



NASHO



An Official Journal
of the
NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
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Patron: Matt Anderson PSM, Director Australian War Memorial
President: Ron Brandy
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Autumn 2024 Edition



The Northern Territory Pavers Project Dedication

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This is the second edition of “Nasho”, the newsletter for Nashos who were previously members of NSAA states and territories which have closed along the way. Ex NSW members are welcomed to “Nasho” for the first time in this edition.

“Nasho” will achieve the best readership if readers make comments and suggestions for subsequent editions. Otherwise.

Pete Norman

Editor Pro Tem, NSAA National Secretary

THE PAVERS PROJECT – NORTHERN TERRITORY:

A LASTING MEMORIAL

NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S MEMORIAL IN DARWIN

At 10am on Monday 22nd January 2024, members of the National Servicemen's Association Australia NT Incorporated (NSAANT), gathered with family and friends at the Darwin Military Museum, East Point, Darwin for (probably) their last formal gathering and for a special event. That 'special event' being the official opening and dedication of a memorial pathway made of pavers inscribed with the names of 63 National Servicemen from the Northern Territory.

The memorial pathway, a last memorial to those men who did their duty and served their country with pride and honour, was laid within the grounds of the Darwin Military Museum (DMM) at the request of the NSAANT. Initially, the pavers were to be laid within an existing pathway along The Esplanade adjacent to the Cenotaph. However, after two years of discussions and delayed decision making with various stakeholders, the members of the NSAANT sought an alternate venue for the memorial.

It was suggested by NSAANT member Major Jim Wright, a former President and current Life Member of the Royal Australian Artillery Association NT (RAAANT) that established, owns and operates the DMM, that the RAAANT be approached with a proposal to accommodate the memorial path. This was done by NSAANT Immediate Past Hon. Treasurer", Mr. Mike Lane, on 9 August 2023 by email to the current RAAANT President and DMM Director. The proposal and request was forwarded immediately to the RAAANT's Management Committee (aka: the Board) with a request for an electronic vote. Within 24-hours, the RAAANT Board had voted unanimously to support the project, transport the pavers from the City of Darwin depot to East Point and to have the pavers installed within the DMM. The pavers were laid, and the pathway completed within a month of the request being received.

It was agreed between the NSAANT and the RAAANT Board to host a morning tea and to unveil and dedicate the pathway on Monday 22nd January 2024. At precisely 10am that day, the group was called to order (attention) by Mr. Mike Lane following which the Director DMM gave a short talk on the somewhat controversial history of conscription/ National Service in Australia over the previous 120 years. Mr. Lane then addressed the group, spoke of the history of the NSAANT, paid tribute to previous NSAANT Office Bearers and general members and thanked the RAAANT for 'coming to our rescue' with regard to a lasting memorial. Mr. Lane then called upon the NSAANT's Patron Mr. John Antictomatis AO, former Administrator of the NT and National Serviceman, who spoke briefly about the Association, of being proud to have served our great nation and that we should all be proud of Australia and of being Australians.



At the conclusion of the formalities, Mr. Lane recited the Ode of Remembrance and all in attendance vowed "We Will Remember Them". **At a signal from Mr. Lane, former National Serviceman Corporal Bjorn Christie-Johnston, the lead Piper of the Darwin and Districts Pipe and Drums, struck up the pipe-band and led the group to the path in which the pavers had been placed.**

Finally, the Territory's National Servicemen had a lasting memorial to their service in the defence of our nation.

After the function, Corporal Christie-Johnston wrote to Mr. Lane and I saying;

"Thank you both so much for making today such a memorable occasion.

The attention to detail was commendable: welcome on arrival; tables, chairs, cool drinks, morning tea/coffee and refreshments; under cover; speeches were spot on (informative and not too long); numbers and mix of VIPs, guests and families was perfect for the occasion and the venue.

The short walk to the pavers along a delightful discovery track, with the Pipeband leading the way ensured a wonderful sense of occasion and enjoyment as well as the ideal opportunity to capture the theme of the event on camera.

It was indeed an overall smooth transition from an era of yesterday-year to the dawning of a new day".

In reply, the RAAANT Board members say;

"It was our honour and pleasure!"

Written by Dr. Norman S. Cramp. ASM., MA, MIM., PhD.

Director

Darwin Military Museum



NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN:

Greetings to all National Servicemen, families, and friends.

NSAA National Executive: It is a privilege to lead the members of the NSAA National Executive, Vice President Noel Moulder OAM, Secretary Peter Norman, Treasurer Richard Tregear, and Public Officer John Thorne ESM, and I offer my sincere thanks to them for the work they do on behalf of the Council and our membership.

