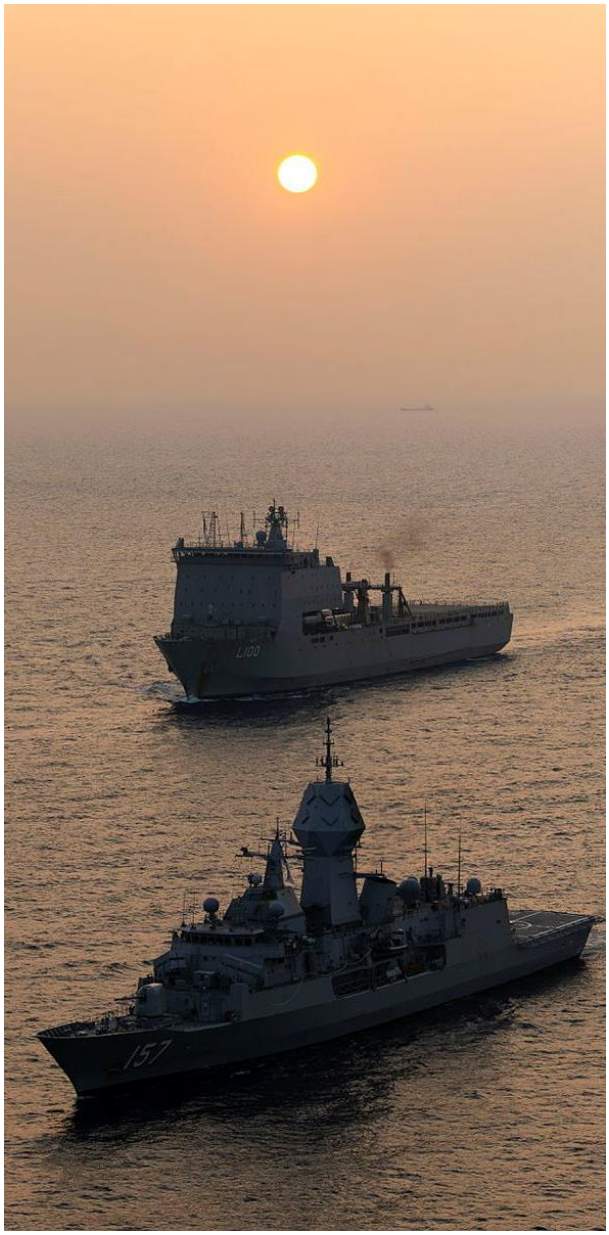
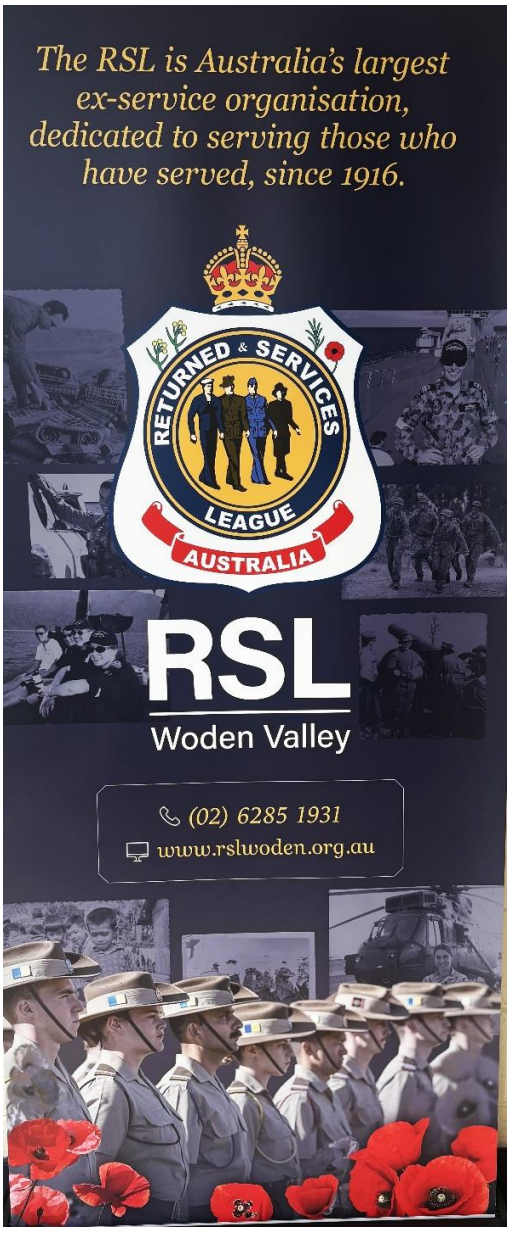
Official Magazine of
WODEN VALLEY
SUB-BRANCH
R.S.L.

The SERVICEMAN

First Published in January 1962

CHRISTMAS EDITION **NOVEMBER 2026**





HMA Ships *Choules* and *Perth* Exercise Keris Woomera 26 (October 2026) was the largest overseas training activity for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in 2026, involving around 1000 ADF personnel.

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The SERVICEMAN

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE WODEN VALLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH (INC)
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OFFICE BEARERS 2025-2026

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The Sub-Branch meets on the last Tuesday of each month except April and December at the Grant Cameron Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611. Membership $40 subscription is due on 1st January annually and should be posted to the *Grant Cameron Centre*, 14/27 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611.
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Kathryn Spurling





There is a great deal of discussion currently underway concerning the title, future form and content of *The Serviceman.* All this is healthy and like the RSL and Woden Valley Sub Branch, change is healthy so that we never lose relevance. As Editor I promise my priority remains highlighting the stories and lives of our membership. Nonetheless regardless of urgent requests those stories have not been forthcoming bar from a few brave individuals.

Furthermore, recent Sub Branch Board and Ordinary General Meeting discussion has explored the possibility of widening the scope and distribution of the magazine. Woden Valley RSL Sub Branch is the only ACT Branch to publish this worthy magazine and past editor Bob Cremer is to be congratulated for his meritorious service in this regard.

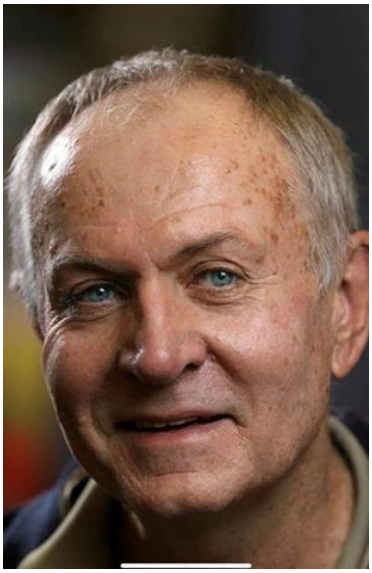
As Editor I have invited other ACT RSL Sub-Branch members to contribute articles, biographies, conversations and to offer news of any events not only newsworthy but that our own members may be interested in attending. I also contacted RSL Sub Branches in Papua New Guinea and Washington DC as well as *ACT Peacekeepers* (all interestingly listed under the *ACT RSL Sub Branches* page) intrigued in their activities, membership and the stories they can tell. To ensure the evolution of any organization we must reach out and encourage connectivity.

Please think about writing your story. If you are not confident in writing, that is fine, it is my job to edit. We celebrate and support veterans and their families. I keenly await more members to tell me their stories, those of others and military history chapters of interest. kspurling48@gmail.com

This issue received interesting contributions and demonstrates how this Sub Branch again punched above its weight during the ANZAC Day commemorations.
And for those interested in poppies, our own Janny Poate photographed varieties poppies growing on her Gundaroo property *Diggers Rest.* These are featured throughout this edition. In memory of their son Private Robbie Poate, Janny and Hugh have turned their property, into a safe haven and recovery centre for ADF veterans and First Responders. Through their generosity and empathy many have been assisted by Hugh and Janny and I hope to include an article in the next issue of this magazine of how they turned their grief into such positivity.

PRESIDENT`S MESSAGE

Winston Phillips



The cooler months of 2026 have been busy – and challenging – as I guess is always the case. Our regular ANZAC Day activities (ANZAC Appeal, ANZAC Eve Dinner and ANZAC Morning Remembrance Service) were all very successful due to the committed preparation and participation of our volunteers and staff, and the active engagement of our members and the local veteran community.

The standout for 2026 was the return of the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park, due primarily to the outstanding planning and preparation efforts of Liz Berryman alongside the ongoing hidden work of the judging panel for the Schools Essay Competition. A commendable effort came from Master of Ceremonies Stuart Althaus and the participation of local primary school staff and students. Grant funding made it possible!

Following the success of the event and ongoing risk of inclement weather, Liz and I met with the Principal and staff of St Bede's Primary School, Red Hill, to explore the school's offer to host future ANZAC and Peace Ceremonies. St Bede's grounds and facilities are excellent, and includes shaded under-cover and indoor options. The venue will be different, the format slightly altered but it will still be the WVSB ANZAC and Peace Ceremony, with the same purpose, and broader ACT primary school involvement. We will be out in the community (rather than potentially out in the rain) and hopefully better engaged with parents who are of course potential members or supporters. Liz has again volunteered to lead in 2027, but welcomes any assistance.

As mentioned in the ANZAC edition the WVSB Board of Directors had begun working through a process, whereby the excellent work undertaken by the Veterans Support Centre for over a decade can continue – ideally as an ACT-wide VSC under ACT RSL Branch management. A significant refresh of ACT RSL Branch Executive has allowed detailed discussion on future VSC operation. Funding was a critical issue for both the WVSB and ACT Branch. Our board's primary concern being our own financial viability has meant parallel planning to wind down, or 'gracefully degrade' the level or extent of VSC services in 2027.

Thankfully, due to the exceptional outcome with the 2026-27 (and 2027-28, 2028-29) Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grant funding, WVSB (and RSL ACT Branch) are now both much better placed, financially, to deliver compensation and wellbeing advocacy services to the local veteran community. There remain a broad range of issues to be carefully worked through in conjunction with RSL ACT to prepare for the proposed transition, including necessary organisational change for the Sub-Branch (to our By-Laws) and liaison with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Grant conditions exclude key expenditure categories (such as rent and cleaning costs). Our pool of advocates us growing, as are their individual skills and experience, but we've also had recent retirements and must steel ourselves for more. Our Vice President (Advocacy), Wade Cooper is always seeking new advocates.

Beyond the VSC (our compensation and wellbeing advocacy work) and our community engagement, commemorative and fundraising events, the Sub-Branch quietly continues to deliver. Our weekly Coffee Catch-ups and Eddison Lunches remain well attended, demonstrating their value to members, while other activities continue, including our engagement with local Residential Aged Care facilities.

A special note of thanks is warranted for Cynthia and Quinton White for their ongoing efforts with hospital visits; a pre-COVID Sub-Branch staple which we could no doubt rejuvenate with more volunteers and appropriate engagement with veterans and hospitals.

Similarly, our sincere thanks go to our Secretary Shauna Bastick and Treasurer Jan Properjohn – both of whom stood down at the AGM in May but found themselves continuing in the roles for want of volunteers to replace them. The Sub-Branch – noting our size and complexity – simply cannot function without both those roles filled. While Jan has an eager assistant in training (Terry O'Brien), we need volunteers to step forward as soon as possible to take on these pivotal roles in 2027.

