



RETURNED and SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA  
EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH  
ROUTINE ORDERS

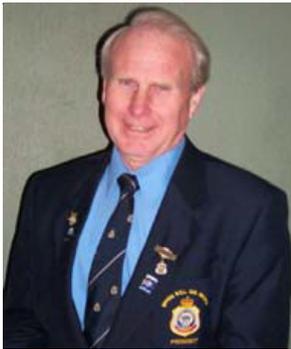


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October-December 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The veterans of the Epping sub-Branch of the Returned and Service League of Australia, mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth 2, the commander in Chief of our Defence Forces. Since her first military service in 1945, Her Majesty has had a long and proud association with the defence forces, not only as Commander in Chief of all the forces but has had honorary appointments as Patron to many associations within the Australian Defence Forces.

We join with all Australians, the millions comprised in the Commonwealth of Nations and all countries across the world to express our condolences as we participate in the current expression of sadness for the loss of our sovereign. In her death we are joined, participants in history as we witness the end of the era of Queen Elizabeth the second. A reign of 70 years, the longest in British History which has spanned some significant events in world history

Throughout such a chronicle of events at home, within the commonwealth of nations and across the globe, the Queen was a widely respected figure, her humble and compassionate respect to all was ever present and available to encourage and comfort.

In her daily activities, she met individuals from all walks of life from world leaders to school children whilst continuing to be steadfast figurehead for the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of nations. Her reign saw enormous social change and political upheaval as well as significant changes in the British empire as it morphed to a commonwealth of nations, individual nations now sharing a commonality of origin, now a family of cooperating populations overseen by a monarch whose prime concern to reach out to all offering encouragement and as rigorous sense of security.

Queen Elizabeth born the eldest daughter of the Duke of York and as such never contemplated to be considered an heir apparent to the crown. With the abdication of her uncle Edward VIII in 1936 and the accession of her father George VI to become king, it was at about the age the about 10 her life would change as she came to terms with the reality of her future. As a young woman, at the age of 25, early in her married life, following the death of her father became our young queen. She undertook her duties, responsibilities with a dedication to serve and inspiration to all and to the age of 96

We remember and reflect upon her life of her unselfish service to all above self, her compassion to all and ever the peacemaker.

The Queen is dead Long Live the King.

Lest we forget

John K Curdie OAM sub-Branch President

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### VALE

### “WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

During the months of July 2022 - September 2022, advice has been received of the passing of the following members:

NAME	RANK	SERVICE	UNIT	SERVICE NUMBER	DATE JOINED	DATE DECEASED
Ronald William <b>MACKINTOSH</b>	FSGT	RAAF	67 SQDN	67896	19/11/1999	?/07/2022
Ronald John <b>PEEL</b>	PTE	ARMY	13 NS Trg Bn 12/16 HRL	2700382	27/02/2009	28/07/2022
John Dudley <b>COX</b>	CAPT	ARMY	1 HAA Regt	2129853	15/11/1997	10/08/2022
Ronald Herbert <b>CAMPBELL</b>	Coder	ROYAL NAVY		D/JX604933	01/11/1995	2022?
Audrey Celia <b>CAMPBELL</b>	PTE	ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS			01/11/1995	2022?
Stanley Neville <b>LEDGER</b>	LAC	RAAF	2 SD	A210060 (16200)	07/06/1994	01/08/2022
John <b>MYLO</b>	PTE	ARMY	1 RAR	28191	04/12/1990	22/08/2022

### SENIOR MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

President: Merril Prestidge      Vice President: Les Rowe      Secretary: Margaret Cummins  
 Treasurer: Deirdre Curdie      Tours Coordinator: Don and Brenda Greentree  
 Committee Members: Don Campton, Don Greentree, Brenda Greentree, Gavin Nell

Hi Everyone,

36 of us journeyed to Palm Beach RSL Club on the 13th for a most enjoyable lunch; 29 SMA members and 7 Epping Club members.

The day commenced a bit damp but turned into a lovely day, - good food and good company. This was our last outing for this year.

We will be having our Christmas luncheon in November and the sub-Branch lunch in December.

There is still plenty to keep us busy for the rest of this year.

As you are aware the committee is looking into other ventures for next year. We will keep you up to-date with these ideas.

As this is the last ROUTINE ORDERS for this year and in case I do not see some of you have a very merry Christmas.

Merril Prestidge, President

### AUSTRALIAN WAR WIDOWS N.S.W. LTD

Coordinator: Heather Gillam 9876 3588

Barbara Bell

Treasurer: Heather Gillam

Meetings: First Monday in month at 10.30 a.m.