NSAA National Council: The NSAA National Council met again in Canberra on 7th March 2024 to address and manage the affairs of the National Association. We welcomed a new delegate from Tasmania Jeff Gray, acting NSAA Tasmanian President, who replaces Barry Sonter who has had to stand down as both NSAA Tasmanian Branch President and council delegate through ill health. We sincerely thank Barry for his advocacy for his Tasmanian members, his camaraderie, and contributions to the Council. We look forward to working with Jeff Gray as a Tasmanian Delegate and his ongoing leadership role in NSAA Tasmania.

Appointment of our new NSAA National Patron: At the NSAA National Council meeting held on the 7th of March 2024, the council approved a proposal for an invitation to be extended to Mr. Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the Australian War Memorial, to be our NSAA National Patron. I am delighted to advise the Minister for Veterans Affairs has approved Mr. Anderson's appointment to the role of NSAA National Patron with immediate effect.

On your behalf I thanked Mr. Anderson for accepting our invitation, congratulated him on his appointment, and welcomed him to our association. I'm sure you will join me in welcoming Mr. Anderson to the role of National Patron and we look forward to him being able to join us when we meet in Canberra in September 2024.

Sustaining the NSAA National Presence: You will be aware that collectively, the National Executive and the National Council, have been actively involved with the subject of our future as an association for some time. Without dwelling on the obvious and well documented reasons, the association is collectively doing its best to support NSAA State/Territory Branches who are struggling to maintain active and viable management committees that can maintain the administrative governance requirements necessary for the sound and accountable management of their respective branches.

Significant work by the National Executive has culminated in the association being able to welcome former members of closed State and Territory Branches to the National Association as individual members. This has been achieved through the success of a motion put to Council at our 7th March 2024 Council Meeting that formalised an amendment to our Rules and By-laws that now includes this new membership category. As a result of this approved change, the NSAA National Association has

enabled former Northern Territory and New South Wales Branch members to join the association. The NT members have already been processed and the NSW members are in the process of having transfer forms provided to them. I am very grateful to the respective State and Territory teams, our National Executive, the National Council, and Vicki Blundell, our Direct Membership Manager, for their great work in making this happen. Thank you all.

Archives Project: The consolidation and culling of our NSAA National Archives have continued since I last reported to you. Currently, all known and available archives have been collected, but there may well be more yet to be uncovered. Culling of financial and administrative archives, treasurers, and secretaries, have been culled and are to be co-located with our late National President's archives in the near future.

The NSAA National Executive, on your behalf, extends our gratitude to the NSAA Queensland Branch for providing us with a safe storage and working (culling) area at their Wacol facility. At the completion of the culling phase, NSAA National Vice President Noel Moulder OAM and I will engage with the National Library of Australia (NLA) on the next phase of physical assessment of the collected material to determine the extent to which, or not, further work is necessary before embarking on the phase of passing our records to the NLA. Should it be necessary, we will apply to the NLA for a grant to fund further processing.

Annual Governance and Commemorative Activities: Typically, the first few months of the new year include the conduct of Annual and General meetings to complete the governance requirements of our respective Branches and Sub-Branches. This often leads on to the Commemoration of National Servicemen's Day and other Memorial activities.

Now, as we enter into the April period, our attention turns to ANZAC Day commemorations and the all-important ANZAC Appeal and badge selling. On behalf of your NSAA National Executive, I wish all members, families, and friends a successful and enjoyable ANZAC Day in which to connect with mates, honour the fallen, and relish the camaraderie as Nashos.

With very best wishes and kind regards,



Ron Brandy

National President
National Servicemen's Association of Australia

1/4/2024

“NASHO” NEWSLETTER - TARGET AUDIENCE EXPLAINED:

“Nasho” is the newsletter for Nashos who were previously members of NSAA states and territories branches which have closed along the way. Two have has closed so far, Northern Territory and New South Wales, with possibly more to follow as age wearies us all.

Many such disenfranchised members may wish to remain with the NSAA, so a special category was set up in late 2023. These members are referred to as “Unattached National Members”.

The Unattached National Members will receive a copy of “Nasho” three or four times per year. Courtesy copies are also sent to states and territories secretaries, and to the Officer Training Unit (Scheyville) Association.

If there is anything published in any edition of “Nasho” which needs clarification, a letter to the editor is appropriate.

THE 1% COHORT:

The One Percenters. Your perspective on this piece may change based on your actual age.