Demand for RSL Funeral Tributes seems to be growing, and a deeper pool of available volunteers would lighten the load on the few members that currently undertake this valuable and personally rewarding function – volunteers welcome.

2026 is rapidly drawing to a close. On behalf of the Executive and the Board, I thank you all for your support and contributions and wish you the very best for the remainder of the year, including the festive season.

****

FALL IN

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Alexander Leech

Matthews McCormack

Sandrine McHugh

Vincent Patrech

Anthony Robinson

Francis Turner

ALL MEMBERS:
A reminder that membership fees are due soon so please pay your $40 to RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch BSB: 062-908 acc: 1084 1897 and continue to enjoy the camaraderie of this great organization and of course this wonderful magazine.

ANZAC and Peace Ceremony 2026

Liz Berryman

On 24 April 2026 the RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch held its ANZAC and Peace Ceremony at Eddison Park, Phillip. This was the first time the Ceremony was held since 2019. Around 350 primary school students, performers, veterans and members of the public attended. The primary aim of the ceremony was to assist young schoolchildren to appreciate the culture of the ANZAC spirit and the price of peace. The ceremony was based on the *Australian War Memorial* ANZAC ceremony but included explanations of the Catafalque Party and the Ode.

In attendance were the Deputy High Commissioner of New Zealand, Mr Kenneth Ryan, the ACT Shadow Minister for Veterans, Mr Peter Cain, MLA, and Mr Bill Smith, former President of the RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch and the initiator of the first RSL ANZAC and Peace Ceremony.

Group Captain Marshall, NZ Deputy High Commissioner Mr Kenneth Ryan, Mr Winston Phillips, Mr Peter Cain MLA, Colonel Passmore (Jenkins)



The ceremony opened with the story of Ms Christine Gascoyne's grandfather, David McGarvie, who fought at Gallipoli. Christine described how David was wounded at Gallipoli and when he tried to crawl back to the safety of the Australian trenches, mistaking him as a Turkish sniper they opened fire. When David called out his name and rank, his unique voice (caused by his hare lip and cleft palette) was immediately recognised and he was assisted by his mates to get to safety.

In the opening prayer, Principal Air Chaplain Mark Willis (Ret'd) remembered all the men and women of the Armed Forces who gave their lives for our country and prayed for those currently serving in our Defence Force.

Mr Bill Smith and Ms Fran Hinton (Jenkins)



Cadets from *241 ACU* (Jenkins)



The Guest speaker address was provided by Major Donna Manton (Rtd). Her address captured the spirit of remembrance and connection that the day was about.

Col. Passmore, Maj Donna Martin (Ret'd), LtCol Stuart Althaus (Jenkins)



Wreaths were laid by students and guests at the Memorial, named after the original Woden Valley war settlers, the Eddison family, who lost three sons on active service during World War II.

The *National Military Re-enactment Group* brought the uniforms of the Great War to life, with their display of Australian military uniforms from the *Royal Australian Navy* (including the *RAN Bridging Train* at Gallipoli), the *Australian Imperial Force* (including the *Australian Flying Corps*) and the *Australian Army Nursing Service.*

Prizes for the top three essays in the 2026 ANZAC Essay Competition for Primary school students in the Woden Valley area were also awarded. The topic for the essay being *How can remembering the ANZACs help us understand the importance of peace today?* The winner of the competition, Hamish Passmore of *St. Bede's Primary School*, read his essay.

In closing Mr Andrew Casey, Principal of *St Bede's Primary School*, acknowledged the importance of ANZAC Day:

It occupies a unique place in Australia's national identity. It is a time to remember those who have served and sacrificed in war, conflict, and peacekeeping operations, and to honour the values that emerged from those experiences; courage, endurance, selflessness, and mateship. These values transcend generations and remind us both of the cost of our freedoms and of our shared responsibility to uphold them. By participating in ceremonies such as today's and

initiatives like the ANZAC Essay Competition, students become custodians of remembrance. As we move further from the lived experiences of the original ANZACs, it is the understanding and commitment of young Australians that will ensure these stories and values remain.

Liz Berryman (Jenkins)



I would like to thank all members of the Sub-Branch who helped organise and run the Ceremony, with special mention to Stuart Althaus (our Master of Ceremonies), Shauna Bastick, Wade Cooper, Matthew Griggs, John Peters, Winston Phillips and Kathryn Spurling; and to David Jenkins, our photographer for the event.

Editor's note. The ANZAC and Peace ceremony could never have proceeded had it not been for the tireless work of Liz Berryman.

It has also been decided that from 2027 the ANZAC and Peace Ceremony will be held at *St Bede's Primary School.* The venue offers the Woden RSL Sub Branch a large weather proof venue free of charge. It will also be held earlier in April to not only better align with the school term but provide volunteers and the public greater participation during a very crowded period of remembrance.

****

On ANZAC Eve, Woden Valley RSL Branch held its annual commemoration eve dinner. It was well attended and for the first time (to this editor's knowledge) we had a female dinner speaker.

WGCDR Karri Roberts (RAAF) (AWM)



WGCDR Karri Roberts (RAAF), Commanding Officer of Canberra's *460 Squadron* spoke of her extensive 26 years military service. Stories she relayed concerning her three overseas deployments, especially Afghanistan, were stunning and she received a standing ovation. The event touchingly reading the names of our members who had died during the previous year. Regretfully due to a shortage of volunteers and this editor struggling with a foot injury no photos of those gathered were taken.

Ian Gollings granddaughter Charlotte on an overseas holiday took these photographs of a stone in Cornwall with the poem written by Laurence Binyon first published in September 1914 which includes that verse we are all very familiar with.



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.



****

Les Cook

Woden Valley RSL Sub Branch was saddened by the passing of our own hero Les Cook, aged 103, on 5 March 2026. Leslie 'Les' Cook, was believed to be the last surviving ANZAC who fought during the WWII *Battle of Crete*.



Born 10 January 1923, in Herefordshire, England, Les migrated to Australia as a young child and grew up on a Gippsland, Victoria, dairy farm. At seventeen, he enlisted in the *2nd Australian Imperial Force* during May 1940 and served as a signaller with the *2/14th Battalion*.

In March 1941, he landed with Allied forces in Greece and fought in the *Battle of Crete* which commenced on 20 May 1941. The Allied Crete campaign was marked by limited equipment and intense aerial bombardment as German forces dominated the skies. British, Commonwealth and Greek forces were pushed steadily southward, under aerial and artillery

bombardment, followed by waves of motorcycle and mountain troops. By 28/29 May evacuation was the only option, and Allied ships attempted to rescue as many as possible under concentrated bombardment and ship losses. Casualties ran into the thousands. About 18,600 men of the 32,000 British troops on the island were evacuated; 12,000 British and Dominion troops and thousands of Greeks were still on Crete when the island came under German control on 1 June; their future brutal.



Les survived and continued serving in North Africa, Syria, New Guinea and Japan, before returning to Australia in 1947.

After the war, Les built a career in the Australian Public Service, until his retirement in 1981. He remained active well into his later years and was widely respected within the Greek Australian community for his connection to Greece. Les left behind three daughters and a lasting legacy to the *Battle of Crete*. He was an honorary life member of Canberra's *Hellenic Club*, the *Greek Orthodox Community, Church of Canberra* (GOCCC) and the Woden Valley RSL Sub Branch. 'Forever a hero to both Australia and Greece', announced John Loukadellis, President of the GOCCC.

The funeral of Les was widely attended and during the service, the Ambassador of Greece to Australia Mr Stavros Venizelos read the message from H.E. Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic.

On behalf of the Government of Greece and the Greek people, I wish to express our deepest condolences on the passing of Les Cook. Today we bow our heads with sorrow - but also with profound gratitude and honour - before a man whose life was defined by courage, duty, and quiet dignity. Les Cook belonged to a remarkable generation of young men who were called, at a very early age, to confront the cruelty of war. Like so many of his fellow ANZACs, he answered that call without hesitation. He served his country with bravery across distant theatres of conflict - in the Pacific and in Greece - among the many who rose to fight the forces of the Axis.

On Greek soil, he fought in the Greek Campaign and in the Battle of Crete, the scene of the largest German airborne operation of the Second World War. In those dark days of 1941, the ANZAC soldiers, together with their Allied and Greek comrades, fought with extraordinary determination. They delayed the enemy's advance and left a mark on the course of the war that would resonate far beyond the island of Crete, sending a powerful message of hope to the free world.

Yet the story of the Battle of Crete did not end with the Allied evacuation. The struggle continued. The Cretan Resistance fought on until the final surrender of Nazi Germany in 1945. The people of Crete paid a heavy price for their defiance. Entire villages were destroyed countless lives were lost- yet they refused to bow to occupation. Many risked

their lives to shelter Allied and ANZAC soldiers left behind in the chaos of the evacuation, sharing their homes, their food, and often their fate.

For the people of Crete, this history is deeply personal. My own father, Konstantinos Mitsotakis, lived through those dark days in Crete. As a young man, he joined the resistance, was arrested by the occupying forces and condemned to death twice - experiences that profoundly shaped his life and his service to our country.

From that shared sacrifice emerged an enduring bond of friendship between Greece and Australia; Les Cook embodied that bond.

Those who knew him speak of his humility. Despite the extraordinary experiences he lived through, he remained a man who never sought recognition for himself and never forgot the comrades who stood beside him, nor those who never returned home. I had been looking forward to meeting him during my upcoming visit to Australia. His passing saddens me deeply. Les Cook lived a long and fulfilling life, and he leaves behind an example that will continue to inspire us all - a reminder that peace must never be taken for granted. It demands vigilance, courage and sacrifice.

His memory will endure - in Greece, in Australia, and wherever the legacy of the ANZACs is honoured. Lest we forget.

****

LAST POST

We sadly farewelled the following members:

Alexander Craig

John Kent

Leslie Cook

Patrick Cotter

Brian Edwards

John Mutton



Brief Overview of 32 small ship squadron detachments (LSMs) in South Vietnan (SVN)

Warren Barsley

The first deployment commenced with the departure of *Vernon Sturdee* and *John Monash* from Sydney on 11 April 1966. Landing Ship Medium *Vernon Sturdee* remained in SVN until June 1966 and *John Monash* returned to Sydney, on 9 June. *Clive Steele* departed for SVN Jun 66 commencing the continuing detachments of LSMs to Australian Force Vietnam (AFV) for five years until withdrawn in Mar 1971. Apart from the one LSM continuously detached to SVN, other LSMs and *John Monash* provided back up support to *Jeparit* and did resupply trips from Sydney to Vung Tau and return, particularly around Christmas and if additional tanks were required in SVN.

Clive Steele (Barsley)



Jeparit was a general cargo ship owned by the *Australian National Line* and provided a regular six weekly re-supply service between Sydney and SVN. As a result of industrial disputes with the Seamen's Union, *Jeparit* was commissioned as HMAS *Jeparit* with RAN personnel replacing deck and engine room crew. *Jeparit* did not have a heavy lift capability and therefore had to discharge/load tanks in either Cam Ranh Bay or Saigon. Owing to river security uncertainty, Saigon was ruled out as a discharge port option.