August 1st

September 5th

**October 10th** (Note that October 3rd is Labour Day Holiday)

October 19 **War Widows Day (NSW)**

November 7th

December 6th Tuesday - Christmas Lunch

## **EPHING RSL SUB-BRANCH**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: OCTOBER 2022 -JANUARY 2023**

*All meetings subject to COVID-19 rules and restrictions*

#### **OCTOBER 2022**

Monday 03	Labour Day Public Holiday	
Tuesday 04	RSL Senior Members Association Meeting	1400
Monday 10	Australian War Widows NSW Ltd	1030
Monday 10	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930
<b>Wednesday 19</b>	<b>War Widows Day (NSW)</b>	
Tuesday 26	RSL Senior Members Association Committee Meeting	1030
<b>Monday 31</b>	<b>RSL Senior Members Association Meeting</b>	1400
	(Tuesday 01 November is Melbourne Cup Day)	
Monday 31	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930

#### **NOVEMBER 2022**

Tuesday 01	MELBOURNE CUP DAY	
Monday 07	Australian War Widows NSW Ltd	1030
Friday 11	Remembrance Day Wreath Laying Boronia Park Cenotaph	1045
	(Assemble at 1030)	
Monday 14	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930
Tuesday 15	RSL Senior Members Association Christmas Luncheon	1200
Monday 28	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930
Tuesday 29	RSL Senior Members Association Committee Meeting	1030

#### **DECEMBER 2022**

Tuesday 06	Australian War Widows NSW Ltd Christmas Lunch	1030
Tuesday 06	RSL Senior Members Association Meeting	1400
Sunday 11	Epping RSL sub-Branch Christmas Luncheon	1200
Monday 12	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930

#### **JANUARY 2023**

Monday 09	Epping RSL sub-Branch Committee Meeting	0930
Monday 30	Epping RSL sub-Branch Monthly General Meeting	1930
Tuesday 31	RSL Senior Members Association Committee Meeting	1030

## **EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH HOSPITAL/AGED CARE VISITATIONS**

Members of our hospital/aged care visiting team have performed a great service for the sub-Branch for many years by maintaining close liaison with members when they are not well, and when they have to go to hospital. Mainly though they keep up regular contact with those with more extended problems who spend time in Care Facilities etc.

### ***SUSPENSION OF VISITING DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC***

Sadly, in mid-March 2020, over two years ago, it became necessary to suspend our visiting programme due to the impact of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Pandemic on our country. Care facilities and hospitals went into lockdown. Also, importantly, we did not want to put our visiting team at any personal risk. The situation started to look much more promising late in 2021 resulting from the significant growth in double vaccinations and then in booster vaccinations, but Omicron arrived and spread so rapidly that once more we do not know when we shall be able to resume visiting. Facilities are constantly going into lockdown and when visiting is allowed it is highly restricted and by appointment only.

We are, however, constantly monitoring the situation so that we can resume our visiting program when this becomes feasible.

Robin Cummins, Welfare Officer - 9680 4865

## **NICKNAMES FOR MY COLLEAGUES IN WORK**

**Wicket keeper** - puts on gloves and stands back

**Harvey Norman** - 3 years no interest

**Sensor light** – only works if someone walks past

**Noodles** – thinks all jobs take 2 minutes

**Blister** – appears when the hard work is done

**Lantern** – not very bright and has to be carried

**Deck chair** – always folds under pressure

**Perth** – 3 hours behind everyone else

**Bushranger** – holds everyone up

**Wheelbarrow** – only works when he's pushed

**Limo** – carries about 8 people

**Cordless**- charges all night but only works for 2 hours

## ANNUAL DAY OF RECOGNITION TO HONOUR WAR WIDOWS

NSW Government Minister for Veterans Media  
Release Sunday, 21 August 2022

The NSW Government has designated 19 October as a special day for the State to officially recognise war widows and widowers of members of the Australian Defence Force for their contribution and personal sacrifice.

Premier Dominic Perrottet announced this date would be an annual day of acknowledgement for NSW War Widows who will be formerly thanked in Parliament during the inaugural event on 19 October.

Minister for Transport, Veterans and Western Sydney David Elliott joined the Premier yesterday to make the announcement at a special reception at Government House to honour Vietnam Veterans for their service.

“Establishing a special day is a small token in recognising and honouring our war widows and widowers of those who made the ultimate sacrifice by serving in the defence forces,” Mr Perrottet said.

“War Widows Day is an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution and personal sacrifice made by more than 15,000 surviving widows and widowers of servicemen and servicewomen across NSW.

Mr Elliott said War Widows Day acknowledged and honoured the resilient families in our communities who have faced enormous grief.

“The date acknowledges the birthday of Mrs Jessie Vasey OBE CBE (1897-1966), founder of the Australian War Widows Guild in 1945,” Mr Elliott said.

“Mrs Vasey, widow of Major General George Vasey who was killed en route to New Guinea during the Second World War, worked tirelessly to ensure that war widows were recognised by governments in Australia and given the financial support and services they needed.

