



110 YEARS ON ...

We still remember them

On 25 April 1915 Australian soldiers landed at what is now called Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

For the vast majority of the 16,000 Australians and New Zealanders who landed on that day, it was their first experience of combat. By that evening, 2000 of them had been killed or wounded.

The Gallipoli campaign was a military failure. However, the traits that were shown there – bravery, ingenuity, endurance and mateship – have become enshrined as defining aspects of the Australian character.

The British had been trying to force their way through the narrow straits known as the Dardanelles to capture Constantinople and so relieve pressure on their Russian allies engaged with Ottoman forces in the Caucasus.

Minefields and on-shore artillery batteries thwarted the early naval attempts to seize the strait and it was decided that troops would have to be landed on the peninsula to overcome Turkish defences.

British and French forces landed at Cape Helles on the southern tip of the peninsula. Meanwhile, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), which included the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Australian Brigades along with the 1st New Zealand Brigade as well as artillery units from the British Indian Army, landed on the west coast in a series of waves.

- continued page 6.



HELPING a stricken mate at Gallipoli.– photo from Imperial War Museum.

'It lay in the mettle of the men themselves. To be the sort of man who would give way when his mates were trusting to his firmness ... to live the rest of his life haunted by the knowledge that he had set his hand to a soldier's task and had lacked the grit to carry it through - that was the prospect these men could not face. Life was very dear, but life was not worth living unless they could be true to their idea of Australian manhood.' – War correspondent Charles Bean on Gallipoli.



OUR MISSION:

To assist ALL veterans and their dependents in all matters relating to their health, welfare and well-being.

Our website: www.vietnamvetssc.org.au

Email: secretaryvvaasc@gmail.com Editor: ricocheteditor@gmail.com

General information Page 2 INCLUDING LATEST OFFICE NEWS

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PATRON: Laurie Drinkwater (pictured)

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UPDATE: NEWS ON DROP-IN-CENTRE

Located at the rear of the Library Complex Administration Building (upstairs) , Cnr Sixth Avenue and Beach Parade, Cotton Tree.

Phone 54794552 E-mail: secretaryvvaasc@gmail.com

OPENING HOURS: *Currently the office at the Drop-In Centre is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday ONLY (except for Public Holidays) from 0900 to 1200 (9am – noon).*

MEETINGS: *Third Tuesday of the month: Comm Meeting, General Meeting — times, check office for details.*

ACCESS: *Due to privacy and security issues, entry is no longer available via the back door, but only through the front door. However, if you need to use the lift in the main library building, you have to advise the office on phone 54794552 to arrange office entry.*

POSH MEETINGS: *Partners Offering Support and Hope meet Friday 1- 4pm in the meeting room beside the Drop in Centre. Coffee/tea/chat.*

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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This service provides counselling and support to all veterans of overseas conflicts. The families of Vietnam Veterans are also able to receive counselling through us. Group programmes include the Lifestyle Management Program (5 days live-in with partner) and the Heart Safe Program (12 month gym). Other therapeutic/educational groups are being planned for the Sunshine Coast.

DISCLAIMER: The committee of Vietnam Veteran Association of Australia Sunshine Coast Sub-Branch Inc. and its individual members take no responsibility for errors, omissions or inaccuracies in this newsletter, nor accept liability for any loss or damage suffered directly or indirectly from the use of information contained in this newsletter, and do not warrant that opinions published in this newsletter are necessarily the opinions held by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, this Sub-branch or the Sub-branch Committee, including individual members.

OUR MISSION: To assist all veterans and their dependents in all matters relating to their health, welfare and well-being.

OUR SUPPORTER THAI DANG PUBLISHES MEMOIR

Sub-Branch members are aware of the support given to the VVAASC over many years by Thai and Diamond Dang.

Their support of veterans has incorporated a number of diverse Associations and individuals such as the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit and the RAAF's School of Radio.

They are also well known for their philanthropy in relation to the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the Sunshine Coast Hospital.

Thai has now published his memoir. It details his early life in Vietnam, relationships with Australian troops, perilous escape by boat, time in a refugee camp and his eventual repatriation to the USA.

Despite qualifying as a successful plastics engineer in the US, he devoted his life to helping others especially the less fortunate such as the homeless and the aged. He and Diamond were great supporters of US Vietnam veterans, the children of Vietnam veterans and UNACEF.

