

# QUEENSLAND RSL NEWS

# PINE RIVERS HOBBY SHED

RAISING  
THOUSANDS  
FOR VETERANS

## RECOGNISING OUR VOLUNTEERS

A GLIMPSE INTO THE SERVICE OF  
OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

## RSL SCHOLARSHIPS

HELPING VETERANS AND THEIR  
FAMILIES PURSUE NEW AMBITIONS

## VIETNAM THROUGH THE LENS OF A VETERAN

COMMEMORATING THE  
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
VIETNAM WAR WITHDRAWAL

## 2023 PREMIER'S ANZAC PRIZE

A HISTORY  
LESSON LIKE  
NO OTHER



**RSL**  
Queensland

2023 // EDITION 03

The official publication of the Returned & Services League of Australia (Queensland Branch)

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### Front Cover

Pine Rivers District RSL Sub Branch member Paul Scarborough working in the hobby shed.

# Recognising the selfless contributions of veterans

We marked two major commemorative anniversaries in recent months – Korean Veterans' Day on 27 July and Vietnam Veterans' Day on 18 August.

## THE SO-CALLED 'FORGOTTEN WAR'

One of the less understood facts of the Korean War was that it claimed an estimated 2-5 million lives. It's believed that as many as 3 million Korean War casualties were civilians.

Nearly 18,000 Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses served in the Korean War. Some 340 Australian service men lost their lives, more than 1,200 were wounded, and 29 were taken prisoner. More than 40 remain missing in action, presumed dead.

Unlike earlier wars, our Korean War veterans returned home to relative indifference. The war they fought – in a distant land – never gained the profile of other conflicts and became known as the 'forgotten war'.

Each year, Korean Veterans' Day honours those whose service and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

## VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY

This year, we marked 50 years since Australia ended its involvement in the Vietnam War. Throughout Australia's 10-plus year involvement in the Vietnam War, more than 60,000 Australians from all three services of the armed

“ While some Australians turned their backs on our Vietnam veterans, they never turned their backs on us. They continued to serve in their local area as volunteers, as front-line workers in our police force, hospitals, and as teachers helping educate the next generation. They are the sort of people our communities rely on. ”

forces served there. A total of 523 were killed in action and more than 3,000 were wounded or fell ill.

It remains important we acknowledge that the Vietnam War was considered politically and socially divisive. As a consequence, many veterans were not treated with the respect and honour they deserved upon returning home. Many faced discrimination from the community and several institutions, including – on occasion – the RSL.

While some Australians turned their backs on our Vietnam veterans, they never turned their backs on us. They continued to serve in their local area as volunteers, as front-line workers in our police force, hospitals, and as teachers helping educate

the next generation. They are the sort of people our communities rely on.

Some forged significant careers in business, others took elected office and government roles. They made it their mission to make sure that the next generation of returned service men and women, and their families, received the support and respect they were often denied.

My generation and the many that have come after me have benefitted immensely from this group's selflessness and their drive to ensure other veterans were not treated as they often were.

Because of the voice of our Vietnam veterans, Australians now recognise the difference between those who decide

to commit us to war – our elected leaders – and those who do the fighting. Because of the motivation of our Vietnam veterans, today's veterans are warmly welcomed home.

## VETERAN & FAMILY WELLBEING CENTRES

This year we're seeing major developments in the support services being offered to veterans and their families, with three Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres opening in Queensland and one we support in the Northern Territory.

The Centres provide a range of mental health, wellbeing, social connection and physical programs for veterans and their families.

The Mates4Mates-led Centre opened in Darwin on 29 May and the RSL Queensland-led Centres opened in Cairns on 26 August and in Brisbane on 28 August. We look forward to sharing more details in the next edition of *Queensland RSL News*.



**RSL Queensland  
State President  
Major General  
Stephen Day DSC AM**

# Commemorate our Gracious and Noble Queen HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II



On the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II passed away peacefully at the age of 96 years old. As the nation mourns the world's longest reigning female monarch, we pay tribute to her rich life of dedicated service to the Commonwealth.

Throughout her reign, the Queen stood true to the pledge she made at the tender age of just 21, "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the

service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." Take this opportunity to remember the extraordinary life of the monarch, her exemplary reign and the profound influence she had the world over.

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# A sobering reminder of the risks of service

**ON** Friday 28 July, we heard the tragic news that four Australian Defence Force (ADF) members were killed during a training activity as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre. On behalf of RSL Queensland, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of these servicemen.

The loss of these four young men – Captain Danniell Lyon, Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, Warrant Officer Class Two Joseph Laycock and Corporal Alexander Naggs – was felt deeply by the entire Defence and veteran community across Australia.

Whether in training or on deployment, this is a sobering reminder that members of our Defence Force are exposed to, and undertake, hazardous and challenging activities daily to ensure our continued safety and security.

This was an immense tragedy that impacted both current and ex-serving ADF members. As veterans, we understand that there are risks and challenges in both training and in operations, but knowing this does not make it any easier when tragedies occur.

Please know that free, 24/7 support is available if you need it. Call Open Arms on 1800 011 046 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

## **DELIVERING ON OUR MISSION**

We've continued to make great progress on our 2030 Strategy, and I'd like to

“

*Whether in training or on deployment, this is a sobering reminder that members of our Defence Force are exposed to, and undertake, hazardous and challenging activities daily to ensure our continued safety and security.*

”

share a few examples from recent months.

## **CARE - NEW INITIATIVES**

As our State President also mentions in his column, we officially opened two Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centres in Queensland in August – just two days apart. The Centre in Cairns opened on 26 August as a regional satellite location and the Brisbane Centre opened on 28 August.

The Centres focus on a holistic approach, and offer easy access to support from RSL Queensland, Mates4Mates and other organisations, all in one convenient location.

Additionally in August, the new psychometric assessment tool, the Mental Readiness for Military Transition Scale (MT-Ready), received academic publication.

The tool has been developed to predict how likely a Defence member is to have a difficult transition from Defence to civilian life, and what areas of adjustment and reintegration they might need support with along the way.

The tool is a result of the research delivered by Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

(GMRF) in partnership with RSL Queensland. The tool is expected to enable serving members to identify the psychosocial factors they may need further support in prior to transitioning to civilian life.

## **COMMEMORATION - HONOURING OUR VIETNAM VETERANS**

On 18 August (Vietnam Veterans' Day) we recognised our Vietnam veterans. While they comprise the largest demographic within RSL Queensland's membership, it hasn't always been a close relationship. Due to strong anti-war sentiment, many were treated unfairly by some members of the community – including the RSL – when they returned from war.

I would like to personally thank our Vietnam veterans for their courage to fight for a fair go. Their actions paved the way for post-Vietnam veterans to receive better treatment and recognition as a result of service.

## **CAMARADERIE - SUB BRANCH GRANTS**

We are continuing to support the work of our Districts and Sub Branches via our Sub

Branch Grants Trial. This program gives Sub Branches the opportunity to access additional funds for building repair and renovation works, so they have appropriate facilities to welcome and support veterans and their families.

So far, we've awarded a total of 39 grants since December 2022. Some examples of these include:

- Burleigh Heads RSL Sub Branch building had their timber floors restored
- Cardwell had repairs to their verandah ceiling
- Hughenden has upgraded their facilities, installed air con, window blinds and upgraded the floors in their bathrooms
- Mossman installed new security cameras to the property
- Cairns installed solar panels.

## **STRATEGY ON A PAGE**

Don't forget to read our Strategy on a Page at [rslqld.org/about-us/strategy](https://rslqld.org/about-us/strategy), which outlines the progress we've made so far, and what we aim to deliver for veterans and their families in the long term.



**Robert Skoda**  
Chief Executive Officer  
RSL Queensland

Honouring those  
who were only 19

## Veterans Remembered

### Men's Ring



- Sides feature tribute to pivotal Vietnam battles in which Aussie diggers fought courageously



- Poignantly engraved
- Plated in gleaming 18K gold
- Genuine black onyx inlay
- Arrives in a gift box, along with a Certificate of Authenticity

They were the forgotten diggers. A generation of young men who fought for Australia like their fathers before them. But they returned as outcasts, casualties of a war nobody understood. Yet time heals the injustices of the past. Now, you can honour our Vietnam diggers with the "Veterans Remembered Gold Ring", available only from The Bradford Exchange.

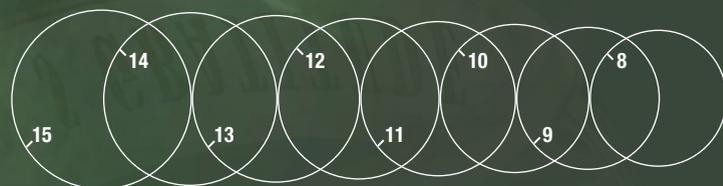
This heartfelt tribute is expertly handcrafted and plated in 18K gold to create a shining tribute to those who served. The ring cap features the stirring words "Veterans Remembered" in dramatic raised-relief. The cap also features a genuine onyx inlay, a stone believed to promote personal strength and stamina, the very attributes which helped our veterans survive on and off the battlefield. Each side showcases sculpted acknowledgements of Long Tan, Tet, Vung Tau and Nui Dat, pivotal battles in which our veterans gallantly fought. The inner band is engraved with "A Nation's Gratitude", heartfelt thanks from all of us to the men whose courage and resilience wrote a sterling new chapter in the proud Anzac legend.

## Available for a Limited Time Only

Available in men's sizes 8 – 15, high demand is expected for this gleaming tribute to our Vietnam heroes. Secure your ring today for 5 instalments of \$39.99 or \$199.95, plus \$19.99 postage and handling, backed by our 120-day guarantee. Send no money now. Return the coupon or go online today at [www.bradford.com.au/veterans](http://www.bradford.com.au/veterans)



Find your perfect ring size



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# OUR CARE AND SUPPORT IN 2023

From January to June, RSL Queensland provided a broad range of services to meet the needs of veterans and their families.



**3,120 claims and appeals**

lodged with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

“

*I felt that my advocate listened to all my questions and issues. She walked me through a process that was unknown to me. Excellent service.*

”



## \$1.6m in financial support

provided to help cover groceries, fuel, bills and accommodation for veterans and their families in times of urgent need



## 67 scholarships awarded

to ex-serving Defence members and their children – as well as partners of current or ex-serving Defence members – to increase their employability



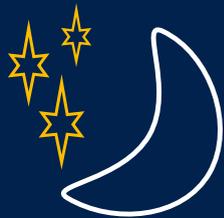
## 128 veterans housed

in safe, permanent accommodation they can call home



## 114 jobs

secured in meaningful employment for veterans and the partners of current and ex-serving Defence members



## 456 nights in short-term accommodation

provided for veterans travelling from regional areas for medical treatment



## 4,714 enquiries answered

referring veterans and their families to services that suit their needs

**FIND OUT MORE**

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**RSL**  
Queensland

# NEWS

## GO BEYOND STRENGTHENS SUPPORT FOR VETERANS ADJUSTING TO CIVILIAN LIFE

**EX-SERVING** ADF personnel can benefit from a smoother transition to civilian life thanks to the Go Beyond program, a joint venture between RSL Queensland and the Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF). First launched in 2021, this free online program

has undergone improvements to ensure it meets the needs of veterans across Australia.

### WHAT'S NEW

To better understand the user experience, a comprehensive consultation was conducted with veterans across the

country. GMRF heard directly from veteran focus groups and used this to enhance the user experience, making Go Beyond more accessible with additional post-program learning tools.

One veteran who completed the program said, "I think

other veterans should complete the Go Beyond program if they are serious about wanting to better their lives. The more knowledge you have in your arsenal about your conditions can only be a positive thing to take those steps to getting better."

### BACKED BY RESEARCH, TAILORED FOR THE USER

After six years of research, GMRF found that leaving the ADF can have psychological and cultural implications that may hinder a healthy transition to civilian life. This can result in low mood; feelings of being misunderstood by civilians; and a lost sense of purpose, connection and belonging.

Through a personalised and confidential survey, Go Beyond accurately assesses where users may need support. It provides each user with a personalised, self-paced program of practical activities and tools to assist in their transition. ←



To learn more or start the Go Beyond program, please visit [gobeyond.org.au](https://gobeyond.org.au)

# REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM UNIT CITATION

To find out more and apply, visit [defence.gov.au](https://defence.gov.au) and search "Vietnam Cross".

**FOLLOWING** a recent review by the Department of Defence, the Australian Government has expanded the eligibility for the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation to include several additional units.

If you or a member of your family served in these units during the Vietnam War, we encourage you to apply for the award in recognition of service during this time. ←

## DRAW TO REMEMBER EXPANDS ACROSS QUEENSLAND

**LAST** year, RSL Queensland's Draw to Remember pilot initiative saw 3,500 children commemorating Remembrance Day through creativity.

The pilot was a huge success, and this year RSL Queensland is excited to be extending Draw to Remember to primary schools across the state. In 2023, a total of 70 RSL Sub Branches and 198 schools will be taking part.

As part of the activity, RSL Sub Branch volunteers will visit local schools in October to teach students about Remembrance Day and encourage remembrance through art.

It's a unique opportunity for children to meet a local veteran, learn the significance of 11 November, and create their own commemorative chalk mural for Remembrance Day.

Cardwell RSL Sub Branch President Robert Lang, who teamed up with Murray River Upper State School for last year's pilot, spoke highly of the activity and those who took part in it.

"The kids had an absolute ball with it," he says.

"What amazed me when I went to see the results of their art was just how much they knew about military history. And some of them were only Prep kids.

"It was wonderful to see them, and you couldn't walk on the footpaths at the school because it was all covered in chalk. They had six boxes of chalk, thanks to the RSL, and they used every stick of it.

"Every time it rained, which is pretty well what happens

in the tropics, the next morning the kids were out touching up their artwork. It was great to see."

RSL Queensland will again supply the materials for Draw to Remember – including chalk and learning resources – free for participating schools via RSL Sub Branches.

Instructions and other educational material will be freely available online for anyone to download. ←



For more details on Draw to Remember, keep an eye on our Member Update email newsletter and [rslqld.org/news/latest-news](https://rslqld.org/news/latest-news).

# RSL QUEENSLAND STATE DEPUTY PRESIDENT REAPPOINTED



**RSL** Queensland members re-appointed Wendy Taylor as State Deputy President for an additional three-year term at the 2023 State Congress on 24 June in Brisbane.

Trained as a Registered Nurse, Ms Taylor served nine years in the Army Reserve and then 16 years in the regular Army, including senior nursing and command roles

in both the Gulf War and East Timor.

RSL Queensland State President Major General Stephen Day DSC AM welcomed the decision of

**ABOVE:** RSL Queensland CEO Robert Skoda with newly reappointed Deputy State President Wendy Taylor and State Vice President Bill Whitburn OAM.



members and congratulated Ms Taylor on her re-appointment.

"Our AGM is a key part of our democratic process, helping us build and maintain trust within the organisation," MAJGEN Day said.

"I want to recognise the contribution by the other three candidates Doug Egan, Paddy Evans and Barry Vains OAM to the process, and the demonstration of their commitment to serve the League. I know each of them and am grateful that they will continue to contribute to the League in other ways." ←



Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland, officially opened the 2023 State Congress.



## PIONEER-FITZROY-HIGHLANDS DISTRICT NAME CHANGE

**THE** recent name change from Pioneer-Fitzroy-Highlands to Central Queensland relates purely to the name of the District, noting there are no changes to the Sub Branches encapsulated within this District.

The Central Queensland District will continue to provide support to its 20 Sub Branches and the local Defence community. The new name will be easier for the local community to understand, which will positively impact support the District can provide. ←

*If you have any questions, please contact the Central Queensland District Secretary or email [cq@rslqld.org](mailto:cq@rslqld.org)*

# CELEBRATING A DECADE OF IMPACT WITH MATES4MATES



**TEN** years ago, RSL Queensland established Mates4Mates to help address the significant health and wellbeing challenges faced by Australian veterans and their families impacted by service.

Today, Mates4Mates has grown and helped almost 10,000 current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members and their families connect, recover and move forward in their journey after experiencing service-related physical injuries, mental health impacts and social disconnection.

From its humble beginnings hosting rehabilitation adventure challenges to raising awareness for those impacted by service,

Mates4Mates has expanded nationally to offer a full suite of evidence-based services and programs.

Over the past 10 years, Mates4Mates has opened centres and provided outreach opportunities in South East and North Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, and expanded its services through online offerings for veterans and their families across the country.

Through it all, RSL Queensland and Mates4Mates have worked side-by-side to innovate and adapt to ensure the support provided remains scalable, accessible and available to all. Demand for services has soared, with Mates4Mates providing more

than 30,000 occasions of service in 2022 across their mental health and physical rehabilitation services, social connection activities, and Skills for Recovery programs.

RSL Queensland State President and Mates4Mates Board Chair Major General Stephen Day DSC AM says the growth of Mates4Mates is a testament to how vital and helpful the initiative is.

“As we reflect on the past, we measure the success of Mates4Mates not only through the number of people we have supported or service centres we have opened, but also by the stories we hear daily about the lives that have been changed,” MAJGEN Day says.

“The countless stories of veterans and their families able to get back to being active and doing the things they love shows us exactly why Mates4Mates was such an important initiative for RSL Queensland to start.”

Mates4Mates General Manager Emma Whitehead says the organisation plans to continue to evolve and support the needs of veterans and their families into the next 10 years and beyond.

“The contributions that veterans and their families have made to our nation is significant, and Mates4Mates is proud to have the opportunity to play a role in supporting them,” Ms Whitehead says. ←

# NEXT STEPS TOWARDS IPSWICH VETERANS' HUB

**FOLLOWING** a successful grant application, the Australian Government recently announced that RSL Queensland has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to develop a business case to establish a Veterans' and Families' Hub in Ipswich.

The expansion of the Veterans' and Families' Hub network will see the more than 10,000 veterans and their families in the Ipswich Local Government Area access improved specialist services close to home. RSL Queensland will take these next steps, in partnership with Mates4Mates and GO2 Health, to develop a business case to support the establishment of the Ipswich Veterans' and Families' Hub.

This will likely see a "hub and spoke" model established in Ipswich that expands out to the broader region west of

Brisbane. This model follows feedback from community consultation that identified the need for services to be available and easily accessible for locals.

The multipurpose Hub is set to feature a range of culturally appropriate, coordinated services to assist with advocacy, case management, financial literacy, medical and allied health services and access to housing support for veterans and their families.

The intention is for this hub, just like the hubs currently operated by RSL Queensland and Mates4Mates across the country, to not only provide services and support to the local veteran community's needs, but to also be sustainable into the future. ←



Damon Kerns-Stokes GO2Health, Les Nash (RSL Queensland State Council Chair), Shane Neumann MP (Member for Blair), Matt Keogh MP (Minister for Veterans' Affairs), Buzz Lawson (Mates4Mates), and Kelly Prior GO2Health.

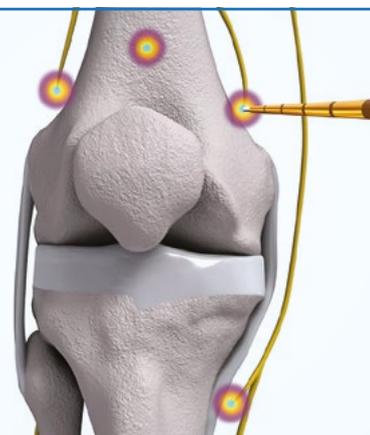
## Is hip or knee pain holding you back?

### Radiofrequency Ablation may help get you back to doing what you love.

If you're suffering from ongoing hip or knee pain, Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA) is a non-surgical, safe and effective procedure with minimal treatment and recovery time.

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# Recognising our volunteers

*National Volunteer Week was marked throughout the RSL Queensland network on 15-21 May. The week recognised the dedication and vital support that volunteers across the country provide to various causes within their communities. In this edition, some of RSL Queensland's wonderful volunteers share their stories.*

## MAKING VETERANS SMILE IS REWARD ENOUGH

*Behind Goodna RSL Sub Branch is the great Women's Auxiliary, who have made it their purpose to support veterans and the local community.*

served the Sub Branch and local community in numerous ways for the past five years.

The group produces craft items and sources other products, including commemorative badges, to sell to the public. Funds raised are then used to support various causes, from buying a veteran a new shirt, to building the war

animal memorial, and providing socks to the local children's hospital.

The women of the Auxiliary leverage their close ties to the local community to identify how to best utilise the funds raised.

According to Goodna RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary President Pam Hauck, the most significant and rewarding part of their volunteering service is offering camaraderie to Sub Branch veterans.

"A few volunteers ask, 'What can I do?' and I say, 'Just be here for the veterans! The camaraderie is the biggest part of anything, and that's why for volunteers it's just all

**IF** a veteran needs to have a chat over a cuppa, they can drop into the Veteran Clinic at Goodna RSL Sub Branch on a Wednesday.

When locals are out walking, they can stop at the war animal memorial in front of the Sub Branch to allow their service animal or companion pet to have a drink of water.

When the Sub Branch and adjacent restaurant were flooded in 2022, they had to re-establish their premises to give veterans their 'home' back.

The members of Goodna RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary are behind these initiatives, having

**PICTURED:**  
Members of Goodna RSL Sub Branch Women's Auxiliary Pam Hauck, Robyn Abbey and Coleen Macintyre at the war animal memorial.





camaraderie; we are helping one another," Pam says.

"Sometimes, just to make a cup of tea because they're by themselves is enough. They say, 'It's just nice to sit down and have a cup of tea with somebody,' and that puts a smile on their face.

"That's what I feel about volunteering; it's helping a lot of other people and it makes your day – gives you a purpose in life."

In January, Goodna Women's Auxiliary received an Australia Day Medallion for their volunteer services to the community – an accolade they were nominated for by former Goodna RSL Sub Branch President Judith Van de Pol.

"It's phenomenal what they do. On a meeting day they come in early, do the morning tea, do the sausage sizzle, do the clean ups and everything," Judith says.

"The fundraising – they've always got a stall going somewhere, thinking of different ways to raise money. Without them, our Sub Branch would not exist."

For Pam and the women of the Auxiliary, the award was acknowledgement that they are doing worthwhile work.