## NO ASTRONOMICAL SURPRISE TOO BIG

By Sergeant Matthew Bickerton  
Defence News 26 August 2022

Unexpected satellites, inclement space weather and space junk were all factors Army’s first “space team” confronted during the Sprint Advanced Concept Training exercise in Adelaide from August 1-5.

Corporal Jackson Smart, from 1st Signal Regiment, took part in the military-led exercise, which comprised simulated and real-world scenarios.

“As well as the simulated exercise, Russia launched a satellite during the exercise, in real time,” Corporal Smart said.

“We were able to plot the trajectory of the Russian launch using commercial sensors and quickly identify its initial orbit.”

The data came from a civilian agency that scours social media looking for signs of upcoming launches around the world – which is how the Army team discovered the Russian rocket launch.

The training focused on resources to help Defence understand the space domain and how activities there can affect operations below.

“In Army, we rely heavily on GPS and satellite communications, so it’s important we’re aware of the potential threats that could stop us from using those technologies,” Corporal Smart said.

Corporal Smart said space debris posed a risk to active satellites and some space-faring nations were developing capabilities to target satellites.

“It’s not just threat actors we need to consider, but space weather,” Corporal Smart said.

“Solar flares can erupt from the sun along with coronal mass ejections, which can also affect satellites.”

Army provided three network engineers who had previously completed the Defence Space Overview Course to work as orbital analysts during the exercise.

Before the exercise, the Army team spent a week training in orbital mechanics to understand space domain situational awareness.

Defence Space Command participated, along with Australian industry and academic partners to enhance cooperation.

Commander Defence Space Command Air Vice Marshal Cath Roberts has set the development of Australian Defence Force joint space professionals as a workforce priority and supported Army’s participation in meeting this goal.

She said it was an opportunity for triservice personnel to collaborate with leading space operators from the Defence and commercial sectors.

“Not only does this enhance domestic space expertise, but it increases the understanding of the criticality of space across the joint force, and supercharges collaborations with allies,” Air Vice Marshal Roberts said.

## UNIVERSAL LAWS OF LIFE

Law of Mechanical Repair -After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to pee.

Law of Gravity - Any tool, nut, bolt, screw - when dropped - will roll to the least accessible place in the workshop.

Law of Probability - The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of the act.

Law of Random Numbers - If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal - and someone always answers.

Variation Law - If you change traffic lanes or airport queues, the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.

Law of the Bath - When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone rings.

Law of Close Encounters - The probability of meeting someone you know INCREASES dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

Law of the Result -When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work IT WILL!!!

Law of Biomechanics - The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

The Coffee Law - As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

Murphy's Law of Lockers - If there are only 2 people in a locker room they will have adjacent lockers.

Law of Physical Surfaces - The chances of an open-faced jam sandwich landing face down on a floor are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet.

Law of Logical Argument - Anything is possible IF you don't know what you are talking about.

Brown's Law of Physical Appearance - If the clothes fit, they're ugly.

Wilson's Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy- As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it.

Doctors' Law - If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor & by the time you get there you'll feel better. But don't make an appointment and you'll stay sick.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

In 1997, Governor-General Sir William Deane issued a proclamation formally declaring 11 November to be Remembrance Day, urging all Australians to observe one minute silence at 11.00am on 11 November each year, to remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

### What is the origin of Remembrance Day?

11 November is universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the First World War. This conflict had mobilised over 70 million people and left between nine and 13 million dead and as many as one third of these with no grave.

At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare. The allied armies had driven the German invaders back, having inflicted heavy defeats upon them over the preceding four months.

In November, the Germans called for an armistice (suspension of fighting) in order to secure a peace settlement. They accepted the allied terms of unconditional surrender. The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month attained a special significance in the post-war years and became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war.

The allied nations chose this day and time for the commemoration of their war dead. Originally, it was known as Armistice Day.

After World War Two, the Australian Government agreed to the United Kingdom's proposal that Armistice Day be renamed Remembrance Day to commemorate those who were killed in both World Wars. Today the loss of Australian lives from all wars and conflicts is commemorated on Remembrance Day.

**ROUTINE ORDERS** is issued 5 times per year, in January, April, June, August and October.

Contributions for inclusion in **ROUTINE ORDERS**, such as forward activities, interesting personal notes etc. are always welcome. Items for the next issue von Monday 30 January 2023 are required before Wednesday 18 January 2023. Earlier would be appreciated. Electronic copy preferred if possible. *Routine Orders* editor Barry Hoschke bhoschke@tpg.com.au.

## SUPPORTING MARITIME TRADE DURING EXERCISE KAKADU

By Lieutenant George Cross  
Defence News 23 September 2022

Ninety-eight per cent of Australia's physical trade travels by sea and transits through Navy's maritime ports. Its value is estimated at \$1.2 billion dollars per day. So when 15 warships and nearly 3000 people from more than 20 nations descended on Australia's 'gateway to Asia', ensuring Darwin port's commercial shipping operations were unaffected by Defence activities took on a whole new significance.