Since moving to Australia in 2016, the couple continued to support Vietnam veterans. In 2018,

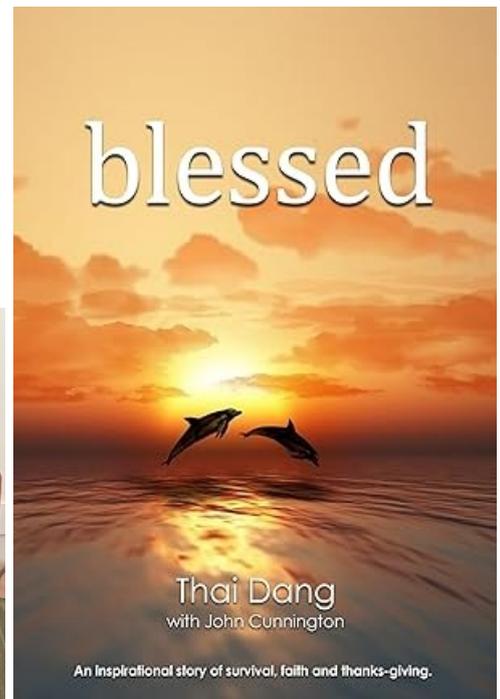
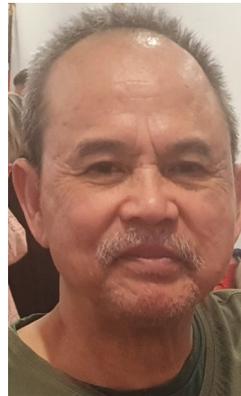
After Thai suffered a debilitating and almost fatal illness, they continued to give, and in 2022 were presented with the Queensland Emerging Philanthropist Run-

ners-Up Award by the Governor of Queensland.

All the above represents just a fraction of Thai's inspirational story.

Thai Dang's memoir, *blessed*, is available from Amazon, and also available on Kindle, from <https://www.amazon.com.au/Blessed-story-survival-faith-thanks-giving/dp/B0D8HYV4CF>

THAI Dang at Vietnam Veterans Day 2022 (below) and his book cover.— Story John Cunnington.



Cotton Tree Cenotaph has been a place of reverence for the Maroochydore community since 1986.

Located along a serene waterfront esplanade, the memorial and its surrounding gardens are proudly maintained by a team of volunteers from Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch.

Part of the team which oversaw these important works is Sub Branch President and RAAF veteran Peter Tsakissiris.

"The veteran community at Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch is vibrant and supportive," Peter said.

"As of November 2024, we have 834 members, nine life members and 45 volunteers who help provide a great service to all veterans in our community and foster camaraderie, mateship and resilience.

"Our dedicated team, in close partnership with the Sunshine Coast Council, works diligently to maintain the Cotton Tree Cenotaph area, ensuring it remains in excellent condition despite the wear from the harsh Australian elements.

Cotton Tree Cenotaph has received a few upgrades in its lifetime, including a refurbishment completed in 2006 and the installation of an eternal flame in 2018. More recently, the community identified a crucial need to honour

Younger veterans included on Cotton Tree Cenotaph

younger veterans at the site, motivating officials from Maroochydore RSL Sub Branch and Sunshine Coast Council to set works in motion.

"The cenotaph is a place where we recognise the service of all Defence personnel, and it was important to have it reflect the enormous contribution to our national security in conflicts and operations post-Vietnam," Peter said.

"It was also important for the upgraded site to bridge generational gaps and create a shared space of remembrance and unity for veterans of all ages."

Two key changes were made to honour those who have served in more recent conflicts and operations. First, the existing plaque was upgraded to mention conflicts in Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Second, a new plaque was created to acknowledge those who served in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations in Somalia, Bougainville, East Timor, Cambodia, Sinai and Rwanda.—from **Queensland RSL News**

From the President

Hi Everyone,

Hope you are all safe and healthy. Well March has been and gone, another month down the tube. As you would be aware, we have given up providing volunteers to attend the Mooloolaba Tri as 'Road Marshals' and by the look of this weather, just as well.

The committee decided that we are no longer as firm and resourceful as in our younger days with a large majority of our members being unable to stand for longer periods of time. To add to the issue, the fact that participants are often standing on either the side of, or directly upon the roadway, it is difficult, and more difficult as each year passes, to find toilet facilities. So, no more Mooloolaba Tri volunteering.

Speaking of volunteering, we are looking for a few people to man a stall at Spotlight, Maroochydore, on 22, 23 and 24 April this year selling Anzac Day badges. It's not a hard job, and you will be 'sitting down'. The more we can get the easier it will be for the other volunteers as we can reduce their hours at the stall.

With John Cunnington and John Huxham, (some refer to us as Larry, Shep and Moe) I attended the Caloundra Air Museum. We had a container down there that the museum wanted moved in order to gain more space for their exhibits. By the look of the thing, it appears to have been there for about 100 years. It was so rusty, smelly damp and corroded that when we opened it, it was like opening a tomb in Egypt.