The primary purpose of the LSM in SVN was to provide the link with *Jeparit* in Cam Ranh Bay. Because *Jeparit* was unable to discharge tanks in Vung Tau the LSM would take 'dead' tanks to Cam Ranh Bay and collect 'live' tanks from *Jeparit.* The 'live' tanks were then delivered to either Baria Hard or Vung Tau for the Armoured Squadron with *1 ATF* in Nui Dat. In between LSMs were deployed in support of US or Australian forces, operating between Saigon, Vung Tau, the Mekong Delta area (Can Tho, Vinh Long and My Tho), and up the coast of SVN to places such as Phan Rang (*2 Sqn RAAF*), Qhi Nhon, Nha Trang and Phan Thiet.

Tasking of the SVN LSMs was controlled by the SO Movements/OC *11 Movement Control Group, HQ 1 Australian Logistic Support Group* (ALSG) Vung Tau. In Saigon LSMs usually berthed at the US Army port of Newport, a US relatively secure protected port also used by US commercial ships supporting US SVN forces.

Vung Tau was the LSM homeport. They generally beached within the confines of the port in the area allocated to landing craft, to the west of the de long pier. The beach was also utilised by the several USN LSTs and many *US Army Transportation Corps* LCM8s. Vung Tau was relatively secure, the river being regularly patrolled by *US Coastguard* and Army riverine craft. The river was regularly checked for enemy divers and mines by both US and RAN divers. Also, because of river patrols and diver operations, percussion grenades were not used by ships on the beach.

An alternative to beaching at Vung Tau was to berth at the *US Coastguard* base, Cat Lo, about five miles up-river from Vung Tau toward Baria. This base was also secure and well patrolled. Ships at anchor in Vung Tau bay, waiting for the tide or a berth on the beach, sometimes used percussion grenades as a deterrent to enemy divers as the anchorages were not as well patrolled as the river.

Bridge of *John Monash* (Barsley)



Mekong Delta ports, and river passage in the delta, were the most likely place to be subjected to enemy attacks. During river passages between Vung Tau and Saigon, approximately five/six hours duration; from the entrance to the Mekong to delta ports, again five/six-hour passages; crews were at action stations manning the 40mm Bofors direct fire support weapon, the .50 cal. weapons and the mounted M16s. Gun crews on alert wore flak jackets and 'battle bowlers' (steel helmets). In very high temperatures and humidity these were very uncomfortable and stressful days, and they were frequent. During river passages weapons were usually test fired in approved areas, usually twice during a river passage, once each way, lasting about five minutes, due to free fire zones. River transits were only undertaken during daylight hours owing to the lack of navigational night aids (ie, lights) and the likelihood of enemy interference.

Cam Ranh Bay was a major USAF base and a major port of entry for US Forces equipment. The port was operated by a US commercial contractor (SEALAND). It was considered relatively secure and well patrolled. During my visits to Cam Ranh Bay there was never an incident affecting my ship, *Clive Steele*.

Phan Rang was the base for *2 Sqn* RAAF (*Canberra Bombers*) and a regular port of call distributing stores that arrived in SVN in *Jeparit*. Although relatively secure and time in port never amounted to more than a few hours. These were regular ports of call, again all US controlled ports, used by the US Armed Forces and relatively secure but

dependent upon tasks in support of US Forces. Those US Forces were always concerned with safety of the LSM when in their port. Safety was always the responsibility of the ship officer commanding: whether percussion grenades were used was his decision.
The only direct hit suffered by an LSM was when *Clive Steele* was hit on 5 Jan 69 with three RPGs and numerous rounds from small calibre automatic weapons after leaving Can Tho, headed back to Vung Tau. The extent of the damage (knocked out air conditioning plant and hot water system) caused the LSM to be withdrawn from service and sent to Singapore for repairs and refit on 27 Apr 69, and returning 21 Jul 69. My Tho had come under fire during one trip of the *Clive Steele* but not close enough to the LSM to cause any damage or real concern.

One incident in Phan Thiet resulted in *Clive Steele* stranded on an unchartered sandbar at night, waiting for high water, when an enemy rocket attack on Phan Thiet provided a fireworks display for the crew. While Vung Tau was relatively secure, there were occasional mortar attacks initiated by the enemy from the opposite side of the river. While there were occasional 'hits' on Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) and the beach, I am unaware of any LSM ever taking a direct hit. Similarly, CAT LO had occasional attacks from across the river but no reported hits on LSMs.
The number of crew remaining onboard at all times as duty watch was the decision of the officer commanding, although generally accepted practice was that the ship kept three watches and that one third of the crew were onboard at all times. The duty watch always contained a senior deck officer/NCO of at least Sgt rank and the same for the engine room crew, should the LSM be required to pull off the beach or leave an anchorage in an emergency. The duty watch was an 'active' watch and members of the watch were armed with personal weapons.

There were occasions when personnel, additional to ship's crew were carried on trips. These personnel generally came under one of the following categories:

- Tank drivers, to drive the tanks that were on board as cargo,
- Plant operators for engineer plant that may have been carried as cargo,
- Vehicle operators for vehicular cargoes,
- Security personnel, sometimes MPs, if valuable or attractive cargo was carried,
- Reserve Personnel as part of their short familiarisation period in SVN,
- Sea Transport Officer (Civilian) employed by the Department of Transport for duties in relation to the HMAS *Jeparit* cargo loadings/unloadings.

Apart from tanks, the LSM distributed general cargo ex *Jeparit* and cargoes arranged by the Movement Control Officer (MCO). These could include vehicles, engineering plant and equipment (usually for US forces), canteen supplies, etc. Valuable and attractive cargoes were usually escorted by MCO arranged personnel. The only dangerous cargo I can recall were occasions when bombs were carried to Phan Rang for the RAAF.

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Brief Biography of Warren Barsley

Warren Barsley was born in Newcastle (NSW) on 12 February 1938.
After completing my education at Newcastle Boys High School, I accepted an employment offer at BHP Newcastle. On 17 March 1954 I began my maritime career as

an apprentice deck officer with BHP shipping. I completed my apprenticeship in 1958 and obtained my 2nd Mate Foreign Going certificate. I then joined the British India Shipping company (B.I.) in October 1958 when I joined the M.V. Carpentaria in October 1958. I then served on voyages from Australia to Indian and Persian Gulf ports as far north as Basra (Iraq), until proceeding to the U.K. to study for my 1st Mates Certificate, which I obtained in London on 27 June 1960. I then served on cargo ships operating between European Ports and Indian ports. I also served on an oil tanker operating between European ports and the Persian Gulf, until I began study leave in the UK for my Master's Certificate, which I obtained on 10 December 1962. On 19 March 1963 I flew to Hong Kong to join a Bank Line vessel, trading between Japan and the Far East to ports in the Indian Ocean, such as Isle de La Reunion and Mauritius, and then on to East and South Africa serving ports between Mombasa to Capetown, including one trip to Haiphong (the port for Hanoi, North Vietnam). While on leave in the U.K in 1964 I applied for, and was accepted, as a Captain in the Australian Army (RAE) to man the newly acquired LSMs.

I served in the RAE(Tn) then later the RACT, on board LSMs and the John Monash from August 1965. I also had appointments in Army Office (Canberra), Command of 32 Small Ship Squadron RACT and service in PNG and Vietnam.
I was serving as CO of the LSM Clive Steele when we were attacked by VC Troops in the Mekong River on 5 Jan 1969, which necessitated us being sent to Singapore for battle damage repairs and overhaul. I also served as CO of the *John Monash* in support of survey operations in Sumatra (Borneo) from April to Sep 1973.

I retired as a Lt Col on 5 December 1985.

****

Musicians from the *Royal Australian Navy Band*, the *United States Navy Band*, and the Band of *His Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth* aboard the 1885 tall ship *Wavertree* after a joint concert at the Seaport Museum, New York, part of the United States 250th Anniversary of Independence and International Naval Review 250 celebrations. (RAN)



Richard Norden VC

(Article courtesy of *Vetaffairs*)



A striking new memorial dedicated to the Battle of Coral-Balmoral and the extraordinary bravery of Private Richard Norden VC during the Vietnam War was unveiled in Gundagai, NSW, on 14 May this year. Veterans of the battle, their families, friends and hundreds of supporters were joined by Governor-General Sam Mostyn, who posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross to Richard Norden in 2024.

On 12 May 1968, Australian and New Zealand troops established a new Fire Support Base called Coral in a strategically important area north of Saigon. In the early hours of the following morning, the base was attacked following a relatively brief but intense rocket and mortar barrage.

Private Richard Norden, VC



Coral-Balmoral was the longest sustained battle faced by Australians during the Vietnam War. It was also one of the costliest. Twenty-six Australians were killed during the battle and almost 100 were wounded. Private Richard Norden risked his own life to save Section Commander, Lance Corporal Daniel ‘Joe’ Kelly, and retrieve the body of Private Christopher Nisbet who was tragically killed during the battle. Former governors-general David Hurley and Sir Peter Cosgrove were in attendance alongside Keith Payne VC, Repatriation Commission Kahlil Fegan and the families of Privates Norden, Nesbit and Kelly.



The statue, erected by the Gundagai RSL Sub-branch, depicts Richard Norden VC, drag-carrying his section commander Joe Kelly back from enemy lines.

Flying Officer Tom Bradley

Kathryn Spurling



It was a crisp 7 June morning, when Woden Valley RSL Sub Branch members Rose and Don Limn joined thousands on the Australian War Memorial lawn in front of the striking Bomber Command memorial sculpture.

They were there to honour Rose's father Flying Officer Tom Bradley, RAAF, DFC and the thousands of other Australians who flew in European skies during WWII. Tom Bradley survived but 4,100 did not. An estimated 10,000 Australians served as ground and aircrew with Bomber Command Europe. The most dangerous theatre of operations for Australians during WWII was the European air war. Of RAAF aircrew serving with RAF Bomber Command, one in three were killed; 20 per cent of all Australian WWII combat losses.

Tom Bradley (Limn)



At 32, Thomas Bolger Bradley was older than most when selected for RAAF aircrew training in August 1941. Aviation warfare was advancing quickly, aircrew tended to be young, but aircrew and aircraft losses were rising rapidly. Tom, the son of *Bradley and Whitman Sawmills* family business, impressed recruiters, his intelligence suitable for the difficult Navigator course. Training was lengthy and by the time Tom farewelled wife Betty and daughters Virginia and Joan; to board an England bound ship it was a year later. Additional operational training ensued and his classification altered to Observer/Bomb Aimer. Pilots selected their crew from the throngs of newly operational ready aircrew standing awkwardly in a large hanger. They had done their homework, perused records and decided who was likely to bond as a crew and on whom lives depended. Tom's personnel record read: *A thorough and conscientious officer, carries out his duties efficiently and has a pleasant manner. A very sound officer*. Who better to guide aircraft and those within to the target and importantly safely 'back to base'.

