Logistics Command, Joint Operations Command, and logistics elements from RAAF and Navy," Captain Law said.

"When I joined the ADF I wanted to belong to an organisation where I could experience a range of jobs and advance as far as I wanted to, while contributing to our national interests.

"My deployment to the Middle East has allowed me to manage a wide range of capabilities, including the warehouse, postal services, armoury and maintenance workshops.

"It means I get to work with a whole range of people I wouldn't normally get to work with.

"It is increasing my understanding of the ADF's supply chain all over the world and fulfilling my greatest desire to serve my nation with pride."-----



Source - Army News

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Operation COVID-19 Assist 2020/2021

The support the ADF is providing on Operation COVID-19 Assist will now never be forgotten thanks to The Australian War Memorial (AWM).

AWM commissioned photographer and former Army photographer, Gary Ramage, has spent seven days taking photos and videos of ADF personnel on operation in NSW.

“Recording what’s happening is vital to understanding the important role the ADF plays in society,” Mr Ramage said. “As time passes, we will start to forget much of what happened during Operation COVID-19 Assist and the support that Defence provided to governments across the country. My job is to ensure that doesn’t happen and that we will remember.”

The photographer started his military assignment at the biggest checkpoint on the NSW/Victoria border, Albury, before heading to the remote checkpoints in the Snowy Mountains.

“I was impressed by the range of experience on the checkpoints – from personnel yet to complete initial military training to Navy officers with 20 and 30 years’ experience,” he said.

The AWM photographer was provided access to the ADF’s support of NSW Police quarantine activities at Sydney Airport and hotels where personnel were assisting with the reception and repatriation of civilian travellers from overseas and Victoria.

He also captured imagery from Pier One Hotel where the ADF is providing security for personnel returning from overseas deployments.

The NSW Commander of Operation COVID-19 Assist, Brigadier Mick Garraway, said it was important to highlight the good work Defence was doing in the community.

“This is a unique operation involving all services as well as permanent and reservist personnel,” Brigadier Garraway said. “The value we place on the few images taken during the 1919 Spanish Flu pandemic highlights the importance of the war memorial’s work in documenting the events of today.”

The video and stills captured by Mr Ramage are expected to form part of future AWM national collection.

DoD Defence News For the Operation COVID-19 Assist record



For DoD Defence News article by Lieutenant Commander John Thompson, photograph (left) by Army photographer Gary Ramage



NSW Police and ADF members load care packages into a vehicle ready to be delivered to homes in the Fairfield Community. (Above) Photo credit: Corporal Dustin Anderson



LEFT - Seaman Nicholas Hopkins talks with members of the NSW Police and NSW Rural Fire Service at the Prariewood Community Centre Vaccination Hub in Fairfield, Sydney. Photo: Corporal Dustin Anderson

ADF soldiers will be deployed to help police with compliance checks in Sydney

Hundreds of soldiers will arrive in Sydney today to help police crack down on residents flouting stay-at-home restrictions amid rising case numbers. Three hundred military personnel will undergo training over the weekend before hitting the streets with police on Monday to help ensure residents are complying with the health orders.

NSW Police Minister David Elliott said the deployment was necessary because a small minority of people thought "the rules didn't apply to them". He told Channel Nine that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) officers would be paired with members of NSW Police. "It will be imminent to see the 300 soldiers on the street," he said. "It's no different to what we saw in Melbourne last year where the police worked hand in glove with the military to ensure they could have that intelligence-based compliance checks done quickly and swiftly." Mr Elliott said the federal government first offered military help on July 7 but up until now the government hadn't thought it necessary.

But yesterday, as case numbers rose dramatically, the NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller formally requested help from the ADF in enforcing Sydney's lockdown. Commissioner Fuller said the ADF assistance would allow police to double the number of house calls they can make in the eight local government areas (LGAs) of concern. "There's 2,000 doors we have to knock so to bring Defence in made logistical sense," he said. "We can double the amount of checks we do in a day by doing a police officer with a member of the ADF. They don't come with powers and they won't be carrying firearms but they come with an enormous amount of training, very disciplined, they understand the task." Commissioner Fuller said police had been stretched across a number of COVID-19 operations and this was an opportunity to bring in more resources to help maintain public safety in NSW.

Defence Minister Peter Dutton said the ADF officers would act as a "force multiplier" to increase police presence around affected areas.

More than 200 military personnel are already deployed in NSW, working in hotel quarantine and at Sydney Airport.



ADF soldiers will be deployed to help police with compliance checks in Sydney

Article - part of longer article by Alison Xiao, Photographs from NSW Police and Dept of Defence

The last thing Army reservist and civilian prison officer Private William Reid expected to witness while deployed on Operation COVID-19 Assist was the birth of a child. But that's exactly what happened to the infantry soldier while he was on an operational placement with Ambulance Victoria as part of his 60-day training to qualify for a Certificate II in Medical Services First Responders.

"It definitely took a few seconds to process everything that was going on," he said following the experience.

Also while on the operational placement, he drove the ambulance, set up monitors, prepared equipment, provided emergency patient transport and was involved in the aged-care response to COVID-19. "It has been an eye-opening experience seeing the challenges local emergency services go through every day," he said.

Private Reid was stationed at vehicle checkpoints in Melbourne when he volunteered to take up the opportunity to train with Ambulance Victoria as part of his deployment. He completed two weeks of online training before the operational placement. "A usual shift consists of two paramedics and one ADF member as a contingency," he said. "After seeing me [an ADF member], patients are different – those who might usually be disgruntled or aggressive are more calm around us."