During Exercise Kakadu 2022, this important task fell to a small, integrated team of Australian and New Zealand maritime trade operations officers with experience in the commercial marine sector. Navy maritime trade operations officers fulfil an essential role, liaising between civilian port authorities, merchant vessels and navy operators. During Exercise Kakadu, their expert advice, trade networks and merchant shipping industry knowledge proved invaluable.

Maritime Trade Operations Officer Lieutenant Roderick Thiele, who joined the Royal Australian Navy as a reservist in 2019, said the exercise offered a unique opportunity to work with regional counterparts.

"It's really great to have two Royal New Zealand Navy maritime trade operations officers join us for Exercise Kakadu this year," Lieutenant Thiele said.

"We're working as a fully-integrated team for the exercise with a presence at the Darwin Port, the Navy's Harbour Support Coordination Centre and Maritime Operations.

"We work from the same doctrine so there are many similarities in how we do things, but there have also been plenty of opportunities to learn from one another."

During the exercise's harbour phase, these officers were busy briefing maritime warfare officers about the commercial traffic they should expect in the vicinity of the exercise areas and in liaising with industry stakeholders ashore.

Once the sea phase started, the maritime trade officer's work increased and became even more vital as ship movements in the vicinity of commercial maritime activities became more dynamic.

"We've expected this and we're ready for it," Lieutenant Thiele said.

"There is no better opportunity for us to apply our experience and training in real-world situations than during an exercise like Kakadu. We're very excited."

Exercise Kakadu is the Royal Australian Navy's premier international-engagement activity, the largest maritime exercise conducted in the Northern Australia Exercise Area off Darwin and is one of the ADF's largest multinational exercises. It is conducted with support from the Royal Australian Air Force.

"The exercise theme of 'partnership, leadership and friendship' has been in full display at the Darwin Port as the Australian and New Zealand maritime trade operations officers work together to ensure the safe and free movement of merchant vessels around the exercise area," Lieutenant Thiele said.

The Royal Australian Navy is seeking applications from suitably qualified commercial maritime sector professionals willing to provide this important liaison between the ADF and the commercial maritime and shipping industries.

Applicants looking to be part of this reserve-only capability and support the protection of maritime trade by facilitating better mutual understanding must have qualifications or experience as a seagoing commercial mariner, in a shore or port-based maritime role or with a maritime industry regulator.

For more information about how you can serve Australia as a maritime trade operations Navy Reserve officer, visit [www.defencejobs.gov.au](http://www.defencejobs.gov.au)

## **Australian's have been involved in more conflicts as peacekeepers than as belligerents...!!**

**Australian military involvement in peacekeeping** operations has been diverse, and has had peacekeepers in the field continuously for 60 years – the first occasion being in Indonesia in 1947, when Australians were among the first group of UN military observers during the *Indonesian National Revolution* which ended in 1951.

Between 1950 and 1989, Australia's commitments had generally been limited, consisting of small numbers of high-level and technical support troops (signals, engineers, or medical units) or observers and police, however, the pattern changed with the sizeable deployment of 600 engineers to Namibia in 1989–90 as the Australian contribution to UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group)

From the mid-1990s, Australia has been involved in a series of high-profile operations, deploying significantly large units of combat troops in support of a number of missions including those in Cambodia, Rwanda, Somalia and later in East Timor. These deployments have consisted of sizeable numbers of combat troops.

Between 1994 and 2003, military observers were sent to Bougainville as part of a peace monitoring mission, firstly as the *South Pacific Peacekeeping Force*. In 1999, Australia's involvement in peacekeeping reached a new level when it took the lead in deploying a force that peaked at around 6,000 personnel, to East Timor during that country's emergence as an independent nation, before handing over to a UN-led mission in 2000.

And again, between 2003 and 2013, a total of 7,270 Australian personnel rotated through the Solomon Islands as part of *Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands*. In addition, smaller scale commitments were made to missions in Africa, including to places like Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Darfur.

Australia has been involved in close to 100 separate missions, involving more than 30,000 personnel and 10 Australians have died during these operations.

The selection of an Australian to lead UN Forces is testimony to the high regard in which our contribution is held by the international community.

- Maj Gen David Ferguson was Force Commander of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai from 1994 to 1997
- Richard Butler led the UN Special Commission in Iraq from 1997 to 1999
- Maj Gen Timothy Ford was Chief of Staff of UN Truce Supervision Organisation from 1998 to 2000
- Maj Gen Peter Cosgrove commanded the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) 1999 to 2000
- Maj Gen Ian Gordon was Chief of Staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation from 2006 to 2008
- Maj Gen Simon Stuart was Force Commander of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai from 2017 to 2019.
- Maj Gen Cheryl Pearce was Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping force in Cyprus 2019/2021

**Police** also have been involved in Peacekeeping with a contingent of Australian Police involved in Cyprus since 1964. Here, there is no sign of an end to the conflict between its Greek and Turkish communities, but the Police help minimise its effects and build bridges between them both. Police have also served in Cambodia, Bougainville, Mozambique, Haiti and Timor.

