



RAM-RAMBLINGS

Volume 15 Edition 2, October 2018

From the Presidents Pen,

Hi to all Rammers and/or Black Sheep and happy springtime.

My apologies for a tardy RR again this time. The snow season has been the best for 14 years and so my workload was extended in the NSW snowfields. Additionally, I had a simple but unfortunate, student initiated fall towards the end of the season 09:51 on 20 August which slowed me down a tad.

BREAKING NEWS

Noddy's World – a new segment for news, views and suggestions on the ageing Black Sheep...

Pretty much all of the originals of 107 (Malaysia and Vietnam that is) will now be septuagenarians now. This qualifies those people to:

1. complain about the weather on an hourly basis;
2. shout at the Television and expect it to answer back;
3. be outrageously politically incorrect;
4. bitch and whinge about how everything used to be;
5. regret that you never got into politics;
6. not reply to check-out chicks, waiters or Baristas when they say, "How is your day so far"
7. grumble about aches and pains in all your joints and orifices;
8. take your own Blood Pressure twice daily;
9. do two bowel cancer screenings in 3 months, because you forgot you did the first one;
10. drink only OP Bundy, fine quality Gin and craft beer – tinny slabs are for cretins;
11. make wild gestures and very loud and inappropriate stage whispers in public places;
12. get a walking cane and wave it around in Woolies and Coles self check-out;
13. refute fake news about Russian agents and "Military Grade Nerve Agents" that don't work;
14. question everything;
15. be an armchair General about every current military edict or decision;
16. drive at exactly speed limit and in the Right Hand lane on dual carriageways;
17. go longer periods between trimming nose and ear hairs;
18. sport a steel gray comb-over; and,
19. absolutely refuse to eat Tripe.

That's a small part of my list. I am sure you have some specials of your own. All you later rammers can have a good laugh and call me a grumpy old fart, but there is still a good thinking brain in here somewhere. It's just that I sometimes forget where I left it... But seriously, at the moment, I question everything that I am told or hear on the so called NEWS. (*dot point 14 above*) I have a pretty standard patter now when I accused about

having a personal attitude about many topics (**Dot points 2 & 3 above**). I ask the accuser what their particular “frame of reference” is for their accusation, allegation or statement. They are usually half my age with one tenth of my life experiences, but rather than ramping up the agro, I just shake my head and walk away saying “you poor misguided fool” (in the stage whisper from **dot point 11 above**).

Does this sound like somebody you know? Yourself, maybe? Trust me, there is nothing wrong with you that a stiff Gin and Tonic, an OP Bundy and Coke or a James Squires 150 lashes won't fix. (**dot point 10 above**) Just don't let the BP get too high (**dot point 8 above**). And about “Fake News” and “Irrefutable Facts” presented on such topics as “Novichok” and “Russian Agents positively identified as...” and “Chinese Spies nicking IP, and “Assad's Chemical attacks on civilians and medical centres”. (**Dot Point 13 above**). Just remember that all this stuff is proudly brought to you by the same crowd that brought you “Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq” and “he tried to kill my daddy – George Dubya Bush” and “For sure it was Iraqis who did 9/11”(when it was actually nine Wahhabist Salafite Saudi Arabians and one Egyptian).

And while you are at it, read up on Operations Ajax and Boot (CIA and MI5 and 6) and the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup d'état. You might find out why the Persians are not particularly fond of the Americans and Brits and if they remember one date each year, it's 19 August when they were robbed of their democracy. . (**dot point 14 above**).

Now where did I leave my tongue? Last time I looked, it was firmly planted in my left cheek.

So its goodnight from me and its goodnight from MeToo...

... remembering that the “MeToo” movement is closely akin to an unhealthy movement of the bowels (**dot point 9 above**). So check it regularly.

Your President

Warren “Noddy” Feakes



Then (Malaysia 1967) and now (in the self checkout at Coles)



A quick note from the Battery Commander:

Hilton, the latest Army News (19 April 2018 Pages 4 & 5) contain articles about training being conducted by two of the Battery's Forward Observers, CAPT Karl Vatzlavik and CAPT Lachlan McDonald. It is not possible to reproduce the two articles here, but they can be accessed via the following link: <http://armynews.realviewdigital.com/#folio=4>

Regards Brendan Perkins, Battery Commander 107 Battery

Extracts from this article are:

Coalition trainers are teaching Iraqi troops how to control the skies.



Students from the Iraqi Army are poised to graduate from the third iteration of the Iraqi Forward Air Controllers Course (IFACC), currently being delivered by a small team of Australian, New Zealand and US trainers of Task Group Taji (TGT) 6. After a 10-week intensive course covering doctrinal and safety aspects of forward air control, the Iraqi students have been calling in live close air support missions at Besmaya Range Complex, Iraq as part of their final certification exercise.

Capt Karl Vatzlavik is the senior instructor on the course and has watched the students develop to this point in their training.

"The training audience has also performed well with both the Iraqi and coalition assets and they'll do even better over the next week with the experience gained during additional dry fire activities."

Capt Lachlan McDonald has found instructing on the IFACC professionally rewarding, as well as beneficial to the task group's building partner capacity mission.

"It's been really good to come to Iraq and teach the students on what is essentially my core job back in Australia," Capt McDonald said. "It's also vindicated the process used across nations, being the NATO standard in close air support. In this exercise we've had Australians, New Zealanders, US, Dutch and French work with the Iraqi students to see aircraft come in and bombs hit the deck. This course commenced a few rotations before us and now we can see this program is starting to find its feet in Iraqi Army."

The full story can be accessed via: <http://armynews.realviewdigital.com/#folio=4>

More news on Brendan Perkins, Battery Commander 107 Battery. Brendan has advised that he has been moved on very short notice to a high security position, which is not for publication at this time. He will not be returning to the Battery on completion of this overseas attachment. As 107 Battery is just changing from the fully ready to deploy phase into the rest and retaining phase of their operational cycle, your Secretary understands that Major Christopher Lingard has taken over as Battery Commander and the BSM is now WO2 Nathan Swindall. Your Secretary will be making contact with both the new BC and BSM, once they have settled in to the Battery. The first task is to arrange the presentation of the 107 Battery Association books to the BEST Gunner, junior NCO, senior NCO and young Officer at the Battery end of year function in December. It is possible that our new Assistant Treasurer and ex BSM of the Battery in mid 2000's, Brett Armstrong, will be available to make the presentations. Full report will follow in the December RAM Ramblings.

Subject: MARIE THERESE (TESS) SALMON - HEALTH STATUS

From George Salmon, Battery Commander 1970-1971 on 20 July 2018. Dear Friends, This email is addressed to some who have been kept very much aware of Tess's recent illness and many who would have known nothing of it. Its content is such as to provide a picture for those in the latter category and update those in the former. About 11 Jun 2018 Tess developed abdominal pain, which spread rapidly to wider areas. She was admitted to Canberra Hospital on Sat 7 Jul. After considerable investigation, including X-rays, CT and bone scans and blood tests it became apparent that she had widespread cancer, despite no previous awareness of such illness. Yesterday the prime source was finally diagnosed as urothelial cancer, affecting the whole urinary tract, which has virtually shut down. Attempts have been made to attack this but it is very aggressive. Her condition is untreatable and at 6 pm today she commenced a palliative care program. Her forecast longevity is very short and, unless the urinary system recommences to function, even shorter.

Our son Andrew is in Canberra, son Paul flew from Melbourne today and our daughter is right now in flight from Kuala Lumpur to join us. Her siblings are coming down tomorrow from Cessnock. Though we would welcome your prayers, Tess is comatose and it is impractical and potentially stressful for her to receive visitors, so please respect our judgement on that. The only good news is that, due to the palliative care treatment, Tess is in very little pain for the first time in six weeks. Please feel free to forward this information to anyone whom you think I should have included in its distribution. Regards, *George Salmon*
G T Salmon 134 Namatjira Drive CHAPMAN ACT 2611 - Tel: 02 6288 5414

Editor: It is understood that Tess passed on shortly after this report in late July. The Association will miss Tess and her frequent friendly appearances at Association Reunions and functions over many years. Our thoughts are with George and his family.

however being Sunday there were minimal road trains on the road, which made it a bit easier. A non-eventful trip, stopped at a nice rest area for morning tea.



Arrived at Daly Waters in time to join the queue for the park. Paid our fees and finally got in, set up & prepared for the night ahead. The park was full by 1400hrs as this is a first in best-dressed park. The wait is well worth it when happy hour arrives. Contrary to many rumours the new owners have not removed all of the underwear and other paraphernalia that goes to making this a unique outback pub.

We once asked how they got all the underwear to display and were told “they have to be wearing them when they donate them”, what a sight that must be.



Happy hour finally arrived and it was off to the bar for a night's entertainment and food. Ordered our meal of wild caught N.T. Barramundi with salads then a few pots of beer. The entertainment is provided by husband & wife team Lou Bradley & Phil.

She is very good, but you don't want to get up to go to the toilet during the show unless you can take the embarrassment that she dishes out, many stayed glued to their chairs rather than risk her humour. Four-hours later it was back to the van for the night.

Neil Lunney in his new Home



Your Secretary was travelling through SE Queensland last month when he came upon Neil Lunney, who has recently relocated to Oz Care – Montville Lodge at 22 Saffron Drive Currimundi 4551. It is the suburb next to Little Mountain (Caloundra race track) where Mim still resides. Neil is doing well, being spoiled by the Oz Care staff. He sends his regards to all and always welcomes visitors. If in the area, call all Mim for best visiting time.

Secretary's Report: With pleasure that your Secretary advises that he's received NO postings of members to the Great Gun Park since the last RAM Ramblings. However, it is with great pleasure that we welcome back to the fold, Brett Armstrong of Townsville. Brett was the Battery BSM back in 2006-8 and has re-joined the Association as Assistant Treasurer. Brett is the Secretary of the RAA Association of North Queensland and your Secretary is also Treasurer of the RAAANQ. Both associations have similar goals of supporting the serving members of 4 Regiment and 107 Battery respectively and are now working closely to undertake each responsibility within a simplified administration. More on this later.

Reunion Townsville 2020, the fiftieth commemoration of 107th Battery deploying to Vietnam, Townsville 23-29 April 2020.

Warning Order - mark your diary now. Full details to be included in the December 2018 RAM Ramblings, with invitations to join the activities will be issued in July 2019 next. Following from the highly successful Malaysian 2017 bash, a fully family friendly program is planned with the adult children and grandkids of members most welcome.

Committee: Your committee is:

ELECTED POSITIONS (Executive)

President: Warren (Noddy) Feakes – Wanniasa ACT – 0417 209 360
Vice President: Brian Tap – Narrabeen NSW - 0410 543 743
Secretary/Treasurer: Hilton Lenard – Kambah ACT - 0418 695 345

State/Territory Representatives: (Elected)

Queensland: Neil Lunney – Sunshine Coast – 0419 712 136
NSW: Bob Edmonds – Sydney - 0410 678 100
Victoria: Ken (Doc) Barclay – Mildura – 0428 251 364
Tasmania: Les Mullan – Launceston – 0408 449 006
SA: Adrian (Wally) Walford – Murray Bridge – 0418 818 776
WA: Bob White – Dudley Park - 08 9535 9411
ACT: Peter Moat – Weetangera - 0419 594 610

NT: Jim Wright – Palmerston – 0419 090 852
NON-ELECTED POSITIONS *(Appointed by the Committee)*
 Editor RAM Ramblings: Warren (Noddy) Feakes – Wanniasa– 0417 209 360
 Webmaster: Doc Barclay – Mildura – 0428 251 364
 New Assistant Treasurer: **Brett Armstrong** – Townsville Qld – 0418 721 567
 Historian: Hilton Lenard – Kambah ACT – 0418 695 345
 Welfare Officer: Ian (Bozo) Simpson – Sydney - 0432 610 794
 Hon Chaplin: Rick Burley – Wallsend NSW - 0412 455 301
Regional Representative: *(Appointed by the Committee)*
 North Qld: Mike Dennison – Townsville - 0429 777 786
 Central Qld: Jon Eaton – Sarina - 0402 248 716
 South Qld: Jim Bray – Miami - 0403 748 858
 North NSW: Col Lowe – Central Coast – 02 6761 8936
 Sydney: Ian (Bozo) Simpson – Sydney - 0432 610 794
 South NSW: Ian Hughes – Sanctuary Point – 0417 140 250
 Melbourne: Noel Paterson – Rosebud – 0411 568 103

BOARD of TRUSTREES: Warren Feakes - Wanniasa – 0417 209 360
 Hilton Lenard – Kambah - 0418 695 345
 Jim Wright – Palmerston - 0419 090 852

Election of Committee Members: As per our constitution, an election of committee members is due By December 2018. If no nominations are received by 20 December 2018, the above executive members will be re-elected for another four years. As your Committee slowly ages in place, new committee members are always welcome to join. Duties are not difficult and the more involved, the easier it is for all.

Members List: There are 197 financial members. Association membership covers all regions of Australia plus Paul Gaff in USA, Gordon Pound & Peter (Jock) Sime in the UK and Mac (Rob) McKimmin in Thailand. Sixteen members are currently serving in the Defence Force. Membership covers all periods of 107 Battery’s post 1965 history, with approximately one third having served at Holsworthy and/or Malaysia (1965-1969) a further third at Townsville then Vietnam (1969-1971) and a third at Townsville since 1971. Many have served in more than one location. Like an updated membership list then contact the Secretary.

Treasurer’s Report: With 168 life subscribers, all life subscriptions are held in the Trustee accounts. Your membership renewal information is included in this edition. Subscriptions for 2018 are now over-due, remaining at only \$15 PA and life subscription at \$150. As at 30 June 2018 the un audited Association accounts show a small trading loss of \$142.15 compared with a previous year loss of \$145.00. Current assets are \$4,566.25 in working funds and \$30,509.91 held by the Trustees, representing all life subscriptions and resulting interest received to date. A copy of the accounts will be available on request, once the auditor has completed his audit.

Australians at War – August

Source-Australian War Memorial – compiled by Neil Layton

- 2nd Aug 1941. Last major action involving Australians at Tobruk.
- 2nd Aug 1990. Iraq invades Kuwait.
- 3rd Aug 1914. Australian offers assistance to Great Britain in the event of war.
- 4th Aug 1914. Great Britain declares war on Germany.
- 5th Aug 1944. Mass breakout of Japanese prisoners at Cowra POW camp in NSW.