- 99% of people born between 1930 and 1946 (GLOBALLY) are now deceased...
- If you were born in this time span, your ages range between 77 and 93 years old (a 16-year-age span) and you are one of the rare surviving one-percenters.
- You are the smallest group of children born since the early 1900s.
- You are the last generation, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war that rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.
- You are the last to remember ration books for everything from tea to sugar to shoes. You saved tin foil and poured fried meat fat into cans.
- You can remember milk being delivered to your house early in the morning and placed in the "milk box" at the front door. Discipline was enforced by parents and teachers.
- You are the last generation who spent childhood without television and instead, you “imagined” what you heard on the radio. With no TV, you spent your childhood "playing outside". There was no city playground for kids. The

lack of television in your early years meant that you had little real understanding of what the world was like. We got “black-and-white” TV in the late 50s that had 3 stations and no remote.

- Telephones (if you had one) were one to a house and hung on the wall in the kitchen (who cares about privacy). Computers were called calculators; they were hand-cranked. Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage, and changing the ribbon. INTERNET and GOOGLE were words that did not exist.
- Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and your dad would give you the comic pages after he read the news. The news was broadcast on your radio in the evening. The radio network gradually expanded from 3 stations to thousands.
- New highways would bring jobs and mobility. Most highways were 2 lanes and there were no Motorways. You went downtown to shop. You walked to school.
- Your parents were suddenly free from the confines of the depression and the war, and they threw themselves into working hard to make a living for their families.
- You weren't neglected, but you weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad you played by yourselves. They were busy discovering the postwar world. You entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where you were welcomed, enjoyed yourselves. You felt secure in your future, although the depression and poverty were deeply remembered.
- Polio was still acrippler. Everyone knew someone who had it.
- You are the last generation to experience an interlude when there were no threats to our country. World War 2 was over and the cold war, terrorism, global warming, and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life. Only your generation can remember a time after WW2 when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. You grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better.
- More than 99% of you are retired now, and you should feel privileged to have "lived in the best of times!" If you have already reached the age of 77-years-old, you have outlived 99% of all the other people on this planet.

You are a One Percenter.

FEATURE ARTICLE: RUSS SWAN – A NASHO:

Russ Swan was conscripted on 3 July 1970 and spent his 21st Birthday on a short leave pass in Sydney on a Sunday looking for a bar for a first legal drink. All the bars were shut. At his first posting he was recalled from a field exercise and asked if he wanted to go to South Vietnam. He said, “yes” and his OC said, “Good. Then we can put you on a flight tonight!” After a short stay in Sydney we joined his unit in SVN early August 1971 and returned to Australia with the unit in November 1971. Russ continued to serve with the Australian Army until December 1990. Below is the transcript of a speech he delivered in Darwin in 2021, followed by some photos he took while serving in Vietnam in 1971.

AUSTRALIA’S NATIONAL SERVICEMEN From 1911 to 1972

National Servicemen’s Day 2021

Speech by:
1736986 WO2 Russ Swan (retired)
National Servicemen’s Intake July 1970
South Vietnam – 1971.

The Right Worshipful, the Lord Mayor of Darwin, the Honourable Kon Vatskalis,
Ladies and Gentlemen

There have been two kinds of citizen soldiers in Australia since the time of Federation.

One of those was and continues to be volunteers and have been known variously by several names including the Citizens Forces, Militia, Citizen Military Forces (or the CMF). Today they are known as the Australian Army Reserve. Being National Servicemen’s Day, I will not be speaking further about them.

The other kind of citizen soldier has been those that were conscripted at various times for military service. National Servicemen or “Nasho’s” as they were called were those who were conscripted. There have been 4 National Service conscription schemes since 1911.

The last one was the National Service Act of 1964. This was amended in 1965 to allow conscripts to be sent overseas to fight.

These soldiers were everyday citizens who were obligated to leave their homes, their jobs and families, who answered their country's call and even went to fight in two of our wars – WW2 and South Vietnam. Some were killed or physically and/or maimed permanently and/or psychologically marked as a result.

By and large prior to the Vietnam War, the use of citizen soldiers both as volunteers and conscripts had mostly been intended to protect the Australian homeland or territories. Indeed it had often been politically popular. But when it came down to using any conscripted soldiers in any conflict overseas, there has been a sharp division in national opinion.

During WW1 there were 2 referendums to introduce conscription for the Western Front. There was a lot of public unrest but both referendums were narrowly defeated.