Tom joined RAF *75 Squadron* (RNZAF) operating out of Norfolk on 25 September 1943. Norfolk had seen its share of conflict. The Iceni unsuccessfully rose against the Romans in AD 60–61. Norfolk witnessed successive waves of conquest and now a different threat and warfare dominated. Attached to RAF *75 Squadron* (RNZAF) Tom may have mused how fitting it was as a member of an ANZAC themed crew. They familiarized themselves onboard a *Stirling III* bomber with minelaying operations off the Netherlands Coast, before successive moonlit nights operations commenced; each with that familiar mixture of adrenalin and sense of doom. On 23 December 1943 Tom wrote in his logbook: 'Air Sea Rescue. Unsuccessful', only too aware how Christmas for the families of the lost airmen would never be the same.

Tom Bradley (left) and crew. (Limn)



The *Stirling Bomber* operational ceiling made it vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire so was removed from main force operations. Tom and his crew of seven undertook *Special Operations* in support of the French resistance and attacked rocket sites in occupied France.

In April 1944 the crew finally moved to *Lancaster Bombers*, but during the most demanding time of the air war, longer dangerous operations attempting to avoid flack and fighter attacks. The emphasis was on enemy air bases. During May 1944 Tom recorded in his logbook, '554.25' operational flight hours, half of which were at night. A significant note carefully penned in red 'operational' ink '*D-Day' Daylight bombing Coastal Battery Vicinity Caen … Lisieux & Railway Yards'*. New orders flying with different pilots, different crews and during one month, during1944 Tom flew in *Halifax*, *Lancaster*, *Mosquito*, *Proctor* and *Beaufighter* aircraft.

Tom returned to Australia and like all veterans was expected to simply assume pre-war life. According to Don Limn:

Tom did not talk much about the War and had, I suspect, survivors guilt. He was one of the eldest of his crew but one of the few not to die. He did tell me that the missions of which he was most proud were those in support of the French Resistance (the 'Maquis') including one mission at low level down a narrow valley at night without lights. They had to fly over a bridge and, just before doing so, a German guard came out onto the bridge, lit a cigarette, then looked up as a large dark shape went over his head!

For *Bomber Command* veterans a severe legacy remained from orders followed, bombs dropped and for Observer/Bomb Aimers like Flying Officer Tom Bradley, RAAF, DFC,

the visions of releasing and watching bombs hit targets and those below, meant a heavier legacy.

On 7 June Canberran Rose Limn honoured her father's service and more. One of six daughters: 'Sadly, Susan and I are the only remaining sisters. Mum died in 1984 and Dad died in 2003'.

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Editor's note



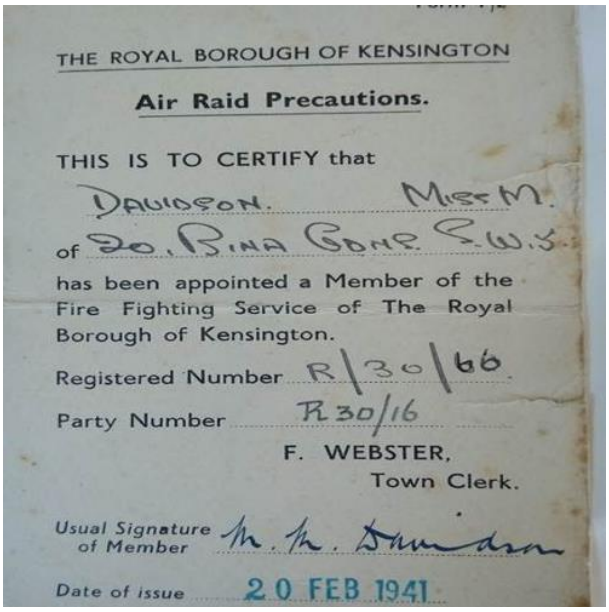
My father was Flight Lieutenant Maxwell Norris, RAAF, DFM, a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner who flew *Halifax* bombers with RAAF *466 Sqn* and RAF*158 Sqn* with Bomber Command Europe. On 7 June 2026 I joined Don and Rose Limn and thousands more in front of the Bomber Command Memorial and laid a wreath on behalf of the RSL National President.

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A Hero Mum

Alaistair Bridges

A *Victoria League Club* booklet states that Miss M.M. Davidson is an enrolled worker of the *King George and Queen Elizabeth Victoria League Club* for overseas servicemen. There's also a stamped National Registration Identity Card giving her address as 67 Middleton Avenue, Uphall. 'Always carry your identity card', it warns.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON

Air Raid Precautions.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that

DAVIDSON. Miss M.

of 20, BINA GDNS. S.W.5.

has been appointed a Member of the Fire Fighting Service of The Royal Borough of Kensington.

Registered Number R/30/66

Party Number R 30/16

F. WEBSTER,
Town Clerk.

Usual Signature of Member M. M. Davidson

Date of issue 20 FEB 1941

Miss Davidson was born in Scotland and enjoyed a cycling trip with friends around Germany before the WWII. She moved to London for work. When the war started, she joined the *Air Raid Precautions* (ARP) at 26 under her

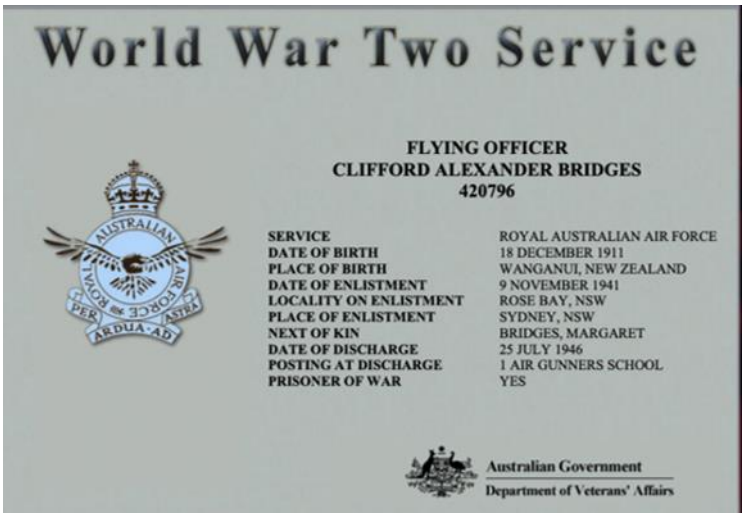
maiden name, Margaret Mitchell Davidson. Her certificate states she was a member of the 'Fire Fighting Party' Royal Borough of Kensington (1941), giving her the powers of 'entry and of taking the steps for extinguishing fire and for protecting property or for rescuing persons ...'

According to the card, she lived at 20 Bina Gardens.

An enormous raid on 16 April 1941, launched in retaliation for the RAF attack on Berlin a week before, resulted in eight hospitals and several churches being hit. A parachute mine destroyed the *King George and Queen Elizabeth Victoria League* building in Maler Street where 350 Canadian airmen were sleeping. This huge explosion blew out a plate glass window directly above where three wardens were standing in Tottenham Court.

We do not know if Miss Davidson was one of the two women ARP workers injured. She never talked about it. She was admitted to hospital. Unfortunately, try as I might I cannot get anything out of United Kingdom, not even on the ARP. I think they all deserved a *George Medal*.

Miss Davidson was my future Mum. When Mum met my wife-to-be Sandra in 1967, Sandra remembers Mum in the kitchen picking a small sliver of glass out of her scalp and telling Sandra it came from that injury 26 years before.



My then future Dad, as a New Zealander, joined the RAAF and went through the *Empire Air Training Scheme* (EATS), starting in Sydney then Narrandera to Camp Borden (Canada), to fly *Vickers Wellingtons* with *70 Sqn* RAF at Upper Heyford. He arrived in June 1943 and Mum and Dad met on a train. I have an old movie on that train which Dad took; it is Mum's legs! Dad was sent to the Middle East theatre where he bombed the Ploesti oil fields.

Mum was carrying me at the time Dad was sent to the Middle East. Five months after I was born, Dad was shot down. He and the crew survived, but that is yet another story. Mum once a war hero is now left with a baby and unsure where her husband was. Eventually she heard he was a Prisoner of War (POW).

At the end of 1945, Dad returned to Australia. Mum and I followed on the MV *Stirling Castle*. To me, this is the third time Mum was a hero. She had to farewell her three sisters and her father (Daddy, she always called him) knowing it was unlikely she would ever see them again while she faced an unknown country and unknown family in-laws.

It must also have been a devastating time for ‘Daddy’ saying goodbye to a daughter and, at that time, his only grandchild. From what I have been told and the photos we have, he and I got on extremely well. Fortunately, Mum was to see her sisters several more times but not her father who died in the early 1950s.

When I used to tell a little of this story to school children in the *Australian War Memorial*, I would end by saying it is no wonder the women who had endured WWI were upset to see their sons off to WWII just 21 years later. Now I understand why my mother was upset when I departed for Vietnam - just a generation later.

Alistair Bridges was a helicopter pilot who served in the *Vietnam War*. He worked as an AWM guide.

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Norm Russell is a member of the RSL Tuggeranong Sub-Branch

History of the RAAF Canberra Bomber Squadron in Vietnam

Norman Russell

The story below was given in a speech I made at *LDK Greenway Views* Senior-Living village memorial on Vietnam Veterans Day 18th August 2026. On Vietnam Veterans Day it’s appropriate to reflect on at least one aspect of Australia’s involvement in the *Vietnam War.*



I’ve been asked to speak about the history of the *Canberra bomber* squadron deployed to Vietnam. But firstly, let me say that I was not associated with the Canberra aircraft or the squadron in Vietnam. I served at Vung Tau with *9SQN* helicopter squadron as an armament engineer officer responsible for all trades except engines and airframe. The squadron was tasked to support the *Australian Army* troops at Nui Dat. Vung Tau is many hundreds of kilometres south of where the Canberra squadron was located.

Please note that what I will say was drawn principally from an article placed by Air Vice Marshal RB (Bob) Treloar, AO (Ret’d**)** in Air Force Associations *Wings* magazine, Volume 77 No 4. In turn, Bob acknowledged his article was based on the book *The RAAF in Vietnam*, by Chris Clark, and The *Highest Traditions* by John Bennett.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) operated the English Electric *Canberra Bomber* between 1951 and 1982. A total of 48 *Canberra Mk.20 Bombers* were built in Australia under license. None were built in the UK. The aircraft was introduced to replace RAAF squadrons of large *Lincoln Bombers*, bombers that were similar to the WW2 *Lancaster Bombers.*

In December 1966, No. *2SQN*, flying Canberras', was placed on notice to deploy to Vietnam. In 1967 the squadron arrived at Phan Rang with eight aircraft and 230 personnel, later increased to 280 personnel.

Bombs for the squadron were shipped from Australia. I understand that the bombs came from WWII stocks that had been held over the years at *No. 1 Central Ammunition Depot* (1CAMD) in bomb storage buildings and in outside revetements. No doubt the RAAF, and 1CAMD in particular, were pleased the *Vietnam War* provided a means of getting rid of those old bombs.