Private Reid said the experience with Ambulance Victoria had given life to the potential for a new civilian career. He is considering studying para-medicine next year. "This experience has had a massive influence on me, and it's something I won't be taking for granted," Private Reid said. "Ambulance Victoria staff do an incredible job helping others, and I'm so thankful I could do my part." He said he appreciated the opportunities the ADF provided. "It's fantastic that the ADF has a focus on personal and professional growth," he said. Private Reid, of the 8/7 Battalion, Royal Victoria Regiment, has been deployed on Operation COVID-19 Assist since July as part of Task Unit One in Joint Task Group 629.2. He grew up in Invermay in Tasmania, but now lives in Geelong. He enlisted in the Army Reserve five years ago. He was one of 20 people who were presented with their Certificate II in Medical Services First Responders on October 5.

The Certificate II in Medical Services First Responders is equivalent to civilian qualifications such as the Certificate II Advanced First Aid.



Article by Flight Lieutenant Clarice Hurren, photograph by Dept of Defence

ADF supports Victoria

Victoria's COVID-19 Household Engagement Program has continued its vital work over the past month, assisted by personnel from the ADF. Personnel are supporting authorised officers from the Department of Health to visit close contacts and returned interstate travellers to ensure they are aware of their status.

About 40 teams are providing information to people who are in isolation or quarantine, and providing community members with access to vital services and resources during their time in isolation.

Commander of the Joint Task Group 629.2 of Operation COVID-19 Assist Brigadier Matt Burr reiterated how important the Victorian Government's Program was in order to keep Victorians safe. "It's vital this work continues, as we have Victorians returning from interstate along with a significant number of people who have attended locations that have subsequently been deemed COVID exposure sites," Brigadier Burr said. "There are currently thousands of people in isolation at their homes. We're able to support the state agencies to double their personnel on the ground, to ensure the community is both aware of their status as a close contact or returning resident."



As of August 15, the Household Engagement Program had carried out more than 21,000 visits to close contacts in Victoria. "We're able to assist members of the community by providing mental health and wellbeing resources, as well as linking them up with any help they may need throughout their time in isolation," Brigadier Burr said.

The ADF is also supporting the state government's quarantine program, with 11 hotels across the state hosting returning travellers.

By Captain Kirsten Cleland, August 2021

Private Amanda Jones and Victorian Department of Health Authorised Officer Peter Jarvis are part of the COVID-19 Household Engagement Program in support of the Victorian State Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo: Private Michael Currie

ADF helps with Food Distribution

As a part of Operation COVID-19 Assist, ADF personnel are supporting non-government organisations in Sydney to prepare and distribute food care packages to those in need.

A number of ADF Joint Task Group 629.1 members helped OzHarvest staff and volunteers pack food hampers in their warehouse in Alexandria.

OzHarvest Hamper Program Manager Shannon Richardson said that the ADF, NSW Police and emergency services were helping OzHarvest to scale up the volume of their hamper deliveries as demand grows. "Before COVID we were delivering around 2000 parcels each week. This has now doubled and continues to grow," Ms Richardson said. "The hampers are part of the government-funded food program and are sent to charities and vulnerable people across greater Sydney, though most of these will go to communities in Western Sydney who are experiencing difficulty in lockdown." Ms Richardson said because of COVID-19 restrictions the number of volunteers available had diminished. "Because of the huge scale up in the operation we have asked the ADF to help prepare the hampers, with the goal of packing as many as we possibly can," Ms Richardson said.

Seaman Michael Gleeson said he was happy to be helping. "I think it is great that the ADF can come down to help with packaging up both dry and fresh food into these hampers," Seaman Gleeson said. "We are working closely with volunteers and staff from OzHarvest and getting through a high volume of hampers, which will go out to a lot of people who really need it."

The NSW Government has requested an extra 300 ADF personnel on top of the 250 who are currently assisting with airport and hotel quarantine programs. They are performing support tasks to assist NSW Health and the NSW Police, from supporting their COVID-19 welfare and compliance monitoring to assisting with contact tracing and vaccinations at vaccination centres.



Army personnel and OzHarvest volunteers prepare dry and fresh food hampers in the OzHarvest warehouse at Alexandria, Sydney, a part of Operation COVID-19 Assist. Photo: Corporal Dustin Anderson

By Captain Martin Hadley

RAAF Supporting the Covid-19 battle in Fiji

An Air Force C-130J Hercules aircraft delivered 10,000 doses of the Australian-made AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to Fiji on May 7 in a bid to stem the spread of the virus in the region.

The airlift from RAAF Base Amberley was conducted with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Health.

The Hercules also delivered medical supplies and personal protective equipment for Fijian health service workers fighting the COVID-19 outbreak.

Commander Air Mobility Group Air Commodore Carl Newman said the mission to Fiji had followed similar support to Papua New Guinea. "Assisting our neighbours in this way is a small but impactful contribution we can make to help protect their citizens and control the spread of COVID-19," Air Commodore Newman said. "For the crews conducting these mission, it's incredibly rewarding work, and one of the reasons that they joined Defence. They're making a difference in helping not only citizens in Australia, but in the broader region."

The mission to Fiji demonstrates Australia's commitment to helping regional neighbours manage the spread of COVID-19.