6th Aug 1915. Battle of Lone Pine begins on Gallipoli. The Australians suffered more than 2,200 casualties at Lone Pine and the Turks over 5,000. Seven Victoria Crosses were awarded.

6th Aug 1941. Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The bomb was dropped by US B29 bomber nicknamed "Enola Gay". It was estimated to have killed some 140,000 people by August 1946.

7th Apr 1915. Australians charge at the Nek. Three waves of the 8th and 10th Light Horse regiment went forward and altogether 375 of the 600 became casualties, a figure which included 234 dead.

8th Aug 1916. Battle for Monquet Farm, near Poziers, was the focus of nine separate attacks by Australian troops between 8 August and 3 September 1916. Some 11,000 Australians were killed or wounded in the fighting.

8th Aug 1918. In the thick fog of the morning 8 Aug the battle for Amiens began. It delivered a devastating blow to the enemy. By nightfall all the Allied objectives had been gained; the Germans suffered 27,000 casualties and 450 of their guns captured.

9th Aug 1945. Nagasaki bombed. Nagasaki was the second Japanese city to suffer an atomic attack. Japan surrendered shortly afterwards.

13th Aug 1941. The Australian Women's Army Service was formed to release men from certain military duties.

15th Aug 1945. VP (Victory in the Pacific) Day. On this day Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's unconditional surrender.

18th Aug 1966. Battle of Long Tan, South Vietnam.

18th Aug annually. Vietnam Veterans' Day commemoration.

19th Aug 1971. Australian Government announces withdrawal from Vietnam.

20th Aug 1943. Brock's Creek bombed by Japanese aircraft.

21st Aug 1915. Last major fighting on Gallipoli takes place to take Hill 60.

21st Aug 1950. K Force recruiting campaign begins in Australia.

22nd Aug 1942. With the arrival of the 18th Australian Brigade, Allied troops in the Milne Bay area now numbered more than 8,800. The battle of Milne Bay, which began on 25th Aug, resulted in the first defeat of a Japanese land force in the Second World War.

26th Aug 1916. 6th Aust Bde attacks Mouquet Farm on the Somme. Some 11,000 Australians were killed or wounded in the fighting.

31st Aug 1918. Battle of Mont St Quentin begins. Mont St Quentin, overlooking the town of Peronne, was the scene of a famous Australian action under the leadership of Lt-Gen Sir John Monash. The depleted Australian divisions won an impressive victory against the German defenders, capturing some 2,600 prisoners. This battle was considered by many to have been the crowning achievement of the AIF in the First World War.

Note: 19 Victoria Crosses were awarded in the month of August.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

STOP PRESS The Long Tan cross will open to the public in the Vietnam Gallery of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) on 17 August.

The battle of Long Tan was fought on 18 August 1966. One-hundred-and-five men from D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) and three New Zealanders from an artillery forward observation party from New Zealand's 161 Field Battery, encountered a force of more than 2,000 Viet Cong soldiers. During the battle, 17 Australians were killed and a further 25 were wounded, one of whom later died of wounds. This was the highest number of Australian casualties incurred in any one engagement of the Vietnam War.

The losses on the Vietnamese side were at least 245 dead, an estimated 350 wounded, and three captured.

The AWM will mark the 52nd anniversary of the battle of Long Tan and Vietnam Veterans' Day in August with a [program of moving tributes](#) honouring the 60,000 Australian men and women who served our nation throughout the Vietnam War.

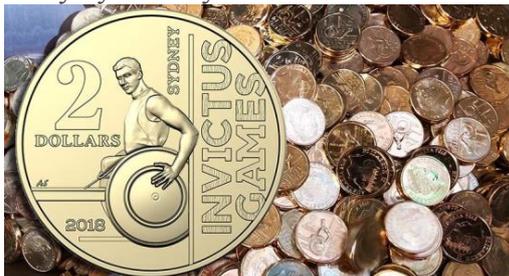
Invictus Games Sydney 2018 The Invictus Games is an international sporting event for wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women, both active duty and veteran. Invictus Games Sydney 2018 is on 20-27 October. The Australian War Memorial is a proud supporter and key Games stakeholder.

Don't miss your chance to celebrate the healing power of sport and cheer on our wounded warriors over 8 days of fierce competition. 500 competitors, 18 nations, 11 sports, on and around Sydney Harbour and at Sydney Olympic Park.

But the Games is more than a sporting event – it captures hearts, challenges perceptions and changes lives. With tickets starting from \$20 they will sell fast so don't miss out!

Royal Australian Mint launches Invictus Games \$2 coin by Brian Hartigan, *Contact Magazine* www.contactairlandandsea.com

An image of a wheelchair competitor adorns Australia's newest circulating coin, unveiled today by the Royal Australian Mint ahead of Invictus Games Sydney 2018.



The Invictus Games Sydney 2018 commemorative coin design and coins produced by the Royal Australian Mint ahead of the Invictus Games in Sydney in October 2018. Images supplied by the Royal Australian Mint.

Produced in partnership with Invictus Games Sydney 2018, the new \$2 coin will celebrate the unconquered spirit of wounded, injured and ill service personnel and veterans across Australia. Royal Australian Mint expects to release 2.3 million of the coins into public circulation over coming months, ensuring they reach Australian's wallets and change in time for Invictus Games Sydney 2018 to be held from 20 to 27 October.

CEO of the Royal Australian Mint Ross MacDiarmid said coins had the ability to reach many people and, in this instance, help to share the Invictus Games spirit and spread the word on the healing power of sport across Australia. "This new \$2 coin, designed by one of the mint's own coin designers, represents triumph over adversity and will be a tangible reminder of the courage of all Invictus Games Sydney 2018 competitors beyond the games in October this year," Mr MacDiarmid said.

Invictus Games Sydney 2018 CEO Patrick Kidd said he was appreciative of the mint's support of the games. "It is just brilliant to have the mint as one of our partners."

The Royal Australian Mint is a national institution and their support is a very tangible demonstration of the significance of these games to our nation. While held in Sydney, these are Australia's games and Australia's opportunity to put on an international show of support for our defence community. These coins are a fitting tribute to the men and women who serve and have served in our Defence forces and their families. The picture on the coin celebrates the unconquered spirit that this community displays each and every day and that you will all

witness when these games come to Sydney in October. I encourage all Australians to get hold of one of these coins and keep it as a memento of these games and the incredible competitors from 18 different nations who will join us in October.

As an official supporter of Invictus Games Sydney 2018, the Royal Australian Mint is also producing medals for the games and will also release a series of commemorative products leading up to the event.

The battles of Hamel and Amiens - 1918

ONE hundred years ago on 4th July 1918 in the European spring, a 93-minute battle was fought during the First World War on the Western Front that is heralded as one of Australia's greatest military achievements and is still considered a masterpiece of logistics and combined arms warfare.

The Battle of Hamel was a turning point in the First World War and the first time Australia fought alongside our American allies. We have fought together in every major conflict since. Seeking an opportunity to straighten the line north-east of Villers-Bretonneux, then Lieutenant General John Monash, in what would be his first battle as Australian Corps commander, decided to launch an attack on the Germans at Le Hamel. Monash meticulously planned the attack, consolidating the strategies used in previous battles by the British Expeditionary Force, and coordinated infantry, artillery, armour and aircraft in a way that had not been done before. The Allies achieved all of their objectives in 93 minutes, just three minutes longer than Monash had planned, with a relatively small number of casualties when compared with other battles on the Western Front. In all, some 1,200 Australians and 170 Americans from their four companies were killed or wounded, while German casualties were more than 2,000 and some 1,600 were taken prisoner. The Battle of Hamel is viewed as the forerunner of the successful Allied battles leading to the end of the First World War. Official War Historian Charles Bean was right when he described Hamel as 'a big battle on a small scale' as the methods used—the product of trial and experience—were used on a far grander scale at Amiens on 8 August 1918.

The Battle of Amiens was a great success and in just over three hours, Allied troops had overrun the enemy's front line. By the time the battle ended, the Allies had taken more than 29,000 prisoners, more than 330 guns, and had liberated more than 110 towns and villages. "German General Erich Ludendorff called 8 August 'the black day of the German army', but for the Allies it represented a significant victory and further validated the effective tactics used at Hamel.

As the Anzac Centenary 2014-18 period comes to a close it is important to remember these critical battles at the end of the First World War, but also to recognise a Century of Service commemorating the service and sacrifice of all Australians killed in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

Order of the Day Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery Anniversary Greetings 2018

This year marks the 147th Anniversary of the formation of a permanent component of the Australian Artillery when the New South Wales Artillery was formed. A part of this Regiment was later designated 'A' Battery and continues in service on Army's Order of Battle to this day. This is also the date that, by convention, we celebrate not only the beginning of the Australian Gunner journey, but also its continued service as the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery to the Army, our Nation and the Commonwealth. On the 1st of August

this year, with the 100th Anniversary of the end of the Great War only three months away, we will pay special attention to commemorating the significant role Gunners played in that conflict.

As part of this commemoration, four young soldiers from the RAA were recently part of an ADF contingent that travelled to France to attend commemorative activities for the Battle of Hamel. In addition, it is hoped that the RAA will be part of a Commonwealth Gunners commemoration in November this year when, at 11.00am on the 11th of November across the time-zones of the Commonwealth, Minute Guns will be fired in as many Commonwealth Artillery units as possible to mark the time when the guns fell silent.

As is customary on the 1st of August each year, our Representative Colonel Commandant has once again written to Her Majesty the Queen, our Captain General, on behalf of the Colonels Commandant, the Head of Regiment, and all Ranks of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery to convey to Her Majesty our respect and loyalty on the marking of another milestone in our history. Congratulations were also extended to Her Majesty on the occasion of her ninety second Birthday and our appreciation was expressed for the enduring leadership and dedication shown by Her Majesty to the service of the people of the Commonwealth.

On behalf of the Representative Colonel Commandant, Brigadier AG Warner AM, LVO, and our Colonels Commandant, I sincerely thank all ranks of the Royal Regiment, both serving and retired, for their outstanding service. Let us also remember at this time the members of the Regiment who have passed away during the last year and please join me in appreciating and honouring their service. They will be sadly missed.

Finally, our thoughts are with those members of the Regiment who still remain deployed on operations around the world. We wish them all good shooting and a safe return to their families.

Unique,
CD Furini AM CSC
Brigadier
Head of Regiment
1st August 2018

Gunners: Accurate. Responsive. Dependable. Joint

65th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice *from DVA e-News June 2018*

The commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice took place at 11am on Friday 27 July 2018. The service was held at the Australian National Korean War Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra. The present-day border between North and South Korea approximates the border as it was in June 1950 when North Korea invaded the south, beginning a war that pitted the Cold War powers of communist China and the Soviet Union against the United States and her allies fighting under United Nations' auspices in a massive military confrontation.



All three of Australia's armed services took part in the Korean War. The Royal Australian Navy committed ships four days after the war began; the Royal Australian Air Force's 77 Squadron was deployed to Korea within a week of the invasion; and the first Australian ground troops arrived in September 1950.

The Armistice ending three years of fighting on the Korean peninsula was signed on 27 July 1953. About 17,000 Australian personnel served in Korea, including Army and RAAF nurses. Some 340 Australians were killed, more than 1,200 were wounded and 30 were taken prisoner. For more information, visit the [DVA website](#).

The fiftieth anniversary of the Battles of Coral and Balmoral celebrated in Canberra.

The Australian Defence community honoured Australia's Vietnam veterans and their involvement on the battlefield in Vietnam, as the Australian Defence Force commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral.

Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell joined members of the ADF who participated in the commemorative national service held at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra.



Memorial service to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battles of FSBs Coral and Balmoral, at the Vietnam War Memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra. Photo: courtesy DVA.

Lieutenant General Campbell paid tribute to all Vietnam Veterans and said the actions between the Australian forces and the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong over the 25 days of fighting were among the largest and most protracted battles fought by Australians during the

course of the Vietnam War. “The Battles at Coral and Balmoral took place between May and June 1968. The battles involved almost 3000 men, this was the first Australian all arms brigade-sized operation since World War II,” Lieutenant General Campbell said. “When the Fire Support Bases at Coral, Balmoral and Coogee were established in early May 1968, the enemy forces reacted aggressively and commenced their attack of Coral on 13 May. This followed with an assault on Balmoral on the night of 25–26 May and again on 28 May. “Armoured, artillery and infantry units fought hard to destroy the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. When the battles finally ended, 26 Australians had been killed in action, with almost 100 wounded.”

Members of the Royal Australian Artillery from 8th and 12th Regiment manned artillery guns sited at Mount Pleasant to fire a salute at the commencement of the service to remember all those who died in Vietnam.

“It’s important that we recognise our history and the people who made that history. Australia, then and now, has been blessed to have incredibly dedicated individuals committed to serving our nation,” Lieutenant General Campbell said.

Australian combat units were engaged in the Vietnam War from 1962 to 1973, in response to a request for support from the Republic of Vietnam to the United States and its allies.

The Australian Defence Force is supporting other commemorative activities for the 50th Anniversary of the Battles at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral at Lavarack Barracks in Townsville this week with the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

Gallantry of Vietnam veterans recognised—SBS News/AAP

Australian soldiers who fought in the Battle of Coral-Balmoral have been recognised collectively for their gallantry. Australian soldiers who fought the largest and most sustained battles of Australia's war in Vietnam have collectively been recognised for their gallantry.

May 13 marked half a century since the Battle of Coral-Balmoral, an almost continuous series of fierce attacks fought over 26 days from May 13 to June 6, 1968. Twenty-six Australians died and 100 were wounded. It's estimated that 300 North Vietnamese were killed in these actions, but exact figures will never be known.

Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove, who is also a Vietnam veteran, has awarded unit citations for gallantry to those directly involved, while those who flew support missions or were forward deployed are also entitled to wear the citation insignia. Family members of deceased veterans are also encouraged to apply for the citation.

Sir Peter praised the exceptional leadership and soldiering skills and their sustained and outstanding performance in the face of overwhelming odds.

Veterans of eligible units should apply directly to the defence department through a medals application form - www.defence.gov.au/medals.

Citations have been awarded to:

- * 1st Australian Task Force (Forward),
- * 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment,
- * 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment,
- * A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment,
- * C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment,
- * 12th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery,
- * 1st Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers.
- * No 9 Squadron RAA161 Reconnaissance Flight,
- * 161 Reconnaissance Flight.

