

THE NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

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SEPTEMBER 2010 FIRMS AS MEMORIAL DEDICATION DATE

The National Service Memorial now appears likely to be dedicated in Canberra in the first or second week of September 2010.



This follows a commitment by the Australian War Memorial to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works that the Eastern Precinct, of which the Memorial forms part, would be completed by Anzac Day that year. **This photo at the hearing shows (left to right) the Deputy Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, Peter Lindsay MP; National Secretary Noel Moulder; Committee Chairman Mark Butler MP; National Media Officer Allen Callaghan; National President Earle Jennings and the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major-General Steve Gower. Mr. Butler's father was a Vietnam-era National Serviceman.**

The Committee, which held hearings into the project on 13 October, will present its report to Parliament before the end of this year. If it approves, the project would begin after Anzac Day 2009. The NSAA's National President, Earle Jennings, gave evidence that the Association supported the redevelopment of the Precinct to incorporate the National Service Memorial, improve public access - particularly car and coach parking and provide better amenities including a new cafe.

Mr. Butler and Mr. Lindsay told the hearing that the NSAA had been given a prime site at the Australian War Memorial and commended the Association for its fundraising efforts.

THE GOOD DRILL

The National Council asks all Branches and Sub-Bran­ches to advise, through their State Branches, how many members will attend the dedication.

The program planning includes asking the Prime Minister to host a reception at Parliament House on a Tuesday night, followed by a march at the Australian War Memorial at 10a.m. on Wednesday and the dedication at 11a.m. We will invite the Governor-General to unveil the Memorial; former Governor-General, Archbishop and Air Force National Serviceman, Dr. Peter Hollingworth and the Canberra-Queanbeyan Branch Padre to dedicate it; the Prime Minister, the Minister for Veterans Affairs and the Leader of the Opposition to represent the Parliament; the AWM's National Council; the Chief of the Defence Forces to represent the Services and former Governor-General and Navy National Serviceman, Mr. Bill Hayden, to respond on behalf of all National Servicemen.

National President, Earle Jennings, emphasised the following based on advice from the AWM and other organisations that have held similar functions and ceremonies in Canberra:

- The size of the Great Hall at Parliament House and the very strict security will determine how many can attend. If your name is not on the list that will be given to the Security office well before the evening, they will turn you away.
- At the War Memorial, seating will be provided in State Branch blocks. Again, if you are not on the list, you will have to take your chances on getting a view.
- Members will be responsible for their own transport, accommodation, meals and other costs. There will be no hospitality at the Dedication ceremony.
- There will be no private car parking at Parliament House or the Australian War Memorial. The NSAA will provide coaches to both venues for those who do not bring their own coaches. There will a small charge.
- For uniformity, for NSAA members, preferred dress is what we wore for 'walking out' - National Service or unit beret; blue or black blazer; blue shirt; National Service or unit tie; grey slacks and black shoes. Medals will be worn. Keep badges on coats to a maximum of two. Keep your name tag in your pocket. This is a very formal ceremony and we will be judged by our turnout.
- The Association and the AWM have established a joint Dedication Planning Committee to ensure that all goes smoothly. hat includes everything from VIPs to printing the programs. For example, we would like a flyover to mark the very historic occasion but these days that has to wend its way through a lot of channels before we get a response.
- As soon as we have a firm date, we will advise of the final arrangements so don't rush out to make travel bookings yet. We will supply a list of available accommodation and have endeavoured to avoid high-demand and high tariff periods in Canberra. But remember, if you are **firmly** planning to attend you must advise your State Branch through your Branch or Sub-Branch.



Carol Cartwright, (left) of the AWM with her officers and NSAA President Earle Jennings at our recent meeting on 14 October.



THE MEMORIAL WORDING

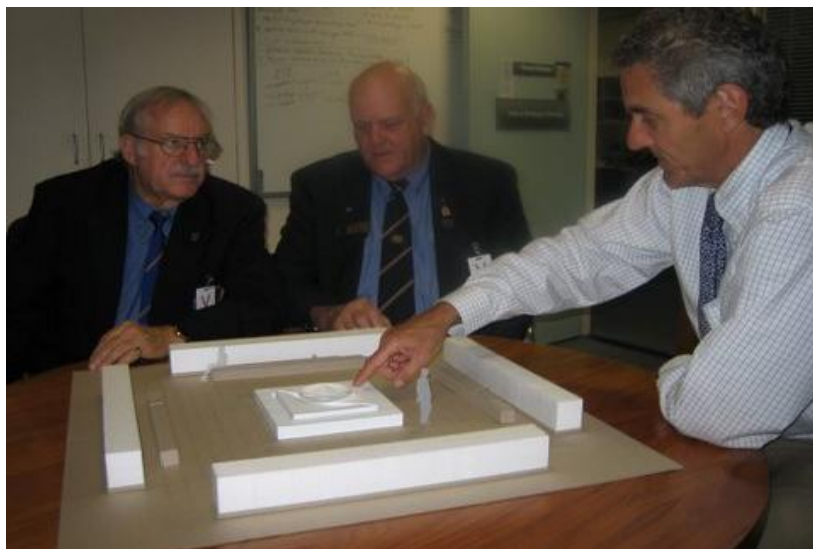
Tenders will be called early next year for the sandstone plinth, black granite slab and bronze bowl, together with the sandstone paving, box hedging and wooden seating in the surrounding courtyard. The entrances will be marked by pencil pines. Standing nearby, will be the statue of Australian war hero, 'Weary' Dunlop.