Before leaving Australia, the Canberra's wingtips were fitted with bomb racks to each carry a 750lb bomb to supplement the maximum 6000lb internal bomb load of 12 x 500lb bombs.

The squadron wasted little time in getting started after arriving at Phan Rang, and with call sign 'Magpie', under the authority of the United States *35th Tactical Fighter Wing,* the squadron's first mission was flown on 23 April 1967, flying high-level, day and night bombing under radar control.

Called *Skyspot* missions, for a number of reasons these missions were not liked by the aircrew. For example, the nature of the high-level missions allowed for lower aircrew skill levels. Also, high-level bombing provided little feedback or satisfaction to the aircrew for their efforts.

As a result, the squadron's role was changed to include low-level, daylight bombing under a Forward Air Controller (FAC). As most of us know, FAC operation involved pilots in light aircraft flying very low and marking the intended target area with small, white phosphorus smoke rockets, and the FAC then inviting aircrew to "hit my smoke". These very-low-level FAC flights in light aircraft presented a high risk of the aircraft being shot out of the sky. Australia provided a number of FAC pilots. I believe all survived. Despite their age, the *Canberra Bomber* was well suited to low-altitude bombing missions over jungle, as its steady, level flight path and its endurance enabled it to operate effectively at the lower height.

But US authorities were concerned about the vulnerability of the squadron's low-level bombing operations, and it wasn't until late 1969 (two years after the squadron arrived in Vietnam) that the majority of bombing missions were conducted from low level. Also, by February 1969, the squadron was conducting low-level missions in the dark, under flares dispensed by a FAC.

The standard bomb load was eight 500lb or six 1000lb bombs using the bombs shipped from Australia. When those bombs were all used, American-supplied 750lb bombs became the standard bomb load.

In bad weather, the bomb release height would be lowered from 3000ft down to 1000ft, or even down to 800ft. Bombs released from such low heights required a sharp pull-up of the aircraft to a safe altitude to avoid self-fragmentation; that is, bomb shrapnel being ejected up and hitting the aircraft. While low-flying Canberra aircraft were often subject to small arms ground fire from the enemy, and several aircraft sustained hits, no

significant damage resulted. The greater risk to aircraft was being hit by shrapnel from their own bombs. Hence the need for a fast pull-up to a safe altitude. On at least two occasions, shrapnel lodged in the aircraft fuselage.

As an aside, let me tell you about my experience with *2SQN* low-level bombing.

While at *9Sqn* I was invited by the CO Wing Commander Peter Coy to go with him on a helicopter trip to the Canberra squadron at Phan Rang. While at Phan Rang, I obtained approval to be a passenger on a Canberra bombing mission to the Mekong Delta. I sat on what was called a jump seat located just inside the door of the aircraft. I can't remember, but the seat must have been provided with a lap belt. On arrival at the target area, the FAC held the *Canberra* off until, to my surprise, a second *Canberra* arrived. The FAC marked the target, then directed the two Canberras' to simultaneously attack.

Being an Armament Officer, I decided to stand, look out the cockpit, and see how cleanly the bombs were released from the bomb bay of the adjacent aircraft. As I watched the bombs being released, **BANG!!!** I suddenly hit the floor like a sack of potatoes dropped from a great height. At that point of my Armament Officer career, I was unaware that, the moment the bombs were released, the aircraft nose suddenly went up and power was applied to the engines, all to climb to a greater altitude to escape possible hits on the aircraft from bomb fragments. Live and learn!

Now, getting back to the squadron:

From mid-1968, the focus of the squadron's operations shifted to the Mekong Delta, and 70 percent of low-level missions were flown against targets in that area. The Mekong Delta is quite a distance south of Phan Rang.

The squadron lost two aircraft during the war, one in 1970, shot down by a surface-to-air missile, and one lost in 1972. The two crew members of the second aircraft shot down, pilot Wing Commander John Downing and navigator Flight Lieutenant Allan Pinches, were successfully recovered from the jungle, but the crew of the first aircraft, pilot Flying Officer Mike Herbert and navigator Pilot Officer Bob Carver, failed to return from a strike mission near the Laotian border and disappeared without a trace. Despite an extensive search, neither the aircraft nor its crew were found. It wasn't until 39 years later, in 2009, that the remains of the crew of the first aircraft were found, recovered from the jungle and returned to Australia for burial with full military honours. As we know, even during recent years, Australia has shown it never gives up searching for its lost servicemen.

By the time the squadron completed its service in Vietnam in June 1971, the ground crew had achieved a very impressive 97 percent aircraft serviceability rate. The aircrew achievement was also very impressive, accounting for 16 percent of the *35th Tactical Fighter Wing*'s assessed bomb damage. After four years in South Vietnam, the squadron had flown 11,963 sorties, and had dropped 76,389 bombs totalling 27,158 tonnes. The squadron was credited with 786 enemy personnel confirmed killed, and a further 3,390 estimated killed, in addition to bomb hits on large numbers of structures, bunkers, sampans, bridges and roadway trails. All said and done, a very impressive effort by a proud RAAF squadron.

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Matron Ethel Gray, CBE, RRC

Kathryn Spurling

Matron Ethel Gray (AWM)



My dear Maud, the mail closes in a few hours, so I thought you would like one of these cards which to my surprise were placed on my table this morning. One of our canteen helpers was passing my office windows when I was speaking to one of the patients, and asked me if he could snap me – this is the result. I look about 60 years & sometimes I feel it. This is one of the windows of my office, & opens like a door. My love to you. I have not heard of little Ruth for news except in the home letters. Hope she will like her little doll. She must have it about now. Ethel. 9.3.16

These were the words written on the reverse of the portrait postcard opposite of Matron Ethel Gray CBE RRC. Born 24 April 1876 and educated at Lee Street State School, East Melbourne, Presbyterian Ladies' College; Ethel Gray gained her Nursing Certificate from the *Royal Melbourne Hospital* on 12 March 1903; appointed a staff nurse two days later and became Sister, 29 May the same year. Tenure at *Royal Melbourne* lasted until 1908 when she was appointed Matron of the *Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital* at Fairfield, Melbourne. Matron Gray returned to *Royal Melbourne* as house matron July 1909. She enlisted 23 February 1915 in the *Australian Army Nursing Service* (AANS). Known for her dedication and exceptional organisational and administrative skills she became one of the most highly decorated within the AANS.

She was awarded a *Commander of the Order of the British Empire*.
This Matron is recommended for length of service and loyal devotion to duty. She has held the position of Matron in Australian Hospitals in England and France, and under her chare a high standard has been maintained.

Escorting H.M Queen Mary around Harefield Hospital, England. 16/8/1915. (AWM)



Mentioned in Despatches twice, the 1917 one stated: *For distinguished and gallant service in the field between the period 26 Feb to 26 Sept, 1917.*

In 1920, Matron Gray was the only Australian woman to receive the *Medaille de la Reconnaissance Française*.

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To encourage RSL Sub Branch connectivity, Wendy Farnham President and Treasurer of Canberra North Sub Branch has offered this biography.

Biography – LTCOL Wendy Farnham

LTCOL Wendy Farnham was a member of the Army for 47 years 10 months. Wendy was also a member of the Australian Public Service (APS) for 36 years (27 years in *Department of Defence*), until she retired in 2016. Due to her overlapping and intertwined APS and Military careers Wendy has a wealth of knowledge across many facets of Defence business.

Wendy's first interaction with the CMF (as it was then) was in Kempsey in 1974, during SUR's AFX at Styx River. At the end of the AFX there was an escape and evasion exercise that ended at the Kempsey Showground – youth groups from Kempsey were asked to go and see if they could find the soldiers as a fund raiser for the 1974 Flood Relief. I was part of a group of Ranger Guides and Scouts who headed into the hills, got lost, and found the soldiers at the same time. Two years later I joined ANU Coy SUR not realising, until after I enlisted, that it was the same unit – and so my 47+ year association with the Army began.

Early days (Farnham)



Wendy enlisted in the Citizens Military Forces as a PTE WRAAC Clerk with ANU Coy *Sydney University Regiment* on 23 June 1976, transferring firstly to RAAOC, on the disbandment of the WRAAC, and then to the *Royal Australian Army Pay Corps* (RAAPC) as a WO2 in 1990. Wendy served with SUR from her enlistment in 1976 to her transfer to the RAAPC in November 1989. During that time, she was Orderly Room Clerk and Unit Pay Representative as well as assisting in the preparation of OCDTs for their training. Wendy also instructed on many Recruit Courses at 2 Trg Gp. During GEN Hurley's tenure as ADJT SUR she was his SGT Clerk during AFX at Newnes State Forrest. In 1981 she was very honoured to be one of the first female Sergeants to be awarded the Croll Whistle by LTCOL Stewart Cuddy.

From 1980 to 1989 Wendy worked as a civilian personnel manager in the Departments of Education and Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territory. A highlight of this period was her appointment as the Administrative Officer for the Australian Pavilion at *EXPO 85* in Tsukuba Japan. This role, which lasted 8 months, was a significant challenge, and has meant that any job since has been easy (relatively).

From 1989 (when Wendy came to Defence) to 1991 she was on the project team which developed CENRESPAY II (CRPII), delivering effective monthly pay and allowances to *Defence Force Reserves*, for over 21 years. Wendy then completed a period of CFTS at the RAAOC Centre, on the RAAPC Writing Team, developing trade training courses for both ARA and Ares members of the RAAPC. The release of CRPII, and SPDE (the ARA Pay equivalent of CRII – almost) along with the creation of the ARA component of the RAAPC in 1990, were significant. The training, designed by the Writing Team, was trailblazing as it incorporated the first desktop computer-based training within Army. Following completion of CFTS in 1993 Wendy worked on the ADFPAY Project and then moved to Army to work on the development of a new personnel system for Army (Army Central Manpower Information System). This project was cancelled in 1997 (six weeks prior to contract signature with the preferred tenderer) by the announcement of PMKeyS and the *Defence Efficiency Review* (DER) / *Defence Reform Program* (DRP). Following DRP implementation, Wendy worked within *Defence Acquisition Organisation* (DAO) as an APS member, to implement the PRINCE 2 Project Management Method (which had been used to manage ACMS) across all major capital acquisition projects within the Command and Support Systems Branch. She then commenced the same task for the rest of the DAO, with a total of 129 projects transitioned. Progress was well advanced when the DAO became the DMO July 2000 with momentous change in direction after the new Deputy Secretary appointment.