[Ed: It is understood that several of the ten or so Rammers, who were on detachment from the Battery in Malaysia to 12 Fd Regt in Vietnam and served at Coral, have applied and been granted approval to wear the Coral citation insignia.]

A brief history of the battles of Coral and Balmoral

During the "Mini-Tet" offensive mounted by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in May 1968, the 1st Australian Task Force deployed two battalions to an area 20 kilometres north of Bien Hoa city to intercept and disrupt enemy forces withdrawing from the capital, Saigon, and the Bien Hoa–Long Binh base complex. Several fire support bases (FSB) were established to provide defended firing points for artillery and mortars which would cover foot patrols to be sent out by the battalions (1RAR and 3RAR). One of these FSBs was dubbed "Coral", situated 7 kilometres north of the town of Tan Uyen.

Occupation of Coral was begun on 12 May, but the defences remained unfinished when, at about 3.30 am on 13 May, it was attacked following a brief but intense rocket and mortar barrage. The 1RAR mortar platoon position was over-run, along with one of 102 Field Battery's six 105 mm M2A2 howitzers in the base. With the aid of extensive air support, the attack was beaten off by 6.30 am and the captured gun-pit was retaken – still with the gun in it (this howitzer is now on display in the Vietnam gallery at the Australian War Memorial). Eleven Australians were killed and 28 wounded, while the attackers lost more than the 52 bodies they left behind. A further three Australians died in patrol clashes on the 14 May. At 2.30 am on 16 May Coral again came under attack, this time from a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force estimated at three battalions strong. The base was now defended by armoured personnel carriers of A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, and 1RAR's rifle companies, all of which were heavily engaged; part of the A Company position was occupied for a period, but the enemy was forced to withdraw. The attack was repelled after four hours of fighting, with the Australians having suffered five men killed and 19 wounded. Two members of an American battery which had reinforced the base were also wounded. Only 34 enemy bodies were recovered, but blood trails and drag marks indicated that many more casualties had been removed.

On 22 May Coral was subjected to yet another rocket and mortar barrage, but this time the NVA troops were dispersed by return fire from 1RAR's mortars as they formed up to attack. Although there were further bombardments on 26 and 28 May, and patrols sent out from the base came into contact with the enemy, Coral was not seriously threatened again. During fighting on 26 May, the base's defenders even turned the tables on the NVA by sending a troop of Centurion tanks from C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment (which had arrived as reinforcements three days earlier), outside the perimeter wire with infantry support; these engaged and destroyed most of a NVA bunker system that had been discovered. Enemy efforts on 26 May were primarily focused on another FSB named "Balmoral", which was established about 4.5 kilometres further north on 24–25 May by 3RAR supported by tanks. The defenders threw back assaults launched against Balmoral on 26 and 28 May. On the latter occasion, the attacking NVA regiment lost at least 42 killed and seven prisoners, but again casualties were thought to have been higher.

National Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (NVVM) grant for new building and facilities.

At a presentation at the NVVM at Phillip Island on Friday 18 May 2018, the Federal Minister for Health and Federal Member for Flinders which includes Phillip Island, Greg Hunt MP on behalf of the Federal Government, passed over a cheque for \$5 million being a once only donation to commence the new build of the Museum. The total cost of the rebuild will be about \$35 million. Considering that the Federal Government gave over \$100 million for a

new WW1 Interpretation Centre opened in April 2018 at Villers Bretonneux in France, and over \$350 million for the extensions to the War Memorial in Canberra, our Vietnam Veterans should be pleased with this donation. The NVVM requires a further \$30 million to complete the task. For those Rammers who have not yet visited the NVVM at Phillip Island, it is worth the effort. When there, check out the NVVM library and reference centre and you will locate a copy of the 107 Association book, '107 Field Battery Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam – 1965-1971' presented to the NVVM on behalf of all Rammers by our local Rammer on Phillip Island,

Digger remembers Australia's bloodiest battle of Vietnam War 50 years on.

From ABC Goldfields By Jarrod Lucas



Veteran Jeff Dalley pauses for reflection in front of the Vietnam war memorial in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

ABC Goldfields-Esperance: Jarrod Lucas

Fifty years ago, Jeff Dalley was a 21-year-old soldier digging in for the fight of his life. When the dust had settled, he had survived the bloodiest and most protracted engagement of Australia's decade-long involvement in the Vietnam War, an engagement in which 26 Australians were killed in action and 100 were wounded.



Jeff Dalley at Nui Dat in Vietnam in 1968.

Supplied: Paul Braybrooke

The battle over two small patches of ground known as Coral and Balmoral would rage for 25 days, during which the young lance corporal would help repel mass charges by the enemy and see one of his best mates killed in a rocket attack. Nearing his 72nd birthday, Mr Dalley has recalled what it was like serving as an infantry rifleman with 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, better known as 3RAR by those who wore the army uniform. Mr Dalley described the assaults by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces at the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral as "human wave attacks". "They just never stopped

coming. They would use their fallen as cover," he said. "They would pretend that they were dead and just lay there, but at the same time when darkness came they would crawl closer to you and they would blow the wire."

Battles lasted more than three weeks. The battles in May and June 1968 involved almost 3,000 men — Australia's first brigade-sized operation since World War II.

Coral and Balmoral were fixed next to a route used by enemy forces approaching or departing Saigon and nearby Bien Hoa.

Mr Dalley's battalion was sent to establish Coral on May 12 as part of Operation Toan Thang, the US-led response to the communist Second General Offensive, or "Mini Tet".



Jeff Dalley
after
completing his
army recruit
training.
Supplied: Paul
Braybrooke

The men immediately began work on the defensive positions, and Mr Dalley remembers digging in under fire. "It was just like a gigantic football field. There was a few little shrubs and the jungle further out," he said. "The only cover we had was when we dug our own holes."

Tanks and artillery fired at point-blank range. The bases were filled with artillery, mortars and armoured vehicles supporting the infantry. Mr Dalley still applauds the actions of an artillery sergeant at Coral when the enemy threatened to overrun the Australians.

"They had broken through and got to one piece of artillery and they were trying to turn that around to fire on the Australians, but the sergeant had the foresight to remove the firing pin, otherwise who knows what would have happened," he said.

Exhausted and at the end of one of the longest weeks of his life, Mr Dalley's unit was sent to establish the Balmoral base on May 24. Four Centurion tanks arrived to provide fire support.



3RAR conducting
a routine
perimeter sweep
of fire support
base Balmoral
during the
Vietnam War.

Supplied:
National Vietnam
Veterans Museum

Diggers were almost overrun but 'we'd hold em' At 3.45am on May 26, Balmoral came under a barrage of mortar, rocket, machine gun and small arms fire. But with the support of tanks

and armoured personnel carriers, and artillery fire from nearby Coral, the Diggers were able to push back the North Vietnamese attack.

"Thankfully, for the tanks and APCs, that stopped them," Mr Dalley said. "The tanks were using splintex [anti-personnel rounds] and the armoured personnel carriers had .50 calibre and .30 calibre machine guns, and they just raked the place. "A lot of people say if it hadn't of been for the armoured, we would have been run over by the enemy. "But you ask the infantry and we say 'No, we'd hold em'. "We didn't want the tankies to get the glory and the tankies didn't want us to get the glory, so we'll call it a 50-50 split." Close friend was killed in rocket attack. The known North Vietnamese and Viet Cong losses around Coral and Balmoral were 276 killed, nine wounded and 11 captured. But the fatalities were estimated to be much higher, as the enemy was known to carry their dead off the battlefield.

Among the Australian fallen was 20-year-old Alan John Cooper, a talented Australian Rules player from Adelaide, who was killed by a direct hit from a rocket on May 26.



Jeff Dalley (far left) with his infantry section, including Alan Cooper (third from left) who was killed at Balmoral. (Supplied: Paul Braybrooke)

Cooper, or "Coop" to his mates, was Mr Dalley's second-in-command in their nine-man rifle section. "That was a pretty bad day [May 26, 1968], but we all knew the consequences," Mr Dalley said. "AJ Cooper was a really top bloke, everybody liked him, and it was just a shame that it went straight down his hole. "The rocket went into his hole and it destroyed him."

Anniversary brings back raw emotions. Mr Cooper was laid to rest with full military honours in Adelaide, one of more than 500 Australians killed in Vietnam. Mr Dalley expects the 50th anniversary of his friend's death to hit him hard. "I always remember Coop on the 26th of May, because my birthday is the 27th," he said. "I like to have a quiet time with my memories there and usually have a few beers and just think of Coop. He was a good mate."



Gary Cooper, next of kin to fallen soldier Alan Cooper, gives a reading at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra. (Supplied: Department of Defence)

Mr Dalley met Mr Cooper's two brothers at a reunion in Canberra a few years ago and wrote an emotional letter to his parents, telling them how respected Coop was among the men. "I never got a reply back which I'm grateful for in one way, because you talk about it and talk about it and it becomes embedded," he said. "But I always remember Coop."

Many close shaves in year-long tour of duty. After Balmoral was closed, 3RAR returned to the Australian taskforce base at Nui Dat, but Mr Dalley's tour of duty in Vietnam was not over for several months. Wounded once in action, Mr Dalley had other shrapnel injuries, but the reality of the war only hit home after a near miss on a later patrol when his unit was ambushed by a machine gun team.



Jeff Dalley heading out on patrol in Vietnam and sending a message home to his parents.
Supplied: Paul Braybrooke

"I had shrapnel and bullet holes through my shirt," he said. "Some of my [rifle] webbing had holes through it and there was a bullet hole through the middle of my hat. "I've got to admit when that happened I had a breakdown. "I don't know why but I never had a drop of blood on me, but my clothes were just ripped to pieces from the shrapnel and the bullets, but I didn't have any holes in me."

Veterans abused on return from war. Mr Dalley, originally from Benalla in Victoria, moved to the gold-mining hub of Kalgoorlie-Boulder in Western Australia in 1974. He said settling back into civilian life was something he struggled with for decades, admitting he never talked about the war.



Jeff Dalley at home in Kalgoorlie with his partner Rita Crist and dog Merf. (ABC Goldfields-Esperance: Jarrod Lucas)

"I had a lot of problems. I had a lot of mood swings and changes, jobs here, there and everywhere. I wanted to be alone," he said. "I never advertised the fact that I was a Vietnam veteran because when we marched through Adelaide we had eggs, tomato, paint, everything thrown at us. "It was better to shut up and try and get on with your life, but that was hard because it's a different life altogether from the life you experience when you're in the army."

Battle honours for Vietnam veterans 50 years on. At a national memorial in Canberra on Sunday, the Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry to 3RAR for its actions at Coral and Balmoral. Mr Dalley said it meant a lot to him and his mates.



Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell attaches Coral and Balmoral sashes to the Colours during the national commemorative service in Canberra for the 50th anniversary of the battles. (Supplied: Department of Defence)

"The whole time you were there you were walking on eggshells," he said. "The slightest little noise you would hit the ground, take cover or you just got used to what was being fired in or out of the base. "The whole time from the day we got there to the time we left you were on edge. You didn't trust anybody other than your mates."

Police given ADF anti-terror and riot-control call-out powers *from Brian Hartigan's Contact dated 15 July 2018 (www.contactairlandandsea.com)*

State and territory police forces may soon receive greater freedom to request military backup during terrorist attacks after a reform of Defence call-out powers that was introduced in federal parliament this week.



File photo (2009): Australian soldiers break ranks and charge unruly (New Zealand soldier) protesters during a population-protection and control (PPC) training activity. Photo by Leading Seaman Paul Berry.

The Bill will also allow the Australian Defence Force to be pre-authorized to respond to terrorist threats within Australia, and will expand the military's powers to search, seize, and control movement at the scene of a terrorist incident.

Minister for Defence Marise Payne reported that the Turnbull Government will introduce a Bill to make it easier for the states and territories to seek assistance from the Australian Defence Force to respond to terrorist and other violent incidents. *The Defence Amendment (Call Out of the Australian Defence Force) Bill 2018* was developed in close consultation with state and territory governments to ensure a strengthened approach to combating

terrorism, wherever it may occur,” she said. The Bill will amend Part IIIAAA of the Defence Act 1903 to

- make it simpler for states and territories to request ADF support where necessary to assist in the event of a terrorist or other violent incidents, such as geographically dispersed or otherwise widespread, coordinated acts of violence;
- allow the ADF to be pre-authorised to respond to threats on land, at sea and in the air; simplify, expand and clarify the ADF’s powers to search, seize, and control movement at the scene of a terrorist incident; and
- strengthen the ability of the ADF to respond to incidents occurring in more than one jurisdiction.

\These amendments give effect to recommendations of the Defence Counter-Terrorism Review, announced by the Prime Minister in July 2017. Police remain the best first response to terrorist and other incidents, and states and territories will continue to have primary responsibility for protecting life and property in their jurisdictions. Amendments to the ADF call-out powers were the most significant changes since the provisions were enacted in 2000, in the lead up to the Sydney Olympics. The terror threat we face today is greater and more complex than that we faced when these laws were introduced almost 20 years ago. The government is committed to ensuring that law-enforcement agencies around Australia can easily request ADF assistance to respond to these threats where necessary and are available to states and territories to assist with other major incidents, such as geographically dispersed or otherwise widespread, coordinated acts of violence or other domestic incidents that threaten the security and lives of Australians.

Minister Payne said the reforms were part of a suite of measures being rolled out to enhance Defence’s support to national counter-terrorism arrangements. Defence has already strengthened the practical support it provides to state and territory police since the outcomes of the review were announced in July last year. This includes the establishment of an enhanced ADF counter-terrorism liaison network with state and territory police, a broadened program of specialist training and streamlined police access to Defence facilities, such as rifle ranges. Defence has also expanded the capacity and capability of supporting ADF teams on call to assist police to respond to domestic security incidents and threats when requested by the states and territories. These reforms will ensure Defence is more flexible and agile in the way it supports states and territories. These amendments were recommended last year in a counter-terrorism review prompted by the Lindt Cafe siege and other recent attacks overseas, especially London.

Boxer CRV contract officially signed by *Brian Hartigan Contact Magazine 26 August 2018*
The contract to deliver 211 Boxer CRV armoured combat reconnaissance vehicles to the Australian Army was formally signed on Friday.