The thing was full of junk. Old tables; chairs; Eskys; filing cabinets; books and documents dating back to the 90s. There was not one item that wasn't covered in mildew and all documents were water-damaged. In

short it was a lousy day and I really want to thank the two Johns for their assistance on the day.

Finally, when returning from the Council tip, John Cunnington noticed that someone/thing had collided with the side of his motor vehicle, which had been parked and unattended on the side of the roadway beside the museum. So a double bad day for JC.

We are still considering our invitation to take up office at the Maroochy RSL Hub. A few things have transpired over the past couple of weeks and I will discuss options with our committee at the next committee meeting.

There are no great issues with the proposed move, and if we do take up the offer, it will still be some considerable time before we can arrange between ourselves when the move would take place, together with other administrative matters that will need to be addressed.

In the interim, we are gearing up in preparation for Vietnam Veteran's Day in August. Our Secretary is madly filling our various forms and other necessary documents required by Council and other State bodies in order for the day to proceed, and I might say is doing a most tenacious job of the whole thing.

Well, that is about it from me for the month. As I have said many times before, if you have any ideas, thoughts or suggestions on how we can improve our association, please make contact.

In the meantime, please take care of yourselves, stay happy, healthy and as strong as possible.

**Best Regards,
Mick Howe, President.**



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From the Secretary

Hi All,

Over the past decades, the Sub-Branch has been storing old records and a variety of “stuff” in a storage container at the Caloundra airfield. The container has deteriorated over time, water has leaked in and you can imagine the condition of our “stuff”.

Up until this year, there has been little investigation of the contents of the container for around five years. It was always a task getting behind the BBQ trailer which has since been donated to 223 Squadron Air Force Cadets.

Late last year, a representative of the Caloundra Air Museum politely asked if we could clear the container as the area it was on was needed for other purposes. All that was required by the Sub-Branch was to organize a work party to clear out the “stuff”. The air museum would then arrange disposal of the container at no cost.

On Tuesday, 25 March, an intrepid work party of three ventured into the container’s abyss. I can report that anything partly readable had been water-damaged. Needless to say, the majority of the “stuff” was transported to the Caloundra Re-cycling Centre.

On another note, Mick Gay, our membership officer is planning to do Anzac Day memorabilia sales at Spot-

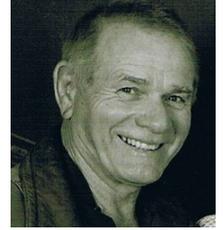
light on 22-24 April.

If anyone has some spare time to assist on the stall, please leave a message for Mick at the Drop-In Centre or email secretaryvvaasc@gmail.com and I will pass on the details.

That’s it from me.

Regards

John Cunningham



LEFT: Mick Howe and John Huxham struggle to work out how the ratchet straps work. (clandestine photography by yours truly)



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AVENUE DENTAL

• from Page 1

However, in the early morning darkness it is possible that they were beached one kilometre or so north of their planned objective in an area of steep, rugged terrain.

Once on the beach, many units became separated from one another as they began moving up the tangle of complex spurs and ravines in the darkness. Turkish resistance remained strong, and the Anzacs were subjected to devastating artillery bombardments.

By mid-morning Turkish reinforcements had arrived under Mustapha Kemal (later Kemal Ataturk, president of Turkey). Kemal's orders to his men are said to have been: "I don't order you to fight, I order you to die. In the time it takes us to die, other troops and commanders can come ..."

The Anzac position became progressively more precarious as the Anzacs failed to secure their high-ground objectives. The Turks mounted a fierce counter-attack regaining much of the ground the Anzacs had taken.

That evening, Major-General William Bridges, commander of the 1st Australian Division, and Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood, commander of ANZAC, both advised General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, that the Allied force be withdrawn from the peninsula.

After consultation with the Royal Navy, Hamilton decided against an evacuation, and ordered the troops to dig in. Fall-

That day at Gallipoli

ing back on improvised and shallow entrenchments, the Anzacs held on for a crucial first night.

By that first evening 16,000 men had been landed but more than 2,000 had been killed or wounded.

For the next eight months, the Australians advanced no further than the positions they had taken on the first day. The British and French forces farther south were also unable to break out of their positions.

By November 1915, with more Turkish reinforcements and German equipment in place, it was obvious the stalemate would continue. Lord Kitchener, the British chief of staff, visited the peninsula and recommended to the British Cabinet that a general evacuation take place.

In late December 1915 the Anzacs were successfully evacuated with barely any casualties, and by 20 January 1916 all Allied troops had withdrawn from the peninsula.

The battles fought by the Australian Imperial Force at Gallipoli are widely regarded as the foundation legend of Australian military history, and potent symbol of federated Australia.