"The Australia Day Medallion was out of this world. It was one of the proudest days of my life to be

President of the Women's Auxiliary and of the members, because they work hard, they do a lot of things and to be given that medallion, it was just appreciated so much," Pam says.

"It wasn't the accolade; it was just the fact that we did do it, and we appreciate what the RSL did by nominating us for that medal; it

proves that we are doing it right.

"I just love helping people; most of us do. That's what we are here for – to help people. If you go home at night-time and you think, 'I put a smile on his face today,' that just really gets to you.

"Our biggest achievement is putting those smiles on people's faces." ←

**ABOVE:**  
Maree Rankin,  
Margaret Krause  
and Susie  
Vickery.

**BELOW:**  
Colleen Gould  
and Coleen  
Macintyre.



# VETERAN CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF VOLUNTEERING

*Cairns RSL Sub Branch 'Volunteer of the Year' Stan Carswell MBE has given countless hours to his community.*

**BELOW:** Cairns RSL Sub Branch member Stan Carswell MBE speaks with a fellow veteran.

**ACROSS** 20 years of volunteering for the Cairns RSL Sub Branch, Stan has given countless hours to fellow veterans and the wider Cairns community. Known locally as a fountain of knowledge on Cairns' military

history, Stan often steps in to help families locate war graves and loved ones who are buried in the Cairns District.

However, it's his involvement in the final farewell to veterans, through a poppy service at their funeral, that Stan finds most moving.

"I still get emotional when I get down to their list of service and their service record. It breaks me up, even though I don't personally know the veteran that I'm conducting a service for," Stan says.

Stan conducted his first poppy



service 20 years ago, and in April, he conducted his 159th.

"The poppy service is for any veteran that passes away, irrespective of whether they're a member of the Sub Branch or not," Stan explains.

### NASHO SERVICE SPARKS DEDICATION TO HONOURING VETERANS

Stan served as a National Serviceman (Nasho) for six months in 1952. He was among the early intakes of the scheme, which started his decades-long association with the Defence community.

"I was lucky enough to be selected to do my service with the RAAF in Townsville, known as 10GR Squadron, for general reconnaissance. It was quite an experience," Stan says.

After his service, Stan lived and worked in Papua New Guinea for 20 years before returning to northern Queensland with his family. He joined the Cairns RSL Sub Branch shortly after and has been actively volunteering there ever since.

Stan has held various positions on the Sub Branch's board over the years and served as Deputy President for RSL Queensland Far Northern District, all the while volunteering for any role that needed filling.

"I was the coach driver for the Far Northern District as we travelled around to the regions to hold our meetings in different locations, and I was the Sub Branch representative for the Warhaven Homes Governing Committee for many years," Stan says.

"Every ANZAC Day I serve rum and milk from the bar here; I've been doing it for about 18 years. My dear wife Agnes used to join me, but when she passed away three years ago, I decided to continue doing it on my own, and

they've named the bar after me in honour."

Stan also assists the Sub Branch with preparations for its Vietnam Veterans' Day commemorations in August.

"I've been researching Vietnam veterans that may be buried in and around the cemeteries up here. There is one that we've been looking at – an ex-National Serviceman, actually. He was killed in action – just 25 years of age. I have been to the cemetery to locate his grave site."

### VOLUNTEERING EFFORTS RECOGNISED AND CELEBRATED

Stan's willingness to put his hand up and his dedication to helping others haven't gone unnoticed. His service as a volunteer in his Sub Branch and the local community was recognised and celebrated when he was named '2022 Volunteer of the Year' at last year's Cairns RSL Sub Branch Christmas party.



Cairns RSL Sub Branch President Nathan Shingles, who presented Stan with the award, speaks highly of his fellow veteran and RSL member.

"Stan is a much-loved member of the Cairns RSL Sub Branch. He always goes above and beyond when caring for our Defence family," Nathan says.

The award was a pleasant surprise for Stan, who says he doesn't do what he does for the accolades.

"I feel very humble and grateful. I don't do what I do for any bouquets or anything like that. I volunteer because I feel that I'm in a position to offer something and to do something for the Sub Branch." ←

**ABOVE:** Stan is known locally as a fountain of knowledge on the military history of Cairns and often steps in to help families locate war graves and loved ones who are buried in the Cairns District.

**LEFT:** Stan has spent 20 years volunteering with Cairns RSL Sub Branch, and is pictured helping Cairns Regional Council with its flags.

# ASSISTING VETERANS THROUGH A LIFETIME OF ADVOCACY

*RSL Queensland member Kevin Plumb has dedicated his life to service.*

**ABOVE:** In February 2023, Kevin Plumb's outstanding contribution to the veteran community was recognised when he was awarded RSL Australia's highest honour – the Meritorious Service Medal.

**RSL** Queensland is supported by thousands of volunteers throughout the state who play a vital role in helping us serve, advocate for, and support our veterans and their families. People like Kevin 'Kev' Plumb.

Kev has been a member of RSL Queensland since he discharged from the Australian Army in 1968, and has been actively involved in RSL Queensland since 1971.

First serving on the Sarina RSL Sub Branch's committee before becoming President, Kev then went on to become the Vice President and then President of the Mackay District, all of which he says allowed him to not only help others, but also himself.

"I had a few issues from Vietnam, and my roles within the RSL gave me something to put my mind to," Kev says.

Since his service, Kev has dedicated himself to advocating for

veterans and their families. He still remembers the first issue he set out to address in his advocacy journey.

"When I served, we had to pay for all our parcels and letters to come back to Australia, and the same applied for all incoming mail from family. I went to my State Member, then he went to his Federal Counterpart, and they made sure that they did away with any overseas postal costs for overseas service personnel and their families. That is something that continues to this day."

Now, Kev's passion for advocacy sees him volunteer as a Pension and Welfare Officer. Since undertaking a course with DVA in 1993, Kev has worked with countless veterans and their families to help them understand

their entitlements, tell their story, and submit compensation claims. This is a role he continues to play today.

Bringing his know-how of the system, and his commitment to never submitting a claim until he deems it "good enough to go," Kev helps veterans and their families navigate the often confusing and time consuming claims process, all the while providing updates, reassurance and mateship to those in need.

Kev says his passion for his role can be summarised as a passion for doing what is right.

"I'm just trying to do the right thing by the veteran community," he says.

A few months ago in February 2023, Kev's outstanding contribution to the veteran





community was recognised when he was awarded RSL Australia's highest honour – the Meritorious Service Medal. It was an honour that Kev says came as a surprise.

"I can tell you truthfully, this was a total shock. It was a very emotional night, and I was pleasantly surprised. I just felt warm within my heart to think that my effort had been acknowledged."

Kev's family knew about the award but kept it a secret, using the excuse of a belated birthday celebration for his family to set up a surprise dinner, attended by his wife, daughters, grandkids, and members of the Central Queensland District.

"[That night] is a memory that will stay with me for the rest of my life," Kev says.

For anyone considering becoming a volunteer, Kev has just one message.

"If you're thinking about it, give it a go." ←

**LEFT:** Central Queensland District President Phil Luzzi presented Kevin Plumb with the Meritorious Service Medal.

**BELOW:** Kev's family surprised him with a celebration dinner to present the award, attended by his wife Barbara, left, daughters Sharon Price and Melinda Flynn, right, grandkids, and members of the Central Queensland District.



# KNITTING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT FOR THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

*For RSL Queensland Far Northern District Australia Day Medallion recipient Margaret Plant, volunteering is about doing something worthwhile to brighten another person's life.*



National Volunteer Week shines a light on the ways volunteering brings us all together, builds community and achieves vital work across Australia. Find your local RSL Sub Branch and become a member at [rslqld.org](http://rslqld.org) or learn about other volunteering opportunities at [volunteeringqld.org.au](http://volunteeringqld.org.au)



*“Volunteering helps you socialise and boosts your mental health. It gives you a reason to get out of bed in the morning, knowing that you are doing something worthwhile to brighten another person’s life.”*

**FOR** Malanda RSL Sub Branch member and Operation Blankie coordinator Margaret Plant, volunteering is at the heart of all she does.

“My work and volunteering has given me a purpose and changed my demeanour for the better – I’m challenging myself every day,” she says.

“Volunteering helps you socialise and boosts your mental health. It gives you a reason to get out of bed in the morning, knowing that you are doing something worthwhile to brighten another person’s life.”

Margaret began volunteering four years ago, when she and fellow Sub Branch members Catie Shanahan and Pauline Lawrence first established Operation Blankie. The initiative aims to comfort fellow veterans and their families in times of need, hardship and dark moments by providing them with packs of knitted and crocheted goods such as beanies, scarves, gloves and blankets.

“We started Operation Blankie for a friend and brother to help keep him warm while in hospital and to comfort his loved ones. From that first rug made, it was not just Operation Blankie but blankie in operation,” Margaret says.

“No day is quite the same for me. Whether it’s meeting with the group for a coffee, ensuring our donated yarn and finished items are properly washed and prepared to the highest standard, or simply working through an admin day.

“The smiles and sometimes happy tears you get when veterans and families receive an item from us – that helps not just me, but all volunteers involved as we share these moments. It makes the time and love they put into every item worthwhile.”

Margaret helps coordinate 43 volunteer knitters and crocheters from around the local area including the Atherton Tablelands, Innisfail, Gordonvale, Mission Beach and Townsville, as well as working with volunteers in other

states including New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania.

Over the past four years, the Operation Blankie team have made 2,500 items consisting of rugs, beanies, scarves, mittens, shawls and twiddle mitts.

“We are a social group that highly values camaraderie. Initially we met once a month, but now we have started meeting up every week. Volunteering is about giving back to our veteran community and that means supporting our own team as well,” Margaret explains.

On Australia Day, Margaret’s tireless dedication and contributions to the veteran community were recognised when she was awarded with the RSL Queensland Far Northern District Australia Day Medallion, one of only two medallions awarded in her District each year.

“For me, it’s a very humbling experience but as I say to my team, there is no one person on a pedestal. When I accepted the award, I accepted it on behalf of the group,” she says.

“It’s about a group of people – some veterans, some family members of veterans long passed – who get together every week to knit and crochet, making items for those who have served their country and need a boost.”

Margaret hopes that volunteering efforts continue to influence younger generations and encourage more people to give back to drive change and ensure volunteering is inclusive of all members of the community.

“As the song goes, ‘from little things big things grow’ – that’s how I started volunteering and that’s how Operation Blankie started.”

“For those thinking of volunteering there is always a place for everyone to get involved. No matter age, access or background, go to your local Sub Branch and find a group that works for you.” ←

**OPPOSITE:** Malanda RSL Sub Branch member Margaret Plant, right, is pictured with other members of Operation Blankie, which provides veterans and their families with packs of knitted and crocheted goods.

# INDIGENOUS VETERANS' CEREMONY

## Mentoring the future generation of Indigenous veterans

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veteran and Elder, Aunty Frances Visini, spends her days preparing young Indigenous Defence recruits for life in the Navy. This is the story of her journey into this pioneering role.*

*Courtney Adams*

**FAR RIGHT:** Decades after leaving the Navy, Aunty Frances Visini was asked to rejoin to help support new Indigenous recruits.

**INSET:** Aunty Frances joined the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service as an Officer's Steward in 1970.

### SETTING UP FOUNDATIONS IN THE NAVY

Aunty Frances Visini was born on Thursday Island (Waibene). Her heritage on her mother's side is the Komet tribe from Mer and the Wagedagam tribe from Mabuiag. Her father is from the Western Cape, of the Yupangathi tribe.

Aunty Frances joined the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service as an Officer's Steward in 1970. Her uncle and her mother's cousin proudly served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion, planting family roots in the Australian Defence Force.

"I did two years' service before I got out to have a family and go to uni for a teaching degree. I did 25 years of teaching before retiring and moving up north," Aunty Frances explains.

"My short stay in the Navy gave me a good, strong foundation and grounding because it was full of a wide variety of people that I always felt comfortable with. As an Indigenous person, being a minority among a majority

strengthened my outlook on life."

While she may have put her Navy days behind her early, a phone call decades later would draw Aunty Frances back to the military.

"I got a call from the Commander of the Navy Indigenous Development Program (NIDP) telling me that a position was coming up for a mentor supporting new recruits," she says.

"I was a bit apprehensive at first because I didn't know what it entailed, but I put a resume together and sent it to him. The rest is history."

### THE NAVAL INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (NIDP)

Based in Cairns, the NIDP is a 21-week program designed to help young Indigenous recruits gain the skills required for enlistment into the Defence Force. Through the NIDP, recruits work to build their employability by developing their physical fitness, language, literacy, numeracy, resilience, confidence and leadership skills.

Aunty Frances is pioneering the role of Elder in the NIDP. Inaugurally appointed in August 2022 with fellow Elder, Uncle Phillip Bowie, she helps Indigenous recruits in a support and guidance capacity. In her role, Aunty Frances takes great pride in offering cultural mentorship by breaking down communication barriers and sharing her experiences.

"When I first introduced myself to the recruits, I spoke in both English and Creole, as English is their second or third language for some of them. I broke down the barrier by telling them my story in Creole and reiterating in English," she says.

"I listen and tell them to come to us with any concerns they have – and they do. They come to us and ask what it was really like for us. As role models, we are propping them up and letting them see how we survived.

"We were a minority back then, and I never received this type of support. I went straight from the top to the bottom; I had never been on a plane, never wore shoes before. It was quite an experience, but a very positive one."

### GOING FULL CIRCLE

Aunty Frances is passionate about playing her part in nurturing the future generation of Indigenous veterans. She says that her whole military experience, especially her involvement in the NIDP, has been a fulfilling chapter of her life.

"I've had a good, full life and I really put that down to being in the Navy. I went from being a small-town island girl into this big, wide world. I managed it all and I'm very proud of that," she says.

"I'd do it again in a heartbeat. I feel like I've gone full circle. This is completing my life because when I left the Navy, I felt that I had unfinished business. When this job fell into my lap, I just thought, 'wow.'" ←





Sarpeye Barracks - The  
51 FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND



# INDIGENOUS VETERANS' CEREMONY

**RIGHT:** Marsat Ketchell joined the Navy at 15, serving from 1970-1996. Despite being nearly the smallest in the division, he would stand up for other Indigenous sailors.

## A proud warrior legacy

 **Belinda Crossman**

### WARRIOR BY BIRTH

Marsat Ketchell was born from warriors.

Almost all Torres Strait Islander men enlisted during WWII, and Marsat – who was “born and bred” on Thursday Island (Waibene) – grew up listening to his grandfathers’ and uncles’ war stories.

“We spoke about their service in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion (TSLIB), and what they went through,” he recalls.

“The TSLIB were the first all-Indigenous soldiers to form a battalion in Australia. We try and keep that legacy going. They’re warriors by birth. That’s just how we are; we’re proud when we put the uniform on and get ready for battle. That’s how we grew up.”

While Marsat’s father served in the Army during the Malaya conflict, Marsat had his sights set on the Navy.

“From my front yard, we saw ships on their way to and from Vietnam. I was exposed to warships nearly every day. So that’s when I made up my mind.”

### 26 YEARS OF SERVICE

Marsat joined the Navy at 15, serving from 1970-1996.

As a fresh recruit, he was no stranger to teenage taunts – racist and otherwise, but he countered them with quickfire humour and by proving his worth.



*“The TSLIB were the first all-Indigenous soldiers to form a battalion in Australia. We try and keep that legacy going. They’re warriors by birth. That’s just how we are; we’re proud when we put the uniform on and get ready for battle. That’s how we grew up.”*

“Us Indigenous boys were quick off the mark,” he says. “I always waited until there was a crowd.”

“Then I’d say, ‘Remember you called me this?’ – mainly to put him down, but also to teach what this meant to us and how we felt about it.”

“I guess that’s when I started to stand up for Indigenous sailors and veterans, even though I was nearly the smallest in the division in size.”

Working primarily with weapons and explosives as a Naval gunner, Marsat served in a range of roles around Australia and overseas – deploying to Vietnam on board HMAS *Sydney* and HMAS *Vampire*, clearing WWII ordnance in Papua New Guinea, training counter-piracy staff in the Philippines, working on patrol boats, and training guards for visiting dignitaries on HMAS *Cerberus*.

For six months he served on HMS *Collingwood* in the UK, where he trained other Commonwealth forces and was attached directly to the royal family when they visited County Hampshire.

“I couldn’t believe it – for a boy from the Torres Strait to be over

there,” he says. “That was a proud moment.”

Among his other career highlights were reporting directly to the Minister for Defence – “a big, big thing for a bloke who came out of the scrub” – and travelling the country recruiting and retaining both Indigenous and non-Indigenous personnel.

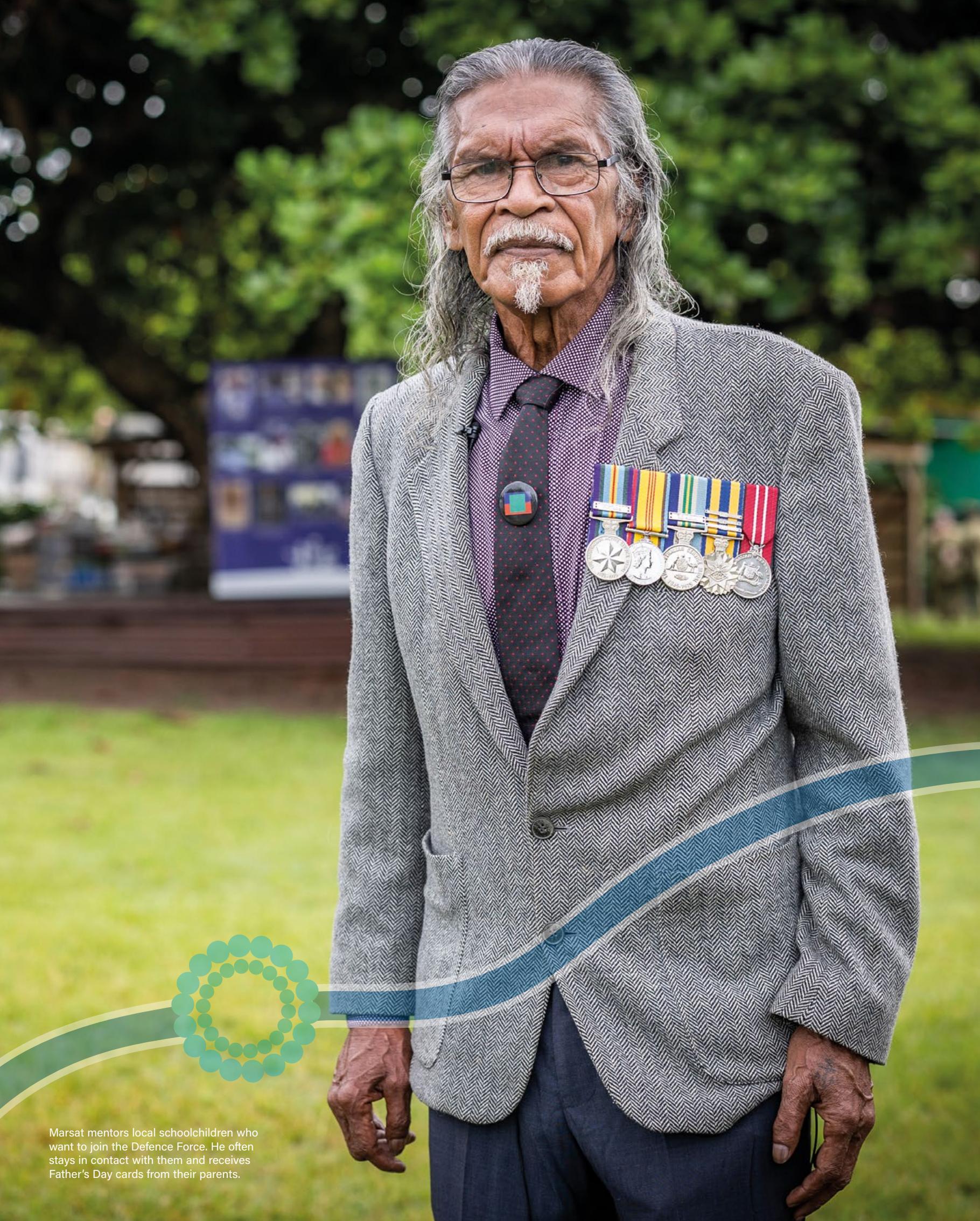
“I once read a quote from the colonial days by a NSW Governor: ‘We must Discipline these Savages,’” Marsat says. “I took the opportunity in this appointment to *Savage the Discipline* through intense cultural awareness and orientation.”

Today, in addition to his work with Queensland Health, Marsat mentors local schoolchildren who want to join the Defence Force, and remains close to those he recruited or mentored years ago.

“The young ones in the Navy stay in touch with me all the time, from what merits and appointments they get, to debriefing with me, thanking me or just letting me know what they’re up to, which is good,” he says.

“I think I’m ‘Uncle’ to about 100 non-Indigenous kids and probably





Marsat mentors local schoolchildren who want to join the Defence Force. He often stays in contact with them and receives Father's Day cards from their parents.

# INDIGENOUS VETERANS' CEREMONY

**RIGHT:** This photo of Marsat, right, was taken at HMAS Cerberus sometime in the late 1980s or early 1990s.



*“There was this sense of denial in exposing that we were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, but we’re all one little happy family now. There’s a much better working relationship amongst the non-Indigenous and Indigenous personnel in the Navy and the Defence Force.”*



godfather to about six. They stay in touch with me and I get Father’s Day cards from their parents. It makes me feel that I’ve done something worthwhile.”

## A SENSE OF PRIDE

Through his recruitment role, Marsat also played a key part in encouraging service members to identify themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

“Through a signal that I sent out to all ships and establishments, I think another 50 or 60 identified and said, ‘I’m this tribe from Tasmania, and my grandmother was this, and my grandfather was that,’” he says.

“They were blond-haired, blue-eyed, as they say, so we didn’t know [their heritage] unless we put it out. Now they’re all together and know of each other. There’s maybe 100 of them that identify.”

Marsat says it was a different story in the past.