Rheinmetall's Boxer CRV overshadows the current in-service ASLAV for more than just size. ADF photo. (file photo)

The government officially signed the contract with Rheinmetall for 211 armoured combat reconnaissance vehicles, which will provide vital mobility, lethality and protection for Australian soldiers.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said Boxer CRV would ensure Australian soldiers have the best possible chance of completing their missions successfully and returning home safe to their families.

Rheinmetall Boxer will replace the current fleet of ASLAVs (Australian Light Armoured Vehicle), which are now more than 20 years old.

Fitted with modern sensors and communications equipment, Boxer's role is to locate, monitor and engage with enemy forces and provide security to our forces.

The vehicles will fill seven different roles on the battlefield including reconnaissance, command and control, joint fires, surveillance, ambulance, battlefield repair and recovery.

Total acquisition cost of the vehicles is \$5.2 billion.

Mr Turnbull said Australian-industry content of the project was raised significantly through the tender process to more than 50 per cent, and more than 75% for sustainment of the vehicles.

"Boxer will be built by Australian workers, using Australian steel, creating up to 1450 high-tech, highly skilled jobs across Australia," Mr Turnbull said.

"This nation-building project highlights the benefits to our servicemen and women, Australian industry and workers stemming from the Turnbull Government's commitment to developing and supporting Australia's defence industry while investing in our military capability.

"The workforce that will deliver the Boxer vehicles will continue to be used to support sustainment, progressive development and upgrades as well as potential export opportunities.

"With the contract now signed, the largest acquisition project in the history of the Australian Army can progress with the first vehicles expected to be available for training in 2020."

M113 replacement project starts *by Brian Hartigan Contact 26 August 2018*

The multi-billion dollar project to replace Army's M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers has taken another step forward with the formal release of the Request for Tender for LAND 400 Phase 3 – Mounted Close Combat Capability. Minister for Defence Marise Payne said the project will see Army's capability significantly enhanced with a fleet of up to 450 modern Infantry Fighting Vehicles and 17 Manoeuvre Support Vehicles.



Key differences between this new tender and the recently announced Phase 2 (won by Rheinmetall's Boxer CRV) is that there are more than double the number of vehicles required – and the winning vehicle will likely be a much heavier, definitely with more firepower, and roll on tracks (as opposed to wheels).

Rheinmetall's Lynx, unveiled in Paris two years ago (pictured above in AusCam colour scheme) is a likely strong contender (not a biased assessment – we just had the picture on hand). "This will be the largest investment in Army's capability ever undertaken and will provide our troops with a modern close combat capability," Minister Payne said.

The vehicles will be equipped with high levels of protection, firepower and mobility that will enable sustained operations, varying from peacekeeping to close combat. Minister for Defence Industry Christopher Pyne said he encouraged Australian industry to get behind the project. I actively encourage Australian small and medium sized enterprises to take advantage of the significant opportunities arising from this project," he said. Just as with the LAND 400 Phase 2 Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles, Australian industry involvement and Australian workers will be critically important to this project. Minister Pyne said that during this tender process, Defence would work closely with industry to optimise Australian-industry content. This project is another exciting opportunity for Australian industry to deliver leading edge technology in support of the Army.

Defence is placing greater emphasis on a coordinated and programmatic approach to Army's biggest project ever. A new Armoured Vehicle Division will be created to consolidate large programs like LAND 400, LAND 907 – Main Battle Tank Replacement and LAND 8160 – Enhanced Gap Crossing Capability into a programmatic 'mega project'. When fully delivered, the LAND 400 Program will allow Army to successfully sustain mounted close combat operations against emerging and future threats as part of a joint force.

Editor: This version of the M113 is longer and has one extra road-wheel (the small wheel supporting the track) on each side then the M113 version most of us were use to in Vietnam and Australia.

HMAS Melbourne and USS Frank E Evans collision

Most people remember Vietnam for all the soldiers that died. Many sailors lost their lives too, though some of them, killed in a collision between two allied ships, aren't listed on the Vietnam War memorial in Washington, D.C. In the early hours of June 3rd, 1969, the USS Frank E. Evans, an American destroyer, and the HMAS Melbourne, an Australian aircraft carrier, were on exercise in the seas between South Vietnam and Malaysia. Both ships were involved in an exercise when they realised they were on a collision course. Melbourne radioed the Evans to warn her, and both ships took evasive action. Unfortunately, inexperienced crew on the Evans exacerbated the confusion and the evasive manoeuvre did not proceed as planned.



U.S. Navy SH-3A Sea King helicopters from USS Kearsarge CVS-33 join search and rescue operations over the stern section of USS Frank E. Evans DD-754, as USS Everett F. Larson DD-830 stands ready to offer assistance (at right) on 2 June 1969. HMS Cleopatra F28 is also present. Frank E. Evans was cut in two in a collision with the Australian aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne R21 during SEATO exercises in the South China Sea. *Photo from Wikipedia*

According to the documentary *The Melbourne-Evans Incident (1975)*, from Naval History and Heritage, the commander of the Evans had retired to his quarters and unseasoned subordinates were in command of the bridge. It was this inexperience, combined with miscommunication aboard the Evans, that caused the collision. Those on the bridge of the Evans muddled up their position and transposed course co-ordinates, so when they tried to dodge out of the way of the oncoming aircraft carrier, they instead swung in front of it. The result was that Melbourne's bow sliced through the hull of the Evans, causing the deaths of 74 sailors on the Evans when her bow section sunk. Only the stern of the Evans was left floating behind.

The crew on Melbourne scrambled to lash the remaining section of the Evans to their starboard side and to haul the surviving crew members to safety.

Initially, the investigation of the incident sought to partition blame so that the commander of Melbourne was implicated, but subsequent investigations exonerated him and placed responsibility more firmly on those in command of the Evans.

Remembering the Townsville Black Hawk crash

During the afternoon of 12 June 1996, a formation of six Black Hawk helicopters performed a day light practice assault on a hill top near Townsville.

As reported extensively in the media at the time, the formation comprised two rows of three aircraft flying abreast, with the lead aircraft located in the front left corner referred to as BLACK 1.



The Black Hawk memorial plaque at Palmetum Gardens, Townsville, not far from Lavarack Barracks. Photo supplied: City of Townsville

The actual manoeuvre was performed that evening at around 6 pm, with aircrew relying on night vision goggles (NVGs) for visual clues. NVGs significantly impairs vision by reducing the field of view to approximately 40 degrees, less than half normal vision, and reduces the contrast of the terrain.

During the final stages of approach to the target area, the lead aircraft and the aircraft to its immediate right (referred to as BLACK 2) collided in flight. Both aircraft fell to the ground where they were consumed by fire. In all, 18 men lost their lives.

Great airmanship was displayed by the pilot of BLACK 2 as he guided his wildly rotating aircraft to the ground, the tail of the aircraft being severed during the collision.

Great courage was shown by the survivors and witnesses who retrieved injured and bodies from the burning wrecks, well aware of that live ammunition was aboard and the hazards of AVTUR-fuelled fires. What was immediately clear was that a mid-air collision had occurred where the Main Rotor Blades of BLACK 1 had sliced through the aft section of BLACK 2 prior to the crashing to the ground.

One Black Hawk crashed immediately killing 12 personnel on board, while the other was able to make a crash landing but burst into flames, killing six.

Crash survivors, soldiers from the other helicopters and exercise staff risked the flames and exploding ammunition to rescue their comrades and retrieve the bodies of the dead.

Fifteen members of the SASR and three from the 5th Aviation Regiment lost their lives in the accident.

Fourteen personnel were later officially recognised for their part in the rescue and evacuation operation.

ADF senior leadership appointments who took up their commands in July 2018 by Brian Hartigan – Contact 22 April 2018

Lieutenant General Angus Campbell – CDF

Vice Admiral David Johnston – VCDF

Rear Admiral Mike Noonan – Chief of Navy

Major General Rick Burr – Chief of Army

Air Marshal Leo Davies – stays on as Chief of Air Force

Air Vice Marshal Mel Hupfeld – Chief of Joint Operations

Current Chief of Army Lieutenant General Angus Campbell has been appointed Australia's new CDF – Chief of Defence Force.

His deputy will be current Chief of Joint Operations Vice Admiral David Johnston.



*Lieutenant General Angus Campbell – CDF (top left);
Vice Admiral David Johnston – VCDF (top right);
Rear Admiral Mike Noonan – Chief of Navy (bottom left); Major General Rick Burr – Chief of Army (bottom, second from left); Air Marshal Leo Davies – Chief of Air Force (bottom, second from right); and,
Air Vice Marshal Mel Hupfeld – Chief of Joint Operations (far right)*

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull made the announcement at a press conference at Parliament House in April in the company of Defence Minister Marise Payne, retiring CDF Air Chief Marshal Binskin and CDF designate Lieutenant General Campbell. The outgoing and incoming VCDFs, who have been present at previous such events, were absent from today's press conference.

Current VCDF Vice Admiral Ray Griggs had been touted by many as a serious contender for the CDF position, but recent media revelations surrounding his private life (over which he was vindicated by two inquiries) obviously affected his prospects – though Prime Minister Turnbull deflected questions on this at today's press conference, instead thanking Vice Admiral Griggs for his long and dedicated service.

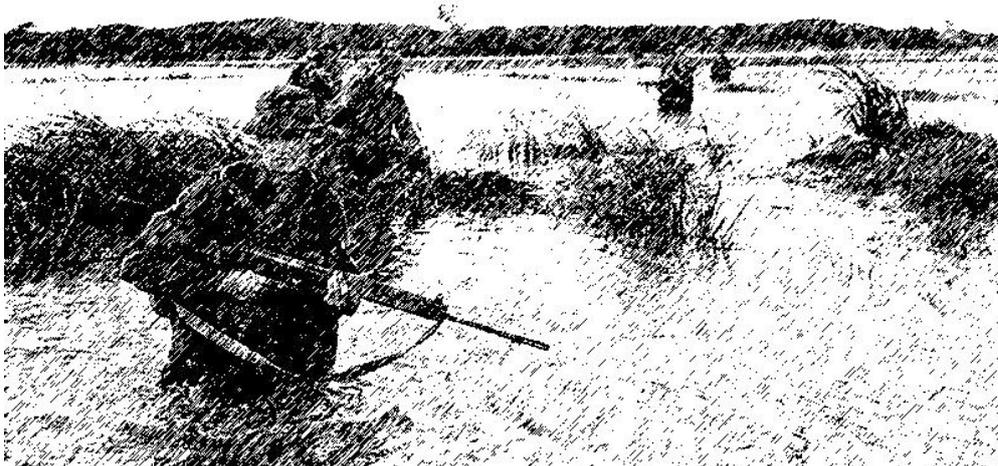
It was announced that current CDF Air Chief Marshal Binskin and his deputy, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, will retire from the ADF – though Minister Payne intimated that Vice Admiral Griggs would continue to serve Australia in some capacity.

She went on to joke that Air Chief Marshal Binskin would soon have more time for flying and riding, though not necessarily in that order.

Prime Minister Turnbull said the government extended its deepest gratitude and thanks to Air Chief Marshal Binskin who has served Australia with great distinction during a period of high operational tempo.

“Air Chief Marshal Binskin has overseen Australia's highly successful contribution to the counter-Daesh coalition in the Middle East and our transition from combat operations to the current train, advise and assist mission in Afghanistan, and his leadership will continue in the coming months,” Mr Turnbull said.

Help wanted finding missing soldiers in Vietnam by *Brian Hartigan, Contact Magazine Newsletter No66, 6 May 2017.*



UNSW Canberra research project Operation Wandering Souls is calling on Australian and New Zealand Vietnam War Veterans to hand in items that were found on the battlefields of Vietnam, in a bid to find that country's MIA (missing-in-action).

Six Australians were listed as missing in action at the end of the Vietnam War, but their bodies were returned home with the help of Vietnamese authorities.

Now, a group of Australian veterans and academics are attempting to return the favour by helping Vietnam find some of the estimated 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers MIA.

This is particularly important in Vietnamese culture as many believe that the spirit of those who died violently, or whose fate is unknown, will wander forever unless the appropriate ceremony is held for them.

Operation Wandering Souls aims to pass on information to Vietnam about the identity and burial sites of these Vietnamese soldiers.

In 2012, the project provided information on more than 450 of those who died in combat with Australian and New Zealand forces and linked their names to specific burial sites.

The team, headed by UNSW Canberra Adjunct Lecturer Dr Bob Hall and Visiting Fellow Derrill de Heer, is putting the call out again.

“We’re getting old,” Mr De Heer says.

“These things won’t be of much interest to our children, so now’s the time to do something with them.”

Items such as photographs, diaries and letters were taken from Vietnamese soldiers as mementos of war and Dr Hall says they provide clues to where their owners were buried.

“Please rummage through your old steel trunk or wherever the items are, find them and send them to the Operation Wandering Souls team along with as much as you can recall about the circumstances by which you ‘captured’ them,” Dr Hall says.

Scans of items and information can be sent to Bob Hall or Derrill De Heer using the contact information below. Items can be sent anonymously if preferred.

Dr Hall and Mr Derrill de Heer hope to be able to hand over some useful items to Vietnamese families and authorities.

“It’s the right thing to do. If the situation was reversed we’d like them to do this for our families,” Dr Hall said.

Operation Wandering Souls contacts:

Dr Bob Hall, Military Operations Analysis Team, Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society – telephone: +61 2 6268 8848 or email: b.hall@adfa.edu.au

New online database reveals the Artefacts of the Gallipoli Battlefield – *DVA Media release*
27 April 2018

The results of five seasons of archaeological surveys of the First World War battlefield at Anzac on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey have been catalogued into a unique digital archive. Minister for Veterans’ Affairs Darren Chester today announced the Anzac Gallipoli Archaeological Database, which was created by the University of Melbourne. “This remarkable database will add new layers of insight into our understanding of the Gallipoli battlefields, I commend the work of the University of Melbourne in creating this database. In particular I acknowledge the Joint Historical Archaeological Survey team who worked for many years to precisely record the details of some 2,000 objects and features they located in their study.”

The database will be an important legacy of the work of the tri-nation Joint Historical Archaeological Survey, the Australian component of which was funded by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

“I have no doubt the Anzac Gallipoli Archaeological Database will be of great value to researchers and the broader community. The Joint Historical Archaeological Survey was a significant project in the Anzac Centenary, and this database will ensure the findings of the extensive fieldwork are easily accessible to all Australian, New Zealand and Turkish people. I encourage all Australians to take the time to browse the database and gain a deeper understanding of the Gallipoli campaign through a unique and fascinating resource,” Mr Chester said

The Anzac Gallipoli Archaeological Database can be accessed on the [University of Melbourne website](#).