The Memorial is a fountain using recycled water, but designed to stand alone should the drought continue. The courtyard will be one of the main gathering areas for the large number of visitors and school parties arriving by coach. This means the National Service Memorial will be the first one they see.

The corner nearest the Australian War Memorial will bear the badge from the front of the Australian National Service Medal with the words 'National Service' and '1951-1972' around it. The badges of the Navy, Army and Air Force will appear on the other three sides.

The wording of the inscription on the Memorial and on the plaques adjacent to the seating will be approved at the next National Council meeting in March 2009.

National President Earle Jennings emphasised to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works that the NSAA will build the National Service Memorial for all Nashos. All National Servicemen will be invited to the Dedication and to march in the Parade.



The AWM's Director of Buildings and Services, Stewart Mitchell, shows Earle Jennings and Noel Moulder details of the architect's model of the National Service Memorial.

Because of the limited space, the parade will be restricted to holders of the *Anniversary of National Service 1951-1972* medal. The route will be on the internal road from the Western Precinct, across the main entrance where the Governor General will be invited to take the salute on the main steps, to the Eastern Precinct where the marchers will fall out to make their

way to the seating area. The National Servicemen's Memorial Pipes and Drums will be invited to lead the parade. Only the Australian flag will be paraded with an armed uniformed escort and Nashos will march in companies of 100.

FROM THE GALLERY...

Our National Media Officer, Allen Callaghan, worked in the Federal Press Gallery in Canberra and knows his way around Parliament House and the political system pretty well.

While at Parliament House for the Parliamentary Public Works Committee hearing, President Earle Jennings, National Secretary Noel Moulder and Allen called on the new Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs, Louise Markus MP and on an old friend of Nashos, Sid Sidebottom MP.



Mrs. Markus represents the Sydney seat of Greenway and was a social worker for more than 20 years. She has been a member of Parliamentary Community and Immigration Committees. The courtesy call enabled us to meet her and to give the background to the NSAA, National Service and the National Service Memorial. The Howard Government gave \$150,000, through then Minister Bruce Billson, to the fund for the Memorial.

Sid Sidebottom, the Federal Member for Braddon in northern Tasmania, in 1999 was the first MP to publicly support the award of the Australian National Service

Medal to Nashos. He is a Patron of the Tasmanian Branch and of the Mersey and Burnie Sub-Branches. In his speech on the *Memorials of National Significance Bill 2008*, Sid had this to say about National Service: 'I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the National Servicemen's Association and to all Nashos who served this country. Though many of them may not have served overseas, they did indeed prepare to serve this country, and psychologically they were prepared to do so.'



It took us far too long to recognise that. The story of the Vietnam Nashos did us no credit for a long time. Many people's views—I was one of them—of the war were unfortunately mixed with our attitudes towards those who served us. Since then, I have been very proud of how our nation, particularly in relation to Iraq and other places of conflict, has made it very clear that we respect and honour the service of those who are ordered into these areas of combat to serve this nation. We should have been very proud of them in the past, and now we are. I personally want to put on record that I mixed my politics with a dose of humanity and the politics came out but not the humanity, and I certainly have reflected on that for many years afterwards.

'I would particularly like to thank my local branches. They were one of the first groups that schooled me in politics. I am not a political person by nature and I do not have a background in it. They schooled me in politics and certainly reminded me that they wanted some recognition for their service. I want to thank my late friend, Frankie Watts, whom I miss, for all the support he gave me when I first came into parliament. I certainly thank him for the great work he did in getting recognition for the Nashos and bringing them together.'

'They are a fine group of people and I know that many members in this House have a lot to do with them. I am really glad we have recognised them and I am looking forward to their Memorial being opened. I know they will be inviting all of us to the memorial and that they will be very proud to see it. I certainly commend the bill to the House. I thank the government for honouring their commitment to the ex-POWs from Ballarat, whom I thank very much for their service. I wish to recognise their families, particularly the families of those who lost loved ones in the service of this country.'