Opposition to conscripts fighting overseas occurred again at the onset of WW2. However legislation was passed in 1942 to allow conscripts to fight overseas in the South-West Pacific. From what I understand there was no referendum held. Bear in mind that Australia was being governed by a War Cabinet. At least one unit saw action. The 11th Brigade subsequently fought at Bougainville but one should understand the situation here. At the time our country was in a full-blown war against the Japanese.

It appears that same divisiveness of opinion in the Australian population regarding conscripts fighting offshore, continued to slumber across the generations up until the Vietnam War came along.

There is no National Service scheme in effect today, however that's not to say it cannot or will not happen again. Future Governments now have two precedents to force conscripts into overseas wars – not just to defend Australia. A mandate incidentally that half the population of Australia has historically opposed.

The last conscription scheme came about when conflicts in South-East Asia started raising fears about Australia's security. In prior decades there had been communist aggression in Korea from 1950 – 1953. There was the Malayan Emergency with the Malayan Chinese

communists from 1948 and still active up to 1960. This was followed by the Indonesian and Borneo confrontations 1963 – 1966. Now the North Vietnamese communists were trying to take over a democratic South Vietnam.

Additionally, Communist fishing trawlers aka GIO's bristling with antennas instead of fishing nets, were often operating off the Australian East Coast. It was obvious they were gathering electronic intelligence from radio transmissions during larger scale military exercises.

At the time, the now-discredited "domino" theory was much in vogue. The idea was that if one country fell to communism then its neighbour would soon follow. It was not entirely unbelievable at the time, given that successful Communist tactics post WW1 by the Russians was to infiltrate and recruit malleable young minds in those bastions of idealism, the universities. They also infiltrated grass root trade unions and social clubs causing dissent among the public.

After WW2 military planners in Australia switched their emphasis from building homeland CMF forces to the Regular Army. But it was badly underprepared to undertake wartime operations anywhere overseas.

By the 1960s the Menzies Government needed a full Division comprising 3 x Task Forces with 3 x Infantry Battalions each – a total of about 40,000 men. The 1960s were boom years of high domestic growth and they were going to have a hard time getting recruitment levels up for the Regular Army. Conscript would be required. And some of those conscripts were going to be needed for active service.

The Amendment of the National Service Act in 1965 allowing use of conscripts in overseas wars once again divided public opinion. The Act also had a new element in that conscripts could for the first time be allocated directly into Regular Army units.

During the National Service Scheme from 1965 to 1972 about 800,000 men registered and about 63,735 were called up. Most served in the Army for a 2-year period instead of a 3-year period with the Navy or Air Force. The Army was able to increase its Infantry manpower to the required 9 Battalions which allowed 1 x Task Force to be allocated to South Vietnam. Of the 63,735 conscripts, 1,688 were trained as Officers and subsequently

commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants. Another 600 became military teachers in places like PNG.

The apparent intention by the Government for this scheme was that active overseas service by conscripts would be voluntary. Ostensibly, Nasho's were supposed to be given the choice of active service and history records that most of them who had been asked did actually volunteer.

But it wasn't all that clear cut. Reinforcements could be rotated through most units on an individual basis in South Vietnam. Nasho's would in theory be asked to do active service. If an individual did not want the posting then someone else could be found quite readily. As indicated above it seems there was no shortage of volunteers.

In fact it's interesting that Nasho's who were asked to join the Regular Army for active service, did so in large numbers. I expect one example might have been that where a conscript's 2-year term came up while in South Vietnam, they elected to switch to Regulars so as to complete their 12-month tour.

However complete units that rotated such as Infantry Battalions it was not so simple. They trained as groups and not as individuals. Anyone not wanting to go overseas faced being sent to another battalion, ostracized and no doubt being permanently relegated to constant kitchen, hygiene and guard duties. It was not an easy thing for an individual to say NO – whatever their reasons may have been. They simply didn't have much choice anyway. They could legally be forced to go.

But such cases are believed to be few. Indeed, one might wonder why so many Nasho's volunteered for active service anyway, especially given the prevailing attitude of the general public. But also being young, 6 ft tall and bullet-proof is a term that comes to mind and young people are innately adventurous.

Out of those 63,735 Nasho's who were called up, over 15,300 served in Vietnam. That's very roughly about a quarter of them. Of those, 210 of the 521 Australians killed were Nasho's and 880 of the 1140 WIA were Nasho's. And let's not forget those who switched to Regulars who may have subsequently become a casualty.

Back home the issue of using conscript soldiers in an active theatre of war overseas became heated among the population, particularly in the latter part of the 1960s and early 1970s. The flames of the issue were being fed with scenes of the conflict appearing for the first time, not just in vetted cinema newsreels but on television screens in Australian homes.