“There was this sense of denial in exposing that we were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, but we’re all one little happy family now. There’s a much better working relationship amongst the non-Indigenous and Indigenous personnel in the Navy and the Defence Force.

“It gives [Indigenous personnel] that sense of pride, which I always promoted throughout my service – pride in being who we are. And we’ll win things through merit; we’ve just got to do what we have to do.”

## A MAN OF PRINCIPLE

To Marsat, the meaning of service comes down to duty – to both his forebears and his country.

“After listening to the yarns of our elders who served in either Vietnam, Korea or the Second World War, you felt that sense of obligation to honour the thousands of Indigenous people who served and are still serving and sacrificing for our nation.

“But more importantly, I felt a sense of responsibility to the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula area of Cape York. Australia is my land, the Torres Strait is my seaway and land, and I’ll play my part in that. It’s about my Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait) sovereignty.

“Throughout my career again as a combatant, I observed and applied the principle of L-O-R-E and L-A-W. One was my cultural lore – ‘Tag Mauki Mauki-Teterr Mauki Mauki, Adleh Ged Mimi Kak,’ which translates as, ‘Do not touch or take anything from my land, do not walk on my land, or there will be consequences. It is the lore that Koiki Mabo presented to the High Court in the Mabo Case – the lore of Malo.

“That sort of fitted into my work and Naval traditional law, our Naval gunnery motto being ‘Si Vis Pacem-Para Bellum,’ which basically means ‘If you desire peace, prepare for war.’”

These principles guided Marsat throughout his Navy career.

“Ethically, that was me. I never strayed away from that. Even as a civilian, I use it in my family life and my work,” he says.

“It’s been a long road – 26 years. But I enjoyed every minute of it.”

## SHARING THE TRUTH

When invited to deliver the keynote speech at the 2023 Indigenous

Veterans’ Ceremony, Marsat was “blown away.”

“I was humbled to be representing Indigenous service men and women of Queensland and their families at such a significant occasion,” he says.

“It was an opportunity to share my story and to share the truth – that in the past, even though Indigenous and some non-Indigenous personnel and veterans were not equally treated, both during and after their service, we’re still here. We did serve and we’ll continue to serve.”

If there’s one thing Marsat hopes people took away from the ceremony, it’s the importance of culture – “our culture and tradition integrated into the Commonwealth Defence Force culture and tradition.

“We have to marry for good outcomes. For us to be fully operational, in Defence Force terms, we’ve got to understand each other and watch each other’s back.”

Marsat wants to remind every young Indigenous Australian that “they are just good as anybody else in Australia” and capable of achieving whatever they set their minds to.

“I tell them, don’t sell yourself short. You are the storytellers... Tell your story; anything else after that will follow in good stead.” ←

# COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VIETNAM WAR WITHDRAWAL

**VIETNAM** Veterans' Day, 18 August, recognised the invaluable contribution of Australians who served in the Vietnam War. Australia's involvement in the war formally ended in 1973, making 2023 – the 50th anniversary – a particularly important year to commemorate. More than 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam from 1962 to 1973, with some returning for humanitarian operations in 1975. Sadly, 523 died, some 3,000 were wounded or fell ill, and – amidst strong anti-war sentiment – many who returned home were treated unfairly by some members of the community. Vietnam Veterans' Day was a chance for us all to pay the respects that Vietnam veterans were often denied, but always deserved.

To mark the day, Sub Branches and Districts around Queensland held dedicated services and the Australian Government hosted a national 50th anniversary commemorative service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra. It was also broadcast nationally on ABC TV and online.

**VIETNAM  
VETERANS' DAY**

18 August 2023

**50<sup>th</sup>** ANNIVERSARY  
of the end of the Vietnam War

Members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR), just north of the village of Lang Phuoc Hai, beside Route 44 leading to Dat Do. (AWM: EKN/67/0130/VN).

# VIETNAM THROUGH THE LENS OF A VETERAN

*Army veteran and avid photographer Rex Targett shares his memories and photos of the Vietnam War.*

*Courtney Adams*

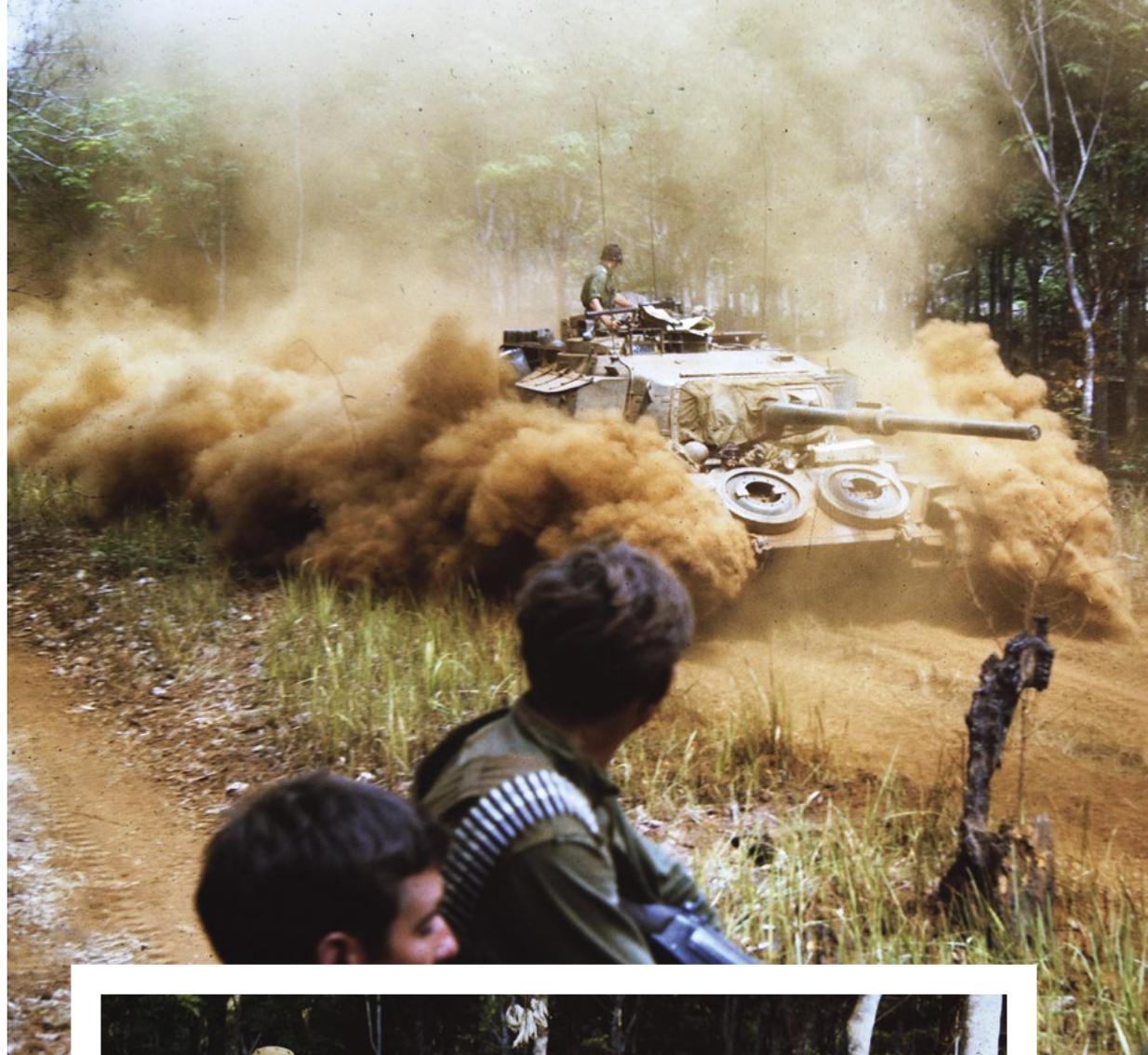
**VIETNAM** War veteran Rex Targett is a self-labelled Tasmanian 'country boy', having worked on farms before following his family's footsteps into enlistment. From 1969 to 1995, he held positions across the Engineering Corps, Catering Corps, Army Reserves, Army Fire Service, and Medical Corps.

## A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

Military service and photography are not typically thought of in the same camp, but both are in Rex's blood. Many of his relatives were soldiers in the Army, and his mother was an enthusiastic photographer who passed her passion down to him.

If you ask Rex what it means to help preserve a piece of Australia's military history via photography, his response is humble.

"When I went to Vietnam in 1969, it was such a new experience, so I felt urged to capture what was happening there," Rex recalls.



"While everyone seemed to have a camera for taking photos with their friends around base, I was interested in the country and loved the people, which is why I took a lot of photos."

## DEPTH OF FIELD

It felt natural to pack a camera while on deployment.

"During that time, I was normally attached to the Armoured Corps,

so we would often go out to the bush and bring as much as we needed with us. We used to go out and see the locals, and being a country boy, I felt I could relate to them," Rex says.

Rex's experiences in these villages form the backdrop of many of his photos. The resulting collection is an authentic but sobering illustration of life in Vietnam during the war.

**ABOVE:** Vietnam veteran Rex Targett took many photos during the war – both of fellow soldiers and local people he came into contact with.



knew we'd have extra rations, which I'd have to give them to let me take a photo. We had to poke holes in the tins so they would be eaten straight away and not end up in enemy hands."

#### A FOCUS ON FRIENDSHIP

Despite capturing difficult moments through his lens, Rex also recorded instances of camaraderie and mateship on base. A picture with childhood friend, Bobby Laird, has since become a family favourite.

"When I arrived at Nui Dat, I was shown the tent where I was going to live and Bobby, my childhood next-door neighbour, was there," Rex recalls. "It was a big surprise, and I was so pleased."

Decades later, many of these photos would be shared by his family with the Australian public.

"On the last night before I left Vietnam, I was lucky enough to be at base. Of course, I took the camera and took photos as I said goodbye to my mates. Some of those photos have been displayed and I'm pleased about that, because otherwise they'd be sitting in a cupboard, and nobody would have seen them," Rex says.

#### REFLECTING ON A SIGNIFICANT CHAPTER

Today, Rex can be found pottering around his garden in Tasmania. He has just one picture from his time in Vietnam on display in his home.

"The photo is of a little girl holding a younger brother or sister. They were kids we had to move. I put it up to remind me of how lucky we are in this country; we've got nothing to complain about." ←

**OPPOSITE:** Rex Targett took this photo of a tank in action in Vietnam in 1969.

**BELOW:** Local kids in Vietnam during the war in 1969. Photo by Rex Targett.

"We'd mostly see kids and women because all the men had gone, and I could feel how disruptive and terrible it was for them," he laments. "We were told when we were deployed to try and win people over, so I tried to do the right thing by showing them friendship."

Meeting the local people was an eye-opening part of Rex's time in the Army, but the harsh reality of war was ever-present.

"I feel most emotional about moving those people. We had to relocate them to a place where they could not support the enemy, but I felt sorry for them having to be moved away from their homes.

"The kids were very smart; they



**Point and Shoot exhibition:** Rex Targett's photos were displayed as part of the 2022 Point and Shoot photography exhibition. This year, the exhibition will travel to Brisbane on 13-15 October and Townsville on 20-22 October 2023. Learn more at [pointandshoot.online](http://pointandshoot.online)

# Remembering the forgotten war 70 years on

**KOREAN** Veterans' Day on 27 July marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice that ended the Korean War. More than 17,000 Australians served in the Korean War, supporting South Korea alongside 21 other allied nations in defence of freedom and peace. Tragically, some 340 Australians lost their lives, more than 1,200 were wounded, 29 were taken prisoner, and more than 40 remain missing in action. These efforts went largely unnoticed in Australia, causing added suffering for many who served in the so-called 'forgotten war'. On 27 July, we remembered the invaluable contribution of our Korean War veterans.



**KOREAN** | **70<sup>th</sup>**  
**VETERANS' DAY** | **ANNIVERSARY**  
**27 JULY 2023**

# SOLDIER OF THE FORGOTTEN WAR

*Matthew Rennie OAM survived a rocket attack, and a bullet to the head, while fighting in the Korean War. But he doesn't regret one bit of it.*

*Belinda Crossman*



**MATTHEW** Rennie was just 19 when he joined the Korean War effort, defending South Korea against the invading North and its communist allies.

The newly trained soldier arrived in Pusan, South Korea, in 1952, joining 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) on the front line for 13 weeks.

"The first night I was there, there was a rocket attack. I thought it was very spectacular. But the bloke I was relieving, he's pushing me into a foxhole saying, 'Pray, you so-and-so, pray!! I thought it was a great fireworks display. I was very naïve; I had no idea what all this was about,'" Matthew recalls.

Matthew's naivety wouldn't last

long. As his battalion moved on to different positions, the reality of war soon set in.

"When the Chinese put in an attack, it wasn't two or three; you'd have 200 charging in," he says. "And the noise was horrendous – the shell, the mortars, the machine guns, everything blazing over. My God, the winters – it wasn't unusual to hit 26 degrees below freezing."

## A BULLET TO THE HEAD

Matthew is lucky to be alive after the night of 24 May 1953.

"The Turks were having a battle alongside our position, and the Chinese weren't making any ground on them. So they were trying to find a weak spot in the line," Matthew recalls. "We happened to be the ones they found, and someone said, 'Here they come.' That was the last thing I remember."

Matthew was shot in the back of the head. The bullet pierced his helmet but somehow only grazed his skull.

**ABOVE:** Matthew Rennie OAM was just 19 when he joined the Korean War effort.

**LEFT:** Ipswich Soldiers' Memorial Hall Museum.

**OPPOSITE:** The Korea, Malaya, Borneo Memorial at ANZAC Square in Brisbane is dedicated to those Australians and their Allies who died or suffered as a result of their service in Korea (1950-1953), Malaya (1948-1966) and Borneo (1962-1966).





**ABOVE:**  
Matthew looks  
around Ipswich  
Soldiers'  
Memorial Hall  
Museum.

Having fatally shot the enemy shooter, Matthew's best mate Frank set about bandaging Matthew's wound, tearing a field dressing with his mouth – and losing his false teeth in the process. "They went onto the

ground, and he just put 'em back in his mouth," Matthew says.

Sadly, Frank later suffered poisoning from the fertiliser in the soil. "He told everyone 'til the day he died that I tried to poison him," Matthew laughs.

"We were very close. When he died, it left a void in my life because we never lost contact over 70 years. I still miss him today."

#### **THE AFTERMATH**

Reading notes from a book he bought at the UN headquarters, Matthew details the devastation wreaked by the 'forgotten war'.

"There were two capital cities, 50 towns and 12,000 villages destroyed," he says. "Two and a half million civilians dead; three and a half million homeless."

Australia suffered more than 1,600 casualties, and many veterans, including Matthew, continued to suffer long after the war.

"I have problems sleeping. I have a noise problem. I can't stand being in a crowd, like going to a football match.



"The other thing is the medical problems. We used DDT powder – one of the most insidious poisons ever manufactured and put out to public use – like talcum powder under the arms and groin. Dieldrin was used to kill mice and rats. Creosote was put around all the toilets. Everything used around us was carcinogenic. That had a bearing on a lot of the problems Korean War veterans had up until their death."

**ALL BUT FORGOTTEN**

After 12 months in Korea, Matthew – like many Korean War veterans – returned to Australia almost as if nothing had happened.

"We were given a leave pass and told, 'go home.' That was it," he says. "There was never any 'job well done,' pat on the back or welcome home parade. Nothing. We just weren't valued for what we were doing."

"We weren't invited to join the RSL because the American president said at the beginning of the war, 'It's like a United Nations police action.' I was told to get out of the Sydney RSL Club in 1954."

In South Korea, however, Australian veterans are honoured as heroes.



Matthew explains that South Korea's government has gone to many lengths to support Australian veterans. As well as helping fund Australia's first Korean War memorial, they've provided Christmas luncheons, care packages, and even comfortable shoes for ageing feet.

"Although I always say my contribution to Korea was very small, they say, 'If you weren't there,

the Chinese could have come through that gap.' They appreciate what we did, and they go all out to make sure we're welcome."

South Koreans will often give up their seats or offer generous discounts for veterans like Matthew.

"It doesn't matter where you go, they treat you like an exalted person, and I was only a private soldier."

Despite having no connection to the WWI armistice remembered by many countries on Remembrance Day, South Koreans pause on that day each year to honour their Korean War allies.

"At 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, everybody stops and turns to Pusan, where the United Nations cemeteries are," Matthew says. "It really touches me that they would do that for us."

**REVISITING KOREA, 70 YEARS ON**

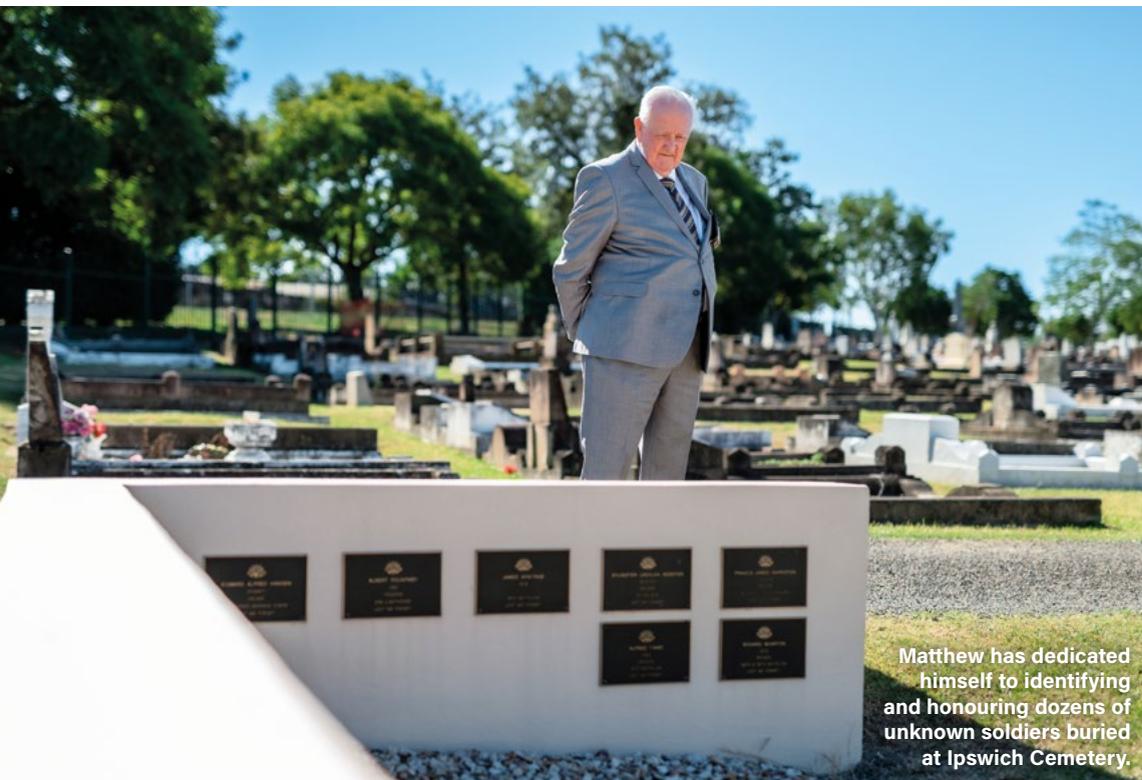
This year, Matthew returned to South Korea – courtesy of their government – for the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice. It was the first time

**ABOVE:** Matthew remembers his Korean War service while looking at exhibits in the Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Ipswich.





Ipswich Cemetery.



Matthew has dedicated himself to identifying and honouring dozens of unknown soldiers buried at Ipswich Cemetery.

he had been there for Korean Veterans' Day.

"It was an emotional time, visiting the graves of my mates there, but it was very important to me.

"It means a lot because when I left Korea, there was nothing. Seoul was destroyed. If you'd seen the women and children in Pusan, and the refugees, you wouldn't wish it on anyone.

"Each time I go back to Korea, I'm amazed at the changes. What they've done has left us far behind, and they say it's only because of what I did that they've got it. When I think we were part of that, I feel real proud of my service there.

"The Korean War was a big part of my life. It made me a man; it gave me a purpose. I don't regret my service one bit, and I'd do it again if I had to."

### **"A CREDIT TO THEIR COUNTRY"**

Matthew has never stopped supporting his fellow veterans. After 11 years in the Army, he's served as State President of the Korea Veterans Association, spent many years as a welfare officer and Legatee, and dedicated himself to identifying and honouring dozens of unknown soldiers buried at Ipswich Cemetery.

He'll never forget the ones he served with, either.

"Just because Korean veterans were forgotten, that doesn't mean we should keep forgetting them," he says.

"Korean Veterans' Day means everything to me. I remember Frank, McDuff, and Jimmy and all. I honour all these blokes. They were great soldiers – some of the finest men Australia produced, I reckon. They were a credit to their uniform. They were a credit to their country." ←

# A sail down memory lane

*Four decades after serving in HMAS Vampire, Navy veteran Roger Collins shares the nostalgia and exhilaration of sailing aboard her once more.*

*✍ Courtney Adams*





**ABOVE:** Navy veteran Roger Collins, second from right, was joined by three other Navy recruit veterans on HMAS *Vampire*'s latest voyage. They are pictured approaching Sydney Harbour Bridge.

**CURRUMBIN** Palm Beach RSL Sub Branch Secretary and District Deputy President Roger Collins recently experienced the voyage of a lifetime. After serving on HMAS *Vampire* from 1964-1965, he returned to her deck in January to 'crew' the Daring-class destroyer back from Garden Island to her berth in Darling Harbour.

**LIFE AT SEA**

In January 1963, Roger joined the Navy as a 16-year-old Junior Recruit. After completing his training, which included time serving on HMAS *Rushcutter*, he was drafted to HMAS *Vampire*.

"You could say our classes of junior recruits were an experiment at the time, as boy sailors hadn't been sent to sea in this category since 1923 on the HMAS *Tingira*," Roger explains.

At sea, Roger worked on diving, infiltration patrols, shipboard maintenance and regular exercises with other military units. He forged

unbreakable friendships and gained valuable life skills. Although it was challenging at times, he looks back on the experience fondly.