The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP, opening the National Council, said the Gap Year for Service recruits is proving successful. High School leavers can 'try before you buy' to see if they want a service career. The scheme was introduced by the Howard Government. Dr. Kelly also is undertaking a national review of the future of the Australian Cadet Service. Dr. Kelly said all aspects of the Cadets including their structure, funding, aims and future are being examined.

THE FUTURE OF THE NSAA

The National Servicemen's Association of Australia will make an Australia-wide drive to attract 1960s Nashos.

It will concentrate on the so-called 'Lost Legion' of National Servicemen who served in Malaysia, Papua-New Guinea and Australia.

The recruiting campaign will be part of the program discussed by the National Council to secure the Association's future.

OPTIONS

In a special forum conducted by the National Secretary, Noel Moulder and the National Executive, all States were invited to put forward ideas for future directions.

Four main options emerged:

- Disbanding the Association following completion of the National Memorial in 2010;
- A merger with other organisations such as the RSL;
- Formation of a new peak body with kindred Associations under a new name such as the National Services Association; and
- A campaign to attract the so-called 'Lost Legion' of 1960s Nashos for whom the NSAA originally was founded.

It quickly emerged that the first three had little or no support. Queensland made it clear it would not support any name change.

In canvassing the options, the National Executive pointed out that without new members the NSAA would cease to exist as time took its toll of 1950s Nashos.

However, there is an untapped potential of almost 50,000 National Servicemen from the Vietnam-era and another 34,000 who took the CMF alternative now reaching retirement age and beginning to join organisations.

Queensland illustrates the potential with all four types of Nashos on its State Management Committee – 1950s, Vietnam veteran, non-Vietnam and CMF alternate.

THE LOST LEGION

Of all Nashos, those called up in the 1960s but who did not serve in Borneo or Vietnam got the rawest deal.

Rotation to active service was as much a lottery as their call-up because out of the nine Battalions only one or two at the most served in a war zone at any one time. They trained for combat but were not required except in support roles. They did that with distinction in Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and in Australia in a wide variety of Corps.

They had a two-year interruption to their jobs, careers and personal lives but got nothing for it – no medal, no veterans' benefits, and no recognition. What they did share with their veteran colleagues was the derision and being spat on in the streets as 'oppressors' and 'baby killers' by members of the Left in Australia who had campaigned for the Communist invasion and oppression of democratic South Vietnam.

This is the main reason why they have not joined any organisations.

WHAT DOES THE NSAA OFFER?

The formation of the NSAA in 1987 was to support non-veteran 60s Nashos but the main result has been recognition for all National Servicemen. Nashos from the 1950s were as much forgotten as the non-veterans.

The Association's campaign for recognition has resulted in awareness by Government, the media and the public of their contribution by Nashos to Australia's defence culminating in the award of the Australian National Service Medal and the Australian Defence Medal.

The decision by the Australian War Memorial to allot a prime site in its grounds for the National Service Memorial is further recognition. Although there have been various compulsory training schemes since Federation in 1901, the Australian War Memorial has decided that it will recognise only that between 1951 and 1972 as National Service.

The Association can offer to 1960s Nashos their own organisation with branches in every State and Territory; an effective and efficient organisation with a proven track record and most importantly of all, understanding and support from all those who shared the unique experience of National Service.

FINDING THE LOST LEGION

The dedication of the National Memorial, now likely to be early September 2010, will give the NSAA the opportunity to reach out to 1960s Nashos.

All Nashos will be invited to the parade and dedication at the Australian War Memorial in a nation-wide publicity campaign.



At left, National President, Earle Jennings and National Secretary, Noel Moulder, inspect the notice board at the AWM giving details of the Memorial.

This will be done through the media and kindred organisations so we reach as many Nashos as possible.

As well, any funds remaining from the Memorial's construction will be used to promote the interests and welfare of National Servicemen.

This is becoming important for 1950s Nashos and will become as important for the later ones, of whom the youngest now are 56.

The CMF alternates, who served six years and are eligible for the ANSM, are in the same position and most do not have any organisation of their own.

The National Council believes the 1960s Nashos would bring new blood and new directions to continue the Association's work, objectives and social activities well into the future. In March next year it will adopt a five year strategy to begin the recruiting drive through the State Branches.

All members will be invited to comment on the strategy – ideas are always welcome because the Association belongs to all of us.

ON THE MONEY

The Royal Australian Mint in Canberra has commenced design work on a collector's coin marking the dedication of the National Service Memorial at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in September 2010. Further details of this memorabilia coin will be available in future President's Bulletins.

Coming Soon...

www.nashoaustralia.org.au