"The Australian Defence Force has been actively involved in assisting governments in their management of COVID-19, both domestically and regionally," Air Commodore Newman said. "Where we can control the regional spread, it only assists us in reducing the COVID-19 threat at our own borders. We've got a strong history of providing support within our region, whether it's a response to a pandemic or another humanitarian crisis."

By Eamon Hamilton, May 2021 Image generic

Defence support welcomed in the community

ADF personnel have had a warm welcome from members of the public as they support the NSW Government's efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. The State Government requested the support of an extra 300 personnel on top of the 250 who are assisting at the airport and on hotel quarantine programs.

Private Jordan Sayers, who is about to join the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, was one of the first to join the effort. He said it was great to be able to help the community during Operation COVID-19 Assist. "Everyone has been very friendly. We've had a few people come up and thank us for being here," Private Sayers said.

Leading Seaman Sam Baker who is also deployed said one of the reasons he joined the ADF was to assist with humanitarian work. "I live in one of the eight local government areas of concern. I am so happy that we are able to do something to help the community during this challenging time," Leading Seaman Baker said.

The additional soldiers, sailors, and aviators on Operation COVID-19 Assist in NSW are carrying out a range of tasks, including delivering food parcels, assisting police with welfare and compliance checks, helping set up vaccination stations and providing contact tracing support.

Commander of the operation, Colonel Warwick Young, said members appreciated the welcome shown by the community. "This is a critical time in the fight against the coronavirus and we are pleased that we can play a role in helping stop the spread and getting our community back on its feet," Colonel Young said. "We have no enforcement powers, but we will be here to support police and other state authorities do their jobs for as long as they need us, like we have done during the bushfires, the floods and through the pandemic."

Local Police Multicultural Officer in Campbelltown Taane Tu said he was grateful for the help from Defence and Police.

"We rely on volunteers to prepare our care packages, but many have not yet been vaccinated, so I asked if the ADF and NSW Police could help," Taane Tu said. "They arrived all energised and smashed through the job in just over an hour."



By Lieutenant Commander John Thompson, Aug 2021

Source - all articles from Defence sites and with permission, images as listed

NSW Police and Private Jordan Sayers work together to patrol the Bankstown sports centre in support of the NSW Operation Covid-19 Assist.

Photo: Corporal Dustin Anderson

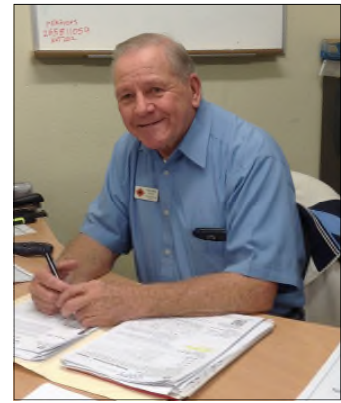


Welfare Officer's Report

I am here to help with any welfare issues you may have, information and guidance as well as transport and care matters. Please call the office for an appointment or call on Tuesdays 100 to 1400 to talk directly to me.
Take care, **Peter**

Compensation Advocate
Mike Opie

Welfare Officer
Peter Millen



Compensation Advocate's Report

See pages 34 - 36 for the details of the Veteran Gold Card, Veteran White Card and Veteran Orange Card and what they entitle you to, there have been some recent changes. You can talk to DVA about these cards and your rights and entitlements, you can also talk to me, Mike, Compensation Advocate at the Veteran Support Centre about any issues or questions regarding these and about your claims, call to make an appointment or ring to talk to directly on Tuesdays from 1000 - 1400. **Mike**

Membership Officer's Report

This is just a short report to bring you up to date regarding membership matters, so far for 2021.

As at 6 October 2021 we have 90 financial members. Membership numbers are down by approximately 15, compared to this time last year.

NOTE that for every membership payment of \$30.00 made here at your local sub-branch, **\$12.50 is retained by your sub-branch for local use.**
To those who have renewed their membership for this year, thank you!

Please stay covid safe and well.

Trevor Morrow, Membership Officer



Membership Officer
Trevor Morrow

Report

To all past and present members, committee members and office bearers I want to say a huge Thank You and that your work has been so appreciated as we have supported veterans from all conflicts with comradery, company, a safe outlet for anyone that needs one, a social gathering at regular intervals as well as specialised social events and, most importantly, the company of others who understand.

The numbers able to physically attend are growing smaller and our Centre is getting less used than ever. It operates a great lunch gathering on Thursdays and welcome help and advice with claims and entitlements information for the ongoing battles with DVA.

Our way forward is getting more difficult than cutting through the jungle was. Our income is limited, our rent is high, our running costs are barely covered and, despite all of the thoughts and ideas that we have come up with, nothing concrete has been put forward.

I am determined that, if at all possible, the Compensation Advocate will be able to continue helping and advising us all with our rights and entitlements.

I am also sure that we can keep a form of social gathering going.

I am sad to say that the end of the Veterans Support Centre is getting closer.

This report is to let you know that things are about to change. I will write to everyone again before the end of this year with the details of what is on offer and how you can access it all.

President's Report

The year is almost over. What a year it has been with the uncertainty of covid lockdowns and members not being able to catchup with family and friends and travel. One long year so far.

Our office has been set up with covid QR entry and other requirements to keep up with Government guidelines.

The office has been able to stay open and working due to the generosity of members with their financial assistance. This has allowed us to continue with our Thursday lunches and the friendship that it brings. Many thanks to all for your assistance and best wishes over the past year.