Living Anzac history and Lone Pine 'descendant' lives on in suburban Melbourne park

by Zalika Rizmal – ABC News

More than one hundred years ago, a young Australian soldier retrieved a single pine cone from a battlefield in Gallipoli and stashed it in his rucksack as a keepsake.

Today, a living piece of this Anzac history thrives in a serene park in Melbourne's eastern suburbs in the form of a Turkish red pine.



A towering pine tree grown from a pine cone found on the battlefield survives in Melbourne

•
ABC News:
Zalika Rizmal

Australia's oldest Lone Pine tree, the towering *pinus brutia* in Burwood's Wattle Park, commemorates one of the fiercest hand-to-hand combat battles of World War I.



Thomas Keith McDowell, pictured here with his wife, brought a piece of history home.

Supplied: Dr
Lindsay
McDowell

It's estimated over 2,000 Australians and 5,000-7,000 Turks lost their lives in August 1915, in what became known as the Battle of Lone Pine.

Part of the Gallipoli campaign, it got its name from the solitary pine tree that distinguished the scene of the battlefield.

Although the tree was destroyed in the fighting, 25-year-old Private Thomas Keith McDowell managed to collect a cone from the fallen tree.

It accompanied the soldier throughout his service — including 18 weeks at Gallipoli — until he was sent home from the Western Front with tuberculosis in 1916.



The landscape
at Lone Pine
before the
charge in
August 1915.

Supplied:
Australian War
Memorial

On his return, he gifted the souvenir to his aunt, Emma Gray, a general store owner from Grassmere, near Warrnambool in the state's south-west.



"Green
thumb"
Emma Gray
was able to
grow the
seeds from
the pine cone.

Supplied: Jean
Giblett

Her granddaughter Jean Giblett recalled her father describing Private McDowell scratching around at the bottom of his wartime kitbag.

"Here, Auntie, you've got a green thumb. See if you can grow something out of this," the soldier reportedly told Ms Gray.

Some 12 years later, she planted some seeds from the cone. Four seedlings sprouted.

"She grew them in flower pots outside the back door and looked after them like pet lambs," Ms Giblett said.

On May 7, 1933, the first tree was planted at Wattle Park, the home base of the 24th Battalion, which fought side by side with Keith McDowell's 23rd Battalion at Lone Pine. The other three were planted around Victoria between 1933 and 1934; one at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, one at The Sisters near Terang and another at Warrnambool's Botanic Gardens.



*Thomas Keith
McDowell (R)
kneels down next
to one of the
seedlings being
planted
near Terang in
1933.*

*Supplied: Dr
Lindsay
McDowell*

According to Wattle Park Heritage Group chairman Tom Thorpe, these were the only "direct descendants" of the Lone Pine tree.

At least two trees were also grown from pine cones from the same battlefield, but Mr Thorpe said they were a different species of pine.

"It's been documented that the other Lone Pines came from branches covering the trenches. They were imported from other areas," he said.

"It's probable that a few soldiers brought home pine cones from the Lone Pine tree, but they never grew them."

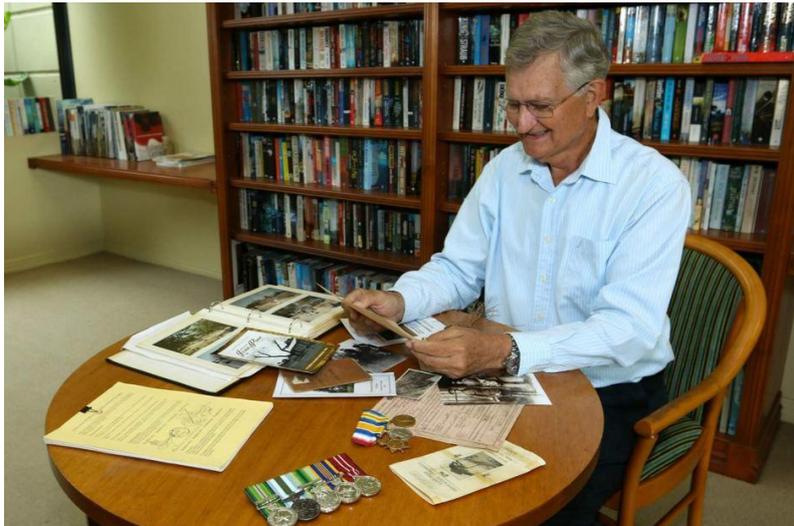
Mr Thorpe also said he has seen interest in the story grow over the years.

"It's got that little bit of romance and mystery about it."

But he said the story is not just about the men who fought at Lone Pine, but those who have served the country in every war.

"It embraces all of them. It's just a symbol now."

Of the four original trees, only two have survived.



Dr Lindsay McDowell has been captivated by the story of his grandfather Thomas Keith McDowell.
ABC News:
Stefan Lowe

The tree at Melbourne's Shrine died from disease in 2012, while the tree near Terang was struck down by lightning last year.

Thomas Keith McDowell's grandson, Lindsay McDowell, grew up hearing about the family connection, but never met his grandfather.

He said the soldier was an English migrant who had worked as a miner in Wonthaggi and that the families lived in different states, eventually losing contact.

As a former army medical officer and lieutenant colonel in East Timor, Dr McDowell became fascinated with his grandfather's legacy.

He discovered all sorts of memorabilia from his grandfather's life, including discharge papers and postcards sent en route to the war.

"I've got it all preserved for my two sons," he said.

Dr McDowell said he hoped the trees would be cared for by the younger generations.

"These trees are the last living tangible link that we have from the Battle of Lone Pine," he said.

"When they go that link will be severed, never to see the light of day again."



Australian visitors still converge on the Lone Pine memorial in Gallipoli every Anzac Day.
Reuters:
Osman Orsal

Unknown Australian soldier identified as a 'true hero of Gallipoli' more than 100 years later.

By political reporter [Anna Henderson](#)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PHOTO: [Australian soldiers at the Mena Camp in Egypt during World War I.](#) (Australian War Memorial (AWM C02588))

For a century, Gallipoli veteran Private Edward Attfield was thought to have deserted from the Australian Army.

But a Victorian researcher has helped prompt work to identify his grave site in Egypt, ensuring Private Attfield's descendants can erect a headstone in his honour and correct the record about his service.

This Anzac Day, the headstone will be unveiled.

His family has chosen the inscription: "I once was lost, but now am found."

Private Attfield's most direct descendant will also receive war medals on his behalf.

The mystery began to unfold two years ago when the body of an Australian soldier was discovered near Giza Base in Egypt.

The identity of the war veteran could not be established and a grave was marked for an unknown soldier.

Victorian researcher Martin Elliget asked the Australian Army to make further inquiries about the identity of the soldier, and helped unearth the truth about Private Attfield's disappearance.

He had been fighting with the 5th Battalion and had gone missing from the area where the body was found.



PHOTO: [Private Edward Atfield's enlistment papers](#). (National Archives of Australia)
Veterans Affairs Minister Darren Chester said the Army's identification board conducted a review to make the determination.

"It can now be confirmed Private Atfield lies in Old Cairo War Cemetery in Egypt," Mr Chester said.

"He had previously been declared a deserter by mistake."

Official records for Private Atfield, regimental number 1701, show his keen interest in joining the army. It took him eight attempts to finally enlist at the age of 24.

In 1915 he fought in Gallipoli, was wounded and evacuated for treatment, and then returned to the battlefield where he remained fighting until December that year.

His Statement of Service notes in 1916 he was considered "illegally absent".

According to the archives his last letter to his mother was written from Cairo in January 1916.

"It is a wonderful occasion to rectify the record on a true hero of Gallipoli on Anzac Day 2018," Mr Chester said.

Forgotten Battle of the Bismarck Sea. *With thanks to Legatee Keith Gaff, Melbourne Legacy*

In recent times it has become common to commemorate the battles in which Australian forces have been involved. One battle would have resulted in serious consequences had it been lost - the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. In late 1942 the Japanese Army planned to invade Lae to strengthen their position. A seaborne assault was launched from the Bismarck Sea on the north-east coast of New Guinea. The invasion force consisted of 6,900 Japanese troops on eight troop transports escorted by eight destroyers and supported by 100 Japanese fighter aircraft. Opposing the Japanese were elements of the U.S. Fifth Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force. Between 2nd and 4th March 1943, they engaged the invasion force, mauling the Japanese so badly, they never tried it again.

The battle was filmed by Australian war photographer, Damien Parer who flew in one of the attacking aircraft; a Bristol Beaufighter of No 30 Squadron RAAF, flown by Flt Lt Ron "Torchy" Uren. Parer stood behind Ron Uren's seat, unsupported, filming over Ron's shoulder. All the while Parer was fighting to stay upright against the G forces created by the manoeuvring aircraft, while handling a heavy 16mm movie camera. To add to his discomfort, he was standing just above the four 20mm cannons. He would have been deafened by the

noise and nearly asphyxiated by the fumes. The film was widely shown in Australian cinemas.

Beaufighters arrived in Australia in mid-1942 and were employed by the RAAF in the strike role. Fast at low level, powerfully armed and very quiet in flight, it was reported that the Japanese gave the Beaufighter a grim nickname; Whispering Death. It's now believed that name was made up by a journalist.

Today, only five Beaufighters still exist and the Battle of the Bismarck Sea is all but forgotten. What of the two men who combined to film the Bismarck Sea battle? Damien Parer was killed in action in September 1944 while filming the American landings on the island of Peleliu. Ron Uren survived and became a Senior Check Captain with QANTAS, piloting the first Boeing 707 jetliner into Sydney.

Rolling Stone *with thanks to Russell Robertson*

A frog goes into a bank and approaches the teller. He can see from her nameplate that her name is Patty Whack.

"Miss Whack, I'd like to get a \$30,000 loan to take a holiday."

Patty looks at the frog in disbelief and asks his name. The frog says his name is Kermit Jagger, my dad is Mick Jagger, and that it's okay, he knows the bank manager.

Patty explains that he will need to secure the loan with some collateral.

The frog says, "Sure. I have this," and produces a tiny porcelain elephant, about an inch tall, bright pink and perfectly formed.

Very confused, Patty explains that she'll have to consult with the bank manager and disappears into a back office.

She finds the manager and says, "There's a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you and wants to borrow \$30,000, and he wants to use this as collateral." She holds up the tiny pink elephant. "I mean, what in the world is this?"

The bank manager looks back at her and says,

"It's a knickknack, Patty Whack. Give the frog a loan. His old man's a Rolling Stone."

Never take life too seriously.



The RAM Shed – Men's Health Following a number of favable comments after last RR return of the RAM Shed men's health feature, some more very useful information has been included this edition. Remember; If the Cap FITS, then WEAR it!

"Spanner in the Works?" resources available for this Men's Health

But get in quick so that we can get the resources to you on time!

"Spanner in the Works?" can be used as a basis for your Shed or groups Men's Health Week event.

"Spanner in the Works?" resources are available for FREE to Men's Sheds and include the "Spanner in the Works?" health information booklet, Men's Health wallet cards, posters and brochures. Resources are also available to other groups and organisations.

More information on the full program is available

at <https://malehealth.org.au/resources/> or <https://mensshed.org/mens-health/spanner-in-the-works/>



Healthier
Workplace WA
com.au

LIVELIGHTER

Anyone can get Lung Disease by Lung Foundation Australia



Lung disease affects 1 in 4 Australians and is responsible for 1 in 7 deaths, however many people tend to ignore the signs and symptoms, often not doing anything about it for far too long. Contrary to what many think, breathlessness is not a normal sign of ageing. Likewise, a persistent or changed cough shouldn't be dismissed as the flu or a cold.

These seemingly mild symptoms could be a sign of lung disease, such as lung cancer or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Early diagnosis is critical to improve outcomes and quality of life.

Take two minutes to check in with your lungs by completing Lung Foundation Australia's online lung health check at <https://lungfoundation.com.au/lung-health-checklist/>

Lung Health Awareness Month is a Lung Foundation Australia national campaign which aims to raise awareness about the importance of lung health and how to recognise and act upon the symptoms of lung disease. We're all used to thinking about our heart and skin health, but our lungs are equally important. It's time we made our lung health a priority as well because if you can't breathe, nothing else matters.

Choose Health: Be Active. A physical activity guide for older Australians.

Do you do enough physical activity? A booklet to help older Australians achieve enough physical activity as they have health problems doesn't mean you can't be physically active. Any increase in activity can be beneficial to mental health. Produced by the Australian Government and Sports Medicine Australia this booklet includes s

exercising with chronic illness and has some advice about healthy eating. To download the booklet go to: https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/3244D38BBEBD284CA257BF0001FA_brochure.pdf

Do you know about My Health Record?

By the end of 2018, every Australian will get a My Health Record, unless they choose not to have one. Did you know, 1 in 5 Australians already have a My Health Record?

Having a My Health Record means your important health information such as current conditions and treatments, medicine details and pathology reports can be digitally stored in one place, allowing health care providers and individuals access to a summary of important health information when and where it's needed.

Benefits from My Health Record will be felt over time as more health information is added to a person's My Health Record. Australian Digital Health Agency CEO, Tim Kelsey, said the implementation of My Health Record will deliver a system that provides a safe and secure clinical health service for all Australians.

"The benefits of My Health Record are significant and compelling. Digital health can improve and help save lives," Mr Kelsey said.

Health Minister Greg Hunt said it also enabled people to take control of their own health, by uploading documents themselves and sharing information like allergies and test reports with clinicians.

"My Health Record provides many benefits to patients, including reduced duplication of tests, better coordination of care for people with chronic and complex conditions, and better-informed treatment decisions," Mr Hunt said.

Australian Medical Association president Doctor David Gannon said the current system meant patient records were often incomplete.

"Especially if the patient has recently seen another specialist or has been discharged from a hospital," Dr Gannon said.

"Less time chasing up paperwork means more time can be spent treating our patients."

More than 5 million Australians already have a My Health Record, a scheme which state and territory governments agreed to in August last year.

If you want a My Health Record, you don't need to do anything - it will be created for you by the end of 2018. If you don't want one, there will be a three-month "window" this year when you can opt out. For further information on My Health Record, including how to register for one now, visit <https://myhealthrecord.gov.au>

PTSD: Physical and Behavioural Symptoms

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can present with physical and/or behavioural symptoms, often being out of the ordinary or amplified for the individual. The symptoms in isolation or in response to a seemingly unrelated situation may not be identified as being associated with PTSD by an individual, however can be related. If you experience any of the below physical or behavioural symptoms, contact your health care provider for support.