*The Runaway Bay RSL Sub-Branch Inc. Newsletter September 2022*

## 80th anniversary of Australian Women's Land Army

Department of Veterans' Affairs Newsroom 27 July 2022

The Australian Women's Land Army (AWLA) was formed during the Second World War to combat rising labour shortages in the farming sector. From December 1941, when Japan entered the war, the nation's need to build up its armed forces was placed above the needs of other industries, which resulted in agricultural labour being steadily diverted to the armed services and to vital war industries.

To meet the shortfall in rural labour, state governments and private women's land organisations were organised, modelled on those established in Great Britain. A national body was formed on 27 July 1942. While policy was devised by the federal government, the organisation of the AWLA remained state-based. An extensive recruiting campaign was undertaken for new members. Most members of the existing land armies were later incorporated into the AWLA as well.

The AWLA functioned in two divisions:

**Full-time members:** These women enrolled for continuous service for 12 months (with the option of renewal). They received badges, distinctive dress uniform, working clothes, and equipment.

**Auxiliary members:** These women were available for periods of at least four weeks at nominated times of the year. They worked on seasonal rural operations, and received a badge, working clothes, and essential equipment on loan for these times.

Recruits had to be between 18 and 50 years of age and be British subjects or immigrants from Allied nations. Women on the land who were already farmers, employees or relatives of landholders were not eligible to enlist. AWLA women were generally drawn from city areas and were often unskilled in rural work. This new form of labour had to be heavily promoted to rural employers, who were initially resistant to using female labour. But such attitudes generally changed over time, and farmers came to praise and respect the women and the work they did.

Enrolment numbers peaked in December 1943, with 2,382 permanent members, and 1,039 auxiliary members. The average working week for an AWLA member was 48 hours, with pay

starting at the AWLA minimum wage of 30 shillings a week. Permanent members were also entitled to sick pay. Women were paid much less than their male counterparts for the same work, which covered diverse roles such as vegetable and fruit growing, pig and poultry raising, and sheep and wool work.

They were also involved in the production of flax, which was one of the most important products during the war. It was used for all sorts of clothing and equipment from coats to parachute harnesses, ropes to tarpaulins and even to cover gliders used to transport troops.

In January 1943, Cabinet endorsed the status of both divisions of the AWLA as an official 'fourth service', after the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service, the Australian Women's Army Service and the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. The organisation was to be formally constituted under the National Security Regulations, however, a final draft of these regulations was not completed until 1945, and was not acted upon before the end of the war and the demobilisation of the AWLA. As a result, members of the AWLA were not accorded the same benefits as members of the other women's services.

The AWLA was disbanded on 31 December 1945. In 1997, many former members of the AWLA became eligible for the Civilian Service Medal, following on from a 1994 Committee of Enquiry recommendation.

Chris Boron's mother Olga served with the AWLA from 1942 when she turned 16. Olga passed away in 2012, but Chris is keen to see the service of AWLA women better known and fully recognised. He points out that it was not always an easy life.

'Living in rural huts and tents (no facilities) in all weather conditions and eating whatever vegetables and fruits that were being harvested, would have been a challenge then and now, for city girls!' he says.

Based on an article prepared by the Australian War Memorial

Further information:

How can I trace Australian Women's Land Army records? | National Library of Australia (nla.gov.au)

Women's land army played an important role during World War II – Anzac Portal (dva.gov.au)

Women's Land Army video – Anzac Portal (dva.gov.au)

## **DVA claims processing among urgent recommendations in Royal Commission interim report**

11 August 2022

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has made 13 urgent recommendations in its interim report, which was handed to the Governor-General, David Hurley, and tabled in Parliament in Canberra today.

The Commission Chair Nick Kaldas said suicide in the veteran community was a national tragedy that required immediate action.

“We acknowledge every serving and ex-serving member who has died by suicide – each life lived and each life left behind,” Commissioner Kaldas said. “We also recognise those serving or former ADF members who have experienced suicidality.”

Key recommendations include:

Clearing the backlog of Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) claims

Simplifying and harmonising complex and confusing veteran compensation and rehabilitation laws

Increasing legal protections for serving and ex-serving ADF members to engage with the Royal Commission

The exemption of the Royal Commission from parliamentary privilege, to make it easier for the inquiry to hold Defence and DVA to account

For Defence and DVA to improve access for serving and ex-serving members (and their families) to their service information, including medical records

### **Claims backlog**

Commissioner Kaldas said one of the most pressing issues was the unacceptable backlog of DVA claims – almost 42,000, as at the end of May this year – that were still awaiting processing.