Despite media negativity it's fair to say that Australian soldiers, regular and conscript alike behaved remarkably well and professionally, as did our brothers from across the ditch. This was a true Anzac force by any measure, and they performed like Anzac's in the truest sense of its traditions. They deserved proper recognition by their respective homelands.

But there were unforeseen consequences for soldiers on their return home.

This war was the first time that a Nasho could be living for months, if not a year in a hostile place. Then if his obligatory 2-year term came up he could find himself on a flight home and unceremoniously discharged from the local Military District HQ. In a relatively short time he might find himself back in his hometown - a place where the biggest household drama of the day might be a flat tyre and being late for work.

And then, far from a welcoming or even thankful population, he/she often met with denigrating attitudes. For myself I've even known people who'd said they'd been forced to go so as to avoid direct criticism. We've all heard the tales of an unthinking public misdirecting their angst at soldiers instead of the politicians and Army brass.

I won't dwell on the sensationalising and lack of balanced reporting of those media news feeds though it did happen. Nor will I linger on the lack of moral fortitude of the politicians of the day to protect our soldiers from denigration, though that also happened. Nor the unthinking mental laziness of those who accepted at first blush what the media was telling them and reacted, sometimes violently towards returning servicemen.

To add further insult as alluded to above and unlike previous wars; there are literally thousands of Vietnam Veterans who never received any kind of formal welcome home from any Government of any level in this country. These are the people who returned home on an individual basis, wounded or not. These were mainly the majority of Nasho's who rotated through units in South Vietnam on an individual basis.

Some might point to the Welcome Home Parade of 1987. Politicians of the day, defence chiefs and other dignitaries stood on the steps of Sydney Town Hall soaking up the reflected kudos as 20,000 men marched by, some in wheel chairs and others hobbling by on crutches.

It would have been a nice Welcome Home, had it not been arranged by the veterans themselves.

Since the Vietnam era, the Australian public today has regained its proper perspective regarding their attitude to their armed forces. My heart is gladdened and when I see someone say something as simple as, "Thank you for your service". And I'm sure it lifts the spirits of the ex-Nasho's here today, that there are people in attendance here who have taken time out to come and pay their respects to our past conscripts.

The lights of the National Servicemen's Association Australia and its branches will soon be winking out. So too are the Nasho's and Regulars who were once involved in the Vietnam War.

But ... in a way it's comforting to know that this sun-dial and the time-capsule with their plaques here on The Esplanade in Darwin, and the Nasho paving tiles laid down at the Darwin War Museum will remain in living memory for a little while yet. At least our children and grand-children will be able to visit and remember that when Australia called, the Nasho conscripts stood up and answered it.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.



Some photos of Russ Swan's time in South Vietnam in 1971: A "Dustoff" helicopter outside the medical facility at Nui Dat. This was the first line for medical treatment of wounded diggers.

The preceding photo and the images on this and following pages were provided by Russ Swan to give us some idea of what the Australians view of a small part of South Vietnam.



Map of most of Phouc Tuy (fook tui) Province showing locations of Nui Dat and Vung Tau



Author on top of "Sig Hill" on the last day at Nui Dat



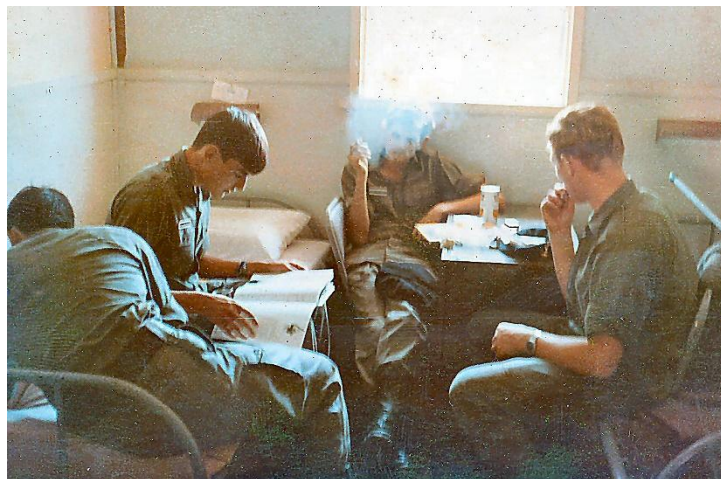
The "back beach" as it was known at Vung Tau



ARVN - Army of Republic of Vietnam lined up outside gate of Nui Dat SVN on last day of Australian occupation