President - Bill Wagner

During the past year there have been a number of younger veterans wanting to make contact with the Pensions and Welfare Team to assist with their claims and general welfare information. Some of these veterans have no idea what pharmaceutical benefits can be obtained with the different health cards. This has caused some veterans quite a lot of financial difficulty. **If you have any doubts please do not hesitate to contact the office.**

As I say this is where our office is beneficial to all. You can understand we are still a driving force in the veteran community which shows the need for offices like ours to continue to operate.

An application has been made to the Mayor's office and other offices to try to obtain smaller premises with a much cheaper rent to enable us to continue operating. **If anyone hears of a suitable premises please advise us asap so we can make enquiries.** As most of you know the grants we get from DVA do not pay for rent or electricity, they are only for internal costs. Our last grant that we applied for and successfully obtained a small amount of funding, has enabled us to purchase much needed office equipment and a defibrillator which we considered is a necessary item.

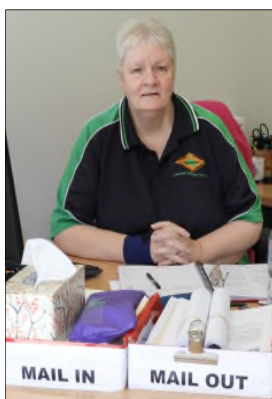
Many thanks to Jodie for inviting the office to assist with Soldier On and the First Responders known as Fortem. We assist with pension and welfare work for Soldier On as well as using our barbeque trailer for their outdoor activities and our office space for their meetings. This enables the younger and older veterans to join together and communicate. Thanks also to Amber Lynch representing Open Arms for her assistance and information she has supplied from DVA.

This is our last newsletter before the festive season. I would like to thank all of the office staff, pension and welfare officers, for their assistance during the year making us viable to stay open to continue our work for the veteran community.

I would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas and a better New Year. Enjoy the company of your family and friends and please—keep safe.

Mr William Wagner
President

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Sarah Marron B. Nutr & Dietetics, APD

- 3 years clinical experience
- Special Interest in:
 - Eating Disorders
 - Cardiovascular Health and Diabetes Management
 - Mental Health
 - Psychology of eating



Emma Schwartzkoff B.App.Sc.(Ex&SpSc), B.Sc.(Nutr) (Hons 1), APD

- 6 years clinical experience
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Americans return for Exercise Teak Action

The return of Exercise Teak Action has strengthened ties between Air Force's No. 37 Squadron and its United States Air Force (USAF) counterparts. Held from RAAF Base Richmond over June 24 to July 2, the bilateral exercise focused on airborne operations training to airfields across regional New South Wales.

The USAF's 353rd Special Operations Group (SOG) brought three MC-130J Commando II aircraft and approximately 100 personnel from Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa. Together with No. 37 Squadron C-130J Hercules crews, they flew complex training scenarios to deliver people and cargo under challenging circumstances, and bring them home safely.

Both units have conducted annual training and other engagement activities together since 2016, although CoVID-19 led the exercise to be cancelled in 2020.

Wing Commander Anthony Kay, Commanding Officer No.37 Squadron, said his unit appreciated the 353rd SOG making the trip to Australia for Exercise Teak Action. "Their willingness to complete the quarantine as a condition of entry highlights the value they place on training with us, and in particular the importance of the relationship between Australian and US Forces," Wing Commander Kay said. "Both parties learned an immense amount and achieved a lot in a surprisingly short time, ultimately planning and integrating together as smoothly as two Australian units normally would. Despite the challenges that CoVID provided, I'm confident both teams are looking forward to the next iteration, and we're really grateful for the time they took to come and work with us."

Exercise Teak Action included scenarios with No. 3 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and No. 1 Security Forces Squadron. For No. 37 Squadron, the exercise allowed its newly-established Combat System Operator (CSO) workforce to be mentored by experienced CSOs with the 353d SOG.

A subset of the Air Mobility Officer role, the CSO is responsible for operation various communication systems, sensors, and other specialist equipment on the C-130J.

"The 353rd SOG regularly employ capabilities that we have started to develop," Wing Commander Kay said. "It has been great for our team to see how our American partners conduct some of these missions, and rewarding for our personnel to see how far and how fast we have progressed."

Following Exercise Teak Action, No. 37 Squadron will continue working closely with the 353rd SOG in the Northern Territory during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2021.

Major Walter Mitchell, 353rd Special Operations Group Mission Commander said the commitment shown by personnel at Exercise Teak Action had been strengthened. "The operations were some of the most valuable training repetitions that both the 353 SOG and our Australians counterparts have been able to accomplish since the onset of CoVID-19," Major Mitchell said. "All parties involved were able to effectively integrate and execute while still mitigating the CoVID risk. This training has allowed for the highest quality of interoperability to continue in the future."

The MC-130J flown by the 353rd SOG appears similar to the RAAF's Hercules, but is equipped with specialist systems for its primary role of supporting special operations forces.

Squadron Leader Nicholas Bourke, a C-130J pilot at No. 37 Squadron, said Exercise Teak Action allowed the RAAF to develop its capabilities. "The 353rd SOG is an active and experienced unit in our region," Squadron Leader Bourke said. "As we share C-130J capability across the Indo-Pacific, we need to maintain high levels of interoperability to respond effectively and collectively to security challenges. The opportunity to enhance interoperability and overcome the challenges of working together at the tactical level is really important."

Exercise Teak Action allows No. 37 Squadron and the 353rd SOG to cooperate on joint operations, from providing humanitarian assistance to working in more complex scenarios.