“We know that the long wait to receive entitlements can have a terrible effect on veterans’ mental health and in some cases leads to suicide and suicidality,” he said.

“Behind each claim is a veteran who needs support, and it is gravely important that this assistance is provided as quickly as possible – lives and livelihoods depend on it.”

The Commission has recommended DVA be given until 31 March 2024 to eliminate the backlog of claims and that the Australian Government provide the necessary resources to ensure this occurs.

### **Accountability – permanent body**

The Australian Government has formally responded to fewer than half of the 57 previous inquiries or reports submitted to it in relation to matters that relate to Defence and veteran suicide.

The Commission is considering what should follow this Royal Commission, including the need for a permanent body to report on the progress and quality of the implementation of recommendations from this Royal Commission and previous inquiries.

Further work – including public consultation – will be carried out in 2023 so that such a body can be in place by mid-2024 when this Royal Commission delivers its final report and recommendations.

### **Broader issues**

Other areas of focus for the remainder of the inquiry include suicide prevention and wellbeing, the role and support of families, ADF culture and transition to civilian life.

Separate issues not detailed in this interim report may be included in any special reports or recommendations produced before the Commission concludes in 2024.

### **Supporting veterans**

Commission Chair Nick Kaldas said the welfare of current and former serving members – and the memory of those who had died by suicide – is foremost in Commissioners’ minds.

“We will continue to listen, consult and learn. We want to ensure this Royal Commission’s legacy is a vast improvement in the welfare of serving and ex-serving members of the ADF and their families,” Commissioner Kaldas said.

The Royal Commission will continue to review each submission received and consider the evidence and information gathered from hearings, roundtables, private sessions, internal and commissioned research.

“We want all current and former Defence personnel to go on to live long, happy and meaningful lives,” Commissioner Kaldas said.

The Commission was established in July 2021 to help reduce the devastating toll of suicide among current and former members of the ADF.

When does a joke become a dad joke?

When it becomes apparent.

What Australian animal can jump higher than the Sydney Harbour Bridge?

All of them – because bridges can’t jump.

## **Demons Rising – Living with PTSD**

Andy Brayshaw

Demons Rising - Living with PTSD is one of four books I am currently penning that documents my 43 years of military service in both the British and Australian Army as a Combat Medic.

I joined the British Army straight from school as a 16-year-old schoolboy. One of the main reasons for this was to get away from an abusive stepfather who took great pleasure in beating the crap out of us kids after a drinking session at the local pub. This was almost a weekly ritual which went on for three days over the weekend and there seemed to be no reprieve.

During my time in the military, I have been involved in numerous armed conflicts including the Falklands War, First Gulf War, Croatia, and Bosnia to name but a few. During this time, I have lost numerous friends and colleagues who have been either killed or wounded in action, killed, or injured because of terrorist attacks or have succumbed to the demons of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Over the years there have been many names associated with PTSD. I was first diagnosed with PTSD in 1983 after seeing action in the Falklands War. Back then however it was not called PTSD but Adjustment Reaction Disorder. In the 90s whilst serving 22 Field Hospital Group during the First Gulf War and later in 1992 – 1993 as part of the United Nations Protection Force in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia it was commonly known as 'Battle Shock'. PTSD has also been linked to 'Combat Stress Reaction' (CSR), also known as 'Combat Fatigue'. CSR, however, is an acute behavioural disorganisation normally seen by medical staff in military personnel as a direct result of the trauma of war which decreases the combatant's fighting efficiency. The main symptoms of CSR are fatigue, slower reaction times, indecision, disconnection from one's surroundings and inability to prioritise. However, CSR is generally of short-term duration and should not be confused with PTSD, although it can sometimes be a precursor to PTSD.

PTSD is a set of reactions that develop over a period in people who have experienced or witnessed an event which threatened their life or

safety, or that of others around them. It leads to feelings of intense fear, helplessness, or horror for the victim. PTSD can affect anyone following a traumatic event. People are at greater risk if the event involved physical or sexual assault, they have had repeated traumatic experiences such as sexual abuse, living in a war zone or have suffered from PTSD in the past.

There have been episodes of PTSD in one form, or another documented as far back as the early Greeks. However, it became more prominent around the time of the First and Second World Wars. Although back then it was known as Shell Shock

The effects of combat on soldiers back then were still very much a taboo that was not talked about. In the First World War many soldiers who were suffering from the effects of shell shock were categorised as cowards who had run away from the battle. The punishment for which usually ended up with them facing the firing squad.