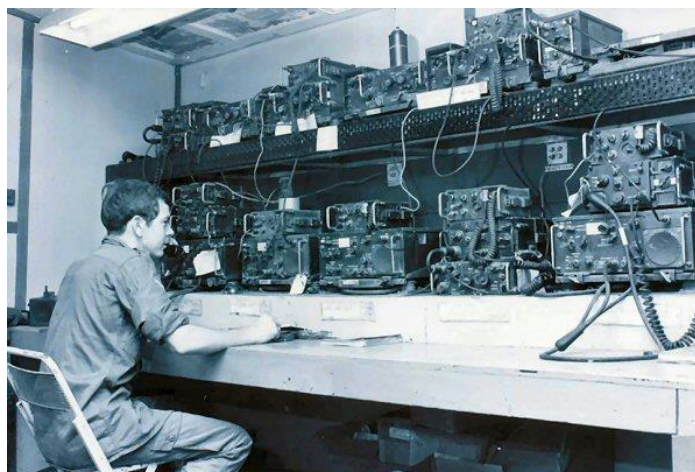
Typical accommodation among the rubber trees showing mortar and rocket protection pits outside each tent



Mixed conscripts and regular soldiers swatting for exams at Corps Training.



Second story blasted by a bomb satchel thrown up there by a pillion passenger of a motorcycle. This was about 50 metres from "Hotel Canberra"



Friendly forces were monitored for communications security from a bunker at Nui Dat SVN



ATF Base - 1971
Australian Task Force Base at Nui Dat 1971



Caribou aircraft were used to bring reinforcements and supplies

NATIONAL SERVICE – CALLUP DEFERMENTS – A 1953 PERSPECTIVE:

By 1954 It had become evident that there were some serious problems in maintaining the C M.F. component of the National Service Training Scheme, especially in rural areas where attendance at weekly drills presented difficulties for those living far away. By late August/early September, an increasing number of parliamentarians were asking questions or commenting on the number of rural deferrals. Mr. Fairhall (Paterson) remarked on the "amazing number of eighteen-year-olds who suddenly became managers of businesses. " On 9th September, Mr. Galvin (Kingston) asked the Minister for Defence "whether it is intended to alter the system of calling up youths for National Service Training" to which Sir Phillip McBride replied that he would inform the house when a decision had been made.

The difficulties experienced in rural areas were dealt with at some length by several parliamentarians both at question time and in adjournment debates. Mr. Falkiner (Franklin), while praising the personal and military benefits of C.M.F. training, had to acknowledge that most youths in North Queensland and the Northern Territory had acquired de facto exemption because of distance. Another M.H.R. Mr. Dean (Robertson) urged magistrates to visit dairy farming localities personally, in order to develop an understanding of the problems faced by families which depended on their son(s) as essential workers. This issue caused considerable dissension in many rural communities where some youths believed that the call-up regulations were being unfairly manipulated by people with influence. Widespread rumours in the press and the community about the widening of exemption provisions prompted Mr. Gullett (Henty) to suggest to the House of Representatives that the government proposed to abandon universal training by exempting from further C M.F. training those who lived more than 5 miles from a drill hall.

The Minister came under a great deal of pressure to clarify the situation but declined to comment until 23/9/1954 when, in answering a question from Mr. Thompson (Port Adelaide) he stated:

It has never been the policy of this Government to have universal call-ups. The policy announced originally when National Service Training was introduced was that there was a universal obligation to register ... the call-up has been confined to the number required but there has been no exemption of classes except in very remote rural areas (CPD Vol. 5, p. 1529)

On 28 September Sir Philip McBride announced that " . the number of National Service [trainees] will continue at 33,750 annually" (C.P.D Vol. 5, p. 1633). This was in keeping with the policy of tailoring intakes to requirements. He emphasised that all eligible men would still be required to register but that deferment for certain rural groups would be granted because:

We have already found it is Impracticable for young men living far from C.M.F. training units to be full, effective members of their units. On this account, registrants in remote areas have so far been deferred and those who do not live within handy distances of training centres have been excused of part of their training. This same sort of problem had to be provided for in the case of the old universal training scheme (C.P.D Vol. 5, p. 1633).

He went on to say that:

those living beyond a radius of 5 miles will be deferred . [and] the training of rural workers will also be deferred for the present. As it happens roughly four-fifths of rural workers live beyond what might be regarded as handy distances to C.M.F. training centres and would be deferred on that score (CPD Vol. 5. p. 1634).