"My mates and I were basically boys going to operate in war zones, so we quickly became familiar with what was required to keep a ship running 24 hours per day. It made us able to cope with life at a young age," Roger says.

"It was a very happy time for me and, I'm sure, all my shipmates. The Navy was a disciplined process and environment, which I personally enjoyed and am grateful for."

**THE JEWEL OF THE EAST**

Roger's positive experience in the Navy can be attributed to his time on HMAS *Vampire*, known as the 'Jewel of the East' in her heyday. She served as one of Australia's last big gun ships, and one of our first all-welded steel hull vessels.

Commissioned for 27 years, *Vampire* sailed over 800,000

nautical miles, inherited battle honours for wartime services in WWII and earned battle honours for her service in the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation.

"I've spoken to a number of sailors and ex-sailors over the years, and if they served on *Vampire* they have all felt that it was probably the best ship they served in. She was truly formidable," Roger says.

*Vampire* sailed around Asia from 1964-1965 as part of the Far East Strategic Reserve, which formed part of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation. The Malaysia-Indonesia Confrontation commenced in this time, sadly claiming 23 Australian lives.

"The Confrontation was very political and to this day there's not a lot of knowledge or information out there, because it was recorded as an undeclared war," Roger explains.

"HMAS *Vampire*'s involvement included patrolling different areas



**LEFT:** Inside the HMAS Vampire.

**BELOW:** Pictured in front of the HMAS Vampire.

around Malaysia, Borneo, the Malacca and Sunda Straits to intercept and search boats for possible infiltrators coming from Indonesia.

"In 1965 we were also part of the escort of HMAS Sydney with 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) into Vietnam."

**A LESSON IN LEADERSHIP**

If HMAS Vampire formed the setting for this positive chapter of Roger's life, then serving under the leadership of Captain David Hamer was its highlight. Awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in the Battle of Lingayen Gulf during WWII, Captain Hamer ran a tight ship but always looked after his crew. He would later become a Federal Member of Parliament and advocate for Defence veteran benefits.

"Captain Hamer had a big responsibility with 60 of us young fellows on board, looking after our welfare and operating in war zones while ensuring Vampire operated efficiently," Roger says.

"She was a good, happy ship due to his leadership, so much so that we won the Gloucester Cup for topping four out of seven divisions of efficiency, and the Pakistan Shield for fleet sporting success."

When Roger joined the Queensland Police Service later in his career, he endeavoured to

model his leadership style on that of Captain Hamer's.

**A VOYAGE TO REMEMBER**

HMAS Vampire was decommissioned in 1986 then loaned in 1990 (and gifted in 1997) to the National Maritime Museum at Sydney's Darling Harbour. The Museum is now responsible for her maintenance, periodically cold moving her to Garden Island's dry dock to be refitted and painted. On

her latest journey, Roger and three other junior recruit Navy veterans were invited on board.

"I felt so fortunate to 'crew' Vampire back from Garden Island to her berth in Darling Harbour. Being back on board for this shift was fantastic. We were treated like VIPs, and I loved every minute of it," Roger says.

With free rein on deck and nostalgia brimming among shipmates, this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity brought back many memories for Roger. He also made new memories, one of which was a stand-out.

"Sailing under the Sydney Harbour Bridge on board Vampire was an extraordinary experience, and one I never thought I would experience in my lifetime. Hopefully, in another five years I'll be able to do the next refit cold move as well."

Roger thanks National Maritime Museum Fleet Manager Scott Grant for facilitating this wonderful experience. "←

*"I felt so fortunate to 'crew' Vampire back from Garden Island to her berth in Darling Harbour. Being back on board for this shift was fantastic. We were treated like VIPs, and I loved every minute of it."*



# TRAUMA RECOVERY PROGRAM PROVEN TO SUPPORT VETERANS FACING PTSD



**ABOVE:** Former Army Sergeant and graduate of the REBOOT Trauma Recovery Program Sean de Gelder served in the military for 14 years and undertook multiple deployments to Timor Leste.

*To propel a brighter future for veterans and their families, RSL Queensland has partnered with PTSD Resurrected since 2019 to deliver the REBOOT Trauma Recovery Program.*

**THE** REBOOT Trauma Recovery Program is a four-day educational program tailored by veterans for current and ex-serving ADF personnel. The program is designed to bring about practical, long-term solutions for those navigating service-related trauma by exploring strategies to tackle symptoms that come as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Former Army Sergeant and graduate of the REBOOT Trauma Recovery Program Sean de Gelder served in the military for 14 years and undertook multiple deployments to Timor Leste.

Upon discharging from the Army in 2013 to follow a career in fuel operations, Sean later found himself battling with the symptoms of PTSD and substance abuse before he was officially diagnosed in 2017.

Searching for answers and struggling to reconcile the impacts of his time in service, Sean said completing the program helped both himself and his wife better understand trauma – and how to manage it – and find tools like communication and forgiveness, which have helped them through some dark places.

“In 2011, my wife and I decided to end our then five-year marriage. At the time, I was not diagnosed, in bad shape, and couldn’t provide emotionally for our then two-year-old,” Sean said.

“Sometime later, I reconciled with my wife, and we remarried. I was now diagnosed, and we came across the REBOOT program.

“We both attended together, and our marriage has never been better – it’s now been eight years since we re-married.”

Sean said the REBOOT program helped him find purpose and forgive himself and others.

“The program facilitators’ lived experience meant participants felt understood and were able to relate to their stories of trauma and struggle,” he said.

“Seeing how they managed



and coped gave me hope that I could too.”

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Tailored to instil hope, healing and purpose, PTSD Resurrected delivers an intervention for current and former serving ADF personnel and their partners, or close network, who are experiencing feelings of anxiety or questions regarding their service that can lead to internal conflict or moral injury.

### THE EVALUATION

To examine the measurable outcomes of the REBOOT program for veterans and their families, RSL Queensland recently commissioned a program evaluation with Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF).

The GMRF evaluation confirmed the impact the REBOOT program has for veterans. Findings revealed participants reported a 20% improvement in symptoms of psychological distress at the end of the program, with a further 20% improvement at follow-up.

Participants also reported that levels of perceived social support improved by 20% at post-program, with changes maintained at follow-up. Additionally, participants' sense of wellbeing increased by 27% at the completion of the program.

Overall, the communal aspect of the program was found to be extremely helpful, enabling those involved to feel deeply understood, supported and less alone.

Offered online or in-person, the PTSD Resurrected REBOOT Trauma Recovery Program is free for veterans, thanks to the support of RSL Queensland. ←

**LEFT:** Sean de Gelder in East Timor.

**BELOW LEFT:** Sean de Gelder conducts a rugby league coaching clinic with local kids at Dili Stadium while on deployment to East Timor in 2010. Image: Defence Australia.

*“The program facilitators’ lived experience meant participants felt understood and were able to relate to their stories of trauma and struggle. Seeing how they managed and coped gave me hope that I could too.”*



For more information or to sign up, visit [rslqld.org/find-help/ptsd-resurrected](https://rslqld.org/find-help/ptsd-resurrected)

GALLIPOLI  
MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

# THE LINK BETWEEN PTSD, GUT HEALTH AND MEDICAL INVESTIGATIONS

*It's common for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to experience gastrointestinal symptoms. However, what you might not know is that they also have a much higher rate of investigative medical procedures compared to veterans without PTSD.*

## The research shows:

- Veterans with PTSD access medical health services to a greater extent than those without PTSD.
- Veterans with PTSD were up to 81% more likely to undergo upper gastrointestinal procedures than veterans without PTSD.



**NEW** research out of Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) has found that veterans with PTSD were up to 81% more likely to undergo upper gastrointestinal investigations than veterans without PTSD.

However, in many instances these investigations are unable to detect any physical cause of their symptoms, and veterans are then sent back for ongoing tests and procedures – often without answers. This can lead to further stress and frustration.

Upper abdominal health issues include gastroesophageal reflux, peptic ulcer disease and fatty liver disease, which can have symptoms such as pain, nausea, reflux and vomiting, and usually require investigation with endoscopy or ultrasound.

In the study, Dr Rebecca Mellor, Senior Research Fellow at GMRF, working alongside Professor Darrell Crawford, Director of Research, compared upper gastrointestinal endoscopy and abdominal ultrasound rates in veterans with and without PTSD.

“PTSD is commonly associated with other gastrointestinal conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), so we were interested to see if there was also a connection between PTSD and upper abdominal investigations for these conditions in Australian veterans,” Dr Mellor says.

“To diagnose the cause of these symptoms, medical practitioners often need to investigate using upper endoscopy or abdominal ultrasound. However, when these procedures fail to detect a physical cause, veterans with PTSD and gut symptoms

are often repeatedly investigated, sometimes unnecessarily, as they search for a diagnosis.”

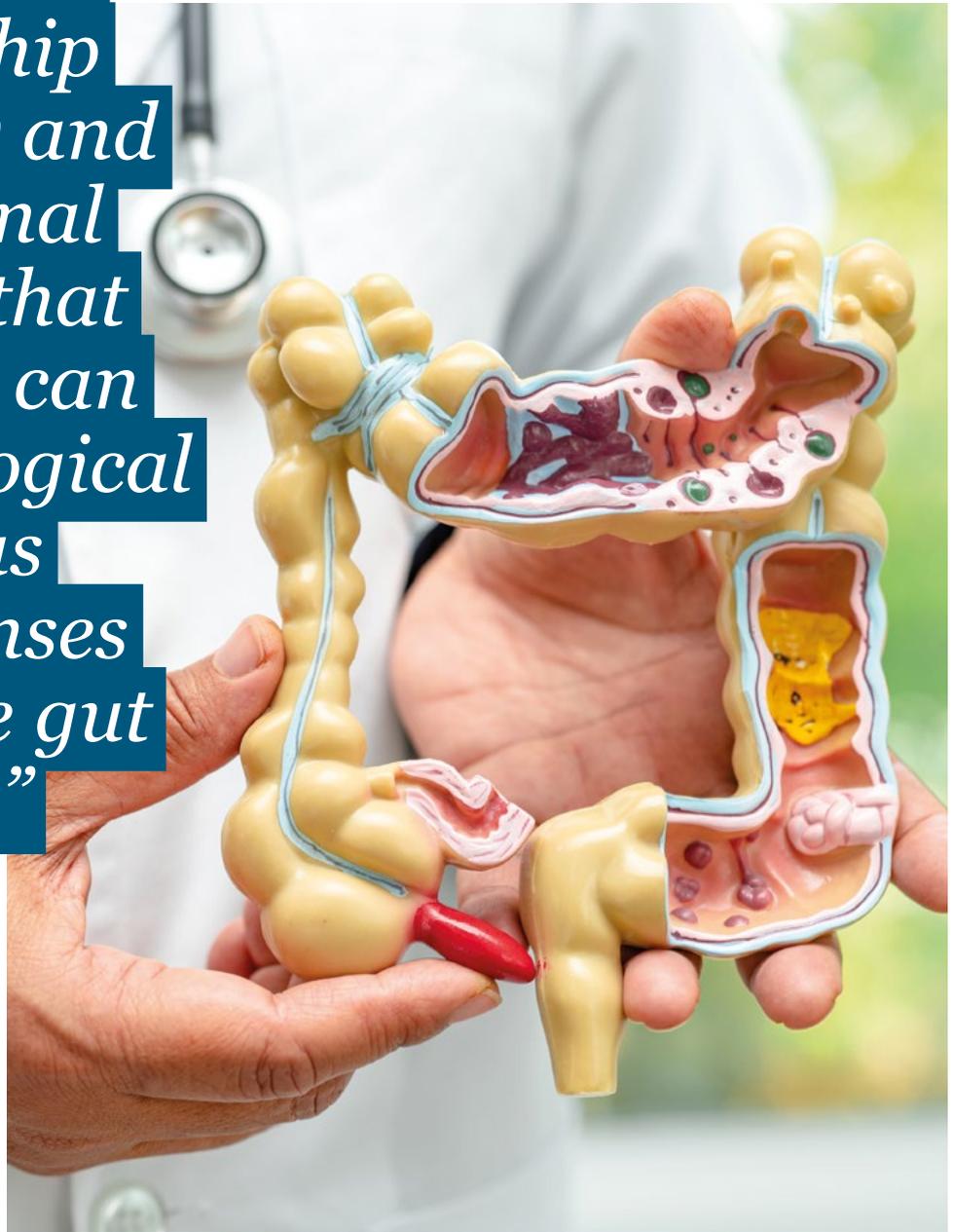
This research is part of a larger study around veterans with PTSD utilising health care. The study aims to inform and educate veterans that some physical abdominal complaints can be symptoms of PTSD. This can help veterans feel more secure in realising that their doctor has investigated appropriately, and repeated medical testing may not always be needed.

“A possible explanation for the relationship between PTSD and gastrointestinal conditions is that chronic stress can trigger physiological and nervous system responses which produce gut symptoms,” Dr Mellor says.

“The inability to find the physical source of the symptom may, in

*“New research out of Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) has found that veterans with PTSD were up to 81% more likely to undergo upper gastrointestinal investigations than veterans without PTSD.”*

*“A possible explanation for the relationship between PTSD and gastrointestinal conditions is that chronic stress can trigger physiological and nervous system responses which produce gut symptoms.”*



part, reflect limited awareness from clinical practitioners of the association between PTSD and gut symptoms.

“We know that trauma-related symptoms are associated with a high likelihood of also having gastrointestinal problems such as inflammatory bowel disease, which do not always have a physical cause that can be identified. Therefore, these symptoms don’t respond well to medical treatments.”

The good news is that psychological interventions such as mindfulness based stress reduction have been shown to reduce gut symptoms as well as

help with depression and anxiety in veterans with both PTSD and IBS. Veterans may prefer to explore these psychological interventions to improve their symptoms.

“We also know that lifestyle factors such as obesity, smoking,

excess alcohol consumption, poor diet and physical inactivity are risk factors for gastrointestinal health issues. By improving both physical health behaviours and addressing psychological health, quality of life can be improved,” Dr Mellor says. ←

This research was funded by GMRF. To learn more about the research conducted by GMRF or to support the work of the Foundation, visit [gallipoliresearch.com.au](http://gallipoliresearch.com.au).



SCAN TO READ THE RESEARCH ARTICLE



# MATES 4 MATES

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
FOR OUR DEFENCE COMMUNITY

## Our impact in 2022.

FIND OUT HOW WE ACTIVELY CHANGED LIVES.

- + **MATES 4 MATES**  
**WE HAVE RELOCATED TO NORTH BRISBANE.**  
A NEW PURPOSE-BUILT CENTRE OPENS IN STAFFORD.

## Stuart Park officially opens.

THE TOP END WELCOMES MORE VETERAN SUPPORT.

- + **SEEKING SUPPORT FOR SUICIDE AWARENESS.**  
TAKING THAT FIRST STEP TO GET HELP.

POGNAT  
**10** Years  
OF MATES

# A message from Emma.

So far, 2023 has been a year of achieving milestones and growth across the organisation, with new sites opening in Darwin (NT), Ipswich (Qld) and Stafford (Qld) allowing us to support even more veterans and families across Australia.

We have recently finalised our annual impact statement, which shows the support Mates4Mates is proud to have provided to veterans and their families in 2022. It is heart-warming to hear the personal stories of veterans and family members who have found recovery, support and mateship through our services.

With over 30,000 occasions of service delivered in 2022, it highlights the extensive hard work the Mates4Mates team puts in every day within our centres, in outreach locations and online. I strongly encourage you to take the time to watch the video featured on our website, which shares the stories of four clients who have been positively impacted by the support and camaraderie they've found at Mates4Mates.

It's stories like these that make me incredibly proud of the role we play within the veteran community, and that our continued growth will ensure we can help more veterans, more often.

The opening of the RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Stafford, North Brisbane saw the Mates4Mates



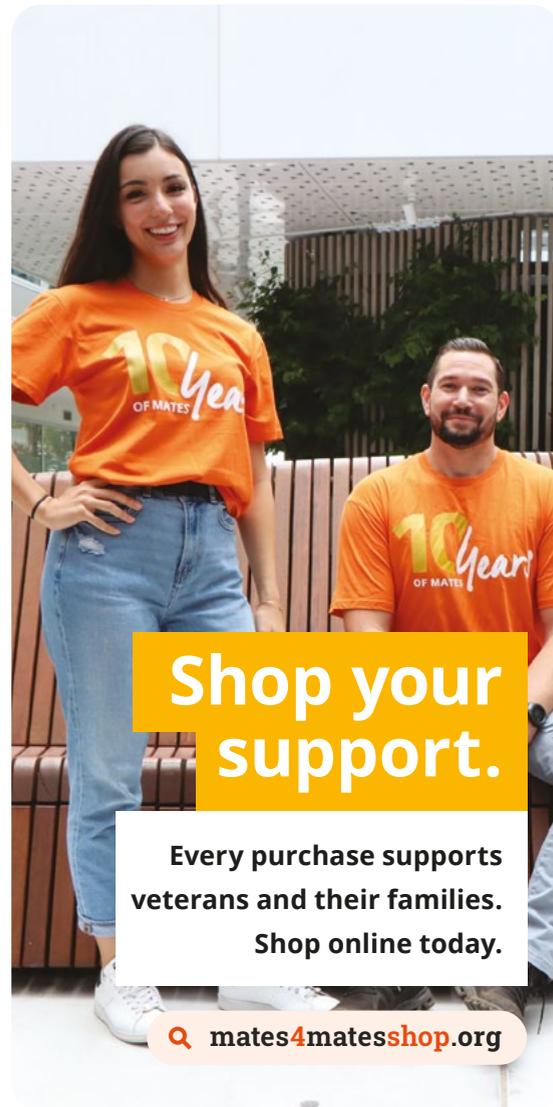
Brisbane team relocate to a brand-new, purpose-built centre, providing the same services our community knows and loves, alongside other health and veteran service providers. This centre makes services easier for veterans and their family members to access, with everything under one roof.

While there are more details about this new centre in Stafford on page 6, I also want to take a moment to say thank you to those who joined us at the official opening of the Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Stuart Park, Darwin earlier in the year.

It was an honour to open the centre alongside a number of distinguished guests, local support organisations and Defence leaders, including Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh. There is a range of wonderful pictures from the event on page 4.

I hope you enjoy this collection of updates and stories as we continue to provide support to veterans and their families impacted by service.

**Emma**  
General Manager of  
Mates4Mates



Shop your support.

Every purchase supports veterans and their families. Shop online today.

[mates4matesshop.org](https://mates4matesshop.org)

Make the call that makes the difference.

Contact Mates4Mates to find out about our services, how you can access support or get involved.

[mates4mates.org](https://mates4mates.org)

1300 4 MATES

Keep up to date, follow us:



Mates4Mates supports current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, and their families, who have been impacted by their service. We are an initiative established by RSL Queensland. If you would like to contribute to our magazine please contact Mates4Mates Marketing team via [marketing@mates4mates.org](mailto:marketing@mates4mates.org) or call 1300 462 837.

# Changing lives in 2022.

Mates4Mates actively changed lives in 2022, hitting new milestones as we provided support to veterans and their families impacted by service.

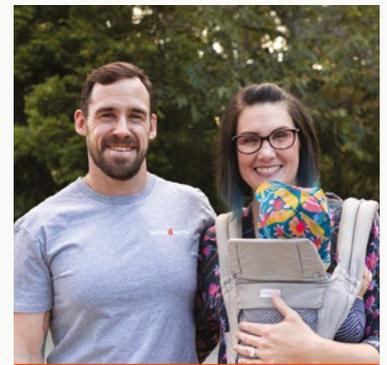
Since Mates4Mates was launched in 2013 by RSL Queensland, almost 10,000 veterans and family members have accessed our services through centres across Australia, outreach activities, and online.

Over the last 10 years, Mates4Mates has been there every step of the way, bringing together the veteran community and their families from across the country.

With 30,000 occasions of service delivered last year, in person and online, our 2022 Impact Video captures the stories of four veterans and family members who have found a way forward with the help of our services.

The veterans and their families had the opportunity in this short film to explore how they have found mateship and a renewed sense of purpose by accessing different Mates4Mates services.

Although each has their own unique experience transitioning out of the Defence Force, Mates4Mates has proven to be a safe, accepting and approachable space for these veterans and family members to seek support and engage with others in the community who understand the challenges they may be facing.



Visit [mates4mates.org](https://mates4mates.org) to watch our 2022 Impact Video and listen to these Mates' stories of the connections they have made and how their lives have changed since joining Mates4Mates.

2022 was a year full of incredible outcomes achieved by the community built by our staff, veterans and families accessing Mates4Mates services, and supporters of those within the veteran community. Thank you to everyone who has played a role in providing vital services to veterans and their families impacted by service.

In 2022, we had **over 30,000 occasions of service:**

-  Over **7,000** occasions of physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services
-  Over **3,700** occasions of mental health and wellbeing services
-  Over **2,600** occasions of Skills for Recovery programs
-  Over **17,000** occasions of social connection





# Top End welcomes more veteran support.

After successfully delivering services in the Northern Territory since 2021, it was a momentous day at the official opening of the new Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Stuart Park.

With a range of distinguished guests and local veteran support organisations invited to the formal ceremony, Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Matt Keogh officially opened the centre alongside Mates4Mates General Manager, Emma Whitehead.

Located at 39 Stuart Highway in Stuart Park, the new Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre includes mental health and physical recovery clinical services, a gym, a veterans' lounge, as well as space for Mates4Mates social connection activities.

Over the past 10 years, Mates4Mates has served almost 10,000 veterans and family members, with almost 600 Darwin locals having accessed our services. Emma Whitehead highlighted that the new centre would allow for greater

access to essential support and services for Defence personnel, veterans and families in the Northern Territory.

"We are committed to creating spaces where veterans and families can access a range of mental health, wellbeing, social connection and physical services and support," Emma said.

Mates4Mates acknowledges the \$5 million grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs to develop this Veterans' and Families' Hub in Darwin building upon the fantastic services delivered by Mates4Mates in the Northern Territory.

"We know the importance of this new centre for the community, and it was an exciting milestone in the history of Mates4Mates to officially open it," Emma added.