Symptoms of PTSD – Physical

- Common physical symptoms that may be experienced in cases of PTSD are:
- Panic attacks
- Experiencing unexplained pain, or a
- feeling that pain is too severe
- Trouble breathing
- Having nightmares or flashbacks, and blocking out reminders of the trauma
- A feeling of being 'flat' or having no energy
- Getting no or low enjoyment out of activities
- Constant worrying or hiding from the world

- A feeling of sadness and loneliness, and mourning
- Feelings of desperation and hopelessness
- Thoughts or actions of self-harm, or suicidal thoughts

Symptoms of PTSD – Behavioural

- Common behavioural symptoms that may be experienced in cases of PTSD are:
- Having a short fuse, being wound up or easily frustrated or aggravated
- Bingeing or drinking excessively, or feeling desperate for a drink
- Acting recklessly in activities such as driving
- Getting into fights or participating in risky sex
- Dependency on drugs
- Uncontrollable gambling or losing money
- Pushing people away or declining offers of support
- Hurting the ones you love, either physically or emotionally

Recognising that these physical or behavioural symptoms are related to PTSD can be challenging. If you do experience any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider, the Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service (VVCS) or Beyond Blue.

Some tips for boosting your immunity during the flu season - from *couriermail.com.au*

Zinc – is crucial for developing the body's infection-fighting white blood cells. To up your zinc levels, eat lean red meat, chicken, eggs, seafood – especially oysters and shellfish – and whole grains, nuts and seeds.

Turmeric – it has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It also helps fight bacteria and viruses when they attack and is reportedly a natural painkiller.

Garlic – raw garlic is the most beneficial for our health because heat and water can inactivate its enzymes and diminish garlic's antibiotic effects. Garlic's toxin-fighting properties help lower blood pressure and cholesterol, fight inflammation, and kill parasites in the body.

Ginger – has powerful antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. It is also super gut-friendly, helping to stimulate indigestion and bowel function.

Vitamin C – is rich in antioxidants and will help increase antibodies and white blood cells to ward off infections.

Hydrate yourself - Dehydration can make cough and flu symptoms much worse and also compromise our general digestion and immunity.



Little Johnny Strikes Yet Again!

Johnny's teacher is giving a lesson on nutrition, and she decides to ask her students what they had for breakfast. To add a spelling component, she asks the students to also spell their answers. Susan puts up her hand and says she had an egg, 'E-G-G' 'Very good', says the teacher. Peter says he had toast, 'T-O-A-S-T?' 'Excellent.' Johnny has his hand up and the teacher reluctantly calls on him:

'I had bugger all', he says, ' B-U-G-G-E-R-A-L-L'.

The teacher is mortified and scolds Johnny for his rude answer.

Later when the lesson turns to Geography, she asks the students some rudimentary questions.

Susan correctly identifies the capital of Australia. Peter is able to tell her which ocean is off Australia's west coast.

When it's Johnny's turn, the teacher remembers his rude answer from the nutrition lesson, and decides to give him a very difficult question.

Johnny, she asks, 'Where is the Pakistani Border?'

Johnny ponders the question and finally says, "The Pakistani border is in bed with my mother". That's why I got Bugger All for Breakfast."

Former Thai-Burma Railway prisoners of war make 6,000km journey for Anzac Day service from *ABC Great Southern* by *Aaron Fernandes*



Australian POWs Harold Martin and Neil McPherson - Harold Martin and Neil McPherson have started their journey to Thailand.

Two former Australian soldiers taken prisoner by the Japanese army in 1942 and sent to work on the Thai-Burma railway have flown out of WA to commemorate Anzac Day about 6,000km away, at the site of their captivity.

At 101 and 96 years of age respectively, Harold Martin and Neil McPherson never met during the war.

But after surviving the work camps, the former prisoners of war each relocated to WA's south coast decades later.

"We both started work on the railway in the same month, October 1942," Mr McPherson said.

"We both worked on the railway for about two years, but we never ever came in contact with each other.

"My first meeting with Harold was here in Albany, and it was amazing to find out how similar our experiences were. We're both survivors."

Now long-removed from the horrors of war, Mr Martin and Mr McPherson have learned to forgive, but they have not forgotten.

"I was fortunate in one respect," Mr Martin said.

"[When I returned to Australia] I had no army appendages with me to remind me of things that happened as a POW.

"I never spoke with my family about it. They had no idea what being a POW meant."



PHOTO: The Burma-Thailand Railway in 1943, with prisoners of war laying railway track. (Supplied: Australian War Memorial)

Working on the Thai-Burma Railway - In 1942, Mr Martin and Mr McPherson were among the 22,000 Australian men and women made prisoners of war when the Japanese conquered South East Asia. Each man was sent to work on the Thai-Burma Railway, which the Japanese planned to use to transport its soldiers. Today, the conditions of the work camps are remembered by survivors as some of the worst in modern history.

"I was a POW for three-and-a-half years," Mr McPherson said.

"Hunger was the worst thing because we only had one topic of conversation: food.

"I was stricken down with malaria and that was a very difficult time, because you spent a lot of time in fever, perspiring and also delirious."

Thirteen thousand Australian prisoners worked on the railway under the direction of Japanese officers.

"Some of them were reasonable, some of them were very, very cruel," Mr Martin said.

"We [lived] in a confined space. Each hut would hold about 50 men.

"A lot of the prisoners made the mistake of doing something to attract attention, and they would be punished, because the Japanese don't need much of an excuse to slap your face or hit you with a gun."



PHOTO: Mr McPherson has travelled to Thailand for Anzac Day 14 times previously. (ABC Great Southern: Aaron Fernandes)

Life and death as a POW

The camps were riddled with tropical diseases.

"We always had two officers there protesting if somebody was not fit to work. They took a bashing from the Japanese, but they never hesitated [to speak up]," Mr Martin said.

"The Japanese, in lots of ways, were practical. For dysentery, if you had more than 12 bowel movements a day, you didn't work.

"For malaria, if you were shivering you didn't work, but if you were only sweating then you would be sent to work.

"Tropical ulcers, you couldn't walk, but you could sit down and break rocks."



PHOTO: The Thai-Burma Railway was built to transport Japanese soldiers. (Supplied: Guy Barnett)
Mr Martin said Australian POWs would boost morale by outsmarting their captors.

"When we went to work in the morning, there would be 50 [of us], two lines of 25, and two Japanese officers, one counting, the other watching," Mr Martin said.

"And when he'd get to the end of the first line, the first man counted would switch onto the back line, so he would be counted twice.

"The Japanese officers would change places, [and on the second count] there would be a discrepancy.

"We would hold them up for a quarter of an hour, 20 minutes, they never caught on to it. It was the kind of thing that would give you a lift in morale, if you could put something over them."

But those moments were brief. More than 12,000 POWs, including more than 2,700 Australians, died in captivity by the end of the war.



PHOTO: Mr Martin survived being taken prisoner by the Japanese army in 1942. (ABC Great Southern: Aaron Fernandes)

Marking Anzac Day at Hellfire Pass

More than 60,000 Allied prisoners, including Australian, British, Dutch and American POWs, and 200,000 labourers from across Asia were sent to build the 415km railway.

Former Australian POWs now commemorate their experiences by gathering each Anzac Day at a section of the Thai-Burma railway known as Hellfire Pass.

Both men will again make the journey this year, attending the dawn service at Hellfire Pass before the official Anzac Day ceremony at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery.

"It's an impressive service. There seemed to be an atmosphere of peace down there," Mr Martin said.

"I think it will grow, because the young people are finding out about it and want to know what their grandparents went through."

For Mr McPherson, this year marks the 15th time he has travelled there to commemorate Anzac Day.

"Because I go to Kanchanaburi each year, I take time out to walk along the line of graves and read off the names of chaps who will be forever young," he said.

"I remember them as 19- and 20-year-olds, whereas here I am 96, and grateful for it."



PHOTO: Many Australians flock each year to Thailand's "Hellfire Pass", where Allied POWs died building a railway for the Japanese. (Robert Baird)

The men travel as part of the Thai-Burma Railway Association's Quiet Lion Tour, named after Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, and all doctors who tended the POWs on the Thai-Burma Railway.

"It's to pay my respects to mates that didn't come home. It is important because what we want is to keep the stories alive of the sacrifices made by young Australians. It keeps me going," Mr McPherson said.

Both men said this year may be their last chance to make the trip.

"Each year I think this will be my last, and the following year I front up again and I hope I can do it for a little while longer," Mr Martin said.

"If Harold can do it at 101, then I'm sure I can do it at 96."

War widows fight for equal support for families of fallen soldiers. By Minique Ross & Amanda Smith and Jane Lee for RBC Radio National Life Matters program

One came back in a Hercules after being killed by an IED in Afghanistan. The other took his own life on home soil. They were both Australian special forces soldiers who were proud to serve their country — and they both left grieving families behind.



Photo: Bree Till (L) and Gwen Cheme have united through a shared grief. (ABC RN Tiger Webb)

But when their widows came together, they were dismayed to find they had received different access to support services — in part, they say, because of how their husbands died.

Bree Till was pregnant when her husband JT was killed by an improvised explosive device. It was 2009, and he was on his first deployment to Afghanistan, working as a bomb technician.

"His job was to essentially walk up and eliminate that as a threat or potential harm to the people who were following. As a consequence for doing his job, he died," Bree says.

Around eight years later, Gwen Cheme's husband Peter, who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, took his own life.

He had had a stroke while deployed overseas, and struggled with mental health issues during his recovery at home.

"I think Pete was suffering from ... post-traumatic stress. High levels of anxiety, stress levels were quite high and depression," Gwen says.

The two women became friends after Bree turned up at Gwen's house to offer her support following Peter's death.

Bree was shocked to learn she had received more access to the domestic support services typically provided to widows and their families by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Taking in everything from childcare to lawnmowing, the initiatives helped keep the day-to-day aspects of her life from falling apart.

But Gwen didn't receive the same help, and Bree believes it's because Peter did not die in active duty.

"I've got the opinion that regardless, grief is grief and loss is loss," Bree says.

"I spoke to Gwen and found out that because her husband essentially didn't fly home in a Hercules — because he had died at home as opposed to overseas — there was a different process and a different level of support available to her and her children.

"Suicide in itself is difficult enough, let alone to have a different experience [and] a different level of support. Surely if anything more support should be given ... it's a more difficult and confusing experience."

Gwen thought this demonstrated that the Army didn't want to acknowledge that being in a war zone could have serious impacts on mental health.

"To say that it [doesn't] is incredibly naive and ignorant," she says through tears.

"I also believe it says we don't believe that they're heroes and so we don't honour their service ... which is really the point.

"It's not necessarily the way they died that we should be honouring, it's the fact that they served and that they gave their lives."

In a statement to ABC RN, the Department of Veterans' Affairs said it was committed to supporting the families of soldiers.

"If an Australian Defence Force member dies months or years following overseas operations but their death can be linked to conditions arising out of that service, partners or dependants of the member will be entitled to the same benefits and support that they would have received if the member had died during those operations," a spokesperson said.

"The benefits available to partners or dependants of deceased ADF members depend on when the member served and the circumstances in which their service took place."

The spokesperson added that compensation, treatment and other entitlements for ADF members and their dependants are issued under three different Acts.

"The entitlements available to dependants, where the member has died as a result of service, can differ across the three Acts. The period of service, and whether that service was under operational or peacetime conditions, determines which legislation applies."

Hand-delivered hate mail

While Gwen says she "had a different outcome" to Bree, she also points out that her husband's unit provided a great deal of support.



PHOTO: Gwen Cherne says her late husband's unit provided lots of support. (ABC RN: Tiger Webb)

"There were [unit] members and friends who sat with us all week and made sure we got through the logistics of the funeral, to make sure there was enough in place for us to be OK financially, that I could take some time off work," she says.

"They checked in with me on a fortnightly, monthly basis and that's including commanding officers, regimental sergeant majors, the major general. Our Special Operations Commander for Australia came and visited me."

And while Bree says she received more support, her husband's death brought its own challenges.

JT received a full military funeral, which meant her grief was more public.

"With that came an enormous amount of respect ... but there were some incidents and things you probably wouldn't expect," Bree says.

"We had someone attend the funeral to deliver hate mail."

The person who delivered that letter was Man Haron Monis — who would later be responsible for the deadly Lindt café siege in Sydney.

He also sent letters to Bree's home, and to the families of other diggers. Some of the letters likened the soldiers to murderers; others said they were going to hell.

"We had things coming in the mail to myself and my family and JT's family, and that continued it on for years to come," Bree recalls.

Monis was later charged over the host of offensive letters. He was sentenced to 300 hours of community service and placed on a two-year good behaviour bond.

Uniting for change

Bree and Gwen are now working with the War Widows Guild of Australia NSW to close what they say are gaps in support for the families of fallen soldiers.

One of the things they're pushing for is the establishment of family advocates, who act as a bridge between families and Army command.

"The advocate would be a way for families to access information and the command in a non-threatening way for [both] small things — when they move into a new location and posting — to larger things," Gwen explains.



PHOTO: JT's medals are now displayed on his son's jacket. (ABC RN: Tiger Webb)

"I know that if I had had the ability to access Pete's command without having to go to someone in uniform ... I would have been able to find out more about the process of his recovery and what was happening ... to provide support to him and also to raise flags when I saw that things were not going well."

The pair are also working to fight the stigma of mental health issues within the Defence Force.

A 2010 review of suicide and self-harm by veterans and members of the Australian Defence Force found 6.4 per cent of ADF members had had a depressive episode in the previous year. It also found service men and women between the ages of 18 and 37 showed higher rates of depressive disorders than the broader Australian community.

The report also revealed that many ADF members and veterans had not sought assistance because they feared doing so may have restricted their career opportunities. That's a notion Gwen is familiar with.

Peter only sought professional help once. He hid his mental health struggle from the Army, afraid he might lose his job if they knew.

And while Gwen noted there was no tangible reason for that fear, that didn't make it any less real for Peter.

"I think, still, there is a stigma within the defence forces around mental health and it does impact careers, and the serving members and veterans have seen it impact careers," he says.

"That is very scary to many serving men and women."