"Activities like this are a key part of being ready to do the job anytime, anywhere," Squadron Leader Bourke said.



NSWGR Nashos 1965-1972

Welcome. A FB (facebook) page - <https://www.facebook.com/NSWGR-Nashos-1965-1972-103631481995921> has been created to invite all those NSWGR Nashos of the 1965-1972 period to have their names recorded as part of our railway history. The Honour boards at Central name those who served and did not come home whereas this electronic Honour Roll hopefully will record, ALL; of us that were called up and marched in.

We have the unit loyalty we march under but I believe that this is the only time in our railway history that will record all of us.

Enclosed is a link to record our names, there is a guestimate by ARHS of approximately 923 NSWGR male employees who marched in over 50 years ago.

December 2022 will be the 50th year since Lance Barnard Deputy PM suspended National Service In Australia. <https://form.jotform.com/212038738231855>

The coming 50th year anniversary, Arthur Smith and I are endeavouring to record their service for prosperity as part of our Railway history

December 2022 will be the 50th year of the suspension of National Service in Australia. This FB page has been created to make aware to the near 1000, 20-year-old members of the NSWGR of that time, 1965 - 1972.

To Commemorate this, the cap with NSW emblem with Nasho has been commissioned for all those who marched in for their National Service term. There is no discrimination of service, i.e., Vietnam, South East Asia, PNG and Australia and this includes those NSWGR members who chose the 6-year CMF alternate, we all served!



This Commemorative Cap is now available for \$35 including postage. I did have a link to order the cap but at this stage, FB has a block on it and am waiting for their reply. Please contact me via Messenger and I'll give you the bank details.

From Roge Mika on behalf of NSWGR Nashos

New Chinooks boost heavy-lift capability

The ADF heavy-lift battlefield aviation capability has been boosted with the arrival of two new CH-47F Chinooks in Townsville.

The \$595 million investment in four new CH-47F Chinooks will take Australia's fleet from 10 to 14 under the acquisition program.

The first two of the new helicopters were delivered to Townsville this week aboard a large US military transport aircraft. The third and fourth helicopters are expected to arrive in Australia mid next year.

Minister for Defence Peter Dutton welcomed the arrival of the helicopters to Army's 5th Aviation Regiment.

"The additional helicopters will strengthen Army's airlift capability into the future and increase the ADF's ability to support operations globally," Mr Dutton said.

"The Chinook is Defence's largest helicopter, with a long and proven track record of supporting ADF operations in Australia, our near region and further afield."

The arrival came about three months after the sale was approved.

Mr Dutton said being delivered just days before the beginning of Exercise Talisman Sabre - the largest bilateral combined training activity between the ADF and US military - highlighted the countries' excellent strategic working relationship.



"By working closely with the United States, through streamlined processes to rapidly deliver Defence capability, the government is demonstrating its commitment to Defence's strategic objectives and, in this case, bolstering Defence's aviation capability," he said

Source - RAAF website July 2021

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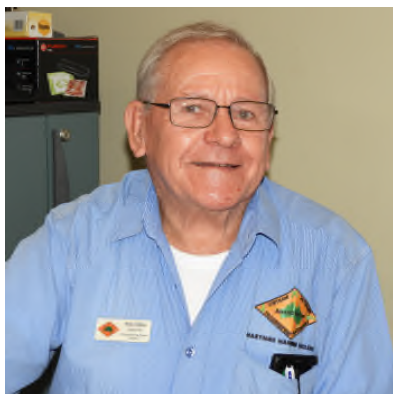
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NAME[please print]:		Signature:	
Address:			
Phone:		Email:	
Date:			
Qty	Item/Product (size*)	Unit Price (\$)	Total (\$)
*Sizes: Small (S), Medium (M), Large (L), Extra Large (XL), Extra, Extra Large (XXXXL) We will contact you when your merchandise is ready for collection.		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE [All prices include GST Freight & Handling]	
		Receipt Number	Date

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Poly cotton short sleeve

Model—Peter Millen



Navy Polo \$35

Navy Polo with pocket \$40

Navy Cap \$17.50

One size fits all

Model: Barry Lynch



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Poly Cotton / Long Sleeve

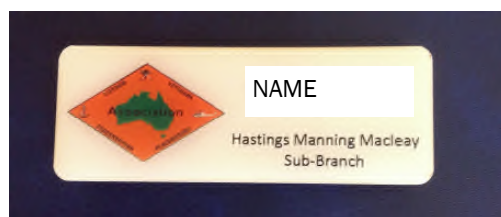
Model: Graeme Cox

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\$5.6 billion Boxer armoured vehicle fleet faces lengthy delays over multiple technical issues

The ABC can reveal the automatic cannon turrets for Australia's new "Boxer" combat reconnaissance vehicles (CRV) are too heavy, and various other headaches with the massive program are emerging.

Other concerns about the Australian Army's largest project to date include the CRV fleet only being able to fire German-made ammunition and requiring bespoke European-produced tyres.

In 2018, German company Rheinmetall was awarded the lucrative \$5.6 billion LAND 400 Phase 2 contract to construct 211 new light armoured vehicles, mostly in Queensland.

The initial block of 25 vehicles, including 12 Boxers that are configured with a turret and 30mm main cannon, was assembled in Germany and arrived in Australia this year.

Australia's remaining 186 Boxers will be constructed at Rheinmetall's Military Vehicle Centre of Excellence (MILVEHCOE) in Queensland.