"We are committed to creating spaces where veterans and families can access a range of mental health, wellbeing, social connection and physical programs to help their recovery journey,"

— Mates4Mates General Manager, Emma Whitehead.



The Mates4Mates Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre in Darwin is open from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

To contact the team, please call **1300 4 MATES (62 837)** or email **[vfwc.darwin@mates4mates.org](mailto:vfwc.darwin@mates4mates.org)**.

# Running to support Mates4Mates.

Mates4Mates is heading back to Bridge to Brisbane on 15 October 2023, and we'd love for our supporters to get involved!

Sign up for Bridge to Brisbane 2023 today and together we can run, jump, walk or wheel our way to the finish line. By choosing to fundraise for Mates4Mates, you will help us to support veterans and their families impacted by service. Head to [bridgetobrisbane.com.au](https://bridgetobrisbane.com.au).



## Meet a Mate.

Take the time to get to know the veterans and family members who make all the difference at Mates4Mates.

Paul has been accessing Mates4Mates services in the Northern Territory for over 12 months.

### What's your favourite social connection activity?

"Lawn bowls because it's active, fun and gets you out of the office and outdoors."

### Why do you enjoy being a Mate?

"The aspect I enjoy most is the social connection. I have made new friends as well as catching up with old ones, all within the Defence community."



## Veterans' Health Week 2023.

Veterans' Health Week is an annual health promotion initiative centred around supporting the health and wellbeing of veterans and their families.

To support this, Mates4Mates is excited to be offering a range of online and in-person events across Australia, throughout the entire month of October, that focuses on this year's theme: *Mental Wellness Matters*.

There will be something for everyone to enjoy and all events will be free for current and ex-serving Defence members and their families registered with Mates4Mates.

For more information, contact Mates4Mates on **1300 4 MATES (62 837)**.



# Mates4Mates relocates to North Brisbane.

"It's been wonderful to see so many of our regular veterans and family members be able to join us at the new centre in Stafford."

— South East Queensland Regional Manager, Laura Duckworth

The Mates4Mates Brisbane team have now relocated from Milton to Stafford in North Brisbane, co-located within the brand-new RSL Queensland Veteran & Family Wellbeing Centre.

Purpose-built to serve veterans and the wider Defence community, the centre continues to provide the same services that veterans and families knew and loved in Milton.

This includes support services by Mates4Mates psychologists, social workers, counsellors and exercise physiologists; a gym for physical health services; regular social connection activities by our liaison officers; and a veterans' lounge.

With the relocation to Stafford first announced in 2021, Mates4Mates South East Queensland Regional Manager, Laura Duckworth shared how appreciative the team is of the veterans and family members who have been patient during this time.

"It's been wonderful to see so many of our regular veterans and family members join us at the new centre in Stafford," Laura said.

"We've also welcomed new Mates who have found North Brisbane more accessible, allowing us to provide our much-needed services and support to many more members of the veteran community."

You can visit the Mates4Mates Brisbane team at Level 1, 274 Stafford Road in Stafford. To find out more about Mates4Mates services in Brisbane and surrounding regions, contact the team on **1300 4 MATES (62 837)** or **brisbane@mates4mates.org**.



# Seeking support for suicide awareness.

**Suicidal thoughts can be difficult to talk about, but it is important to acknowledge these thoughts if they occur and seek support as soon as possible.**

Up to 3% of Australians reported experiencing suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months and it may be more common than people realise. No matter the nature of the suicidal thoughts and feelings you may experience, it is important to reach out. You are not alone, and help is available.

Suicidal thoughts are thoughts of wanting to end your life. They may include thinking about the ways to end your life, the emotional pain you are feeling, wanting that pain to end, and feeling hopeless and unable to recover from that pain. They can occur at any time but most commonly occur during major life stressors and transitions.

Other signs or concerning behaviours may include:

- withdrawing from friends, family, and social activities
- engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviour, such as increased substance abuse or reckless driving
- having thoughts of being a burden to others and that they would be better off without you
- extreme mood swings, or feelings of unbearable pain.



✍ **Written by Ann-Marie Trinh, Mates4Mates Psychologist**

Those around you may also notice changes in your behaviour including talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide (even in a vague or indirect manner); giving away possessions; or making arrangements (e.g., writing a will) without an apparent reason.

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, the signs listed above, or if those around you express concerns, it's time to ask for help by reaching out to someone supportive and telling them how you are feeling. This could be a crisis helpline, a supportive and trusted friend or family member, or your doctor or mental health professional.

It can be frightening or difficult to take this first step. However, sharing your thoughts and emotions with someone who cares can provide a sense of relief as well as a new perspective, helping you to better understand your thoughts, feelings and reactions.

While Mates4Mates does not provide immediate crisis services, we do provide access to psychologists, counsellors and social workers who specialise in working

## Crisis Support Contacts.

**Open Arms:** 1800 011 046  
**Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14  
**13YARN:** 13 92 76

**Beyond Blue:**  
1300 224 636

**Suicide Call Back Service:**  
1300 659 467

**If you feel you or someone else is at imminent risk of suicidal harm, it is essential to prioritise safety and call emergency services on 000 immediately.**

with Defence Force personnel and their families and can work with you to identify ways to help keep yourself safe.

These clinicians can offer confidential and evidence-based therapy to address the underlying issues contributing to suicidal thoughts and help you develop coping strategies. Reach out today on **1300 4 MATES (62 837)** for a confidential chat.

# MATES4MATES

Here for those  
impacted by service.



## Join Mates4Mates

Find a way forward from  
service-related injuries.

Support for all current and ex-serving Defence Force  
members impacted by service, and their families.

- ✓ Mental health and wellbeing services
- ✓ Physical rehabilitation and wellbeing services
- ✓ Social connection activities
- ✓ Skills-based recovery programs



**Join Mates4Mates**

Register today



# Retracing the ANZAC legend

*For eight young Queenslanders, the 2023 Premier's Anzac Prize tour was an unforgettable journey through history.*

*Belinda Crossman*

**IT** was a history lesson like no other.

In April, eight Queensland high school students embarked on a life-changing journey, retracing the ANZAC legend from London to the Western Front.

The 16-day tour of Europe was part of the 2023 Premier's Anzac Prize, presented in partnership with RSL Queensland and the Queensland Department of Education.

It was an unforgettable opportunity for the students and their teacher chaperones to see first-hand the battlefields of WWI, war graves, memorials and other sites significant to Australia's military history.

From 40 impressive applicants from across the state, this year's prize recipients were selected based on their passion for, and knowledge of, ANZAC history.



As part of the prize, the students undertook ANZAC-related research, a Young Historians' Workshop, community engagement and charitable projects (collectively raising more than \$7,600 for Mates4Mates) before departing for the UK and the Western Front.

#### **LIVING HISTORY**

The 2023 Premier's Anzac Prize tour began in London with visits

to the Churchill War Rooms, the Imperial War Museum, and HMS *Belfast*.

The tour then made its way to key landmarks in France and Belgium, from the Louvre Museum and Palace of Versailles to the 1916 battlefield of Fromelles, where Australia lost 5,533 men during its first action on the Western Front.

Students explored trenches, German bunkers, and the Caves

**RIGHT:** Teacher chaperone Alexandra Cashin visited her great grandfather's war grave.



*"I've learned a lot about myself, and it was really amazing to stand pretty much where my great-great-uncles stood, in the same mud."*

of Naours – a vast underground complex whose walls bear thousands of carvings by Australian and other Allied soldiers of WWI.

Dashiell (Dash) Solomon, whose great-grandfather served in WWI, says the experience "really put into perspective" the events of the war.

"Being there and seeing little bits of shrapnel and bullets in the fields, it really made me realise how recent and relevant this was and still is," fellow student Sarah Ellis agrees.

The group also paid their respects at Australian Memorial Park, VC Corner Cemetery (the only all-Australian cemetery in France), the site of the recently discovered Australian mass grave at Pheasant Wood (Fromelles), and Tyne Cot Cemetery – the largest



**RIGHT:** On day four of the tour the students travelled from London to France on the Eurostar train.



**LEFT:** Performing a short service at the Harefield Anzac Cemetery and War Memorial, London.

“Seeing the battlefields and museums and the stuff they witnessed, it was mind-blowing to see they had to go through all of that,” fellow student Claire Gattera says. “It helped me understand the importance of the care for our veterans and current service people.”

Alison Marsh, a Marsden State High School teacher who chaperoned this year’s tour, says the students came home with “an extraordinary story to tell their friends and family” – and much more.

“They didn’t know each other to begin with, and now they’re lifelong friends,” she says. “Along the way, they developed that whole ANZAC spirit of mateship, courage, loyalty and endurance.” ←

**BELOW:** Students touring a German bunker in Polygon Wood, on day nine of the tour.

Commonwealth war cemetery in the world. Then, on ANZAC Day, the students had the honour of laying a wreath at the Australian National Memorial Dawn Service in Villers-Bretonneux.

**AN EXTRAORDINARY STORY**

Reflecting on the tour, student Tom Eccleseton says he “learned a lot about the ANZAC spirit and how that connects to my day-to-day life.”

“I’ve learned a lot about myself, and it was really amazing to stand pretty much where my great-great-uncles stood, in the same mud,” he shares.



The annual Premier’s Anzac Prize is open to all Queensland high school students in Years 8 to 11. For more details, including eligibility criteria and application dates, visit [rslqld.org/get-involved/premiers-anzac-prize](http://rslqld.org/get-involved/premiers-anzac-prize)



# Hobby Shed

raises thousands for veterans



*The pint-sized Pine Rivers Hobby Shed is raising thousands of dollars to support the Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch and its members.*

*Sarah Webb*

PICTURED: Pine Rivers District RSL Sub Branch member Paul Scarborough, left, and Citizens' Auxiliary President Nigel Wilson working in the Hobby Shed.



**ABOVE:** Members of the Citizens' Auxiliary Hobby Shed, from left, Wayne Lord, Di Schulte, Paul Scarborough, Ross Whiley and Nigel Wilson, at the Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch.

**RIGHT:** Hobby Shed members make children's toys, creative clocks, planter boxes and more to raise money to support veterans in their community.

**IT** started with a handmade storage box and a couple of quirky bottle lights that fetched a few bucks to support veterans and their families.

Then, when demand for their crafts increased, members of the Citizens' Auxiliary Hobby Shed at the Pine Rivers RSL Sub Branch turned to creative clocks, lovingly carved children's toys,

planter boxes and more.

Fast forward a couple of years and the Auxiliary has raked in thousands of dollars to support the Sub Branch and its members. The small but mighty volunteer cohort is doing far more than just raising funds for veterans in their community, by also offering members and the general public a haven where they can learn and socialise.

### GETTING VETERANS OUT OF THE HOUSE

"The Hobby Shed actually started as a way for our Sub Branch members to get out of the house, learn new skills, and socialise and interact with others," Pine Rivers RSL Citizens' Auxiliary President Nigel Wilson says.

"It's an area where anyone can make use of the wide range of shed tools available for personal projects or to produce items sold by the Auxiliary to raise funds for the Sub Branch to operate.

"That's why we'd really love to get the word out – because being a part of the Hobby Shed can help those who are perhaps stuck at home and staring at the walls around them, which is particularly important for those suffering from PTSD.

"We've found that just communicating with others and getting out of their comfort zone is powerful, and we've got guys here who can teach them how to use tools and table saws so there are many possibilities and opportunities



*“I’ve learned perseverance and a bit of creativity. But most of all, what I’ve gotten out of this is just being part of a big family. Everybody here cares about everybody else and that’s the best part.”*



for those who would like to be a part of the Hobby Shed.”

Nigel has been President of the Auxiliary for close to three years and says he joined to get out of the house, stay active and learn some new skills.

“I came as a volunteer, and I started off by mowing lawns and cleaning toilets. That was four and a half years ago,” Nigel says.

“Then I started making bottles

with lights in them and selling the odd one here and there to raise a bit extra and it snowballed. Then we started making the planter boxes and it took off like a rocket.”

The “we”, Nigel says, are the core group of Auxiliary members and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to bring the Hobby Shed to life, with each person bringing a valuable skillset to the proverbial table.

“It’s a real team effort here, and each member does a different aspect of the work,” he says.

“Take Di Schulte – she does floral work and arts and crafts. Then there’s Ross Whiley, who crafts wooden toys and flag boxes.

“Then there’s Wayne Lord who is our Vice President. Without him it would all fall apart as he handles the catalogues and the paperwork.

“Then there’s Paul Scarborough, who can often be found out in the shed where he works on a lot of the bigger items we produce.

“They all contribute and without them, the Hobby Shed wouldn’t exist.”

Nigel says that soon after the crew pooled their skillset, they began selling their wares at markets, Bunnings and online

**TOP:** Pine Rivers District RSL Sub Branch member Paul Scarborough working in the Hobby Shed.

**LEFT:** Hobby Shed members craft items such as this stand for displaying coins.

**ABOVE:** Pine Rivers RSL Citizens’ Auxiliary President Nigel Wilson said the Hobby Shed started as a way to get Sub Branch members out of the house, learn new skills and socialise.



who'd like to work on their own projects, use the tools and receive some guidance to build their skills.

The other days are dedicated to making goods for the Hobby Shed to sell, with all funds fuelling the Sub Branch that, in turn, supports veterans.

"If any volunteers or members want to help us along the way and get out of the house, they are more than welcome to come and join us on any of those days. There's a versatile amount of machinery to use, and this year our goal is to bring more people into the Hobby Shed," Nigel says.

As for what Nigel's learned in the four-plus years he's volunteered for the Auxiliary, he says: "I've learned perseverance and a bit of creativity, but most of all, what I've gotten out of this is just being part of a big family. Everybody here cares about everybody else and that's the best part."

To get involved with the Hobby Shed, or to explore their catalogue of goods (you'll find lovingly crafted children's toys, flag display cases, decanters, clocks and more), drop Nigel a line at [nigel.wilson@pinerivers.rslqld.net.au](mailto:nigel.wilson@pinerivers.rslqld.net.au) or call the Sub Branch on 07 3285 8022. ←

to bring in a revenue stream outside of the major Defence commemorations, such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day. They also wasted no time in decking out the shed with materials and tools to increase their capability.

"We've now got a CNC router (computer-controlled router machine) and a 3D printer, and we've started cutting glass bottles

and making bedside lamps," Nigel says.

"So, it's a work in progress, but last year alone we raised thousands of dollars and this year is looking even better."

As for how volunteers and members can get involved, the Hobby Shed is open from 9am to noon during the week, with Thursdays set aside for members



# RSL Scholarships

Empower your ambition

APPLY  
NOW

## RSL SCHOLARSHIP PROPELS ARMY VETERAN TOWARDS NEW PURPOSE —

*Belinda Crossman*

**ARMY** veteran Blake Allen is passionate about helping fellow veterans.

Now in his final year of a Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science at Australian Catholic University (ACU), he hopes to open his own allied health centre for veterans in a remote community.

But that wasn't always the plan.

Blake served six and a half years with 20 STA REGT, based at Gallipoli Barracks, joining in November 2010. Initially trained as an operating weapon locating radar operator, he later transferred to a new role operating UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles), training in the United States along the way.

"I spent most of my career in and out of a training environment, so a lot of it out in field," he says.



three years to cover expenses like textbooks and course fees.

"By stumbling into RSL Queensland Scholarships, it alleviated a lot of my financial stresses, making it easier for me to achieve and not have that pressure of, 'I've got a massive bill I've got to pay now.'"

He says the Scholarships team has been "phenomenal" to deal with.

"I'm horrible with remembering things. The RSL team always reach out and say, 'Hey, look, it's that time of year again. Don't forget about this. Have you looked at doing that?'"

"Then just touching base, asking if I've got any issues or know anyone else that might be interested in a scholarship. It's definitely helpful knowing that I'm going to get a little bit of a reminder."

#### **A DEDICATED SUPPORT NETWORK**

"I definitely wouldn't have gone into studying if I didn't realise I had the support there," Blake says. "I live quite an extensive trip away from any campus, really."

RSL Queensland and ACU, which have partnered to provide dedicated resources to help veteran students, made the whole process less daunting.

"The sense of belonging on campus at ACU is massive. The support we have here for veterans is next to none; they're very much at the forefront for us."

Blake himself is part of that support network, helping and bringing together fellow veteran students as the Student Veteran Facilitator at ACU and President of the (ACU) Brisbane Veterans Society, which he recently helped re-establish.



**TOP:** Army veteran Blake Allen is in his final year of a Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science at Australian Catholic University.

**ABOVE:** After graduating, Blake hopes to open his own allied health centre for veterans in a remote community.

However, after sustaining extensive injuries requiring surgery, Blake spent 18 months in the Soldier Recovery Centre at Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera, and was medically discharged in 2017.

"Transitioning to civilian life was quite hard," he says.

"Having a number of injuries and being told I wasn't able to do certain things physically and then having that mental challenge as well... I wasn't sure where to go and who I could talk to.

"I couldn't sit at home and do nothing; I had to do something."

Blake worked six or seven different jobs before injuring himself again, which, in a twist of fate, "put me in touch with a

few people in regards to higher education"

"I applied to ACU and on my first veteran's transition program, I spoke to the RSL Scholarships team and found out how easy it was to go through the process. Next thing I knew, I'd been accepted for the scholarship."

#### **HELPING VETERANS REACH THEIR STUDY GOALS**

RSL Queensland scholarships are available to ex-serving Defence members, their dependants, and the partners of current or ex-serving Defence members.

Blake was awarded an ex-serving scholarship in 2021, which in his case granted him \$11,000 over



"I wanted to help veterans when they first got here and show them it's not a big scary place. It's about being a peer mentor and facilitator, helping veterans transition or continue their studies, so they feel like they're heard and supported."

It's a role that fits nicely with his long-term career goals.

"I want to create a safe place for veterans and have my own allied health clinic. By doing this Bachelor of Exercise Science, that can help me get my foot in the door and move towards more degrees," Blake says.

**NEW IDENTITY AND PURPOSE**

Blake thinks dealing with new people – and losing one's identity – are some of the biggest barriers standing between veterans and further study. His advice around this is to "give it a go".

"It's about putting yourself out there, giving it a red-hot crack and knowing that you'll find your identity on the way through it. It's definitely a good way to go.

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the RSL team. I'd probably be a lot more stressed. It's been great having that support and help with the funding of what I want to do." ←



**ABOVE:** Blake says the RSL Scholarships team helped relieve his stress and provided funding to help him move towards his career goals.

**LEFT:** While dealing with new people and losing one's identity are some of the biggest barriers standing between veterans and further study, Blake's advice is to "give it a go".



**Applications now open:** Has your career been impacted by service? RSL Queensland scholarships are available to ex-serving Defence members and their children, as well as partners of current or ex-serving Defence members. The program provides funding to help recipients gain qualifications to increase their employability and pursue higher education after experiencing service-related hardship. Find out more at [rslqld.org/scholarships](http://rslqld.org/scholarships)

**CONTENT WARNING:** THIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE EXPERIENCES OF A PRISONER OF WAR, WHICH SOME READERS MAY FIND CONFRONTING.

# POW'S DAUGHTER SHARES HER JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION

*Eight decades after Cyril Gilbert was imprisoned by the Japanese Army, Japan welcomed his daughter in the name of reconciliation.*

*✍ Belinda Crossman*





**IN**

March this year, Leigh Gilbert made her first visit to Japan – the former empire that made her late father a prisoner of war (POW).

She'd been offered a place in the 2023 Japan-Australia Grassroots Exchange Program, along with the daughter of another POW, and RSL Australia President Greg Melick.

"I know Dad was looking down on me going on that trip," Leigh says. "I think he had something behind me getting there, because as soon as I heard about it, I just knew that I was going."

"I had his photo with me everywhere I went. It was the first time I was able to wear his medals over there too, which was pretty special."

### **RECONCILIATION, UNDERSTANDING AND GOODWILL**

More than 120 POWs and POW descendants have taken part in the program since it began in 1997.

Organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, it "aims to deepen the mutual understanding of the peoples of Japan and Australia by inviting descendants of former Australian POWs to Japan, through the RSL network".

It's an opportunity for all participants – POW descendants, RSL representatives and Japanese citizens – to "promote post-war reconciliation, understanding and goodwill between both countries".

For Leigh, this "amazing privilege" was a chance to seek closure, apology and some idea of what Japanese people went through during WWII.



**ABOVE:**  
Leigh's father, Cyril Gilbert, served as a Lance Sergeant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Division 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Australia Army Service Corps. He was captured after the fall of Singapore in 1942, and marched 316km to help build the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway.

**RIGHT:**  
Visiting Joetsu Peace Park.

**AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY**

Leigh and her companions spent eight days touring Japan, visiting sites including the Hodogaya (Yokohama) Commonwealth War Cemetery, and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Museum and Genbaku Dome – the epicentre of the 1945 atomic bombing.

There were meetings with Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliamentary Vice-Minister, who acknowledged Japan's wartime actions. But the biggest highlight for Leigh was meeting Japanese citizens and students.

"Seeing how interested they were in my father's story, seeing the photos – I wasn't expecting it. It was actually overwhelming to realise how sorry they were for what had happened," Leigh says.

"They didn't know what their soldiers were doing during the war. It's still not taught in schools and that's something they want to do. And I think they need to do that to be able to move on."

Visiting Hiroshima was particularly emotional for Leigh.

"I have always felt that if it wasn't for Hiroshima, I wouldn't be here," she says. "I particularly wanted to go there and pay my respects because I knew civilians and children were affected by it. I laid a poppy and had my quiet reflection,

saying sorry that they had to lose their lives so that we got peace in the world."

**THREE AND A HALF YEARS AS A PRISONER**

In Leigh's words, her beloved dad was "a true Aussie character who loved to tell a yarn, have a laugh and a cold beer".

"I'm absolutely privileged to have had him as my father," she shares.

Born in Brisbane, Cyril enlisted in the Australian Army in 1940, just after his 20th birthday. He served as a Lance Sergeant in the 8th Division 27th Brigade Australia Army Service Corps. But he was captured after the fall of Singapore in 1942, and marched 316km to help build the infamous Burma-Thailand Railway.