The Gallipoli campaign was a military failure but the characteristics that the Anzacs displayed throughout the campaign – bravery, ingenuity, endurance and mateship – have come to be celebrated as defining characteristics of the Australian personality.—from National Museum of Australia.



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FROM THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, LONDON



FROM the Imperial War Museum, London, photos of scenes on 25 April 1915 featuring Anzac soldiers (clockwise from top) Australians landing at Anzac Cove; dressing the head wound of an injured Australian comrade; Anzac troops' dug-outs at Gaba Tepe; Diggers resting in the trenches near Gallipoli.— from the collection at Imperial War Museum, London, See more at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/15-photos-of-the-anzacs-at-gallipoli>

‘When you’re laughing, the whole world laughs with you’

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy young wife by the name of Dorothy. Dot Com was a comely woman, large of breast, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?" Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages and sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums.

The drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent.

To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the

drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures - Hebrew To The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS.

And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. Indeed he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drumheads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "YAHOO," said Abraham.

And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside.

It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

That is how it all began. And that's the truth!



Naval Association of Australia Maroochy Waters Sub Section

Once Navy - Always Navy, is the proud motto that underpins the fellowship spirit embodied in the Australian Naval Association's principles and in this same spirit, the Maroochy Waters Sub Section, extends its warm invitation to former personnel of the: RAN, RN, RNZN and the MERCHANT NAVY, to join our enthusiastic members for pleasant fellowship.

We are an accredited Not for Profit organisation committed to the support of worthwhile veteran and community welfare programmes.

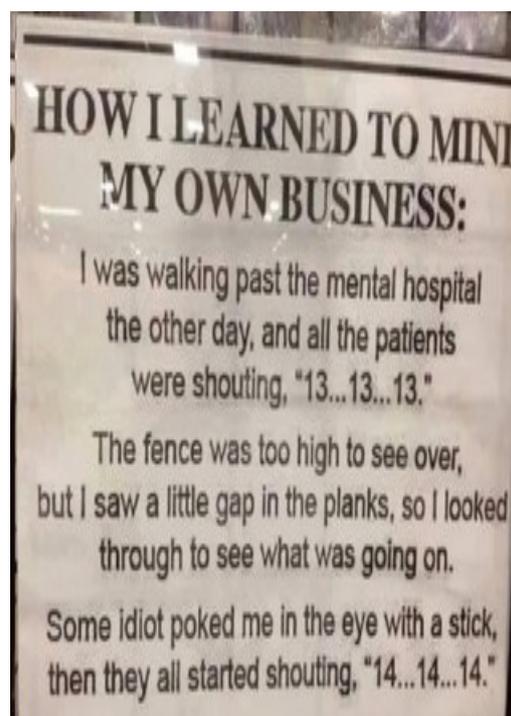
If you have served in any of the above listed units, you and your family are welcome to join the comradeship of fellow, like-minded people, at our monthly social meetings at the RSL Branch office on Memorial Ave Maroochydore, opposite the RSL Club.

Enjoy, also, the quiet ambience of our museum of naval memorabilia containing a wealth of original artefacts, uniforms and models of naval ships used in conflict, all representing a worthy reminder of the contribution by the men and women in their military role of the Australian and Allied Navies through the years.

For further information on becoming a member of our association, with a proud naval heritage, please contact the Maroochy Waters Sub Section, Naval Association of Australia:

Bill Hayward, President, 0411 024 985, bloggshayward@yahoo.com
Michael Wilson, Secretary, 0457 852 122, michaelwilson1@bigpond.com





It doesn't seem like twelve months since we were last celebrating Easter. Time flies, particularly as we get older.

But, to the Christian Easter is the most important celebration of the year. For, without the cross where our Lord was crucified nineteen hundred and ninety two years ago, Christianity would just be another worthy organisation similar to the Red Cross or many other organisations that assist mankind in times of need.

But more than that, Easter not only commemorates Christ's death on a cruel cross, but on Easter Sunday, we celebrate Christ's ascension into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God.

Only in the Bible do we read of others who did not die, but were translated directly into Heaven by-passing the grave. One such was Enoch, who the bible describes as "walking with God, and was not!"

I remember my dear father preaching on Enoch and at the end of his sermon concluding with the words: "We must be careful where we walk!"

As he stepped out of the pulpit, he slipped, and came tumbling most ungraciously down the spiral staircase in a Toowoomba church.

For non-Christians, they simply get a four-day holiday to enjoy the freedom of not going to work.

But, this Easter, please give a thought to the real rea-

Fireside with the Padre



son for this celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, and why so many Christians of all faiths and denominations live in hope of their own resurrection after their time in this life comes to an end.