However, numerous figures across Defence, government and industry have expressed deep concerns to the ABC about the project.

'Overweight' turret unable to include anti-missile protections

Military insiders say integrating the Lance turret is proving far more complicated than first anticipated because crucial anti-missile and anti-drone countermeasures are making the weapons system too heavy and unstable.

A Rheinmetall Defence Australia (RDA) spokesman said "there are no known weight or stability concerns regarding the Lance turret and its integration" on the already delivered "Block 1" Boxer CRV vehicles.

"RDA is not contracted to integrate an active protection system (APS) onto the Boxer CRV [but it] continues to work with Defence in identifying a sufficiently mature APS solution for future integration," a company spokesman told the ABC.

However, sources inside the LAND 400 Phase 2 project warn there are now growing problems with the Lance Block 2 turret which will be integrated with the Spike 2 anti-tank missile and the Iron Fist Active Protection System (APS).

"It is the Lance Block 2 turret that is overweight — it's unable to integrate the missile and APS without making the vehicle too heavy", a Defence official, who declined to be identified publicly, told the ABC.

The German-owned supplier confirmed Australian taxpayers were supporting the costs of the "ongoing development" of integrating the Lance turret on the Boxer CRV.

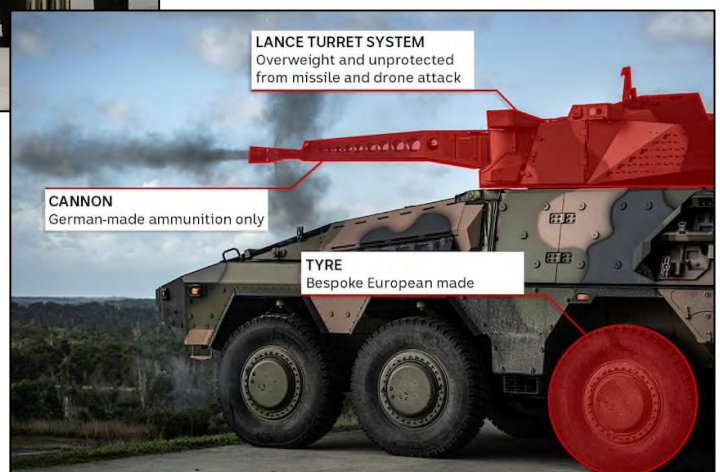
"RDA is contracted by the Commonwealth to manufacture, integrate and deliver the Lance turret onto Boxer for the requirements of the LAND 400 Phase 2 contract," the company said.

Boxers threatened to be put on 'projects of concern' list.



Prime Minister Scott Morrison rode in a combat reconnaissance vehicle in October last year.
(Department of Defence)

The Boxer CRVs have overweight turrets, and require specially manufactured tyres and ammunition only made in Europe.
Emma Machan



A government official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the matter publicly, said Defence informally threatened to put the program on the department's "projects of concern" list at the end of last year.

"They (Rheinmetall) were told at Christmas that they could go on the list and then there was a meeting in March that headed off that listing," the official told the ABC.

'Lethal and protected': Queensland to build hundreds of armoured vehicles

Rheinmetall has flatly rejected the suggestion it has received any cautions from government, and insists it is on track to meet all of the LAND 400 Phase 2 contract obligations.

"Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, RDA remains on track to deliver all of the LAND 400 Phase 2 vehicles to the initial and final operational capability schedule milestones," a spokesman said.

There are also concerns inside Defence that the LAND 400 Phase 2 project could be vulnerable to unreliable overseas supply chains because the new Boxer vehicles rely on European-made tyres and ammunition.

Rheinmetall confirmed the Boxer CRV used "a tyre exclusively manufactured at a facility in France" but argued "such an arrangement is commonplace in military applications".

Similarly the company confirmed the German ammunition manufactured by Rheinmetall Waffe Munition Schweiz was the "only ammunition qualified" to be fired by the cannon on the Boxer.

"Rheinmetall has not been asked to qualify ammunition from other manufacturers," a spokesperson said.

Earlier this year, the head of the Defence Department's Armoured Vehicle Division, Major General David Coghlan, said "gun jamming" was one of the "technical issues" on the CRV.

Major General Coghlan told a June 1 Senate estimates hearing the army's first 12 turreted vehicles were "going through verification and at this stage the turret is performing safely".

"We are not at the end of that process yet. Once they are safe we will issue them to the unit."

The Defence Department declined to respond to detailed questions from the ABC about the LAND 400 project.



Queensland has won the race to build \$5 billion worth of vehicles as part of the largest purchase in the Australian Army's history. (Department of Defence)

Sources - Exclusive article by defence correspondent Andrew Greene

Pictures from Department of Defence and Emma Machan as indicated



Australia to acquire nuclear submarine fleet as part of historic partnership with US and UK to counter China's influence

Australia is embarking on its most significant change of defence and strategic direction in decades, aiming to make the Navy's next submarine fleet nuclear-powered.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said a new alliance had been formed with the UK and US that was the most significant security development for Australia since the ANZUS Treaty.

"The relatively benign environment we have enjoyed in many decades in our region is behind us," he said.

"We have entered, no doubt, a new era."

In the deal announced by US President Joe Biden, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Scott Morrison, the US will share secret nuclear technology to help Australia in the switch to nuclear-powered boats.

The fleet will be the first initiative of a newly formed trilateral security partnership called AUKUS.