More than 80,000 Allied POWs and *romusha* (Asian labourers) died building the railway, succumbing to exhaustion, starvation, tropical disease, and their captors' brutality.

Leigh remembers Cyril's stories from that time well.

There were dark ones, of course – about seeing those who tried to escape tortured in front of everyone; saying good night to the

man beside him, then waking to find him dead the next day; and having to carry, then burn, the bodies of cholera victims.

But there were lighter ones, too – about the time he and seven mates, all starving, celebrated Cyril's birthday with a tin of herrings, meticulously divided under team supervision.

"There were nine herrings and eight mates, so the ninth herring had to be evenly cut into eight pieces – with them all standing over the poor one whose task it was to cut it up. I cannot tell you the number of times Dad told that story," Leigh recalls.

She says Cyril lost all faith in God, in everything – except for his mates. To him, they were the reason he survived.

**A LIFETIME ADVOCATE**

Cyril spent most of 1945 in Changi Prison – "a resort compared to the railway", he'd later say – before finally returning home, "a shell of his complete self".

After discharging from the Army, Cyril spent the rest of his life assisting other ex-POWs and veterans – work that earned him numerous recognitions, including





**ABOVE LEFT:**  
Leigh with Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Akimoto Masatoshi.

**BELOW:**  
Leigh and her companions in the Japanese city of Joetsui.

the Medal of the Order of Australia. At 91, he was still organising reunions and at 94, he was still the National and Queensland President of the Ex-Prisoner of War Association.

"Dad was always about his mates, always," Leigh says. "They were the biggest part of his life apart from his family."

**GROWING AWARENESS**

Much WWII history is unknown in Japan, Leigh says. But various Japanese groups and initiatives are determined to change that.

"The civilians in Naoetsu built this beautiful Peace Memorial Park. The whole town is behind it. Somebody donated their house, which was on the edge of the POW camp there, and they've turned that into a museum.

"I had my photo taken with an elderly fellow there who was really lovely. He lived around the corner when he was a child but was never, ever told what was going on. He only found out about it a few years ago. And that's when they started this Peace Memorial Park."

She's also encouraged by the awareness that the Grassroots

Exchange Program has sparked.

"There was media, so there were stories being written. The schoolchildren were doing projects on it and the POW network group is really pushing for, 'How can we improve it? How can we get this into the schools?' So that message was getting across to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well.

"I would like to think that one day it is taught in their schools – this happened; we're not proud of it, but this is why; and especially this is why Hiroshima happened, and why the war ended."

For those in Australia, Leigh believes remembrance has a key role to play in reconciliation.

"I think as long as we don't forget, and we continue things like ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day, people will find out more.

"Hopefully, one day the world will come to its senses and there won't be any wars."

**CLOSURE**

While Cyril "loved going back to Thailand", returning almost yearly to visit his mates who didn't make it home, he never got to visit Japan. (He applied to join the Grassroots

Exchange Program but was unsuccessful.) However, Leigh was honoured to make the pilgrimage on his behalf.

"I really wish that Dad had heard that Vice-Minister say sorry, and seen these beautiful Japanese people and how interested and remorseful they were. I think that would've made a huge difference to him in his life," she says.

"But I feel I have that closure for Dad and my family.

"I know he would've been very proud. One of the last things I ever said to him is that I would keep his memory alive. I'll keep doing that 'til the day I die."

**IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP**

*Please contact Open Arms on 1800 011 046 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.* ←



**About Leigh:** Like her father was, Leigh Gilbert is a passionate advocate for the veteran community and sees many of the ex-POW community as family. She worked for RSL Queensland for 19 years, first as the RSL Girl in a Million Quest SED Consultant and then as State Fundraising Coordinator.

**FROM  
LITTLE  
THINGS,  
BIG  
THINGS  
GROW **IN**  
**MOUNT**  
**LARCOM****





*Mount Larcom RSL Sub Branch is part of the Wide Bay and Burnett District. Its President, Christopher Feros, and Secretary, Cyndie Feros, work tirelessly with their community to build awareness, support and spirit through the values of the RSL.*

*✍ Courtney Adams*

#### **A DYNAMIC DUO**

Christopher enlisted in the Army in 1989, serving as an SDS driver (Signals Dispatch Service) and Western Sahara peacekeeper in Africa. He was medically discharged in 1994 following a truck accident that required serious medical treatment.

Cyndie, Chris's mother, pays tribute to her family's military service through her involvement with the RSL. Her grandfather, three uncles, husband, brother-in-law, cousin and two children are among those who have served.

The mother and son team has been at the helm of Mount Larcom's RSL Sub Branch since 2018, working passionately on their mission to bring their community together.

"Before we became a Sub Branch, I offered my services as Secretary because they didn't have anyone to take notes at meetings," Cyndie recalls. "Once I became Secretary of the chapter, I realised we could expand, and it became very important to me that we grow."

Chris, Cyndie and their team are dedicated to giving back to the community in multiple ways. They organise raffles, sausage sizzles, school visits, veteran support initiatives, awards, and commemorative events for ANZAC Day and Beersheba Day to promote peace and remembrance. Most recently, they have refurbished their building's kitchen to host volunteer and community events, and installed a stainless-steel kitchen in their barbeque area.

Mount Larcom RSL  
Sub Branch President  
Christopher Feros.



**TOP RIGHT:** Cyndie Feros pays tribute to her family's military service through her involvement with the RSL. Her grandfather, three uncles, husband, brother-in-law, cousin and two children are among those who have served.

**TOP:** Mount Larcom RSL Sub Branch has grown from three active veteran members to about 70 members, with 50% of them being League members. Pictured are Cyndie, Geoff and Chris Feros.

**ABOVE:** Camaraderie is an important part of the Sub Branch.

"When we first joined, there were only three active veteran members," Chris says. "We now have about 70 members from Vietnam up to Afghanistan. About 50% are League and 50% non-League. Our members are diverse; some are Reservists, Navy, Air Force, and Army."

**SMALL COMMUNITY, BIG HEART**

Approximately 360 people call Central Queensland's Mount Larcom home. Cyndie describes the town – which is about 70km south of Rockhampton and 30km west of Gladstone – as "a pitstop for grey nomads".

"We have a mixed community here ranging from pensioners to farmers and families. We are very supportive of everyone here – just

like our Sub Branch," Chris says.

"Even though we are a small town, many of our community members are associated with volunteer groups and essential services," Cyndie adds, referencing organisations such as the Queensland Country Women's Association, State Emergency Service, and Rural Fire Service, which often work together with the local RSL.

Despite its size, Mount Larcom has a proud history of Defence service, which can be traced back to WWI. The town's RSL Sub Branch routinely hosts events to commemorate the sacrifice of members of the Defence Force, including animals.

The Sub Branch is currently renovating its museum and a memorial garden dedicated to the town's military history, which they hope is a point of pride within the community.

"When I first got here, there was only a very small ANZAC Day service, but now we also do Remembrance Day, War Animals Day, Merchant Navy Day, Vietnam Veterans' Day, and Beersheba Day. Next year we hope to add War Widows Day. The more

commemorative days we host, the more the community seems to get on board," Chris explains.

"The trains that run the coal even stop travel through Mount Larcom now on ANZAC Day so they don't disrupt our service."

**BIG PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

Despite the substantial growth of the Mount Larcom RSL Sub Branch, Chris and Cyndie will not be slowing down anytime soon. One of Cyndie's top priorities is establishing memorial sites for the people and animals who sacrificed for their country.

"We want to erect a flagpole and illuminate it so that people can see that we have a connection to service in this town," Cyndie says. "We also want to set up a garden and transcribe our Honour Roll onto plex so that people can do a walk of honour."

Chris also has a strong vision for the future of Mount Larcom RSL Sub Branch through community service.

"Because we live so rurally, one of the things I would like to do is hire a van or bus through the RSL so we can offer travel to our community members who need

*“Despite its size, Mount Larcom has a proud history of Defence service, which can be traced back to WWI. The town’s RSL Sub Branch routinely hosts events to commemorate the sacrifice of members of the Defence Force, including animals.”*

some help with their hospital stays and doctor’s visits,” Chris says.

“My vision is also about getting us into more schools, because the more involved we get with our community, the more they will get involved with us.”

When asked what keeps them motivated in their work, both Cyndie and Chris have a simple answer.

“I feel like I’m achieving things. This is what gets me up every morning. I dedicate at least 70 hours per week to the RSL so we can expand and become something the community is proud of,” Cyndie says.

“I don’t want little RSL Sub Branches to feel that they can’t grow. It takes work, but we are an example that you can grow,” Chris adds.

“We’re not here just for veterans, but for the community and veterans’ families too. This is how we show we care.” ←

*“I feel like I’m achieving things. This is what gets me up every morning. I dedicate at least 70 hours per week to the RSL so we can expand and become something the community is proud of.”*



**LEFT:** Mount Larcom RSL Sub Branch President, Christopher Feros, and his mother, Secretary Cyndie Feros work tirelessly with their community to build awareness, support and spirit through the values of the RSL.



# SOMALIA THROUGH A VETERAN'S LENS

*30 years after Australia completed its UN peacekeeping missions to Somalia, Army veteran Alex Tessieri reflects on his time there.*

**ABOVE:** One of Alex Tessieri's photos from his deployment to Somalia was selected for the 2022 Point & Shoot photography exhibition.

**MAY** 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of Australia's completion of its UN peacekeeping missions to Somalia. Army veteran Alex Tessieri shares the story of his deployment there, and the life lessons he brought home.

***Tell us about your Army career***

I've always wanted to be outdoors and had a keen interest in all things 'military' growing up. I enlisted in

1987 as a general infantryman, and my first posting was at Townsville in Delta Company, 1st Battalion. I ended up in signals platoon, and then became a sniper. By the time I was deployed to Somalia, I was a Lance Corporal in Charlie Company, 9 Platoon.

I served 19 years in the regular Army before transitioning to the Reserves to start a new career as a park ranger, which I've done for 10 years now. I'm currently planning

a move into the Standby Reserve. This year is monumental for me because it's the 30th anniversary of my deployment to Somalia.

***What was Operation Solace and why was it important?***

In 1993, I was 22 years old and just married. I never thought I would be deployed overseas because at the time, Australia hadn't been anywhere since Vietnam, so being sent to Somalia was a bit of a shock. We were part of Operation Solace, Australia's mission within Operation Restore Hope (the international forces' overall mission). The Americans

## 2023 POINT & SHOOT EXHIBITION

Showcasing career imagery and accompanying stories from Australian veterans, the Point & Shoot Exhibition brings a voice to the unique stories of all serving personnel and provides a rare glimpse into the life and experiences of fellow Australians who have served their country.

### **Brisbane general public**

13-15 October 2023

Venue: Vacant Assembly

266 Montague Road, West End

### **Townsville general public**

20-22 October 2023

Venue: Jezzine Barracks Military

Museum, North Ward

For more information, visit [pointandshoot.online](http://pointandshoot.online)



how grand it once was, but a lot that remained was infrastructure that had been pulverised to rubble. Looking back, we were trained and experienced in handling situations in complex environments, but we weren't psychologically prepared for the devastation and desperation we were faced with.

I'll never forget the day a man approached me at a food distribution point. He looked dishevelled and was carrying only a stick. We exchanged a few words, and he passed me his ID card from when he was working as a factory executive. In the photo, he was dressed in a suit, well-groomed. In that moment, I realised that it doesn't take much to go from one point to another; we're only ever on a thin edge.

### ***Did you document this important chapter of your life?***

I took many photos of kids in the aid and refugee camps where we did our distributions, to capture the fact that, unfortunately, they were the ones being caught in all the

disruption. It was hard to cop back then, but being able to show these photos today and tell the story outside my mateship and family circles is excellent. That's why I was happy to share them publicly in the Point & Shoot Veteran Photography Exhibition. While they are now snapshots in time, it's been a good opportunity to talk about it.

### ***What would you like the public to learn from your story?***

Many people don't know about Australia's involvement in Somalia because it's not captured much in literature or memorials. Yet, it played a significant role; when we arrived, there was ugliness and death, but when we left, there was colour, vibrancy and confidence. Without fighting any big battles, we achieved our goal of restoring dignity and a path to normality there. On reflection, a constant theme is how lucky we are in Australia. It hits home that we've got to stop, think and preserve the good that we have here. ←

**ABOVE:** Alex Tessieri served 19 years in the regular Army, including a deployment to Somalia in 1993 as part of Operation Solace.

had done a lot of tactical work before we arrived, so we were based in Baidoa and tasked with restoring order so a more successful humanitarian program could be implemented there. This involved going into the countryside to ensure non-government and aid organisations could safely and effectively deliver food and medical relief to those in need.

### ***How did your experience in Somalia shape you?***

One of the things that struck me was that Somalia was a very well developed country at one point. There were constant reminders of

# RSL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM SECURES OVER 1,000 JOBS FOR VETERANS

*“Working with the team was like lots of little light bulb moments. At times I was overwhelmed, but I always felt I could reach out to them for support and looked forward to calls, particularly while my husband was deployed.”*

*Brooke Turvey is the 1,000th candidate to secure a job through the RSL Employment program.*

**THE** RSL Employment program has surpassed the milestone of placing more than 1,000 members of the veteran community into jobs with employers around Australia. Brooke Turvey, the partner of a current serving Army member, was the 1000th candidate to be placed in a role.

The program – which connects veterans and the partners of current and former Defence members with rewarding employment opportunities – helps to provide purpose and direction as veterans and their family transition into civilian life or settle after relocating.

A Defence partner for more than 15 years, Brooke learned of the RSL Employment program after attending a family day on base. She sought assistance from the program to establish what direction she wanted to take her career.

“I have been involved in volunteer work supporting Defence families whilst on an overseas posting and wanted to continue

working within and supporting the Defence community,” Brooke says.

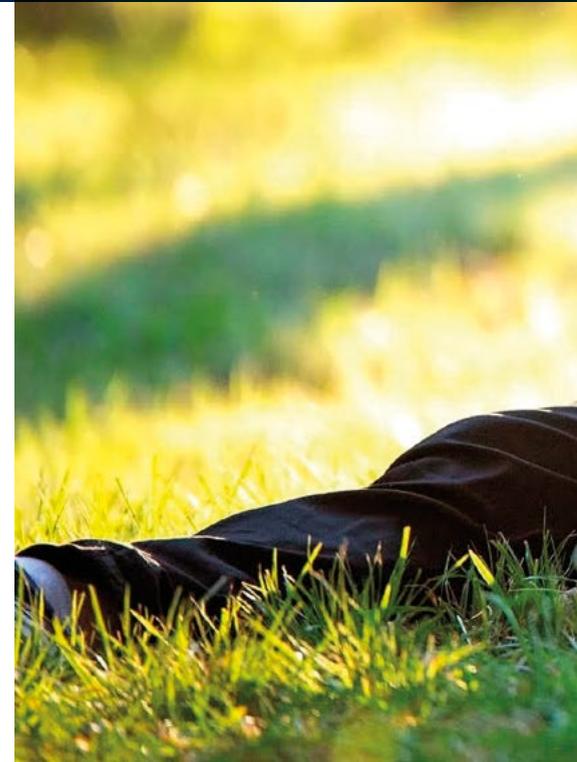
“I have two young children, with the youngest starting Prep this year. It was time for me to get back into the workforce, but it was a matter of finding the support service that worked for me.”

Partnering with organisations nationally, the program is available online and over the phone, and is free to all veterans and their families. Of the 1,000 jobs secured across the program, 72% of the new employees that have been placed in roles are veterans, with the remaining 28% being partners of current or ex-serving Defence members.

RSL Queensland aims to ensure the program is about establishing a meaningful career, not just finding a job.

Working closely with vocational providers, Brooke was able to utilise key services from the employment program to assist with resume writing, cover letter development and interview coaching.

“After being out of the workforce for the past eight years, you don’t understand how much the industry and interview practices have changed. The whole process of re-entering the workforce and studying after so long is incredibly difficult.



“Working with the team though was like lots of little light bulb moments. At times I was overwhelmed, but I always felt I could reach out to them for support and looked forward to calls, particularly while my husband was deployed.

“I now have the chance to make my learning and professional development my own while still having the guidance and structure that is so familiar as a partner of a serving Defence member.”

In 2023, the RSL Employment Program celebrates five years of ongoing support for the veteran community. The program recently launched a jobs board

# 2023 PRIME MINISTER'S NATIONAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AWARDS WINNERS

The RSL Queensland Employment Program are honoured to have been named winners of the Excellence in Supporting Veteran and/or Partner Employment category at the 2023 Prime Minister's National Veterans' Employment Awards, announced on 13 September.



that provides a list of current job opportunities available from RSL Employment partner organisations looking to hire through the program.

Offering a range of roles across partner organisations, the program aims to provide opportunities for those with diverse skillsets to find new roles. Brooke has enrolled

in a Certificate III in Community Services and has secured a part-time role as a Defence School Mentor at a state primary school.

"While it is only early days in my new role and studies, we already have calls scheduled across the next six months, and I will also continue to take part in other training initiatives. The guidance is

exactly what I need and has given me self-confidence in my new role.

"I am very grateful for RSL Queensland and the team that helped me, not just for their ongoing support, but for their understanding of the ADF lifestyle, our values and morals. We were all greatly aligned in this regard, and it helped foster a mutual respect." ←

**ABOVE:** Brooke Turvey and her family. Brooke is the 1,000th candidate to secure a job through the RSL Employment program.



If you're an Australian Defence Force veteran, or the partner of a current or former Defence member, we can help you take the next step towards finding meaningful employment. Explore our free programs for ex-service people, partners, and potential employers at [rslqld.org/employment](https://rslqld.org/employment)

# MATESHIP



## Korean Veterans' Day service held in Beaudesert

27 July marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War, honouring those who served and fell during the Korean War. Pictured at Palm Gardens Jubilee Park in Beaudesert are veterans Jon Forbe-Smith, Beaudesert RSL Sub Branch President Steve Monteath, Beaudesert RSL Sub Branch Vice President Carol Castles and Barry Fisher at the memorial plinth, under the United Nations flag.

## Gin Gin and Boyne Tannum Sub Branch members meet

Gin Gin RSL Sub Branch recently organised a visit to Boyne Tannum RSL Sub Branch. The trip allowed members to meet, network and collaborate with their counterparts regarding Wide Bay and Burnett District inter-Sub Branch initiatives and activities for 2023 and 2024. The executive committees met to discuss common ideas, initiatives to attract new members and to share information and skills regarding grant applications for activities and infrastructure.



## North Brisbane Air Force Cadets assisted with grant

220 Squadron Air Force Cadets are grateful to Brisbane North District RSL for their assistance with a grant to purchase a marquee to use at their parades and events. The Cadet unit often helps the Banyo RSL Sub Branch on ANZAC Day by marching, assisting with flags, and mounting a catafalque guard.



**2023 RSL Queensland State Congress Gala Dinner**

Currumbin RSL Sub Branch member Roger Collins and his wife Dee were honoured to meet guest speaker Corporal Dan Keighran VC at the 2023 RSL Queensland State Congress.



**Korean veterans honoured in Bowen**

In July, veterans Garry Kirk and Bill Barty were presented with certificates of thanks for their service during the Korean War. Immediate Past President of Bowen RSL Sub Branch, John Eyles, presented the certificates. The veterans were joined by their families for the ceremony, held on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice of the Korean War.



**Vigil held to commemorate Goondiwindi veteran**

Members of the Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch held a commemorative service for Sapper Gregory Vincent Brady, who was killed in action during the Vietnam War. Local community members, including school students and Councillor Susie Kelly, attended the ceremony at Goondiwindi Cemetery. President Bill Brasington officiated the special service, along with Reverend Paul Andrianatos who orated the 23rd Psalm. Wreaths were laid and poppies placed on Gregory's grave.



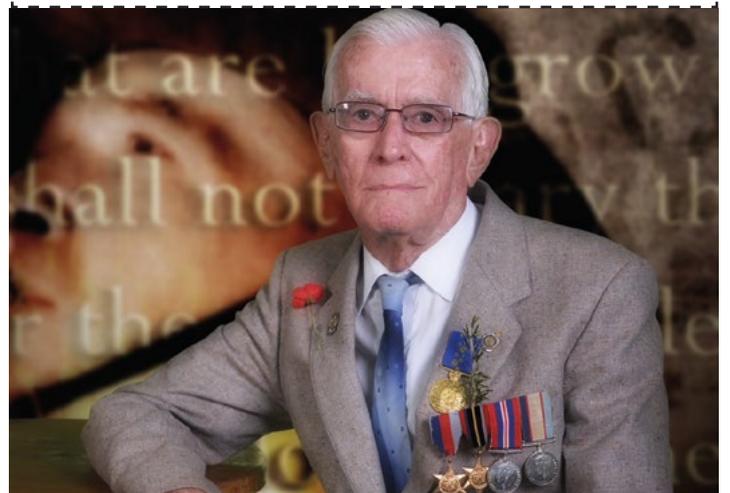
### Vietnam veteran re-acquainted with aircraft he flew

FLTLT Jeffrey Pedrina (Retd) was treated to a personalised tour of the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre back in March. During his tour, Jeffrey had the opportunity to look inside a de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou (A4-236), which he flew with 35 Squadron in Vietnam. After the tour, Jeffrey and his family enjoyed a morning tea with representatives from today's 35 Squadron, where Air Commodore Robert Lawson presented him with the first copy of his re-released bestselling book, *Wallaby Airlines*.



### Paying tribute to Len and John

In sad news, Army veterans John Toohey and Len Cleal of Goondiwindi RSL Sub Branch both recently passed away. They were both highly regarded in their community and District, and are deeply missed by their fellow Sub Branch members. Vale John and Len. Photography by Wayne Pratt.



### A great day of camaraderie over a BBQ

Gracemere and District Sub Branch members, as well as representatives from Young Veterans, Capricornia and Rockhampton Region RSL Sub Branch, Gladstone and Boyne Island RSL Sub Branches, Cockscomb Veterans' Retreat, 42nd AIB and Food Bank came together for a great day of camaraderie over a few drinks and a barbecue lunch. At the event, Welfare Officer Bas Soper was presented a Commendation by Keith Payne VC of Veterans' Benefit Group on behalf of all the veterans Bas has helped out over the years.