In 1995, in her ARes personae, Wendy was commissioned and promoted to CAPT. She served for three years with 2nd Trg Gp as a Resource Manager in Officer Training Wing. In Jan 2001 Wendy was promoted MAJ as 2IC of HQ Army Financial Services Unit (AFSU). Also in 2001 Wendy was one of 12 APS employees selected to attend the inaugural course of the new *Australian Command and Staff College* (ACSC), where she was awarded a *Master of Management* (Defence Studies) and a *Graduate Certificate in Maritime Studies* along with *psc(j)*. Following ACSC, in 2002, Wendy was appointed as the Military Financial Adviser to the *Commander Northern Command* on CFTS; also, assuming duties of Business Manager NORCOM. Wendy was awarded a COMNORCOM Commendation. On her return from Darwin, Wendy joined CSIG (now SEG) as an EL1 and involved in a wide range of activities including the DSG Product Catalogue, Customer Service Agreements, and Performance reporting at Group level; and responsible for the initial Objective and COMWEB implementations for the whole of the group. She continued in this APS role until late Feb 2007 when she was promoted to EL2. She stayed within DSRG (now SEG) until September 2009. At the same time, as an ARes member, she served as Det Comd of Canberra Det AFSU. In 2003 Wendy was a civilian member of the ACSC Directing Staff and appointed SO2 Pay, HQ AFSU. This ARes position was the principal adviser on Reserve Pay Matters to Army, liaising with all Functional Commands ensuring the structures within CENRESPAY II supported effective payment of Ares members.

July 2004, MAJ Farnham deployed to the *Middle East Area of Operations* as the Financial Adviser to the *Commander JTF 633*, based in Baghdad, for which she was awarded the *Australian Active Service Medal* and *Iraq Medal*. On her return Wendy was appointed as DHOC RAAPC. In Feb 2007 Wendy was promoted to LTCOL and in Jan 2008 assumed the role of HOC RAAPC a role she performed until it was assumed by COS 17 SUST Bde. During this period, she oversaw the implementation of the RAAPC Trade Pay Remediation, a significant task that impacted all Others Ranks, Senior NCOs and Warrant Officers in both the Ares and ARA, over three years.

In January 2009, LTCOL Farnham deployed to East Timor as the Financial Adviser to the Commander of the *International Stabilisation Force*, also conducting a review of contracting arrangements on behalf of DEPSEC DSRG (her APS Boss). In September 2009, Wendy assumed the APS role of Director Payroll Improvement within Payroll Systems Branch, DPG. Initially she handled the business aspects of design and delivery of an improved ADF payroll service with primary responsibility; the replacement of CENRESPAYII. In February 2010 her role changed with the formation of the Payroll Remediation Task Force established by MINDEF. Then VCDF LTGEN David Hurley was our sponsor; at our first meeting he recalled working with me in SUR. Wendy and her team were the face of the Task Force conducting the bulk of duties with deployed Pay and Personnel Administration staff and HQJOC addressing a whole raft of issues related to the delivery of Pay and Personnel Administration to deployed personnel. As a result there was a significant reduction in International Campaign Allowance (ICA) overpayments. She became particularly good at writing Hot Issues briefs during this period. The team prevented more than 1262 overpayments from other sources and was awarded a DEPSEC DS Team Gold Commendation. Wendy continued to work in this area until her retirement from the APS in Apr 2016 improving delivery of pay and allowances to all ADF members.

As a Reservist Wendy continued as DHOC RAAPC until Jan 2011 when she transferred to RMC-A to work within the *Directorate of Army Reserve Training* (DART); helping DART to ensure all instructors, involved in the delivery of the ARES GSO First Appointment Course, were qualified as Cert IV TAE 10 (Workplace Evaluation and training); a nice break from RAAPC Corps matters. In 2012 Wendy was invited to join the newly established Army Compliance and Assurance Agency, within the *Adjutant General – Army* (AG-A). Initially duties related to identification of Army Compliance and Assurance Testing risks. Her role morphed into Principal Assurance Officer Pay, Personnel and Unit Administration (PPUA). Over the next 3 years she developed PPUA testing, trained the workforce, and provided quality review of the outcomes of the testing and the development of reports suitable for Unit COs.

In Jan 2018 LTCOL Farnham assumed the new role of SO1 Assurance directly reporting to *Director of Strategic Governance*, created to provide oversight of the six assurance Groups that had been set up and to provide a single POC for Army Policy owners about Compliance and Assurance. LTCOL Farnham worked with AG-A staff to develop a new Compliance and Assurance Reporting Management System (CARMS) hosted on the GENESYS platform. LTCOL Farnham's extensive experience in systems development and business analysis resulted in a highly successful rollout of CARMS on 1 Apr 2019. LTCOL Farnham was employed on SERVOPC from Apr 20 to Apr 21 to further develop CARMS, including system and User documentation and training. In Jan 2022 LTCOL Farnham was appointed as the first Staff Officer Grade 1 Compliance and Assurance Reporting Managements Systems (CARMS). As SO1 CARMS she managed further development of Compliance and Assurance Reporting tools in CARMS but also developed training for AG-A personnel and contributed to training of ECN 150 IET through to WO2, and the Warrant Officer Advisor Course at LWC.

In her last two years in the Army Wendy developed new CARMS functionality that provided an electronic means of conducting Hand Over Takeover and also for recording Unit Appointments normally published in Routine Orders Part 1; the latter having remained unchanged since being adopted from the British Army staff system in 1914.

Retirement presentation with LTGEN Natasha Fox (Farnham)



This work had the enthusiastic support of MAJ GEN Garth Gould, then COS AHQ. This work along with that related to the Youth protection and Safety policy framework for Army, was acknowledged through the issue of an Army Gold Level Commendation on 15 April 2024. Wendy retired from Army on 21 April 2024.

She has travelled extensively. In June she travelled to Vietnam commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the deployment of 6 RAR to the Vietnam War; a unique tour as we were accompanied by 2LT Dave Sabben, PL COMD 12 Platoon D Coy. January 2026 Wendy's Military career was recognised by the Chief of Army appointing her as the Honorary Corps Representative for the *Royal Australian Army Pay Corps* for a period of four years.

Wendy volunteers at the *Australian War Memorial* in the Photo Film and Sound Section, currently indexing over 167,000 WWII pay book enlistment photos, a huge task; likely to take years to complete (the first box took 10 months). The photos will be incorporated into the AWM online database enabling family to see at least one photo of their loved ones. The first box will allow 531 photos to be added to the Honour Roll.

Wendy is training to become a DVA Compensation Advocate for the RSL North Canberra Sub-branch. She is the proud mother of two daughters and four grandchildren; a keen gardener, photographer, traveler, with a deep interest in military history.

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Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) – Port Moresby Sub-Branch

President: Mr Glenn Maitland LM Email: president@pomrsl.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Mr Kevin Zimmerman secretary@pomsrl.com
Patron: The Australian High Commissioner to PNG.

Port Moresby Sub Branch is a Sub branch of the ACT Branch and governed by both the National RSL Constitution and the *Returned Services League of Australia Port Moresby Sub-Branch Inc*. As the Sub Branch operates in PNG, it has also been approved in PNG as an Association. The Sub-Branch was operating unofficially post WWII and held it first annual general meeting in 1951.

The Sub-Branch's main revenue source used to be corporate donations. However, during 2022 we moved to a Golf Day which has proved very popular and successful. The Port Moresby Sub-Branch currently underwrites eleven educational scholarships per year. These scholarships are made available to descendants of PNG's Disciplined Forces that are experiencing financial hardship and cannot otherwise support or pay for their educational needs. Scholarships are available to students for primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational educational needs.



The Port Moresby RSL Sub Branch hosts the annual ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day activities among others. These activities showcase the friendly relations between Australia and PNG. The Port Moresby RSL also assists with refurbishing monuments and grave headstones that are not covered by *Australian War Graves*.

The ANZAC Day Commemoration Service at *Bomana War Cemetery* regularly attracts in excess of 4,500 people per year. These commemorative services not only increase awareness of the sacrifice made by service men and women in the defence of PNG but also has a flow on effect of increasing tourism to PNG. *Bomana War Cemetery*, (AWM) photo taken during the official opening ceremony 5 August 1944-08-05. Left to right the *Royal Papuan Constabulary* Buglers – *Royal Papuan Constabulary Band* and the Guard of Honour consisting of detachments from the RAN, RAAF and the *Royal Papuan Infantry Battalion*. The disused Berry Airfield in the rear.



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Discovering their Nancy Wake

Kathryn Spurling

It started as a crazy idea and became so much more; honouring WWII heroine Nancy Wake, and reigniting self-belief for five *Australian Defence Force* women veterans aged 55 to 65. There were unwelcome mature age bulges, and neglected fitness, but spirit and determination remained. They no longer wished to feel invisible and diminished. Over several glasses of wine, the plan hatched.

We talked about the great times we had in the Navy, Army and Air Force; reflected on the many challenges faced; on where we were in life now, how we perceived ourselves and we believed society perceived us. Did we still possess that adventurous spirit and drive that led us to the recruiter's door? We drew on our inner Nancy and thought 'stuff it', let's do it.

Nancy Wake (AWM)



Nancy Wake, born in New Zealand, raised in Australia, sailed for England in 1932 aged 20, before becoming a journalist in Paris. She married Henri Fiocca. When France was invaded, they joined the *French Resistance* (the Maquis). Nancy ensured 1,000 Allied servicemen and Jewish Citizens escaped. German authorities named her the *White Mouse* and three-million-francs for her; dead or alive. Nancy fled to England to train with *Special Operations Executive*, in hand-to-hand combat, espionage, sabotage and apparently, able to drink male counterparts under the table. Nancy parachuted into France 1944 to support the Auvergne *French Resistance*; arranging arms and equipment drops, and leading *Gestapo* attacks. A Resistance officer declared: *She is the most feminine woman I know, until the fighting starts, then she is like five men*.

During a battle, the radio was destroyed. Nancy decided to ride a bicycle over 200km for the Chateauroux radio operator to transmit to London vital information. Encountering German soldiers, she kept peddling. They believed Nancy was just a French housewife. The Chateauroux radio operator was not found but resistance relayed the intelligence. Nancy pedalled another



painful 200km back; the inside of her thighs rubbing raw. Nancy Wake never rode a bike again! Asked her proudest wartime achievement, she replied, *the bike ride*.

There were countless missions serving their nation's military, so five women veterans committed. France hosted the *Tour de France* race. Their cycling pace **definitely** needed to be **leisurely**.

Liz Wheeler (Wheeler)



Liz Wheeler from Adelaide enlisted 1986 in the *Australian Regular Army* at 18. Joining the *Royal Australian Corps of Transport* as a driver she posted to the *School of Army Health.* For further excitement Liz joined the *Southern Peninsula Rescue Squad*, operating small boat sea rescues, even jumping out of helicopters into the ocean.

Liz Wheeler (Wheeler)



A back injury cruelly resulted in medical discharge. Unwilling to end her Army career, Liz joined the *Army Reserve*, *Royal Australian Medical Corps* and the highly skilled mobile *3rd Forward General Hospital.* Liz resigned 1998, receiving the *Army Medallion*, for exemplary service. She is a Veteran Wellbeing Advocate: *Women veterans living in regional Australia, cannot rely on stuff just coming our way – we have to make it happen.*

Leanne Dunn (Dunn)





Leanne Dunn grew up in Mount Gambier, South Australia, enlisting 1985 in the Royal Australian Navy at 17, as a radio operator. Sea postings and promotions followed. Recalled from 1992 Christmas leave she joined a ship deployed to Somalia with 'Operation Restore Hope'. Leanne was the first woman ship Senior Communications Supervisor; posted to the Australian embassy Washington DC; Senior Communications Instructor, before joining a frigate and the Iraq War. A North Arabian Gulf information manager commendation followed. Leanne was the first woman Communications Fleet Warrant Officer. Leanne resigned 2005.