For soldiers there has always been a stigma associated with PTSD resulting in them not coming forward for help. Most soldiers are reluctant to seek help through official channels for fear of being seen as weak, not fit to be a soldier, or the knowledge that if the soldier has a problem the Army wants rid of them. I have personally felt this attitude from senior commanders during my military career. As a result of this stigma, they will try to hide the torment that their minds are in or worse still turn to alcohol, drugs, or promiscuous activities to help blot out their experiences. These avenues however never work and almost always lead to the suffers either having a run in with the law, ending up in prison, living rough on the streets or even worse taking their own lives. This is abundantly clear from the statistics that have been gathered in the UK from veterans that have seen active service in the Falklands War, Northern Ireland, Bosnia the Gulf War and more recently Afghanistan. In the Falklands War 264 military personnel lost their lives through combat since then more than 350 have taken their own lives including several my close friends, two of which took their lives last year.

Although the Ministry of Defence may dispute the figures or even deny that these deaths are attributed to the Falklands War, the bottom line is that these veterans could no longer live with the

horrors and memories of what had taken place on those barren islands in the South Atlantic. They had been tormented by the demons that they all had lived with for so many years and the only avenue they had open to them to ease the burden that they felt they were putting on their families was to take their own lives. The means that these final acts of redemption took ranged far and wide from hanging, shooting and carbon monoxide poisoning to jumping from bridges, walking in front of a train, or driving their car head on into an oncoming truck.

Even though there has been much progress in how the military diagnose and treat soldiers suffering from PTSD the stigma associated with it remains.

The Falklands War was not my first exposure to trauma. As a young boy I had been exposed to various forms of trauma from my parents splitting up when I was 3, being physically and mentally abused by my stepfather over many years and witnessing my best friend at the age of 6 being killed by a coal truck on our way home from school.

The truck was delivering the monthly coal supply to the local housing estate when the trucks breaks failed going down a hill causing the driver to lose control. There was a group of us kids on our way home from school and we had just finished crossing the road when we heard screeching brakes. The driver was banging frantically on his horn. We all turned to see the truck heading straight towards us and we all scrambled out of the way falling into a small stream. As I climbed out of the stream all I could hear was my friend's sister screaming hysterically.

My friend never stood a chance as he received a direct hit from the truck causing him to be dragged underneath the wheels. The only good news was that he was killed instantly and would never have felt a thing. Half of his body was lying out from under the front wheels surrounded by an ever-increasing pool of blood. I will never forget the sound of his sister's screams as she saw his motionless body under the front wheel of the truck. This image would come back to haunt me many times during my military career along with others that accumulated over the years. These images are what I refer to as the 'Demons Rising'.

## Helping veterans stay healthy at home

Department of Veterans' Affairs Newsroom 27 July 2022

The Government has today committed to ensuring veterans and veteran families have the services they deserve, committing an additional \$70.6 million in funding over four years to increase Veterans' Home Care fees for domestic assistance and personal care services.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh said this funding will help to ensure important domestic assistance and personal care support through the Veterans' Home Care program is delivered to the veteran community.

"The Veterans' Home Care program provides veterans and their families with assistance in their homes, to help them stay safe and independent for longer," Minister Keogh said.

"This commitment will benefit providers of Veterans' Home Care Services, and importantly it will benefit some 37,000 veterans, war widows and widowers who receive services delivered through the Veterans' Home Care program.

"The Department of Veterans' Affairs delivers a system that empowers veterans and their families to improve their health and wellbeing; to stay well, age well and engage fully in social and economic life.

"Investment in tailored programs to support wellness and connection to community will deliver better health outcomes for our veteran community.

"The Albanese Labor Government is committed to undertaking a series of practical measures to ensure older Australians and Australians with disability have access to the care they need and deserve at home.

"Supporting veterans to stay in their homes goes hand in hand with that."

The Veterans' Home Care funding will continue until 30 June 2026. For more information on the program visit [dva.gov.au](http://dva.gov.au).

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Did you hear about the runner who was criticized? He just took it in stride.

## The Epping RSL Youth Club: A history



The recent closure of the Epping RSL Youth Club in August 2022 is the conclusion to a long history of involvement of the youth of the Epping District.

Such history dates to the young families of the returning veterans from WW1 who set up their small “club” in Epping about 1919 (later to become a sub-Branch of the NSW Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia).

The veterans of the Epping District, like all the other groups of veterans that were now forming in villages, towns and cities across Australia, as they re-established their lives to Australia in peace time, their families grew. With such a swell of numbers of youthful Australian so there emerged a need to focus the enthusiasm of youth into ways of bettering their personal and physical attributes.

Such a need for programs specifically for the youth did not escape the leaders of the now emerging League of servicemen’s Clubs. It was in 1919, the then NSW State administration of the emerging League of Veterans Clubs (Now the RSL), a motion prepared for the annual meeting and attributed to Colonel Tinkler , that they should explore the possibility to form a club for the youth of the veterans and their district . It was envisaged that the benefit of such a program would act to oppose the juvenile delinquency that was evident in the society in those days.