China put on notice over 'aggressive action' in the South China Sea

Why Australia wants nuclear submarines

Mr Morrison said the "next generation" partnership would help ensure the region's safety.

"Our world is becoming more complex, especially here in our region, the Indo-Pacific," Mr Morrison said.

"This affects us all. The future of the Indo-Pacific will impact all our futures."

The deal does not extend to nuclear weapons, only the propulsion system, which has always been conventional diesel-electric in Australia's submarine classes.

"Australia is not seeking to establish nuclear weapons or establish a civil nuclear capability," Mr Morrison said. "We will continue to meet all of our nuclear non-proliferation obligations."

The leaders say AUKUS is designed to counter growing threats in the Indo-Pacific.

Mr Johnson also emphasised the deal did not violate nuclear non-proliferation treaties.

"We're opening a new chapter in our friendship, and the first task of this partnership will be to help Australia acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, emphasising, of course, that the submarines in question will be powered by nuclear reactors — not armed with nuclear weapons," he said.

"Our work will be fully in line with our non-proliferation obligations."

Boris Johnson says the first task of AUKUS will be arming Australia with nuclear-powered submarines.

The AFP press agency quoted New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern as saying the yet-to-be-built submarines would be banned from entering New Zealand waters, continuing that country's longstanding non-nuclear policy.

Partnership to 'ensure' region's stability now and in future, Biden says

In a joint statement, the three leaders said AUKUS would also leverage UK and US expertise to bring cyber, artificial intelligence and quantum computing capabilities to Australia.

Thanking "that fellow Down Under", US President Joe Biden said the new partnership would ensure the three countries had the most modern capabilities to defend against "rapid threats".

"We're taking another historic step to deepen and formalise cooperation among all three of our nations, because we all recognise the imperative of ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific over the long-term," Mr Biden said.

"We need to be able to address both the current strategic environment in the region and how it may evolve, because the future of each of our nations, and indeed the world, depends on a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The leaders said they aimed to "bring an Australian [nuclear submarine] capability into service at the earliest achievable date".

The fall of Kabul and the damage wrought by Delta have been occupying the world's focus, but in the waters to Australia's north, foreign navies have been gathering.

Mr Morrison said the enhanced alliance was a response to rapidly developing circumstances in the region that were not envisaged even five years ago.

"This challenge will require more of us in Australia, and for all of us who share a common vision about peace and stability," Mr Morrison said.

China's embassy in Washington said the US, UK and Australia needed to "shake off their Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice".

A spokesman said "[countries] should not build exclusionary blocs that harm the interests of third parties".

Existing \$90 billion submarine project scrapped

The new partnership also spells the end of the Australian government's \$90 billion project for French designed submarines to be built in Adelaide. In a statement, France's Naval Group said it was disappointed the Australian government had scrapped the project: "For five years, Naval Group teams, both in France and in Australia, as well as our partners, have given their best and Naval Group has delivered on all its commitments," it said.

"This is a major disappointment for Naval Group, which was offering Australia a regionally superior conventional submarine with exceptional performances."

Defence had been openly discussing abandoning the multi-billion dollar project since June, as the French deal faltered. France's foreign affairs minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the decision betrayed "the letter and spirit" of cooperation between the two countries. "The American choice which leads to the removal of an ally and a European partner such as France from a structuring partnership with Australia, at a time when we are facing unprecedented challenges in the Indo-Pacific region ... marks an absence of coherence that France can only observe and regret," he said in a statement.

About \$2 billion had already been spent on the Attack-class submarines.

Mr Morrison said France remained an important partner in the Pacific, but he had to make decisions in the best interests of Australia's national security.

Speaking on radio station 6PR, he also said the contract with Naval Group was reaching a final opportunity to cancel the deal. "You have gates in contracts for a reason and we were approaching a very important, effectively final, gate on that contract from which there was no point of return," he said. "To have that opportunity to go down the nuclear submarine pathway was very important."

An 18-month taskforce led by Defence will investigate how Australia can become a "reliable steward" of nuclear submarines.

Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese said Labor supported the AUKUS partnership. But he said it also marked a failure to deliver the \$90 billion Attack-class submarines. "After eight years, three prime ministers and billions of dollars of sunken costs ... this is the most expensive example of something that has characterised this government: its ability to promise but its inability to deliver," he said.

Mr Albanese also called for the opposition leader to be given a seat at the table when it came to decisions on the submarines, promising to keep the position if he was elected at the next poll.

Urgent inquiry call

Former submariner and senator Rex Patrick is calling for an urgent inquiry before the deal is finalised.

"If it's a US submarine, they have highly enriched uranium in their reactors and that creates a proliferation issue in terms of Australia standing up saying, 'No-one should have these this sort of fuel available to them,'" he said. "Yet, we might end up having to have that on our submarines."

Mr Albanese also called for a joint mechanism between senior members of government and the opposition to give bipartisan oversight of the partnership. "We need to know the full cost of the abandonment of the existing program, but we also need to know what the cost of the proposed program would be ... given that the proposal is that the new submarines would not be in the water until 2040," Mr Albanese said.

Mr Morrison said Australia would need to spend more on Defence as a requirement of the new partnership.

Peter Jennings, executive director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, backed the new deal and said his initial response was "surprise". "This is something that has been negotiated very quickly and has obviously been kept quiet in Canberra," he told ABC News. "The irony is that when we chose the French-designed submarine a few years ago we actually took a nuclear-powered submarine and have been spending millions of dollars turning it into a diesel submarine."