This question of deferrals continued to be a source of contention within the community. The government continued to insist that there had never been an Intention to make every youth serve while the general public either believed that the call-up was universal or thought it ought to be.

Over the period 1951-59, over 500,000 youths were eligible for call-up, of whom 163,091 were excluded by ballot and 47,309 declared medically unfit. Figures supplied by the Soldier Career Management Agency indicate that the breakdown of deferments and postponements at the time of registration was as follows: -

Geographical	12,137
Occupational	543
Student/Apprenticeship	8,075
Exceptional Hardship	133
Seasonal	365
Other	<u>883</u>
	22,136

SUSPENSION OF NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING:

Despite continuing public support for a compulsory military training scheme, it had become clear by the second half of the nineteen-fifties that continuation could not be economically justified and the modifications made early in the scheme's implementation only delayed the inevitable suspension. It became more evident as the decade progressed that large standing armies would, in the future, give way to more mobile, highly specialised and well-equipped forces. B D Beddie, in an article on Australian defence policies states that:

public opinion ... retained a strong belief in the value of lightly trained civilian soldiers. As a result, National Service training continued into 1960 although, in the form in which it existed, it probably lost all relevance to Australian strategy after 1953 and had certainly become a burden to the regular army.

Robert O'Neill goes even further, suggesting that National Service had a detrimental effect on the C.M.F due to a surfeit of disgruntled National Servicemen who had been hastily and inadequately trained. (O'Neill, 1979, p. 157)

The R.S.L. protested vigorously against the suspension of the National Service Training Scheme and was supported by some government members of parliament. However, the final decision to abandon the scheme was influenced by economic considerations. This had been the primary consideration in the cessation of previous compulsory military training schemes but this time the reorganisation of the Australian Regular Army was also a key factor.

When A. G. Townley, Minister for Defence announced the scheme's suspension in 1959, he pointed to changed strategic needs and the "unanimous view of the Chiefs of Staff as the primary reason and compared the decision with international defence practices. The need for the reappraisal of the National Service Training Scheme was referred to and the Minister's speech continued.

the national service training scheme ... was cut back in 1957 to a selective call-up of 12,000 trainees annually. The scheme was introduced at a time when global war seemed far more likely than it does today, and it has provided for the Army a pool of some 200,000 men, with basic national service training and with some years of more advanced training in the Citizen Military Forces. At the present time, however, national service greatly handicaps the development of a more effective Army because of the excessive demands

it makes on both manpower and money, without compensatory military advantages (my emphasis) (Main, 1970, p. 134)

By this stage, 3,000 Regular Army personnel were still involved in administration and instructional duties under the National Service Training Scheme. The annual total cost was said to be running at £9 million and the savings incurred from suspension of compulsory military training was regarded as being better spent on upgrading existing equipment and facilities and investing in new and more technologically advanced equipment.

(Source: "National Service Training at Puckapunyal 1951-1959" by Jane Tibby 1996)

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QUEANBEYAN VETERANS' HUB:

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Matt Keogh and Member for Eden-Monaro, Kristy McBain, have today announced RSL LifeCare Veteran Services will receive a \$5.4 million grant to develop a new Veterans' and Families' Hub in Queanbeyan.

This Hub will be established by RSL LifeCare, working in partnership with RSL NSW and other local ex-service organisations, to develop the dedicated space to support veterans and their families.

The Queanbeyan Hub will be developed in a "Hub and Spoke" model across the electorate of Eden-Monaro and the ACT, connecting to 10 RSL sub-branches in the ACT and in nearby NSW to provide outreach services across the region.

With more than 4,500 veterans in the Queanbeyan region and more than 22,000 in the ACT, this unique model will be so important to ensure veterans and their families across the region can access services and supports close to home.

The proposal continues to build on RSL LifeCare Veteran Services' own strong connections to both the NSW and ACT veteran communities through their existing Hubs.

The expansion of the Veterans' and Families' Hubs network in Queanbeyan is part of the Albanese Government's \$46.7 million commitment to deliver ten Veterans' and Families' Hubs across the country.

For more information about Veterans' and Families' Hubs, visit: www.dva.gov.au/vfhubs

TWEED/NORTH COAST:

GREAT NEWS FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES IN THE TWEED/NORTH COAST

The Albanese Government is committed to providing the best services and supports possible for Defence personnel, veterans and families and today we've reached a new milestone.

More than 25,000 veterans and their families will be better off, with the Albanese Government today announcing a \$5.445 million grant has been awarded to RSL LifeCare, working with RSL NSW, to establish a Veterans' and Families' Hub in the Tweed/North Coast region of New South Wales.