Have a great Easter holiday and may you all find the true reason for enjoying an Easter holiday.

Until next month, keep well.

Arthur Fry
Honorary Chaplain



DISPLAY of multicultural Easter eggs from Ukraine, apt at this time. —editor's selection.

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VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA SUNSHINE COAST SUB-BRANCH, MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING, 18 MARCH 2025

Start time: 1108hrs. Attendance: As per attendance book.
Apologies: As per attendance book. Ode recited by John Cunnington.

John Cunnington checked that all attendees had read the previous Minutes. Then moved that February 2025 General Meeting Minutes be accepted. Seconded Mick Gay. Carried.

Business arising from the Minutes: John C advised that the bus from Caloundra to Maroochydore on VV Day was still in discussion. No further business arising.

Correspondence: Invitation from Mudjimba RSL Sub-Branch to attend ANZAC Day Dawn Service 0530H and the Community Service 1100H. Invitation included laying of wreaths at both services. Mick Howe to make enquiries regarding available persons.

Emails incoming: Arthur Fry that he has nominated a replacement Chaplain for VV Day 2025. Win Fowles suggesting that the VVAASC consider donating a "Best Recruit Perpetual Trophy" to 106 Army Cadet Unit Caloundra. Email of appreciation from ANZAC Memorial Hyde Park for the recent Digger Hat Jewellery merchandise. Business arising: Perpetual Trophy discussed at Committee Meeting and approved. Moved John Cunnington, seconded Pieter Reus.

Treasurer Report: In absence of the Treasurer attendees were advised copies available of the Treasurer's Report. Copy also available on Notice Board. Moved John Cunnington, seconded Bob Johnson. Carried.

Membership Report: Currently 173 Financial Member; 90 are Life Subscribers. Any information from Members re: Robert Brooks please update the Association. We no longer have a current address nor contact number for him and cannot post his Membership card etc. Moved Pieter Reus, seconded Gordon Hall. Carried.

Office Manager: Thanked Margo C and Chris W for efforts at DIC. Moved John Huxham, seconded Mick Gay. Carried.

Merchandise: Mick Gay advised that an attempt will be made to have a stall at Spotlight Maroochydore for ANZAC Day sales. Spotlight yet to be contacted. Moved Mick Gay, seconded John Huxham. Carried.

Digger Hat Jewellery: Scotty thanked his DHJ Team for attending this month, 7 attendees. Ran out of keyrings; ordered and received 1000 Keyrings. Invoice yet to be given to Treasurer. Prior to next DHJ Day more pennies to be washed; still looking for a volunteer to take over this job. Also reminded Members no lapel pins being made as no one willing to take on the soldering job. Moved Graeme Scott, seconded John Huxham. Carried.

General Business: John H: Three possible outings. (partially funded by VVAASC): ... Two for consideration are river cruises and the third is a bus tour of Breweries. More information to come.

Meeting Closed 1138. Next Meeting at the Drop-in Centre: 1100 TUESDAY 15 APRIL 2025.

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RWANDA PEACEKEEPERS REUNITE 30 YEARS ON

Australian peacekeepers who went to Rwanda 30 years ago will be reunited in Townsville around Anzac Day at the invitation of the Townsville RSL Sub Branch.

Rwanda veteran and Townsville RSL President Colin Mosch says the reunion will offer multiple opportunities from 22 to 26 April for Rwanda veterans to reconnect and commemorate this significant deployment.

“Given we’ve got veterans living across the country, it can be really hard to get a lot of people together at the same time to catch up,” he said.

“So we wanted to create an event with multiple opportunities across a few days for people to reconnect with each other to make their trip up north even more worthwhile.

“All Rwandan veterans trained here before deployment and for many of us, Townsville was where our military careers were shaped.”

As RSL News recalls, between 1994 and 1995, Australia was involved in one of its most difficult peacekeeping missions ever undertaken.

More than 600 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel served on Operation Tamar as part of the United Nations’ second taskforce, United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda II (UNAMIR II).

The mission itself was made up of Army, Navy and Air Force personnel, deployed primarily to provide medical and humanitarian support where possible.

These Australians made up two ADF contingents, both of which served in Rwanda for six months: one from August 1994 to February 1995 and the other from February to August 1995. This year marks a significant anniversary as 30 years ago, the two contingents overlapped, signifying a defining moment in the mission.

“Both contingents faced extreme challenges, arriving in a country that had just suffered one of the most brutal genocides in history.



The cruelty the Rwandans inflicted upon each other was horrific,” Colin said.

“It was a unique situation to observe – truly a bit surreal.”