Australia will become the only non-nuclear country in the world to have a maritime nuclear capability.(Getty Images/US Navy)





Ssshhh, don't tell anyone,

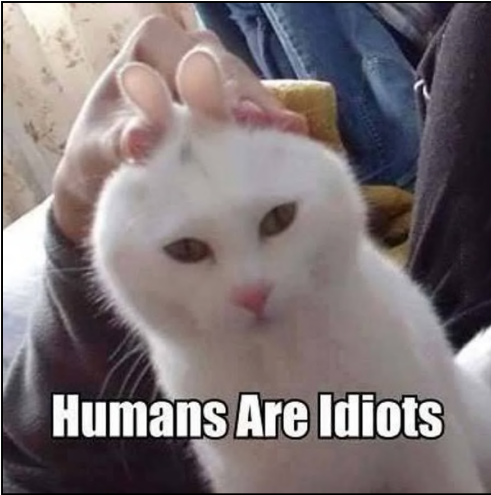


but I'm Superman, see!!

Life's too short to worry



about matching socks



Humans Are Idiots



R.I.P

rest in peas...

Hey man, it's cool... it's cool...



Take all the bamboo you want...



I'm

Watchin' u.

I Hate Mondays!



I hate
mondays!

CHUCKLE
TIME

I found him crossing the road,
can I keep him?



WHEN PETTING CATS...



BE SURE NOT TO ACTIVATE
THEIR MURDER BUTTON.



We're watching
Animal Planet and
you're not changing
the channel 09/03/2010 20:34
ICANNASCHERZBUBER.COM © C

I didn't know which
stick you threw



So I got them all

Everyone knew Buster was adopted.



except Buster

The Gallipoli Trench Project

This Geraldton group, the Gallipoli Trench Project, takes the words “lest we forget” more seriously than most by not just remembering World War I, but living it.

It was not war games and battle glory that necessarily drew the dedicated members of the Geraldton-based 11th Battalion Living History Unit to their labour of love, but keeping the memory of fallen soldiers alive and creating a real-life connection for their surviving loved ones.

The group held its annual commemoration last Saturday of Leane’s Trench being taken during the Gallipoli campaign and the 106th anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine during WWI.

Historic war vehicles were on display for the event, while the seven male members of the group dressed in replica traditional WWI uniforms.

There was a presentation about the work the unit does and the history of the battle, followed by a service at the unit’s own war memorial, a tour of the trench, and refreshments.

It was a special occasion, not just because of the anniversary year but also because of the help provided by the community and businesses to refurbish the trench after it was damaged by tropical cyclone Seroja in April.

“We’re extremely grateful for those people who showed up for the event, and eternally grateful for the support we received from the community, particularly Bendigo Bank and the City of Greater Geraldton,” group president and veteran Chris Cox said.

“A huge effort was put in by Disaster Relief Australia, who heard of our plight with the cyclone damage and came to our rescue to almost completely rebuild the trench. It would have taken us a year of weekends to do it on our own.”

The group is now able to re-open its Living Gallipoli Trench tours to the public for the first time since the cyclone. Incredible effort!



Left Above - Members of the the 11th Battalion AIF and the Gallipoli Trench Project Dr Stewart Adamson, Ian Wright, Mark Long, Phil Eather, Karl Edwards, Chris Cox. and Michael McGilvray. Credit: Elise Van Aken/Geraldton Guardian

Centre - Annabelle, 5, and James O'Brien, 7, at the 11th Battalion AIF's commemoration of the 106th anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine. Credit: Elise Van Aken/Geraldton Guardian

Above Right - 11th Battalion Living History Unit member Michael McGilvray helping refurbish the replica Leane's Trench in Northern Gully.

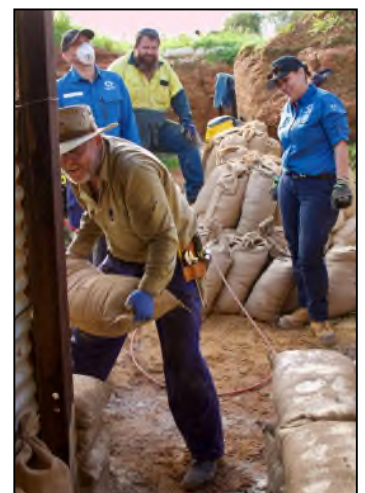
Below - Volunteers help refurbish the replica Leane's Trench.

The monument is a replica of a Turkish trench taken in 1915 by the 11th Battalion, a WWI infantry unit comprising soldiers from WA.

The group is now able to re-open its Living Gallipoli Trench tours to the public for the first time since the cyclone, complete with sound systems, actors and war paraphernalia.

“D company”, as they sometimes refer to themselves in homage to the 11th Battalion soldiers conscripted from the Mid West, was recently nominated for a WA Community Achievement Award, has acted in multiple war films, and featured in documentaries.

Group member and historian James Hurst told host Neil Oliver in an episode of the BBC's The Coast Australia series why creating a “sand bag for sand bag” replica of the trench was imperative. “This is not a generic trench, this is a real position with a real history and we can create real links to people,” he said. “So people can come here and say ‘my great-uncle was here’, and you can find out who he was and you can actually point to a part of the trench. It’s better than a statue, it’s highly educational. I believe it was the first time since the landing, us or the Turks, had taken an enemy trench and held it.”



Source - Elise Van Aken Geraldton Guardian adapted report from Disaster Relief Australia by Karyn Lanthois

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