Rethinking mental illness: 'It's nothing extraordinary'

Gwen says the key to change is encouraging the idea that mental health issues can — and do — affect all types of people.

"We actually have to approach it in a way that shows our serving men and women that this is par for the course — this isn't something extraordinary," Gwen says.

"When I was pregnant and went to hospital, the idea of post-natal depression was something that I was expecting as a possibility and [I] knew what those services were in order to support myself.

"If our serving men and women go into war zones and we tell them that they will come out being affected by their service and then we provide them with consistent support — and it's a requirement, it's an expectation when they come home — that in of itself would begin to change the culture."

They are confident the change will happen.

"I know Bree and myself have an army of women and men behind us supporting us quite literally to help change and make things better for families and for serving men and women and veterans," Gwen says.

"I do believe that our work with the Commanding Officer for Australia Special Operations, as well as the Chief of Army, [has] worked quite a bit to ensure that families are more included."

Gwen says the next step is to ensure a greater support for widows and their families through the Department of Veterans Affairs and Defence, and ex-serving organisations such as the War Widows Guild, Legacy and Commando Welfare Trust RSL.

"[We want] to make sure that where the government stops and those services begin is a more continuous process and that those holes get filled for those families so that they can connect together and provide that real support," she says.

If you or anyone you know needs help:

- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14
- [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800
- [MensLine Australia](#) on 1300 789 978
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467
- [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 22 46 36
- [Headspace](#) on 1800 650 890

Murphy's other 15 LAWS

1. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
2. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
3. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
4. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
5. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
6. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
7. Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.
8. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
9. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end-to-end, someone from California would be stupid enough to try to pass them.
10. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.

11. The things that come to those who wait, may be the things left by those who got there first.
12. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
13. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
14. God gave you toes as a device for finding furniture in the dark.
15. When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people, who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.

Washington, DC, at a Metro Station, on a cold January morning, this man with a violin played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes.



During that time, approximately 2,000 people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

After about 3 minutes, a middle-aged man noticed that there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, and then he hurried on to meet his schedule. At 4 minutes later: The violinist received his first dollar. A woman threw money in the hat and, without stopping, continued to walk.

At 6 minutes: A young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again.

At 10 minutes: A 3-year old boy stopped, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The kid stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. This action was repeated by several other children, but every parent - without exception - forced their children to move on quickly

At 45 minutes: The musician played continuously. Only 6 people stopped and listened for a short while. About 20 gave money but continued to walk at their normal pace. The man collected a total of \$32.

After 1 hour: He finished playing and silence took over. No one noticed and no one applauded. There was no recognition at all.

Unbeknown to all passing, the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the greatest musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written, with a violin worth \$3.5 million dollar. Two days before, Joshua Bell sold out a theatre in Boston where the seats averaged \$100 each to sit and listen to him play the same music. Joshua Bell, playing

incognito in the D.C. Metro Station, was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and people's priorities.

This experiment raised several questions:

*In a common-place environment, at an inappropriate hour, do we perceive beauty?

*If so, do we stop to appreciate it?

*Do we recognize talent in an unexpected context?

Some, representing most, do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made.

How many other things are we missing as we rush through life?

Enjoy life NOW - **it has an expiration.**

An Arab Sheik was admitted to Hospital for heart surgery, but prior to the surgery, the doctors needed to have some of his blood type stored in case the need arose.

As the gentleman had an extremely rare type of blood that couldn't be found locally, the call went out around the world.

Finally a Scotsman was located who had the same rare blood type. After some coaxing, the Scot donated his blood for the Arab.

After the surgery the Arab sent the Scotsman a new BMW, a diamond necklace for his wife, and \$100,000 US dollars in appreciation for the blood donation.

A few months later, the Arab had to undergo a corrective surgery procedure.

Once again, his doctor telephoned the Scotsman who this time was more than happy to donate his blood.

After the second surgery, the Arab sent the Scotsman a thank-you card and a box of Quality Street chocolates.

The Scotsman was shocked that the Arab did not reciprocate his kind gesture as he had anticipated.

He then phoned the Arab and asked him: "I thought you would be more generous than that - last time you sent me a BMW, diamonds and money, but this time you only sent me a lousy thank-you card and a crappy box of chocolates ?"

To this the Arab replied: "Aye laddie, but I now have Scottish blood in me veins".

The Lawyer with 12 kids (contributed) A lawyer, who had a wife and 12 children, needed to move because his rental agreement was terminated by the owner who wanted to reoccupy the home. But he was having a lot of difficulty finding a new house. When he said, he had 12 children, no one would rent a home to him because they felt that the children would destroy the place. He couldn't say he had no children, because he couldn't lie.

Now we all know lawyers cannot, and do not lie...

So, he sent his wife for a walk to the cemetery with 11 of their kids. He took the remaining one with him to see rental homes with the real estate agent. He loved one of the homes and

the price was right -- the agent asked: "How many children do you have? He answered: "Twelve." The agent asked, "Where are the others?" The lawyer, with his best courtroom sad look answered "Well, they're in the cemetery with their mother."

MORAL: *It's not necessary to lie, one only has to choose the right word. And don't forget, most politicians are unfortunately lawyers.*

ABC Fact check: Are there powerful precedents which break with protocol for posthumously promoting John Monash to field marshal?



 **Doesn't check out**

The claim: The week before the 2018 ANZAC Day commemoration, newspapers reported that the Turnbull Government had decided against posthumously promoting the Australian World War I commander General Sir John Monash to the rank of field marshal. Supporters of the campaign to promote Monash, including former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer, argued that his contribution to the Allied victory in WWI had not been sufficiently recognised and that granting him the highest military rank would right a historic wrong. They had hoped Monash's elevation would coincide with the opening of the \$100 million Monash Centre at Villers-Bretonneux in France.

In letters to the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, current and former military leaders argued against a posthumous promotion, saying it would run contrary to Australian military tradition and open the possibility of reviewing all previous decisions relating to rank.

In the midst of this debate Opposition Leader Bill Shorten wrote an opinion article in which he supported the campaign to promote Monash.

"It is true that posthumously promoting Monash to field marshal in this centenary year would be a break with normal protocol," he wrote.

"But there are powerful precedents for such a decision."

RMIT ABC Fact Check investigates whether there are indeed powerful precedents for posthumous promotion to field marshal that break with protocol.

The verdict

Mr Shorten's claim doesn't check out.

In support of his argument, Mr Shorten cited three examples of men whose promotions, he claimed, had broken with protocol: Sir Thomas Blamey, Prince Philip, and General George Washington.

Fact Check consulted two Australian military historians and a British expert in the history of field marshals, all of whom said there was no precedent for posthumous promotion to field marshal in Australia or Britain.

The Australian experts also said the precedents cited by Mr Shorten did not represent a break with protocol.

Australia's field marshals

Australia has had four field marshals: Sir William Birdwood, a British officer who commanded the Australian Imperial Force in WWI (he was made a field marshal in Britain and Australia simultaneously in 1925); King George VI; Sir Thomas Blamey (the first and only Australian field marshal) and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.



Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood
Supplied: Australian War Memorial

All four were alive when appointed. The field marshal rank is the highest military rank in the British and Australian systems and is awarded to an officer who has commanded several armies. In the case of King George VI and Prince Philip, the rank is titular since neither actually commanded armies. There have been 140 field marshals appointed by the sovereign since the field marshal rank was first introduced into the British Army in 1736, according to Dr Tony Heathcote, author of The British Field Marshals 1736-1997. Dr Heathcote, a member of the British Commission for Military History, told Fact Check the rank is generally awarded to senior officers, but it has also been held by four British

Other professional soldiers to have held the rank are Marshal Ferdinand Foch (French Army), Jan Smuts (South African Defence Force) and as previously mentioned, Australia's Sir Thomas Blamey.

Emeritus Professor David Horner of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at Australian National University, and Professor Robin Prior of the University of Adelaide, told Fact Check the protocol for being promoted to field marshal requires an officer to be alive; in active service; to have exercised a level of command equal to that of a field marshal; and to have had the appointment conferred by the reigning monarch.

A quick guide to military ranks

To understand the debate over Monash's proposed promotion, it helps to know how the upper echelons of the Australian Army are structured and where the rank of field marshal sits.

Army officers receive a commission from the Governor-General of Australia, who acts for the monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. Here are the top ranks:

Rank	Details
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Rank	Details
Field Marshal	The highest military rank. Commands armies. Five-star rank.
General	Commands an army (an army is made up of several corps). General is the highest active rank of the Australian Army at the moment. It is only held when an army officer is appointed as the Chief of the Defence Force. Four-star rank.
Lieutenant General	This officer commands a corps (a corps can be a number of divisions). This is the second-highest active rank in the Australian Army. Held by the Chief of the Army, currently Lieutenant General Angus Campbell. Three-star rank. (The Government has announced that in July Lieutenant General Campbell will become Chief of the Defence Force.)
Major General	Commands a division or equivalent. Two-star rank.
Brigadier	Commands a brigade. One-star rank.

Where does Sir John Monash fit in?

During WWI Monash commanded an Australian Corps which was five divisions strong, with the temporary rank of lieutenant general. To reflect his level of command he was permanently promoted to lieutenant general in January 1920 — the three-star rank he held at the end of the war and the highest for an Australian officer at that time.

Monash was knighted on the battlefield by King George V in 1918. Then, in recognition of his exceptional war-time service, prime minister Jim Scullin promoted him to full general in 1929. Monash died in 1931.

Supporters of the campaign to promote Monash, including Mr Shorten, argue Monash should now be elevated one further rank to the highest level of field marshal.

In his article Mr Shorten wrote: "Had it not been for the narrow attitudes of the time, it's a promotion he would have won long ago".



Sir John Monash in Cairo, 1915
(Photographer unknown)

But military historians and others disagree.

Professor Horner told Fact Check that when Monash commanded the corps during WWI he held the correct rank of lieutenant general. Although he was a talented and skilful officer he nonetheless did not shoulder the responsibilities of field marshal during his military service.

He achieved the rank appropriate to his level of command, Professor Horner said. In an article in the Courier-Mail on April 18, Brendan Nelson, the director of the Australian War Memorial, praised Monash as one of the greatest Australians but argued against a promotion. "The promotion of General Sir John Monash to field marshal is inconsistent with such promotions," he said.

"Field marshals commanded entire armies, not a corps of five divisions. Monash did not meet the fundamental criteria for such promotion."



Monash in 1918,
near the end of
World War 1
(Australian War
Memorial)

So, are there any powerful precedents for promotions that break with protocol?

According to professors Horner and Prior, both established experts in the two world wars, there are no precedents in Australian military history for posthumous promotions to field marshal.

Nor were there any precedents that broke with protocol as Mr Shorten suggested, they said.

"I can't think of any," said Professor Horner, dismissing Mr Shorten's claim as "nonsense".

"There is not a single one," said Professor Prior, describing the precedents claimed by Mr Shorten as "ridiculous".

He said field marshals were "extraordinary and few and far between", adding that to promote Monash to field marshal would break with tradition in a manner that would put him in an entirely different category of

"We're not looking at just a skip and a jump here, we're looking at something quite different," he said.

"It would make Monash a politicised and somewhat ludicrous figure and that would be a pity considering his accomplishments."

Others have taken a similar view. Fairfax Media reported that Chief of the Defence Force Mark Binskin, in a letter to Mr Turnbull, said a posthumous promotion of Monash would be legally unsound and open the defence force to more claims.

"Unlike some overseas nations which award promotions posthumously, Australia has no legal precedent for this action," he wrote.

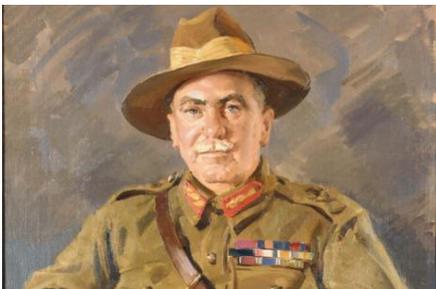
Dr Heathcote told Fact Check there were no precedents for promoting officers after death in British service.

"I can find no precedent for posthumous promotion to field marshal or indeed to any other rank in the British service," he wrote in an email.

Why the precedents cited by Mr Shorten do not break with protocol

Mr Shorten referred to three precedents that he argued represented a break with protocol when promoting to field marshal. But none of them break with protocol. Fact Check will deal with each individually.

Sir Thomas Blamey is the first and only Australian Army officer promoted to field marshal rank.



Portrait of Field Marshal Sir
Thomas Blamey
Australian War Memorial

During WWII Blamey commanded several armies comprising 500,000 men, a command where the correct rank would have been field marshal, Professor Horner said. But he was not promoted to that rank during the war.

"After the war, in recognition of the fact that he had held that position, the government promoted him to field marshal [in 1950]. He was alive and [because he had retired] he was brought back on to active service, to keep the protocol correct," he said.

"The Blamey precedent isn't a precedent. There isn't a break in protocol," he said. Prince Philip has held the rank of field marshal in the Australian Army since 1954. King George VI also held this rank. But as Professor Horner pointed out, these ranks are titular for members of the royal family and therefore within ceremonial protocol. General George Washington, the first president of the United States, was posthumously appointed to the rank of General of the Armies of the United States in 1976. There is no equivalent rank in either the British or Australian army. Also, the appointment was bestowed on Washington through an act of congress. Professor Horner said unlike the US, British Commonwealth countries did not rely on parliament for posthumous promotions, making the Washington precedent not applicable. The future of field marshals In 1995 the British Ministry of Defence announced that the rank of field marshal would henceforth only be awarded in exceptional circumstances, Dr Heathcote told Fact Check. Professor Horner said the US had also moved away from the five-star rank, with none appointed since World War II.

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Principal researcher Sushi Das - @sushidas1 - sushi.das@rmit.edu.au

The divorce settlement

On the first day after his divorce, he sadly packed his belongings into boxes, crates and suitcases.

On the second day, he had the movers come and collect his things.

On the third day, he sat down for the last time at their beautiful dining-room table, by candle-light; he put on some soft background music, and feasted on a pound of shrimp, a jar of caviar, a bottle of spring-water, and 3 cans of sardines.

When he'd finished, he went into each and every room and deposited a few half-eaten shrimp dipped in caviar, and some sardines into the hollow center of the curtain rods. He then cleaned up the kitchen and left.

On the fourth day, the wife came back with her new boyfriend, and at first all was bliss. Then, slowly, the house began to smell.