The objective of this group was to explore the possibility of setting up a boy’s club within the Constitution of the RSL with its objective to create recreation sporting instructions and competitions and which could inculcate law abiding habits, good citizenship, and leadership.

Its membership would not be restricted to the families of the veterans but to the youth of the local district such a grouping being available to those between the ages of 7 to 25 years.

Thus, each sub-Branch took on such encouragement of the youth associated within their district. The Epping group (sub-Branch) structured and supported the youth by establishing groups in which enthusiast could expand their skills and leadership

These arrangements continued ad hoc basis associated working in conjunction with its local sub-Branch as each sub-Branch having its own separate groups of youths in many disciplines of sport and athletics with this arrangement continuing well into the 1950’s. It was in March 1958, at a state congress, that a motion was passed to set up *RSL Youth Council*.

This Council would, by way of new By-Laws under the RSL constitution, now correlate activities of the Youth Groups that were attached to many sub-Branches. It followed that at about this time the Epping RSL Youth Club was formed. This newly founded club would have a formal structure under the provisions of the By Laws of the RSL Constitution and become active with the Youth Clubs from other sub-Branches.

From this arrangement there would evolve inter sub-Branch and Inter District and later interstate competition between the many RSL Youth Clubs.

From the earlier records of our sub-Branch the Epping RSL Youth Club offering a great number of youths of our district, sessions in training and competition in Girls Basket Ball, Girls Gymnasium, Boys Gymnasium, Judo Classes for girls and boys, weight lifting Cricket , swimming. Many of these classes were in the evening with most being held at the Epping School of Arts Building in Oxford Street. The swimming classes were usually held on Sunday Morning at the Dense Park pool from 8 to 9.30 o’clock.

The Olympic size Swimming Pool in, Dense Park Epping is a community based pool which was funded by way of a special levy of an additional farthing on the rates of the properties in the local area. This pool is also special to the Epping Community in that it was dedicated at its opening in 1960, as a war memorial in remembrance of the many service personnel from the Epping District.



*Brass plaque unveiled at the commissioning of the Memorial Pool in 1960*



*War Memorial Swimming Pool  
Dense Park Epping*

The Epping RSL Youth Club continued to grow as it served the youth of Epping district and the Epping RSL sub-Branch continued to provide support for the many activities within the Youth Club.

As the years rolled on it was inevitable that as the social structure and community needs along with family structure of suburbia responded to the modernity of Australia such that the original operation of the Youth Club was to change.

As the demographics of the district changed, affluence of the population was now on the rise and with the household structure evolving to the social structure of the day, Epping embraced the attractiveness that new sporting groups would offer. As specialised sporting clubs and associations formed many of the youth of the district were attracted to other venues which caused some of the activities within the Youth Club closed down..

By early in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the Epping RSL Youth Club had diminished to become a Swimming Group and Classes for the Martial Arts.

So, as the Youth Club was no longer operating to provide the facilities that were in its original charter, the Sub-Branch resolved that the Epping RSL Youth Club would close as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2022.

This decision would set in place a finality to a Sub-Branch and Community activity that had served our local community for some 70 years since 1950's and with it would close a book on the involvement of so many of our veterans and their families and the many trainers and umpires that supported the variety of sports that were such an important part of the life in early Epping.

John Curdie OAM

## EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH DIRECTORY 2022

<b>SUB-BRANCH COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Sub-Branch Office</b>	<b>9868 3272</b>
	subbranch@eppingsubbranch.com	
	<b>President</b>	John Curdie
	<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Brian Swan
		David Taylor
	<b>Secretary</b>	John Prestidge
	<b>Treasurer</b>	Les Rowe
	<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Robin Cummins
	<b>Pensions Officer</b>	Barry Hoschke
	<b>Membership Co-Ord.</b>	Alan Sullivan
	<b>Ceremonial</b>	Brian Swan
	<b>Memorabilia</b>	Allan Lotfizadeh
	<b>Youth Club Liaison</b>	John Prestidge
	<b>Trustees</b>	John Goddard
Andrew Brayshaw		
Robin Cummins		
<b>Routine Orders Editor</b>	Barry Hoschke	
<b>SENIOR MEMBERS ASSN.</b>	<b>President</b>	Merril Prestidge
	<b>Vice President</b>	Les Rowe
	<b>Secretary</b>	Margaret
		Cummins
	<b>Treasurer</b>	Deirdre Curdie
	<b>Tours Coordinators</b>	Don and Brenda
		Greentree
	<b>Committee</b>	Don Campton
Brenda Greentree		
Don Greentree		
Gavin Nell		

### ADVANCE NOTICE EPPING RSL SUB-BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER 2022

Great entertainment promised: The Magic of Christmas, with Australian leading soprano Jessica Di Bartoli and multi-instrumentalist award winner Joey Fimmano.....

The classics of Christmas, Musical Theatre and Opera!