More information If you’re a veteran interested in attending the 30th Anniversary Rwanda Veterans’ Reunion, visit rslqld.org/whats-on/30th-anniversary-rwanda-reunion for details.

PICTURED: An Australian Digger passes an orphan child to a Red Cross nurse in Rwanda.— Getty image; Alexander Joe..



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Smiles all round as brothers catch up

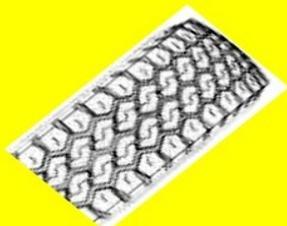
BROTHERS Ron, Brian and Max Prior were given a special Christmas gift when they all happened to be in Vung Tau Harbour on Christmas Day 1968. Twins, Ron and Max, served with the army and Brian served aboard the RAN guided missile destroyer HMAS Perth (II) D38. The twins (left and right) are dressed as sailors, while Brian (centre) is dressed in his brother Max's army uniform. - RAN Public Relations.

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TIMELINE APRIL

1 April 1879: Australia’s first national park – (now Royal) National Park – was created in 1879 just south of Sydney. It was only the second in the world. Australia now has more than 500 national parks covering 28 million hectares.

3 April 1954: Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov, Soviet spies who were masquerading as diplomats in Canberra, defected to Australia. The event had global implications and affected the balance of political power in Australia for decades after the event.

25 April 1915: Australian soldiers landed at what is now called Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula. For most of the 16,000 Australians and New Zealanders who landed on that day, it was their first experience of combat. By that evening, 2000 of them had been killed or wounded (more Page 1).



25 April 1916: One year on from Australian troops landing at Gallipoli

in Turkey, Anzac Day was observed around Australia and wherever Australian soldiers were posted. Australians have commemorated the day ever since.

26 April 1976: The first boatload of refugees fleeing Vietnam sailed into Darwin Harbour, heralding a series of arrivals over the next few years. Most refugees from Vietnam arrived by plane after selection by Australian officials in refugee camps established throughout South-East Asia.

28 April 1996: 35 people were killed and many more injured in a mass shooting at the historic Port Arthur tourist precinct in south-east Tasmania. The massacre provoked national debate about private ownership of guns, especially automatic weapons, and led to major changes to gun safety legislation with bipartisan state, territory and Commonwealth support.

29 April 1965: Prime Minister (later Sir) Robert Menzies (**pictured**) announced in parliament that Australia would send a battalion of combat troops to Vietnam. The decision was motivated by a desire to strengthen strategic relations with the United States and to halt the spread of communism in South-East Asia. By the time Australia withdrew its forces almost eight years later, 521 Australian service personnel would be dead.

Sources include:

<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/defining-moments-timeline>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_Australia_during_the_Vietnam_War

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar>

<https://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar>

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ADAVALE VETERANS RETREAT

LATE NEWS: Flood hits

This space was to be occupied by an advertisement (free) for the Retreat. Just as we were going to “press” we have heard that Adavale is under water. Damage wont be assessed for a fortnight or so.

The only retreat occupants were Ted and Pip Robinson, who were evacuated by separate choppers from the roof of the “Yabbie Bar”. Ted’s chopper, ironically a Robinson, had just got airborne and had to ditch next door.

Fuel on the surface of the floodwater caught fire and he suffered arm burns. Eventually he was taken by Swift Water Rescue to a larger chopper and flown to Quilpie where all have been put up by The Brick Hotel.

Ted still has his sense of humour — “... 12 months in Vietnam in and out of helicopters, survive all that, come to Adavale and the bloody thing crashes,” he told Channel 7 News.

SAS soldiers want their story told

By Oliver Jacques in Riotact, a Canberra region online news source at <https://the-riotact.com/>

Members of Australia's Special Air Service (SAS) regiment who have never previously spoken to the media will reveal what it was like to fight in Afghanistan and how they felt betrayed when returning home, in an explosive new documentary.

Bravery & Betrayal is directed by Simon Heath and funded by Wandering Warriors, a charity that supports SAS veterans and their families. The film will premiere in Perth on 26 April and be screened in cinemas across Australia, thanks also to support from online public donations.

The documentary features SAS troops, family members who lost loved ones and former Coalition prime ministers John Howard and Tony Abbott. Producers have been in talks with former Labor prime ministers Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd to interview them to be bipartisan in telling the story of the men.

Four of the elite soldiers, identified only by nicknames ("Vando", "Andy", "Weeksy" and "Morts") due to operational security reasons, an exclusive insight into what the public can learn from the production.

Over the past few years, there has been considerable media coverage of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Afghanistan Inquiry, led by Major General Paul Brereton, which investigated alleged war crimes involving a small number of SAS.