This zany expedition would commence from Ceyssat, 1 May 2025, to enter Chateauroux for the *Victory Europe* 80th anniversary; assuming, they survived. They just had to cycle 300kms. The *Military Brotherhood Motorcycle Club* were outriders for their first 40km cycle. It was windy and cold but, *we gritted our teeth, clenched our butts and treadled on*. That 40km felt like 400.



Nicky Jellesma (Jellesma)



Nicky Jellesma enlisted at eighteen as a *Royal Australian Air Force*, Clerk Financial, posted to Queensland. Wages were in cash, so Nicky travelled in armoured vans, and was always welcomed. Her nineteenth birthday was being winched out of a *Black Hawk* helicopter, onto an island to enjoy a ration pack fruit cake. Nicky deployed to a Sydney maintenance and distribution centre and became Airman Mess President.

Married and with the birth of her first son, she discharged. The Gulf War erupted so Nicky assumed unit civilian work. Civilian life required adjustment; being part of the *Nancy Wake Memorial Bike Ride*, meant, *coming home*.



Twisted Threads Community donated a hand-crafted mascot. If passport was obtained, this *White Mouse* would travel. A logo, insignias and camouflage riding outfits made this very real.

Looking the part in Cam riding outfits (Dunn)

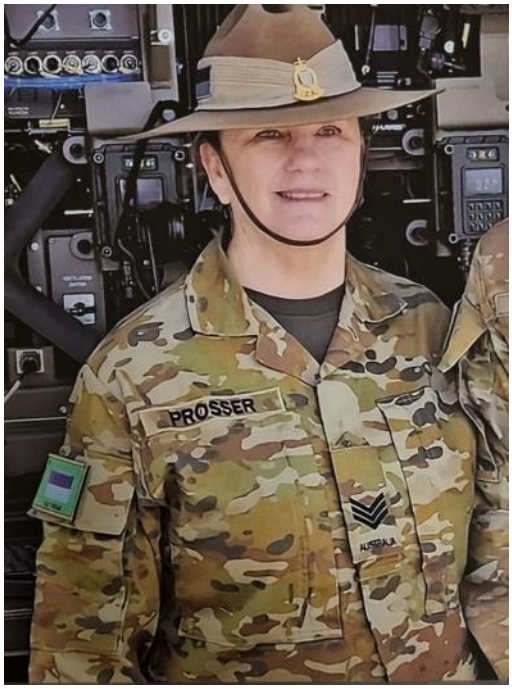


They were paying their own way but there were French support and equipment expenses. Fundraising gained momentum with the generous assistance of locals and the *Naval Association*. Sausage sizzles, trivia nights, movie night, schnitzel evenings. School presentations about Nancy Wake and women in defence; trip logistics; French lessons; and bike maintenance courses, *to keep us upright*.





Kym Prosser (Prosser)



Kym Prosser enlisted 1992 into the *Army Reserve*, and attached to the 10/27 *Royal South Australian Regiment*. From 2013-2023 Sergeant Prosser was Depot Commander and *1 Platoon* Sergeant. She led a group searching and clearing *Black Saturday* fire-ravaged districts. Kym deployed on 'Operation Resolute' as watch 2nd in charge; part of the 'first female search team on a patrol boat'. The 'Combat Assault Course' just another impressive achievement.

Marcia Dening grew up in Robe, South Australia, in a professional fishing family. Girls were not professional fishermen, so 1980 at 20 she enlisted in the *Women's Royal Australian Naval Servic*e as a radio operator. Conquering Morse Code,

Marcia Dening (Dening)



Marcia deployed to bases throughout Eastern and Northern Australia. Highlights included, exercises, flying in *Chinook* helicopters, *Hercules,* and *Orion* surveillance flights. Marcia discharged 1987 to raise a family.

Velotours, an Australian company specialising in bike tours, assured it was a great route, except for all the hills and mountains! Would these women Aussie veterans survive the first three days?

🚴 *Day One 1 May 2025: Shakedown.* Bike familiarisation, Clermont-Ferrand to Saint-Genès-Champanelle. *Aligning hearts with the mission*. The Auvergne Hills, relayed homage and silence.

Day Two: St-Genes-Champanelle to Saint Gervais d'Auvergne. *Our first big day out on the bike – boots on the ground. Baptism of fire* took real definition. The longest and highest elevation accompanied by cries of; *who came up with this crazy idea!*

Walking and shoving were involved but, they made it, 52km with 765metre elevation. *Nancy Wake's legacy was felt, mile by mile*.

Day Three: Hotel beds most welcome and difficult to give up. *We woke up expecting to have really sore bums and legs*, but the next 44km, 450 vertical metres, to Montmarault weren't horrible.



Day 4: Wonderful weather and perseverance, 40km, with a 300m Montmarault to Monthlucon climb. Patisserie cream cakes absolutely necessary to replace all those calories lost cycling. Their hotel was across the road from where; *Nancy Wake reportedly killed a Gestapo officer!*

Day 5: Confidence rose, even as this 60km with 390km climb made them shout: *Will these climbs ever end*! before, appreciation. Nancy rode on a 1940s bicycle. A St Victor detour, where Nancy pushed her gun into the Police Commander's belly after he insulted her.

Day 6: St Amand-Montrond to Bourges. A memorial commemorating citizens executed by *Schutzstaffel*, SS, firing squad. Reflexion as they peddled on.



Day 7: Bourges to Issoudun. Late start, bodies unaccustomed to cycling six days. During 1943 the war was terrible. During 2025 it was difficult to perceive the bloodshed.

Day 8: Issoudun to Chateauroux. Just 33km to join VE Day celebrations and public welcome. They walked the streets Nancy searched for the radio operator. A radio station conducted an interview, with five women veterans.

Day 9, 9 May. Chateauroux to Verneix via Le Chatre. The last 40km. Nancy and resistance fighters took refuge in Verneix. The commune is determined the 'Le Souris Banche' is never forgotten and embraced five ADF veterans.

On learning Henri was executed by the *Gestapo*, the *White Mouse* escaped to England. Nancy was decorated by France, Britain and the United States and lived between England and Australia. Nancy Wake died in London, 7 August 2011 aged 98.

Liz, Leanne, Kym, Marcia and Nicky visited the room where Nancy worked and walked the grounds where her ashes were scattered.



The sense of achievement was great. Leanne summarised.

The ride was two years in the planning, 18 months of training and it felt like it was over in the blink of an eye. We achieved the ride without any serious injuries, without getting lost (minor detours not included) and without losing anyone - accidentally or deliberately!



Memories rode with them, of Nancy Wake, their ADF service; that unique camaraderie and something larger. Self-confidence was refreshed, and they no longer felt invisible.

Discovering Their Nancy Wake

Is a short documentary written, produced and directed by Kathryn Spurling with filmmaker, editor, and Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch member David Jenkins (*Ghetto Media*) from material provided by Leanne Dunn and the *Nancy Wake Memorial Ride*; to be entered in International Film Festivals.

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David Reid is a member of RSL Tuggeranong Sub-Branch

STAND OUT MOMENTS IN MY LIFE

David Reid

I have very fond memories of my early life sitting with my grandfather whilst he showed me pictures and told me stories about his First World War service in the *9th Light Horse Regimen*t in the Middle East. My imagination was captured so that by the time I finished primary school, I wanted to pursue a military career.

However, my father had other ideas and wanted me to become an engineer like him. I did try to please him, but it soon became obvious to me when I commenced an engineering degree at Adelaide University that I was not cut out to be an engineer. My brother (who was also at the University) and I joined the Adelaide University Regiment mainly during semester breaks. I found out that I could lead men at the "heady" rank of Lance Corporal. I had secretly hoped that I would be called up for National Service. When my number did not come up in the ballot, I was very disappointed. That lead to a decision to leave University and engineering to successfully apply for Officer Cadet School (OCS) at Portsea, in Victoria. The twelve months I spent training there led to lifelong friendships with men that I trust with my life.

In early 1967, I met a girl at the church youth group. She was the Parson's daughter, and I fell in love with her, and we were married a week after graduating from OCS. We are still married after 55 years. Our first test came when my first posting as a 2nd Lieutenant, was to *1st Pacific Islands Regiment* in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

David Reid (Reid)



My wife Athalie had travelled with me up to Brisbane for our honeymoon. A fellow graduate, Terry O'Neill and I flew from Brisbane to Port Moresby and went to *Taurama Barracks* to join our Company. I then found out that my wife could not join me until we were allocated a married quarter and that was likely to be some months in the future! To finance her flight home to South Australia, I had to cash in an endowment. She decided to save money by travelling back by train to Adelaide to stay with her parents – welcome to life as an Army wife!

Terry and I were fortunate to have Major Mike Jeffrey as our company commander. He maintained very high standards. His wife Marlena, set a helpful example to Athalie and became a great friend. When Mike asked my platoon sergeant how I was going, he said: *Em e all right tasol em e no tok tok pidgin*. I learnt to speak Pidgin English the next day, after a kick up the backside.

I loved patrolling in the jungle. We travelled to Bougainville and patrolled from Buin to Kieta as a platoon. This was before PNG independence, and we were the first *Pacific*

Islands Regiment troops to patrol there since the Second World War against the Japanese who occupied that Island. At first the native people fled into the jungle until they understood we meant no harm. A local Kiap told me that these villagers got on very well with the Japanese soldiers and had had no contact with PNG soldiers since the war. He thought it was very good that we show the Australian flag. This we did on Anzac Day. It was good that we could show them that Papua New Guinea had an Army. It was National Building which I was proud to be doing.

We patrolled the Solomon Islands then later flew over the Owen Stanley ranges to Lae to act as enemy against an Australian SAS Regiment Patrol training to go to Vietnam. To me this was a highlight of my training in New Guinea. To patrol through jungle with native soldiers who reveled in their skills of following signs of the SASR soldier's movement with stealth, enabled me to identify their position, issue orders for an assault and successfully capture them. Being able to spot their bright green antenna cable on a tree made it possible. We all learnt lessons that day.

I was also able to take Army Reserve Officers up to Imita Ridge with my platoon to show them where The Japanese reached the Australian forces before they were repelled back on the Kokoda Track. My time in New Guinea came to an end and I couldn't wait for my opportunity to go to Vietnam. Athalie was not so keen! She was very pregnant and gave birth to our beautiful daughter Lee Melissa, while I was on leave before my next posting as a reinforcement officer to South Vietnam.

I wrote a letter to Major Jeffrey and asked him if he had any vacancies in *8RAR* where he was a company commander in Vietnam. As fate would have it, he had a National Service Officer from Scheyville going back to Australia at the end of his National Service. I was really impressed when Major Jeffrey wrote me an eleven-page note - *Points to consider as a platoon commander in Vietnam*. How lucky was I. I took over command of *4 Platoon B Company, 8RAR* in Vietnam.

4 Platoon B Coy reunion 2022 (Reid)



Mike Jeffrey went on to have an illustrious career in the Army and served as Governor of Western Australia and Governor General. To his credit he never forgot his soldiers and always attended their reunions until he passed in December 2020.