They tried everything; cleaning, mopping, and airing-out the place. Vents were checked for dead rodents, and carpets were steam cleaned.

Air fresheners were hung everywhere. Exterminators were brought in to set off gas canisters, during which time the two had to move out for a few days, and in the end they even paid to replace the expensive wool carpeting. Nothing worked! People stopped coming over to visit.

Repairmen refused to work in the house. The maid quit. Finally, they couldn't take the stench any longer, and decided they had to move, but a month later - even though they'd cut their price in half - they couldn't find a buyer for such a stinky house.

Word got out, and eventually even the local realtors refused to return their calls.

Finally, unable to wait any longer for a purchaser, they had to borrow a huge sum of money from the bank to purchase a new place.

Then the ex called the woman and asked how things were going. She told him the saga of the rotting house. He listened politely and said that he missed his old home terribly and would be willing to reduce his divorce settlement in exchange for having the house.

Knowing he could have no idea how bad the smell really was, she agreed on a price that was only ten percent of what the house had been worth, but only if he would sign the papers that very day. He agreed, and within two hours her lawyers delivered the completed paperwork.

A week later, the woman and her boyfriend stood smiling as they watched the moving company pack everything to take to their new home and to spite the ex-husband, they even took the curtain rods! -- I love a happy ending, don't you?

The Malayan Emergency was declared on 18 June 1948, after three estate managers were murdered in Perak, northern Malaya, by guerrillas of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), an outgrowth of the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement which had emerged during the Second World War. Despite never having had more than a few thousand members, the MCP was able to draw on the support of many disaffected Malayan Chinese who were upset that British promises of an easier path to full Malayan citizenship had not been fulfilled. The harsh post-war economic and social conditions also contributed to the rise of anti-government activity. The Malayan government was slow to react to the MCP at first and did not appoint a director of operations to counter the insurgency until March 1950. The new director planned to address the underlying economic, social, and political problems facing the Chinese community while, at the same time, bringing government control to the fringe areas where the MCP received much of its support. Before this plan was fully implemented, however, the situation deteriorated further with the assassination of the British High Commissioner in October 1951. The attack galvanised British resolve to meet the threat posed by the MCP; the Malayan government, in turn, stepped up counter-insurgency measures. Prolonged operations were undertaken against the communists in an effort to destroy their base of support in local communities and to drive them into the jungle, where it would be difficult for them to receive supplies from supporters.

Australia's involvement began in 1950 with the arrival of RAAF aircraft and personnel in Singapore. Dakotas from 38 Squadron were deployed on cargo runs, troop movements, and paratroop and leaflet drops in Malaya, while six Lincoln bombers of 1 Squadron provided the backbone of aerial operations. As the capacity of army and police units operating against the communists improved, however, the need for air power decreased, and by 1952 Lincolns were increasingly used as part of combined air-ground assaults against the communists. One of the major military successes of the conflict was one such coordinated operation in July 1954, east of Ipoh, in Perak state. In Operation Termite, as the exercise was known, five RAAF Lincolns and six from a RAF squadron made simultaneous attacks on two communist camps, followed by paratroop drops, a ground attack, and further bombing runs ten days later. The operation destroyed 181 camps and killed 13 communists; one communist surrendered.

By October 1955, when the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), arrived in Penang, the outcome of the Emergency was no longer in doubt, although a lengthy mopping up stage followed, largely undertaken by Australian troops. After several false starts 2RAR

crossed to the mainland in January 1956 to begin anti-communist operations. Over the next 20 months, as part of 28 Commonwealth Brigade, 2RAR participated in a variety of operations, mainly in Perak, one of the main areas of communist activity. Their work consisted of extensive patrolling, watching for contacts in the rubber plantations, and mounting a perimeter guard on the New Villages, settlements which the government had established to provide infrastructure and services in outlying areas in the hope of denying the guerrillas access to their support base. Contacts were rare, however, and the battalion had a mixed record, killing two communists in an ambush on 25 June 1956 but losing three of its own troops.

As the threat continued to dissipate, the Malayan government officially declared the Emergency over on 31 July 1960, though 1RAR remained in Malaya until October the following year, when 2RAR returned for a second tour. In August 1962 the battalion was committed to anti-communist operations in Perlis and Kedah, completing its tour in August 1963.

In addition to air and infantry forces, Australia also provided artillery and engineering support, and an airfield construction squadron built the main runway for the airforce base at Butterworth. RAN ships also served in Malayan waters had occasion to fire on suspected communist positions in 1956 and 1957. Australian ground forces in Malaya formed part of Australia's contribution to the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve, which was established in 1955 primarily to deter external communist aggression against countries in south-east Asia, especially Malaya and Singapore.

2RAR left Malaya in October 1957 and was replaced by 3RAR in the same month. After six weeks of training in jungle warfare 3RAR began driving the insurgents into the jungle in Perak and Kedah, separating them from food and other supplies. Early successes for the battalion confirmed the growing as-

pendancy of the security forces over the communists and by April 1959 one of the main communist centres, Perak, was declared secure. By late 1959 operations against the communists were in their final phase and many communists had crossed Malaya's northern border into Thailand. 3RAR left Malaya in October 1959 to be replaced by 1RAR.

Although operating in the border region 1RAR made no contact with the enemy and was forbidden to move into Thailand, even when the presence and location of communists was known

Thirty-nine Australian servicemen were killed in Malaya, although only 15 of these deaths occurred as a result of operations, and 27 were wounded, most of whom were in the army.

Chapter 35: Vung Tau – Moon arrived on 1 September 1970 - by Ian Cavanough

Reproduced from - A tale by an Aussie infantry soldier in the Vietnam War. *Ian was in A Company 2 RARNZ for which 107 Battery was the Direct Support (DS) Battery.*

There were no speeches, no fanfare. Moon simply arrived. He came from a posting in New Guinea and he could speak fluent Pidgin English. Whereas the previous platoon commanders had a traditional Army leadership style, Moon was different. The Army manual tells a new commander to impose himself on the men. Do something bold and impressive. Moon did not big-note himself, he was a very humble, unassuming man. He commanded the platoon through the section commanders and he worked very closely with them. It didn't take long for him to gain the respect of the men, but I had a suspicion a larrikin was lurking somewhere under that humble persona.

Moon changed the way we operated. Whereas before we would search most of our AO (Area of Operations) by patrolling all over it looking for the enemy, Moon would look at the map

and highlight the natural features such streams and raised ground (I was nearly going to say hills); and concentrate on those. The platoon would set off about 8am, patrol for a couple of hours and prop. Half the platoon would then go on a recce, checking for enemy signs and return. Then the other half would check out another area. This way we covered more ground by actually patrolling less. The objective was to find something to ambush each night: maybe a track, a stream (where we could resupply water); or better still a track and a stream. By 4pm we were in a harbour and maybe we could get lucky.

And lucky we were.

One of the sections came across an old track which didn't appear to have any recent use. That would be our night location. As we were moving into an ambush/harbour site the platoon propped. The enemy sign – the hand held in the thumbs-down position – came down the line.

6 Section had spotted something. Suddenly, one shot rang out and a machine gun opened-up, we all ran forward and closed-up at the rear – our contact drill just like we had rehearsed many times. Killer and I were facing to the rear. My heart was racing at full warp speed; my breathing was so rapid I had to open my mouth to get more oxygen in.

No sooner had the shooting started than it was over.

Then there was silence. I could hear the voices from the section as they moved forward and swept the area. All clear.

Moon placed us in a harbour. One VC was dead. He had an AK47, a pack and some documents. His body was dragged in off the track. Wally from Tasmania was the number two on the gun for 6 section and he filled me in on what happened. They saw the guy coming down the track, he wasn't just walking, he was stepping left and right across the track as he moved towards them. Maybe he was trying to hide his footprints. They decided that Wally should fire first because a burst from the machine gun, with its cone of fire, may miss him. Wally hit him right in the chest and dropped him instantly. Glenn, the machine gunner from Victoria, opened-up just in case there were more enemy and covered the whole area with suppressing fire. It was all over in a matter of seconds.



Details of the contact were radioed to Alpha Company HQ and soon a Sioux chopper arrived and hovered above us as a bag was lowered down on a rope.

I got the call to go to platoon HQ. Mick handed me a Polaroid camera and said “Knackers we need you to take some pictures.” Well how about that? I was considered the camera guru of the platoon and I couldn't even understand my own Canon SLR let alone work out a Polaroid. It was the same type of camera that Rick used back in Townsville to take pictures of the sheila with the big tits at the swimming pool. You can see how valuable that sort of training was.

Mick read out the instructions, “Take one profile shot and one full face frontal.”

I looked at the camera, it was a bellows type, I pulled it out and the sights opened up at the same time. No viewfinder here, just a simple black bit of metal with a hole in it and an inch away an open frame. I looked down at the dead guy. The only other dead person I'd seen was a guy in a coffin when I was a kid, and then I only got close enough to see his nose protruding above the white stuff on the side of the coffin. I was too scared to go any closer. Yet here I was in a war zone with a camera I had no idea how to operate trying to take pictures of a VC who had just been hit with a round from an SLR. He was of slight build, as all Vietnamese seemed to be, and he was about my age. His shirt was pulled up to his neck and his arms were stretched up beside his head – a result of being dragged in off the track by his legs. I could see his chest where the bullet entered his body. It was a simple mark about the diameter of a pencil and a little bit of blood had trickled out only an inch or two. It was located just below his rib cage in the centre of his chest. Wally said the impact blew him from one side of the track to the other.

I was amazed by my reaction to seeing this poor bastard lying there. I felt nothing.

I pulled his right arm back down so I could get a clear profile shot of his head. I pulled on the shirt fabric which was damp and greasy, and I moved the arm in an arc and placed it beside his trunk. I wiped the greasy stuff from my hand onto my trousers, laid down and aimed the camera at his face. I was aware that the light was poor, so I held the camera as steady as I could by locking my elbows and controlling my breathing, which had settled down somewhat since the beginning of the contact. I framed up the shot to include his head profile and clicked the shutter in a nice easy smooth motion, just like pulling the trigger on a rifle.

I stood up and pulled the film out of the camera by pulling on the tab marked 'pull.' I handed it to Mick who placed the film into a metal clip and tucked it under his armpit as per the instructions. Well the instructions said nothing about armpits, it said to place the film in a warm spot for 30 seconds and peel back the cover. I'm just glad I wasn't handling the metal clip after it had been under Muick's armpit. Mick peeled back the film, we all gathered in for a closer look. He held up the black and white picture. It was perfectly exposed, a great picture, nice and sharp, taken in poor light because I used the marksmanship principles.

Yep, it was a perfect picture alright, save for one important thing – I took a picture of his ear! Shit! We only had 9 photos left in the camera. The pressure was on to deliver.

Well I laid down again, a bit further back this time and got the profile shot. I then moved above the body and after a couple of more attempts we got what was required – a full-face frontal shot and a profile shot, but I used the whole film in the process.

I didn't know this before, but these pictures will be used to identify the VC.

With my first photographic assignment completed, I couldn't resist having a look at the AK47. It used the same calibre ammunition as our SLR, which was 7.62mm.

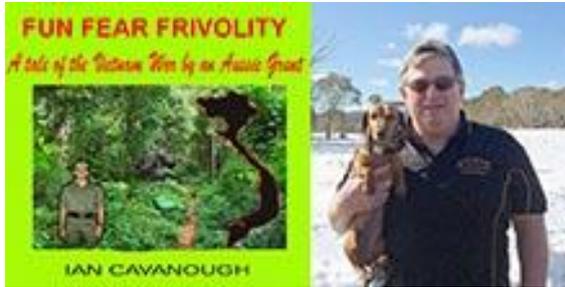
It was lighter and shorter – a simple rugged design. It was clean, but a few years old, as was the ammunition, because the brass was a dull colour. It had a 30-round magazine and it was capable of full automatic fire, something our SLRs were not capable of unless the innards were strengthened and changed which turned it into an AR. It was better suited to the jungle than our SLR.

The chopper came back, dropped a rope down through the jungle canopy to retrieve the bag containing the camera and the VC's stuff, and reported back to GHQ wherever that was.

The platoon was in high spirits to finally engage with the enemy and have something to show for it because most of the time the enemy bugged out and dragged their dead and wounded with them.

As the boys were digging a grave for the VC I went back to Killer and told him everything I had just experienced, emphasising my skill in taking such great photos in the trying conditions. Killer just smiled and nodded. He already knew I was a bullshit artist.

Anyway, I imagined what happened back at GHQ when they inspected the camera and photos – “What the fuck were those blokes doing to use the whole film?” It didn’t matter – I was 2 platoon’s camera guru.



Reproduced from FUN, FEAR, FRIVOLITY – A tale by an Aussie infantry soldier in the Vietnam War

It is never too early *from Advance Care Planning Australia*

Even if you are hale and hearty, it is never too early to plan ahead for your end-of-life medical care, including completing an Advance Care Directive (ACD).

This voluntary legal document, sometimes called a living will, allows you to clearly specify your choices for medical and personal care options at the end of your life, should you be unable to speak for yourself due to illness or injury. This may include recording your preferences regarding resuscitation or other life-prolonging medical interventions, pain management, or your wish to die in your home or an aged-care facility rather than in a hospital.

End-of-life care planning is becoming increasingly necessary in Australia, due to an ageing population, medical advances and changing patterns of disease. More people are requiring palliative care, which was traditionally mainly needed by patients with terminal cancer. Today, people who live past 80 tend to die from other conditions characterised by a slow and general deterioration. Evidence shows that early advance care planning means fewer days in hospital for patients at the end of their life and, most importantly, a final journey that is more peaceful and dignified for both the individuals concerned and their family. An ACD can provide peace of mind for families and care-givers who may otherwise face the burden of making difficult medical decisions on behalf of their loved one.

While you may have already nominated a power of attorney to deal with financial, property or business decisions on your behalf, they cannot make medical decisions for you. Advance care planning therefore gives you an opportunity to nominate a trusted family member or friend to communicate your specific medical care choices, as recorded in an ACD. These persons may be referred to as an ‘enduring guardian’, ‘substitute decision maker’, or ‘medical power of attorney’, depending on which state or territory you live in.

As Advance Care Planning Australia puts it, “If your choices for future health care are known, they can be respected.” For more information contact your GP or visit the Advance Care Planning Australia website at <http://advancecareplanning.org.au>

In the end, it is not the years in your life that counts, it is the life in your years!