"Sections of the media, senior ADF leaders, and some politicians have condemned us, labelling us 'war crimi-

nals' despite allegations being unproven, while distancing themselves from broader accountability," Vando said.

"Sensationalist media coverage, often based on rumour or falsehoods, has damaged the reputation of the SAS, severely impacting the mental and physical wellbeing of veterans and their families."

Soldiers said they felt those questioned by the inquiry were denied due process and procedural fairness, while the press reporting unfairly tarnished all 400 SAS troops.

"Since returning, many of us have felt scapegoated," Andy said. "The media narrative often paints with a broad brush, and public perception

guys who served in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

"You learn about the bravery of their experience, like parachuting behind enemy lines in Afghanistan. The war for them wrapped up in 2014. That's when things started to slowly shift. The media didn't ask for stories of bravery, of protecting Afghans and Australian aid workers ... a lot of them have been cast adrift and are doing it tough."

His film outlines details of SAS bravery and sacrifice that many have not heard.

"While the public often imagines us as Hollywood-style action heroes, the reality is more grounded – relentless

training, precision, and executing missions under conditions that are far more complex than they appear from the outside," Andy said.

"We shouldered the heaviest combat to alleviate pressure on our fellow diggers and to support the broader mission objectives. These deployments required unwavering commitment, extraordinary resilience, and the ability to operate un-

der some of the most challenging and high-risk conditions imaginable.

"The prevailing misconception is that Australian politicians and military leadership provided adequate guidance, but the reality is they failed to lead in Afghanistan effectively. We were sent repeatedly on complex and high-risk operations without clear strategic guidance or sufficient resources."

The documentary also chronicles the battles SAS troops have had to fight after returning to Australia.

- Continued next page.

PICTURED: SAS soldiers in Afghanistan.



follows suit. The presumption of guilt surrounding accusations of war crimes overshadowed decades of dedication, commitment and exemplary service. Some Australians have shown support, many have shown disdain."

Weeksy said: "At the first sign of any rumour of things not going how senior leadership expected, they threw the soldiers under the bus, but in the same breath took no responsibility for this themselves as leaders."

Director Simon Heath says this documentary is not about refuting the Brereton inquiry allegations. "It's about telling the big picture of the 400 SAS



Afghanistan and the SAS

- from previous page.

Vando described post-conflict support for soldiers as “grossly inadequate”.

“Soldiers endured relentless deployments for a decade with no rest, only to face re-traumatisation during the Brereton inquiry without adequate psychological safeguards,” he said.

“This lack of ethical consideration for their mental health is a glaring failure that must be acknowledged and addressed.”

The soldiers, however, say they were far more distressed by the impact the past decade has had on their parents, partners and children.

“Imagine having to explain to your teenage daughters that you or your friends did not murder two children, all while facing the fury of global media outrage,” Andy said. “This despite [those in power] knowing the accusation was false and failing to publicly refute it.

“The strain on families has been overwhelming. Wives, children and parents endured the anguish of waiting for us to return safely, only to witness us being vilified upon coming home. This mistreatment has had far-reaching consequences, destabilising relationships, impacting mental health, and undermining family stability.”

Morts said the feeling of loss could be difficult to articulate. “That story is best told by those left behind. You will see widows and children of the fallen in our documentary, the pain in their eyes and their voices is real and palpable,” he said.

“Returning soldiers will always return a

different person, they will see the world through different eyes, not always negative, but those changes will be noticeable. Families often have trouble navigating those changes. Throw in misguided media vilification and a lack of senior leadership support and you end up where we are. With questions like, ‘Was it worth it?’”

The documentary aims to set the record straight, says Andy. “It’s to honour the service and sacrifices of SAS soldiers, expose systemic failures, and advocate for meaningful reforms in the treatment of veterans, both during and after their service,” he said.

“It seeks to highlight the urgent need for a royal commission into the failures of strategic leadership during the Afghanistan War, holding those at the highest levels accountable for their decisions and ensuring lessons are learned for future operations.”

Morts believes the story of Afghanistan needs a counterpoint to that portrayed by some sections of the popular media.

“It is hoped that this documentary can provide an historical artefact that Australians can use, for generations to come, in making their own mind up on what Afghanistan was and wasn’t,” he said.

“As a community, we must fully explore what we got right and what we got wrong. Unless we learn those lessons, we run the risk of being here again in the future.”

More information here: <https://wanderingwarriors.org/bravery-betrayal-the-documentary/>

- PHOTOS from AWM (top) and Fairfax.