Early in jungle operations north of Phuoc Tuy Province, I had an interesting experience capturing an enemy soldier on a resupply in Viet Cuong Plantation area. He had previously been in a contact where three VC/NVA with him were killed. My platoon was moving into a defensive

ambush position in the jungle when the ‘tail end Charlie’ was confronted by Pham Dinh Trieu, with his hands in the air.

Enemy Prisoner (Reid)

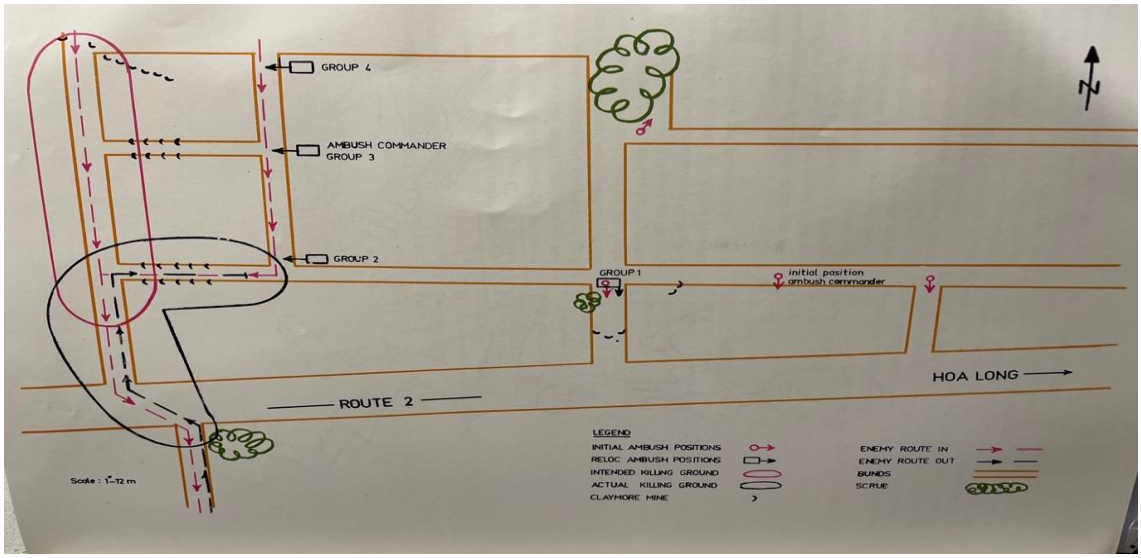


I went to see what the commotion was about and saw this enemy with numerous guns pointed at him. I immediately said: ‘take him prisoner’. Trieu later led C Company to the area of *K24 Dispensary Unit* – his unit in *274 VC Regiment*. The reconnaissance resulted in location and contact with an enemy bunker system containing *K22 Transportation Company 274 VC Regiment.*

A highlight for me in Vietnam was to learn patrolling and ambushing in both the jungle and paddy fields. Every night we set up ambushes in the paddy fields around villages in Phuoc Tuy Province. A Charlie Company, 8 Platoon Sergeant, Chad Sherrin, had a most successful ambush on Route 2 near Hoa Long one night when he saw enemy entering the village. He decided that his ambush set up in the paddy fields, was not in the right position so when the enemy were inside getting resupplied, he moved his ambush site to get them when they came out. The Commanding Officer was having conniptions on the radio! His Company Commander reassured him that he trusted Sergeant Sherrin’s judgement. At 3.15 am the enemy returned, bunched up with little tactical security in marked contrast to their movement into Hoa long. The majority were heavily laden with supplies. They were in two groups of 25 to 30 men.

The ambush consisted of twenty men in four groups of five each armed with a General-Purpose Machine Gun and using banks of claymore mines directed into the killing area. The first group were annihilated. The second group were accounted for by a sweep of the reaction force of infantry and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), led by the Company Commander Major David Rankine on orders from Battalion Headquarters.

Ambush (Reid)



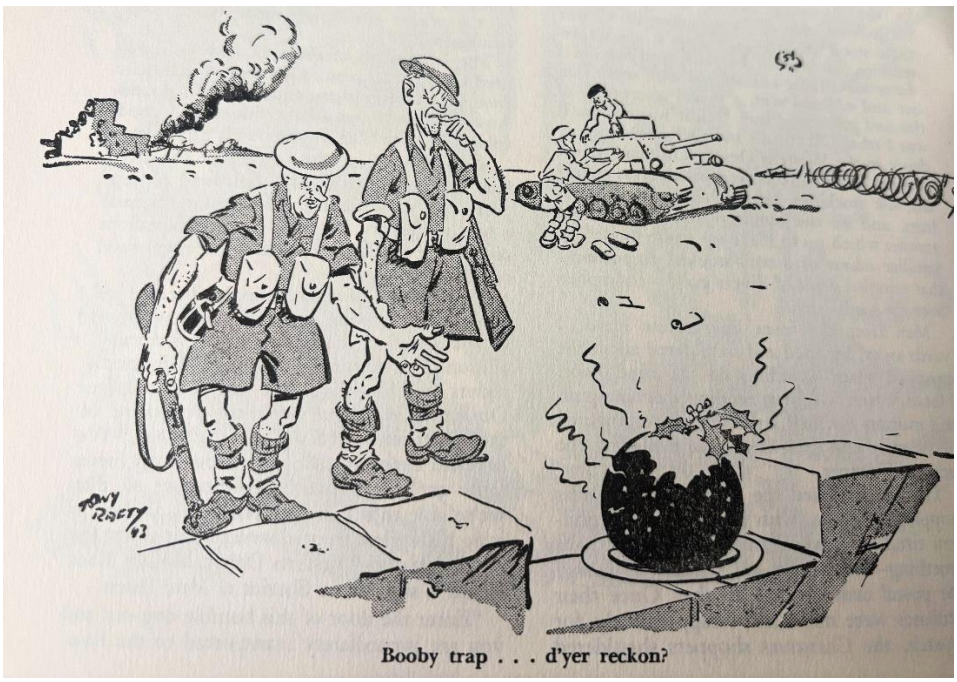
The professionalism shown by these men made me proud to be part of *8 RAR.* When *8RAR* finished its tour and was not replaced, I then went back to the Reinforcement Unit where I trained reinforcements and became a patrol for the Task Force Commander on combined operations. My experiences there came to another level.

My first operation was led by APCs of A Squadron *3 Cavalry Regiment* and a section of mortars to the Mao Tao Mountains to an enemy position identified by intelligence. I saw the lead armoured personnel carrier lift off the ground when it hit an anti-tank mine, and I knew we could be in trouble. Whilst we were waiting for the recovery vehicle to arrive, I gave instructions to my platoon to not move off the tracks as we were in a minefield. A Vietnamese interpreter travelling in my APC chose to walk across the roadside to some bush to relieve himself. Unfortunately, he detonated another anti-tank mine. He was killed instantly; two soldiers were injured and five other soldiers had to be evacuated by air "dusted off" for hearing blast effects. Loading the corpse onto a hovering helicopter was the hardest day of my life.

My platoon received reinforcements that I had requested, and we moved on to contact enemy near Xuen Moc. During this contact the section of mortars provided covering fire in front of the APCs. Unfortunately, some landed right on top of us. No one was hurt, being inside the APCs, but I am glad I wasn't responsible for the fire mission.

I am very grateful that I lived to tell the tale and made it back home in one piece. The experience was not totally without effects on my life. The constant stress led to me later be diagnosed with PTSD and bladder cancer caused by *Agent Orange*. Notwithstanding this, Athalie and I are very happy to be living in an LDK retirement village, Greenway Views. We have 3 lovely children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren, a lot to be grateful for.

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Booby trap . . . d'yer reckon?





RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch is pleased to invite members and their guests to the

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH
Wednesday 9 December 2026

12:00noon for 12:30pm

Orion Room Canberra Southern Cross Club Phillip
$ 63 per person

Menu (alternate service):

MAIN

Roast turkey breast and ham with pistachio and cranberry stuffing, roasted vegetables, crispy potatoes, and cranberry jus *GF*

Pan-fried barramundi with sour cream and chive potato purée, grilled broccolini, shrimp beurre blanc, and smashed peas *GF*

DESSERT

Mini Christmas fruit pudding served with crème anglaise, and rum and raisin ice cream
Classic pavlova topped with summer fruits and passion fruit purée *GF*

Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements

Please RSVP by 30 November 2026. No late bookings will be accepted.

Phone 62851931 or email admin@rslwoden.org.au
Direct Credit (Don't forget to include your name in transfer)
A/C name: Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch
BSB 062-908, Account 1084 1897 (include your name)
Credit Card; Phone 6285 1931 or visit the Sub-Branch office



SUB-BRANCH SERVICES

If you know of any member who would benefit from any of these services, but is reluctant to apply, please let the office know.

Hospital Visiting. We no longer visit the three Southside hospitals automatically but are working with the Veteran Liaison Officers (VLOs) in these hospitals, visit patients on a case-by-case basis.

Hospice Visiting. Visits can be arranged for Sub-Branch members in *Clare Holland House*.

Sub-Branch Office Opening Hours. The office is open from 9:00am until 3:00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The services of the Sub-Branch are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

Office Manager. Alex Solecka administers the Sub-Branch Office and is responsible to the Executive for the efficient day-to-day routine of the office. Alex will supervise all Sub-Branch matters including membership, correspondence, functions and access to Sub-Branch services.

Veterans' Support Centre (VSC). The office is open from 9.00am until 3pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays, and at other times by appointment. The services of the VSC are available to all Sub-Branch members, and all serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and overseas defence forces.

Entitlements and Advocacy (E&A). A team of trained advocates and entitlements/pension officers, both male and female are available to provide assistance with claims under the Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986 (VEA), the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (SRCA), and the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA). Also provided is support and advice to war widows and widowers with regards to pensions. Andrew Properjohn, the E&A Administrator, will assist you with your enquiries.

Community Support. The provision of welfare to Sub-Branch members and their families can be arranged through Community Support. Advice is available on a case-by-case basis to access services, through DVA, MyAgedCare, Centrelink and the ACT Government. Contact the Sub-Branch office on 6285 1931 for details.

Christmas Visits. In December each year, all Sub-Branch members 80 years and over, and all Sub-Branch widows and widowers receive a home visit and a gift.

Health and Fitness Program. Arrangements between the Southern Cross Health Club (SCHC) and the Sub-Branch relating to gym use have changed. For details call the officer on 62851931.

Sub-Branch Publication. The Sub-Branch publication, ***The Serviceman*** is published twice per year and distributed free to all Sub-Branch members, their partners, widows, widowers.

Coffee Catch Up. Every Friday morning in the Corey Room between 10-12.

Eddison Lunch Day Group. Sponsored by the Sub-Branch, the Lunch Day Club caters for members, their partners, widows, widowers and the general community and will continue to meet for lunch each Friday at noon. Come and join us at the *Irish Club*, Parkinson Street, Weston.

Carers Friendship Group. The Carers Friendship Group meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Further details on 62851931.