### Chat with Z Force veteran, Alan Russell

Back in June, Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch President Brian Tidyman enjoyed meeting Alan Russell, who is acknowledged as the last surviving member of the Z Force from WWII. Alan turns 100 this year, and lives independently in Sydney. Brian and Alan discussed training on Fraser Island as well as along the Hawkesbury River in NSW, and about Alan's later career as a geologist. Brian felt inspired by this encounter and called it an "incredible experience".

### Wreaths laid for anniversary of Battle of the Somme

On 1 July, veterans gathered at Freedom Park in Hervey Bay to commemorate the 1916 Battle of the Somme in WWI. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division and to all soldiers who fell at the Somme. RSL members pictured include Robin Smyth, David Fleming, Steve Lyon and piper Duncan Birt.



### Hervey Bay honours Korean War veterans

Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch President Brian Tidyman led a commemoration service for Korean War veterans at the Freedom Park Cenotaph. Brian made mention of two local Korean War veterans, Bill Boswell and Bernie Devine, who sadly were unable to attend due to ill health. Pictured are Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch Secretary Kevin Collins (who represented the Korean War veterans), Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch Deputy President Brad Gray, Fraser Coast Regional Councillor David Lee and Member for Hervey Bay Adrian Tantari MP.

### Hervey Bay commemorates WWII Operation Rimau

On 9 July, Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch held a commemorative service for WWII Operation Rimau at the TS KRAIT Memorial in Dayman Park. Approximately 70 guests attended, with proceedings conducted by Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch President Brian Tidyman. The catafalque party was presented by TS KRAIT Cadets, and Reverend Jeffrey Jarvis led prayers during the service.



**Donald Currell OAM retires**

After an extraordinary 51-year career in the Navy, RSL Life Member Donald Currell OAM has retired at 67 years of age. Enlisting at just 16 years old, he served from 1972-2023 in full-time, Naval Reserves and Defence Force Recruiting positions. Donald was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to veterans in 2014, and enters his retirement with many memories of his service.



**Plaque revealed to commemorate aircraft crash in Far North Queensland**

The date of 7 March marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crash of RAAF aircraft A34-24, a De Havilland DH-84A Type 2 Dragon at Freshwater Gorge to the West of Cairns. To mark this anniversary, Malanda RSL Sub Branch arranged a commemorative plaque to be drafted, designed, constructed and fitted at the tourist viewing platform overlooking the Crystal Cascades at the base of the Freshwater Gorge. The plaque is now completed, and will serve to commemorate the victims of the crash.



**Longreach RSL memorial units unveiled**

The Longreach RSL Sub Branch recently held an official opening to mark the completion of their redevelopment project, which saw significant improvements made to six unit complexes. Among the dignitaries in attendance were RSL Queensland State President Major General Stephen Day DSC AM, State Member for Gregory Lachlan Millar MP, and Longreach Regional Council Mayor Cr Tony Rayner.



### Bundaberg Veterans Support Centre volunteers thanked

The Wide Bay Burnett RSL District recently held its District Meeting on 15 July at the Bundaberg Veterans Support Centre. The Centre is staffed by wonderful volunteers who catered for the event. Mundubbera RSL Sub Branch was pleased that Bundaberg District Office presented a photo of the volunteers as a gift to these wonderful people.

### Spitfire pilot turns 100

On 8 August, Warrant Officer John Walter Shoemsmith (Retd) celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in Wynnum. John is a Life Subscriber of Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Sub Branch. He served as a RAAF pilot during WWII, flying CAC Boomerang and Supermarine Spitfire aircraft. Group Captain Dennis Tan, Senior Australian Defence Force Officer at RAAF Base Amberley, represented the Air Force in congratulating John on the occasion. GPCAPT Tan, right, and Warrant Officer Glenn Lyons, left, are pictured with John and his family.



### 78th Anniversary of the Allied Victory commemorated

On 13 May, the South Eastern District of RSL Queensland hosted a commemorative service in New Farm to recognise the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied Victory in Europe. The service was attended by 50 guests, 28 who laid wreaths. The anniversary honours the Australians who fought and died in the battles of European and African theatres.

# COMMUNITY



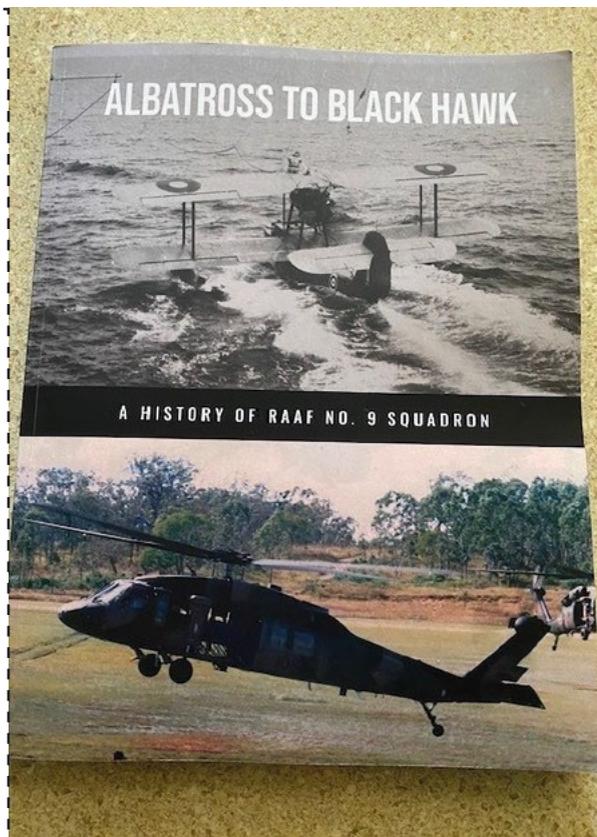
## ANZACs commemorated in Serbia

On 25 April, Kathy Hancock, Richard Cooke and Bojan Pajić attended an ANZAC Day Ceremony at the British War Cemetery in Belgrade, Serbia. The ceremony was organised by the Australian Embassy, who invited Bojan to give the ANZAC Day address, and Kathy and Richard to read a commemorative poem and prayer. Following the ceremony, flowers were laid at the graves of each of the 43 ANZACs laid to rest in the cemetery. Pictured at the British War Cemetery in Belgrade are, from left, Richard Cook, Kathy Hancock, Bojan Pajić and Andrew Pajić.



## History book about 9 Squadron published

A new military book is hot off the press. Wing Commander Graeme Chalmers (Retd) researched and wrote *Albatross to Black Hawk: A History of RAAF No. 9 Squadron* as a tribute to the Squadron. Over several years, members of the 9 Squadron Association assisted by contributing photographs, written recollections and anecdotes for publishing. Number 9 was reformed as a surveillance Squadron, making now the perfect time to read up on its history.



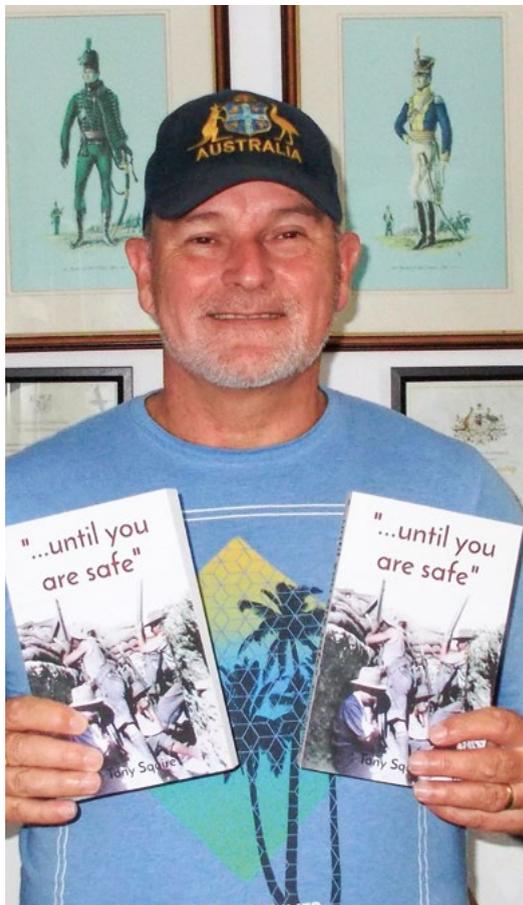
## Billy and Robért visit schools in Brisbane

Loveable mascots Billy and Robért visited students at four Brisbane schools recently as part of their *Billy and Robért Make Mates* program. The pair travelled all the way from Vignacourt, France to deliver ANZAC Day commemoration letters from French students to the young Australians. During their visits, Billy and Robért helped students complete a diary and taught them about Franco-Australian links established during WWI.



**Nine Catalina aviators remembered**

On 11 June, the nine missing crewmembers of 43 Squadron Catalina A24-64 were honoured at a commemorative ceremony at the Catalina Memorial in Cairns. Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Robert Chipman AM CSC was the guest of honour, and unveiled a commemorative plaque dedicated to the aviators lost in 1944. He then joined the Ambassador to the Philippines, other dignitaries and family representatives of the crewmembers, to lay memorial wreaths.



**Veteran Tony Squire publishes historical novel**

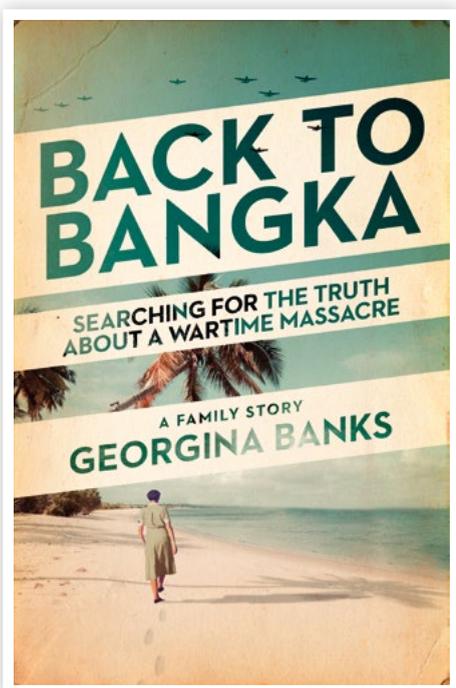
Tony Squire served as a soldier for 21 years of his professional life. Holding a deep passion for military history, he aspired to write a novel that would intertwine his characters with real-life historical events. His dream came to fruition, with Tony embarking on his long-awaited journey of chronicling the remarkable tales of the ANZACs during the tumultuous period of the Great War. "... *Until You Are Safe*" is now available for purchase.



**Ipswich locals in Legacy's Centenary Torch Relay**

The year 2023 marks 100 years of Legacy Australia's support for veterans' families. To commemorate this milestone, a six-month torch relay kicked off in April. Starting in Pozières, France, the torch has been making its way around Australia, visiting all Legacy Club locations in the country, including Ipswich on 16 June, where it travelled 9 km with 20 torch bearers. All torch bearers have a personal connection to Legacy Australia, including veterans, beneficiaries, and legatees.

# WIN



## BACK TO BANGKA

Bangka Strait, Indonesia, 1942. Allied ships are evacuating thousands in flight from Singapore, the island having fallen to Japanese Imperial forces.

Facing terrifying assaults by fighter planes, one ship, the *Vyner Brooke*, is badly bombed and sinks. Its survivors swim or paddle for hours to the nearest land, a beach on Bangka Island, parched, many dreadfully injured. One of the survivors is Australian Army nurse Dorothy 'Bud' Elmes, the great-aunt of Georgina Banks.

*Back to Bangka* is a deeply moving intergenerational family story; a gripping retelling and investigation of events that throw a spotlight on women in wartime – in their vulnerability and profound strength.

*Back to Bangka* by Georgina Banks is published by Penguin Books Australia (RRP: \$34.99).

**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN** one of four copies of *Back to Bangka*, email your name, address and contact number to [editor@rslqld.org](mailto:editor@rslqld.org) (with the subject '*Back to Bangka*') or post to '*Back to Bangka*', PO Box 629, Spring Hill Qld 4004. Competition closes 16 October 2023.

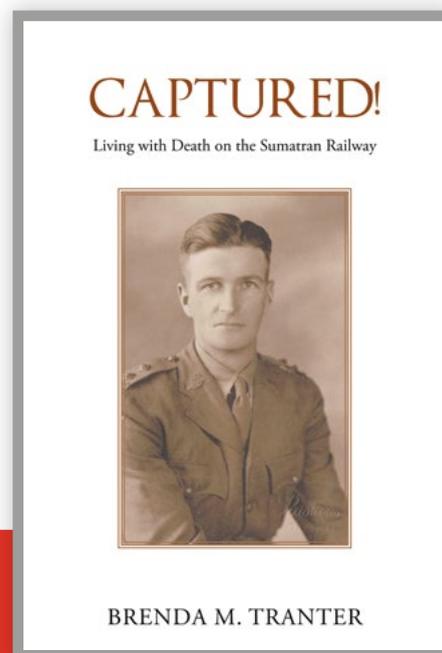
## CAPTURED! LIVING WITH DEATH ON THE SUMATRAN RAILWAY

Australian Lieutenant, A.E. Tranter, from Heathcote, Victoria, spends time in Malaya training young soldiers during the waiting period prior to WWII in Asia. He survives the battle against the Japanese in Muar and the fall of Singapore, before escaping by boat to the wilds of Sumatra.

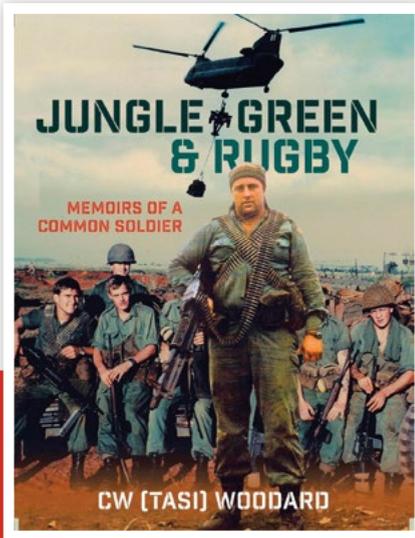
However, his luck fails, and he becomes one of thousands of prisoners of war in the slave labour camps in Sumatra. He writes a tender book for his little daughter, which he manages to keep hidden from the guards throughout his ordeal.

Remarkably, the book is about the pleasant and beautiful things he has seen and learned in his enforced travel, even if witnessed from the heat and stench of locked box cars.

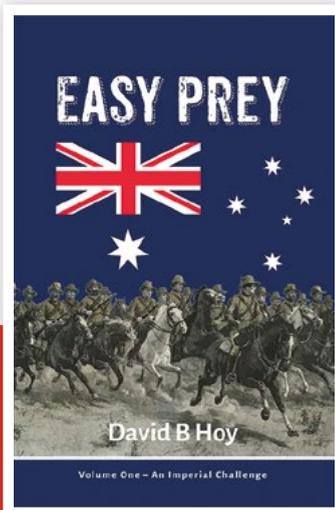
*Captured!* by Brenda M. Tranter is published by Xlibris AU (RRP: \$27.40).



**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN** one of four copies of *Captured!*, email your name, address and contact number to [editor@rslqld.org](mailto:editor@rslqld.org) (with the subject '*Captured!*') or post to *Captured!*, PO Box 629, Spring Hill Qld 4004. Competition closes 16 October 2023.



**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN** one of four copies of *Jungle Green & Rugby*, email your name, address and contact number to [editor@rslqld.org](mailto:editor@rslqld.org) (with the subject '*Jungle Green & Rugby*') or post to '*Jungle Green & Rugby*', PO Box 629, Spring Hill Qld 4004. Competition closes 16 October 2023.



**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN** one of four copies of *Easy Prey*, email your name, address and contact number to [editor@rslqld.org](mailto:editor@rslqld.org) (with the subject '*Easy Prey*') or post to '*Easy Prey*', PO Box 629, Spring Hill Qld 4004. Competition closes 16 October 2023.

## JUNGLE GREEN & RUGBY

From Irish and English convict stock, Tasi was born on a remote Bass Strait Island at the end of the Great Depression and before the initiation of WWII. The author shares his family's military history detailing 10 members, with service in both World Wars, along with his military career, which included six years in southeast Asia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

With a decorated rugby career of over 40 years, he details military rugby in both the northern and southern hemispheres and his Australian participation in the Veterans and Golden Oldies Rugby movement. Tasi was awarded the Australian Sports Medal for his involvement and dedication to rugby.

The many stories within this book also highlight Tasi's post-military service engagements and his travelling experience covering six continents.

*Jungle Green & Rugby* by C W (Tasi) Woodard is published by Xlibris AU (RRP: \$79.99).

## EASY PREY

*Easy Prey* is a systematic and thorough evaluation of Australia's capability in defending itself as an independent nation from the perspective of the history of its military intelligence.

The quality and timeliness of military intelligence is a cornerstone of sound national security. In three volumes, *Easy Prey* explores the successes and, more notably, the shortcomings and all-too-frequent stumbling in Australia.

The genesis of many of today's problems is traced back through our colonial and early federation history. *Easy Prey* draws lessons that will be valuable in informing future strategy and decisions.

*Easy Prey* by David Hoy is published by Boolarong Press (RRP: \$32.50).

## QUEENSLAND RSL NEWS WINNERS EDITION 2, 2023



### FOR AN ANGEL'S BREATH

K Devine, Birkdale  
J Grey, Gilston  
H Winters, Coolum Beach  
G Swanson, Avenall Heights



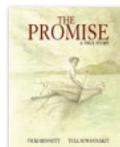
### ONE MORE MOUNTAIN

I Townsley, Ferny Hills  
G East, Helensvale  
L Moore, Victoria Point  
B Barber, Gympie



### THE FIRST ASHORE

R Hay, Everton Hills  
R Williamson, Eagleby  
D Melloy, Woombye  
K Barber, Loganholme



### THE PROMISE

J Manser, Kelso  
W Marthick, Merryburn  
J Chapple, Urraween  
L Birt, Southside

\* Winners' books will be posted to the addresses supplied in the weeks following publication of the magazine.

# PLAY IN AUSTRALIA'S RICHEST PROPERTY PRIZE POOL



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## VIP CLUB MORE MILLIONS FOR MEMBERS

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**DRAW 410**

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Drawn 10am AEST 8 November 2023

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NSW: GOCAU/2332, QLD: 29819, SA: M14420, VIC: 10189/23. Prize value: \$3,563,513. Draw AU410L has a total of 4,670,000 tickets available, including a maximum of 1,127,257 bonus tickets. Drawn at ANZAC House. Winners notified illustration only. Gold bullion selling costs and market fluctuations apply. Rent and property values are based on third-party evaluations and subject to fluctuating market conditions. Market demand statements based on third-party terms and conditions. RSL Queensland's appointed sales agents may earn a commission. RSL Queensland's appointed traders may receive contributions for their services, estimated as a percentage of the total gross proceeds of Affiliated online advertisers, 1.6%. Information correct at time of printing. Terms and conditions apply. For full T&Cs, refer to [rslartunion.com.au](https://rslartunion.com.au).





# A \$4.1M DECISION TO BE MADE

**BRISBANE** woman and Art Union VIP member Ash\* was absolutely elated when told she'd won RSL Art Union Draw 404 – the \$4.1 million Sunshine Coast Hinterland Haven or gold prize!

Ash was over the moon when Craig Hayes, RSL Art Union Head of Lotteries Commercial Operations, outlined what she'd won. "You really don't know

how much this means to me, because I've been renting and I have to find another place," she admitted.

Located in a quiet cul-de-sac, this iconic property offers so much more than just privacy and commanding views. There's a sparkling saltwater pool, outdoor area complete with firepit and state-of-the-art cinema room. The prize also includes \$500,000 in gold.

Ash now must decide whether to savour the ultimate tree-change lifestyle or rent out the property for an estimated income of \$114,400 a year. Alternatively, she could also choose to take the \$4.1 million prize in gold bullion.

Asked what she might choose, she said, "I loved the house, but because I'm in Brisbane and my family is in Brisbane, I would probably

go for the gold bullion, but I would have to speak with the others first."

Congratulations, Ash – we wish you all the very best for the future!

Many thanks to you and all who support RSL Art Union. Every ticket sold supports veterans and their families.

*\*Name changed for privacy reasons. ←*

# COMMUNITY CONNECT



## **VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE SALVATION ARMY'S DRIVE FOR LIFE**

The Salvation Army's Drive for Life is seeking volunteers who are passionate about giving back to the community. They are specifically looking for adults who can commit one to two hours per week to accompany a young person practising their driving skills (taught by professional instructors) until they feel ready to sit for their provisional licence. The organisation has found great success in North Brisbane and Bundaberg with retired volunteers aged over 55 who are seeking Centrelink benefits. The young learners who benefit from this program are highly disadvantaged, with little to no access to an adult to accompany them during their driving practice. Helping them obtain their licence is an important step in achieving their independence. Volunteers (referred to as mentors) receive extensive training and support and give feedback that the program is rewarding and a wonderful way to spend their time. The Drive for Life team is proud of the wonderful relationships that are established between mentors and learners.

***For more information about the program,  
visit [youthoutreachservice.org/drive-for-life-brisbane](http://youthoutreachservice.org/drive-for-life-brisbane)  
or email [driveforlifeyos@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:driveforlifeyos@salvationarmy.org.au)***

## **WESTERN FRONT BATTLEFIELD TOURS**

Australian author Adam Holloway is the owner and operator of Duty Nobly Done Battlefield Tours. The great-grandson of an ANZAC and the son of a Vietnam veteran, Adam is dedicated to providing guests with an engaging and memorable experience of the Western Front battlefields. Through following the Aussie Battalions across the very ground they fought on, and telling stories of the courageous ANZACs, guests will get a sense of where and how the battles unfolded and gain an understanding of the personal cost.