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Roll of Honour — Vietnam, APRIL 1962-75

April 1967

Ashton, William John (1730888), 6 RAR, 22, Pte, Pinnaroo Cemetery and Crematorium, Brisbane.

Badcoe, Peter John (41400) AATTV, 33, Maj., Terendak Military Cemetery, Malaysia.

Copeman, Russell James (215989), 3 Sqd, SAS, 20, Pte, Wollongong Crematorium.

Lloyd, Richard Edward (2784015), 5 RAR, 21, Pte, Garden of Remembrance, Rookwood, Sydney.

Rinkin, Kerry Patrick (217479), 5 RAR, 21, 2Lt, Dawson Cemetery, Taree.

Stone, John Maxwell (53326), AATTV, 27, Sgt (Temp. WO2), Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth.

April 1968

Danilenko, Anatoly (235250), AATTV (attached RAInf), 24, Lt (Temp. Capt.), Parkes General Cemetery, Parkes, NSW.

Fisher, Roger Leon (4718368), 3 RAR, 23, L/Cpl, Mintaro Cemetery, SA.

Gollagher, Peter James (172377), 1FIdSqn, 22, Staff Sgt, Pinnaroo Cemetery and Crematorium, Brisbane.

Nicholson, Kenneth Roy (2412486), 1FIdSqn, 23, Spr, Rookwood Military Cemetery, Sydney.

Polglase, Garry Robert (38763), 3 RAR, 20, Pte, Garden of Remembrance, Springvale, Melbourne.

April 1969

Black, Trevor Ralph (1734408), 9 RAR, 21, Pte, Bowen, Queensland.

Bond, John Albert (21977), AATTV, 29, WO2, Northern Suburbs Crematorium, Chatswood, Sydney.

George, Barry Randolph (2789508), 9 RAR, 21, Pte, Rylstone Cemetery, Rylstone NSW.

McPherson, Lyall Hugh (5715701), 9 RAR, 21, Pte, Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth.

Petith, Trevor Graham (A319010), 22, AC, Garden of Remembrance, Springvale, Melbourne.

Pike, Geoffrey Anthony (218421), 5 RAR, 26, Pte, Macquarie Park Cemetery/Crematorium, Ryde NSW

Remeljej, Alexander (4719818), 5 RAR, 21, Pte, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

White, James Mungo T (5715978) 5 RAR, 21, Pte, Collie Cemetery, Collie, WA.

April 1970

Fitzgerald, Jack (27974) AATTV, 41, WO2, Wagga Wagga General Cemetery, NSW.

Garland, Bernard Anthony (235324), 4 Fld Regt, 23, Lt, Garden of Remembrance, Rookwood, Sydney.

Hughes, Robert Edward (44897), 7 RAR, 19, Pte, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

Hurst, Harold Walter (2791326), 1 Fld Sqdn, 22, Spr, Garden of Remembrance, Rookwood, Sydney.

Kavanagh, Graham Robert (4720992), 7 RAR, 21, Pte, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

McQuat, John Leonard (5716533), 8 RAR, 21, Pte, Allambie Park Cemetery, Albany WA.

Pettit, John Gordon (13824), AATTV, 33, WO2, Mount Thompson Crematorium, Brisbane.

Pothof, Robin Christiaan (235354), 7 RAR, 21, Lt, Woden Cemetery, Canberra.

Poulson, Daryl (3795605), 8 RAR, 21, Pte, Springvale Crematorium, Melbourne.

Smith, Ronald Keith (2257880), 7 RAR, 21, Pte, Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney.

Stanczyk, Henry John (44679), 7 RAR, 21, Pte, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

Tognolini, Michael Peter (218453), 3 Cav.Regt, 19, Trp, Garden of Remembrance, Rookwood, Sydney.

April 1971

Blackhurst, Thomas Douglas (19983), AATTV (attached RAInf), 24, Cpl (temp.), Belmont South Cemetery NSW.

Chapman, Rodney Stewart (4721369), 2 RAR, 22, Pte, Centennial Park Cemetery, Adelaide.

Gillespie, John Francis (3170244), 8 FldAmb, 24, L/Cpl, Springvale Botanical Cemetery, Melbourne.

Jones, Brian Richard Alan (55780), 2 SAS Sqdn (RAInf), 22, 2Lt, Memorial Cemetery, Alice Springs.

Salzmann, Ronald Wayne (1732899), 3 RAR, 24, L/Cpl, General Cemetery, Bundaberg.

April 1972 – 75 nil

Roll of Honour information from Australian War Memorial, Roll of Honour; Department of Veterans Affairs; Virtual War Memorial, Australia; Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Wall of Faces; Find A Grave.



MOUNT Thompson Memorial Gardens and Crematorium at Holland Park in Brisbane.

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