***For further information and to book your seat,  
visit [dndbattletours.com.au](http://dndbattletours.com.au)***

## **SIGN A PETITION FOR A COASTWATCHERS MONUMENT**

Veteran John Gates is inviting people to sign a petition to erect a mainland tribute to Australian WWII Coastwatchers in 2024. As John outlines in his petition, Brisbane was home to the Coastwatchers Headquarters during the latter half of WWII. He believes that recognition of their amazing achievements is long overdue. Brisbane River played host to two key elements of support for the Coastwatchers – the Submarine base at Newstead and the Flying Boat base at Murarrie. The petition requests a memorial place be situated in Newstead Terrace Park, which is midway between these two Coastwatchers support elements.

***Learn more and sign the petition before  
11 November at [epetitions.brisbane.qld.gov.au/  
petition/view/pid/1246](http://epetitions.brisbane.qld.gov.au/petition/view/pid/1246)***

# REUNIONS

## **HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE SOUTH VIETNAM 1966-72 ASSOCIATION REUNION**

A reunion will be held for the HQ1ATF Association from 21-25 November 2024 at the Discovery Hahndorf Resort in South Australia (145A Mount Barker Road, Hahndorf). The weekend will include a barbecue, wine tasting in the Barossa Valley, visit to the Adelaide War Memorial (where the HQ1ATF/D&E Platoon memorial will be unveiled), a commemorative service at the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, the Association meeting and an informal dinner.

***For more information about the itinerary,  
email John Verhelst at [jeverhelst@gmail.com](mailto:jeverhelst@gmail.com)***

***For information about the resort, contact  
1300 763 836, [hahndorf@discoveryparcs.com.au](mailto:hahndorf@discoveryparcs.com.au)  
or [discoveryholidayparcs.com.au](http://discoveryholidayparcs.com.au)***

# LAST POST

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Adams*	Jack	QX43408	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Adcock	Ian	1/3804	Mareeba Sub Branch
Andrews	Stanley	122855	Bribie Island Sub Branch
Andrews	Paul	17151	Redcliffe Sub Branch
Anstey	Neil	R66397	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Archibald	Dennis	A223205	North Gold Coast Sub Branch
Arnold	John	-	Yeppoon Sub Branch
Austin	William	690593	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Austin	Richard	431006	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Baguley	Alan	R44799	Townsville Sub Branch
Bailey	Philip	42331	Ipswich Sub Branch
Baker	Beverly	QF142193	Maryborough Sub Branch
Ballantyne	H	41958	Tully Sub Branch
Bamfield	Douglas	135258	Southport Sub Branch
Barker	Allan	79300	Burleigh Heads Sub Branch
Bartlett	Richard	3/720957	Coolum-Peregian Sub Branch
Barton	Foster	1222	Townsville Sub Branch
Baskerville	Edwin	r52526	Toowoomba Sub Branch
Beale	Frank	QX38522/ 41474	Maryborough Sub Branch
Beams	Brian	B4214	Ipswich Sub Branch
Beecher	Francis	3/74160	Gaythorne Sub Branch
Bell	John	1731145	Tin Can Bay Sub Branch
Benson	Kevin	1/410153	Bribie Island Sub Branch
Bishop	Bruce	1731669	Murgon Sub Branch
Black	Graham	2781302	Mudgeeraba-Robina Sub Branch
Bodsworth*	Norman	VX92586	Bundaberg Sub Branch
Bond*	Gwilym	r55750	Gatton Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Bragg	Robert	A120008	Sunnybank Sub Branch
Brewer	John	16220	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Bricknell	Raymond	29921	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Brooks	Lloyd	1206047	Ravenshoe Sub Branch
Broughton	Ronald	-	Tewantin/Noosa Sub Branch
Brown	Robert	212671	Cooroy-Pomona Sub Branch
Brown	Anthony	4718094	Townsville Sub Branch
Bryant	Kevin	1718375	Toowoomba Sub Branch
Bryde	Eric	QX44056	Tully Sub Branch
Burger	Mark	A124209	Goodna Sub Branch
Burns	Brien	A111509	Tewantin/Noosa Sub Branch
Buss*	Dorothy	QF143188	RSL Defence Servicewomen's Sub Branch
Cameron	Clyde	A11292	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Chambers	Owen	NX141375	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Chapple (nee Pye)	Beverley	W112992	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Cleal*	Leonard	NX145930 (N3037)	Goondiwindi Sub Branch
Clifford	Harry	140245	Gaythorne Sub Branch
Colclough	Neil	B5908	Maryborough Sub Branch
Collins	William	1/703018	Mareeba Sub Branch
Crane	Colin	204391	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Crawford	Mervyn	A118743	Caboolture-Morayfield & District Sub Branch
Cruse	Dennis	A47970	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Cumming	Christine	W/438085	Moura Sub Branch
Curwen	Dudley	150993	Ipswich Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Davies	Daniel	R49103	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Davis	Robert	16902	Innisfail Sub Branch
Dawson*	Glen	1739451	Redlands Sub Branch
Derham	Donald	PJ836897/ NZ1577	Nerang Sub Branch
Dockeary	William	14717782	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Donohue	John	A315934	Springwood Tri-Service Sub Branch
Dowe	Neville	1/709326	Townsville Sub Branch
Dwight*	Valery	811174	Tewantin/Noosa Sub Branch
Edwards	Frank	11733305	Ipswich Sub Branch
Elmslie	Peter	4/716703	Tewantin/Noosa Sub Branch
Enever	Roy	1/729067	Caloundra Sub Branch
Ewers	Thomas	D/ M945505	Maryborough Sub Branch
Facey	William	R93197	Agnes Water/1770 Sub Branch
Farrell	Gifford	1/21436	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Faulkner	Barry	1731284	Cairns Sub Branch
Fawcett	Peter	A320547	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Fewings	Harvey	441020	St George Sub Branch
Fewings	Harvey	v755269	St George Sub Branch
Field	Stephen	8182976	Forest Lake & Districts Sub Branch Inc
Findlay	Margaret	R84749	Bundaberg Sub Branch
Fitzgerald	Desmond	132403	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Flanagan	John	175073	Goodna Sub Branch
Flugge*	H	Q152356	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Fraser	Dorothy	F25412	Defence Service Nurses Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Frost	Richard	A23449	Maryborough Sub Branch
Gallagher	John	23479365	Tamborine Mountain Sub Branch
Gamer*	Henry	QX49759	Maryborough Sub Branch
Gardiner	Keith	A114326	Tramways Sub Branch
Gibbons*	Neil	316797	Redlands Sub Branch
Grant	Russell	R65221	Cairns Sub Branch
Gregory	Sydney	QX26324	Cairns Sub Branch
Grigg	Frederick	A221073	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Guy	Colin	39603	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Gwin	Christopher	D128515B	Maleny Sub Branch
Hagerty	Robert	335096	Manly-Lota Sub Branch
Hair	James	23527326	Redcliffe Sub Branch
Hall*	Eric	PM4569	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Hammond	George	QX500594	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Hanson	Jennifer	W85907	Caloundra Sub Branch
Harris	James	1734121	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Hartley	Derrick	N456030	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Hastie	Alan	441016	Kenmore/Moggill Sub Branch
Hawkes	Laurence	A217562	Maroochydore Sub Branch
Hay	Vincent	C61575	Coorparoo & Districts Sub Branch
Hayward*	Kevin	219602	Jimboomba Sub Branch
Hennessy* (nee Binns, Brown)	Edna	NF451745	RSL Defence Servicewomen's Sub Branch
Henry	James	A1966	Redlands Sub Branch

# LAST POST

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Henry*	James	1/21131	Redlands Sub Branch
Hibbard	Lindsay	434253	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Hoskin	Arthur	1703378	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Hough*	B	QX39352	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Houston	Donald	NX176555	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Huey	Brian	1/726313	Cairns Sub Branch
Hunt	Cyril	PJX/ 625904	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Hunter	David	R58326	Esk Sub Branch
Hurlock	Lloyd	1/711087	Townsville Sub Branch
Husband	James	26275	Coolum-Peregian Sub Branch
Ingham*	Roy	932646	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Jackson	Ronald	R56821	Sandgate Sub Branch
Jackson	Dennis	1106770	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Jennings	William	415992	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Jennings	Frederick	H4187991	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Johnston	Roydon	1731313	Sandgate Sub Branch
Joynes*	George	P/ JX573937	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Justice	Michael	16186	Caboolture-Morayfield & District Sub Branch
Kavanagh	William	R47556	Tin Can Bay Sub Branch
Kelly	William	VX95518	Wynnum Sub Branch
Kennedy	Donald	2711730	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Kerr	Thomas	7/3750	Capricornia & Rockhampton Region Sub Branch
Killick	Frederick	2/880	Five Dock Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Kinnersly	Doug	14717196	Holland Park Mt Gravatt Sub Branch
Kirk	Edward	A24146	Gatton Sub Branch
Kirlew	Michael	Merchant Navy	Caloundra Sub Branch
Kretschmann	Cyril	QX47323	Forest Lake & Districts Sub Branch Inc
Lacey	John	1/61971	Mackay Sub Branch
Le Cornu	Ronald	2745806	Nerang Sub Branch
Leggett	Keith	15298	Caboolture-Morayfield & District Sub Branch
Levet	Graham	15129	Bribie Island Sub Branch
Lewis	Bryan	134415	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Lindsay	Raymond	37394	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Lobb	George	51236	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Low	Richard	0003523H	Kedron-Wavell Sub Branch
Lyndon	Bryan	A124112	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Mallett	George	PM8034	Walkerston-Pleystowe Sub Branch
Manuel	Peter	22895451	Toowoomba Sub Branch
Martyn	James	235012	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Mason*	John	T/14459025	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Mathers	Kenneth	1/710453	Gracemere & District Sub Branch
Maxted	Roy	1718484	Bundaberg Sub Branch
McDonough	James	35421/ 02347	North Gold Coast Sub Branch
McGarry	Ian	A57691	Ipswich Sub Branch
McGrory	Alexander	R51355	Caloundra Sub Branch
Mckaskill*	John	13467	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
McNally*	Colin	032452	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
McNamara	Kevin	12864	Maryborough Sub Branch
McNeill	Neil	B5206	Cooroy-Pomona Sub Branch
McQueen*	John	23913 (NX145588)	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Mellett	Graeme	3796250	Cooroy-Pomona Sub Branch
Miles	Robert	C101260	Gympie Sub Branch
Minster*	Trevor	VX101853	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Mitaros	Stanley	1/720845	Gemfields Sub Branch
Mitchell	George	QX501239	Ipswich Sub Branch
Mitchener	Frederick	14255	Toowoomba Sub Branch
Moore	Ivan	R64522	Pine Rivers District Sub Branch
Murphy	James	2782704	Kawana Waters Sub Branch
Murphy	Martin	A125986	Centenary Suburbs Sub Branch
Nell	Noel	R37305	Woodford Sub Branch
Newman	Frederick	4031105	Gladstone Sub Branch
Nicholls	Terry	F174206	Townsville Sub Branch
Nichols	Darrell	2785055	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Norin	Peggy	389088	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Nottingham*	Alan	14468179	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
O'Brien	Colin	A11061	Townsville Sub Branch
O'Brien*	Joyce	Womens Land Army	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
O'Keefe	Leslie	1/726263	Townsville Sub Branch
O'Shea*	Noel	-	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Paine	Fredrick	142843	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Pamenter	Gerald	CJ/ X163292	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Parker	Raymond	145464	Rainbow Beach Sub Branch
Payne*	Keith	JX104497	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Peacock	Norman	435352	Gracemere & District Sub Branch
Pearsall	Donald	VX54803	Caloundra Sub Branch
Pearson	John	110644	Herbert River Sub Branch
Pearson	Leslie	QX60483 (Q268410)	Gaythorne Sub Branch
Perry	Leslie	Q126413	Greenbank Sub Branch
Phillips	Kenneth	002257	Mackay Sub Branch
Phillips	Gregory	14912	Redcliffe Sub Branch
Pleavin	Barry	133364	Biloela Sub Branch
Prideaux*	Peter	76483	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Pritchard	Lionel	154032	Currumbin/Palm Beach Sub Branch
Reeves	Barry	Q39182	Wynnum Sub Branch
Reinke	Arthur	A13632	Rollingstone Sub Branch
Riseham	Irwin	1/722989	Mackay Sub Branch
Roberts*	R	QX14126	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Roe	John	1411102	Atherton Sub Branch
Rolfe	Robert	Q115597	Crows Nest Sub Branch
Rosenblatt	Neville	1734335	Biloela Sub Branch
Ross	Eric	A1492	Caboolture-Morayfield & District Sub Branch
Rowlands	Kenneth	QX54617	Gracemere & District Sub Branch
Ryan	Claude	N197975	Beenleigh & District Sub Branch
Sampson	Zane	O24506	Gaythorne Sub Branch

# LAST POST

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Schultz (nee Ward)	Gail	W112361	Gympie Sub Branch
Schwarze	John	217101	Tewantin/Noosa Sub Branch
Secombe	Robin	52996	Kawana Waters Sub Branch
Serisier*	J	QX48318	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Shaw	Reginald	150024	Ipswich Railway Sub Branch
Sim	John	NX105483 (N175872)	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Skuse	Glyn	A50316	Goombungee Sub Branch
Smedley	Leonard	39661	Centenary Suburbs Sub Branch
Smith	Douglas	170641	Maryborough Sub Branch
Smith	Bryan	3155307	Mossman Sub Branch
Smith*	Wayne	R106461	Greenbank Sub Branch
Spenceley	Stuart	0114271	Caloundra Sub Branch
Spiers*	Judith	N217172	Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Splatt*	Garry	2/771104	Rainbow Beach Sub Branch
Stoff	Bruce	1/710899	Manly-Lota Sub Branch
Stokes (nee Oxenham/ Spence)	Betty	WR2238	Stephens Sub Branch
Stoneley*	Edwin	QX3346	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Stratton*	Lloyd	VX66470	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Sutherland	Ernest	QX57588 (Q122876)	Bribie Island Sub Branch
Suthers	John	A1774	Ipswich Sub Branch
Toohey	John	1732643	Goondiwindi Sub Branch

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER	SUB BRANCH
Van Harskamp	Robert	4410967	Caboolture-Morayfield & District Sub Branch
Van Vllgt*	Bernardus	110578	Helidon Sub Branch
Vickery	Leonard	1/725957	Rainbow Beach Sub Branch
Von Snarski	Peter	171620	Carmila Sub Branch
Wagner*	Dawn	W24572	Harlaxton Sub Branch
Wales*	Murdoch	440469	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Walker*	Harold	173101	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Wallace	Gordon	1/722430	Kawana Waters Sub Branch
Walsh	Kenneth	A314929	Hervey Bay Sub Branch
Walsh	Kevin	H134304	Darra & District Sub Branch
Watson	Robert	44249	Toowoomba Sub Branch
Watson*	Elaine	F1/1470	Greenbank Sub Branch
Webster	Jack	A21540	Wynnum Sub Branch
Whittred*	Alistair	A50151	Sherwood-Indooroopilly Sub Branch
Wilde*	Warren	243092	Townsville Sub Branch
Williams	William	1/711241	Yeronga-Dutton Park Sub Branch
Willis	Barry	R58832	Redcliffe Sub Branch
Willis	Barry	A119996	Redcliffe Sub Branch
Wolski	Desmond	1/708451	Kingaroy/Memerambi Sub Branch
Wood	Michael	8442665	Townsville Sub Branch
Wooltorton	Arnold	14946134	Townsville Sub Branch
Worthington	Maxwell	150894	Sunnybank Sub Branch
Wright	Edward	22372945	Greenbank Sub Branch
Wynne	Leslie	NS4339	Ipswich Railway Sub Branch
Zeller	Bevan	A110806	Maroochydore Sub Branch



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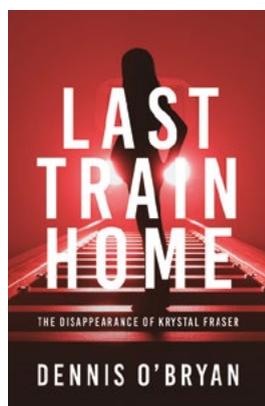
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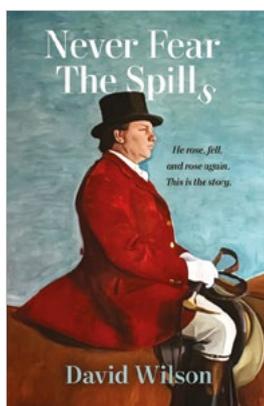
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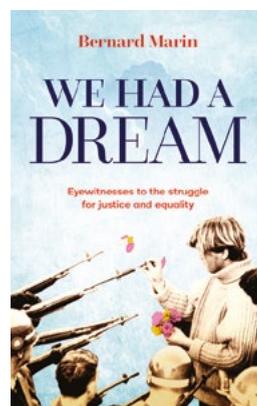
ISBN: 978-1-922958-09-9  
Join Australian soldiers, Stan and Billy, in their stubborn resistance against an overwhelming World War II Japanese force in Papua New Guinea as the Australians fight a tactical withdrawal along the Kokoda Track. The strategies and tactics used in this withdrawal created one of the most famous actions in the annals of Australian military history. Link arms with Carol and Jean, two sisters who experience love and tragedy while struggling to fulfil their duties as waitresses. Experience the full effect that tens of thousands of allied troops had on their home city of Brisbane. At war's end, you will realise how it was that this generation was able to face their future with such confidence and certainty as they built the foundations of the modern Australia that we all enjoy today.



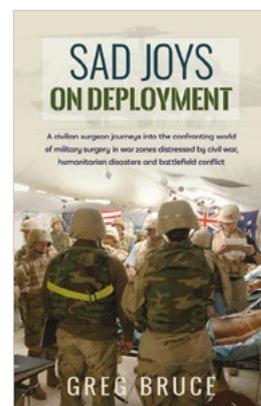
ISBN: 978-1-922958-10-5  
What happened to young mum-to-be Krystal Fraser on 20 June 2009 after she checked herself out of hospital to go to a party rather than await the birth of her first child? More than thirteen years later the question remains unanswered. No-one has reported seeing the young woman since. Local police did not consider Krystal to be a victim of foul play, wrongly believing she was the architect of her own disappearance. The trail went cold before the homicide squad was called in and a missing person case became a murder enquiry. In Last Train Home former police investigator Dennis O'Bryan delves deep into the events and people involved to reveal his discovery of new and compelling evidence.



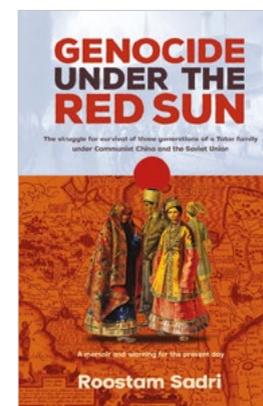
ISBN: 78-1-922958-02-0  
"And, Clancy, you must wheel them, try and wheel them to the right. Ride boldly, lad, and never fear the spills."  
In 1973, facing prosecution for dangerous driving following a high-speed motorcycle collision, a young civil engineer accepted a short-term job offer in Singapore. That twist of fate catapulted him into a global oil and gas industry fuelled by fallout from the Yom Kippur War, which saw crude oil jump from US\$23 to US\$62 a barrel. One year turned into thirty. Singapore turned into the Far East, the Middle East, the North Sea and South America. The journey took him to the world's greatest opera houses and through England's and Ireland's finest fox hunting country. David Wilson rose, fell, and rose again. This is the story.



ISBN: 978-1-922958-03-7  
The 1960s was a decade of social and political upheaval that reshaped every facet of American culture, from civil rights, through feminism, to gay liberation and the anti-Vietnam War movement. Bernard Marin takes readers into the heart of this turbulent time in an anthology of historical fiction. Through Bernard's eyes, we join a young journalist who witnesses both the Chicago riot of 1968, and the uproarious trial of the ringleaders. We follow a university student who finds love while participating in the famous civil rights march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, and witness a chance encounter at a department store lunch counter that transforms a young, Southern white woman into an activist.



ISBN: 978-0-9578709-6-3  
Greg Bruce is an orthopaedic surgeon who served in the Royal Australian Air Force. Between 1995 and 2008, he was sent overseas on ten military deployments to humanitarian disasters, local conflicts and war zones. The restricted medical resources, dangers and harsh living conditions made military surgery very different from civilian practice. There were good experiences and horrible experiences. There were contrasts: Ghastly military wounds. Loss of limbs. Simple sprains and pains. Friendly allied military forces. Hostile enemy forces. Local civilians, some welcoming, some resentful. Enjoying good accommodation and food. Coping with the bad. Finally there was readjustment and reflection on return home. Are you ever the same again?



ISBN: 978-1-922958-08-2  
This book has been written about the struggles for survival of three generations of an extended Tatar family who lived through the most turbulent periods of Russian, as well as Chinese, history. Tatars were subjected to assimilation policies by both the Tsarist and the Soviet regimes, causing them to resist such policies for many generations. The most turbulent periods of the 20th century have been briefly depicted in this book as the background of the struggle for survival by the family, who eventually succeeded not only to survive genocidal policies of the communist regimes of Russia as well as China, but to also come to Australia to live prosperous and happy lives by working hard to establish themselves in their new homeland. .

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This program takes a holistic approach to managing PTSD and mental health.

Ex-serving ADF participants experience a range of evidence-based education sessions and activities over 11 days in a relaxed, rural setting.

[info@4aussieheroes.com.au](mailto:info@4aussieheroes.com.au)  
[4aussieheroes.com.au](http://4aussieheroes.com.au)

## Operation PTSD Support



A multi-day retreat on the Gold Coast, where partners and carers of veterans with PTSD and other mental or physical barriers can take a break, learn new skills and share experiences with others in a similar situation.

[team@opptsd.org.au](mailto:team@opptsd.org.au)  
[opptsd.org.au](http://opptsd.org.au)

## Timor Awakening



Designed for veterans and partners, this program nurtures the mind, body and soul. Find renewed purpose, inner peace, and develop a personal wellbeing plan. Choose from an 11-day Timor-Leste experience or nine-day Gold Coast program.

[support@veteranscare.com.au](mailto:support@veteranscare.com.au)  
[veteranscare.com.au](http://veteranscare.com.au)

For more information, including locations and dates, please contact each program directly.

**EXPLORE ALL PROGRAMS**

[rslqld.org/find-help](http://rslqld.org/find-help)



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Queensland