Veterans who live just over the border will also benefit as RSL LifeCare and RSL NSW have established a firm relationship with RSL Queensland to best support veterans no matter which side of the border they are on.

Following significant community consultation and demographics analysis, the services at the Tweed/North Coast Hub will focus on providing access to physical and mental health services, home care assistance, access to fee-free training, housing assistance, transition, social and family support.

The expansion of the Veterans' and Families' Hubs network in the Tweed/North Coast region is part of the Government's \$46.7 million commitment to deliver ten new Veterans' and Families' Hubs across the country.

For more information about Veterans' and Families' Hubs, visit www.dva.gov.au/vfhubs

THE BEATLES IN AUSTRALIA 1964 – 60 YEARS AGO:

In the United Kingdom, military conscription existed for two periods in modern times. The first was from 1916 to 1920, and the second from 1939 to 1960. The last conscripted soldiers left the service in 1963. It was legally designated as "Military Service" from 1916 to 1920, and as "National Service" from 1939 to 1960. However, between 1939 and 1948, it was often referred to as "War Service". None of The Beatles did military service. Their birth dates fell just outside the defined National Service periods.

The Beatles would never have formed if they hadn't narrowly escaped being drafted into the army. The band's Sir Paul McCartney said the group – which originally came together in 1960 – were lucky to have met when they did, as up until that year National Service in the British military was compulsory for almost all men aged between 18 and 51. He said: "A couple of years earlier, we would have been in the Army, and it's very doubtful that The Beatles would have formed. We would have been at Aldershot, or wherever, in various camps, and might not have even met."

All the rest is history as they say, but for the youth of Australia, life would never be the same again. Philip O'Brien recalls the Fab Four's impact. By Philip O'Brien, June 3, 2014.

"That was (expletive deleted) great," John Lennon said, his Scouse lilt dragging out the remark.

The object of his regard was the creative lighting that Australian singer Johnny Chester had used while performing the Peggy Lee song *Fever*. "I just wanted to make it memorable," Chester recalls. "The house lights were turned off and I had ultra-violet lighting to pick out the white gloves of the bass player and drummer with a red spotlight shining on my face."



Flash back: (back row, far right): Noel Tresider; Johnny Devlin (third from right); Johnny Chester (fourth from right; members of the group The Phantoms (in white suits)). Seated: Kenn Brodziak (centre); Dick Lean (fourth from right). Sitting on floor: (from left to right): Alan Field; George Harrison; Paul McCartney; John Lennon; Ringo Starr; Derek Taylor. (Can anyone fill the missing names?)

Chester was one of the local acts who supported the Beatles on their Australian tour in June, 1964. It's 50 years ago but he has never forgotten that backstage remark from one of pop music's greats.

This week marks the half century since the Beatles made their only tour to Australasia. For three weeks, the Beatles turned Australia and New Zealand upside-down as they performed 32 concerts in eight cities. Crowds lined city streets to see them. Young women risked their lives to meet them. Their appeal crossed the generations. And they prompted an unprecedented marketing frenzy.

All the while, a group of young Australian support performers - including Chester - had the experience of a lifetime: a ringside seat at one of the great events in 20th century Australian popular culture.

So, what was the experience of the tour like for them? Did it help their respective careers? And what influence did the tour have on the directions that Australian popular music took in the years after?



Fans outside the Sheraton Hotel, Sydney.

Hundreds of fans huddled in the rain as the Beatles' flight touched down at Sydney's Mascot airport just before 7:45am on Thursday June 11, 1964. Australian television, then just eight years old, broadcast the event live. Hundreds of thousands of viewers watched

as the Beatles were ferried to the terminal on the back of a truck, wrestling with umbrellas being turned inside out by the wind and rain. Inside, they faced the first of many press conferences, replying to often inane questions with good-natured humour.

At first, Chester was disappointed that he couldn't use his regular band, the Chessmen, but eventually signed a contract for £125 (\$250) a week. "It was such a thrill to be asked that I would have probably paid for the opportunity," he laughs. Devlin signed but was less impressed with the money, at the time earning between £200 (\$400) and £300 (\$600) per week for his regular gigs.

Australian entrepreneur Kenn Brodziak had booked the group 12 months earlier, just before the eruption of Beatlemania, for an unbelievable £2500 (\$5000) per week. The support acts for the tour were booked by venues manager Dick Lean. Melbourne singer Johnny Chester had already supported several international acts and compered the television program *Teen Time*. Johnny Devlin, a major star in New Zealand and Australian since the late 1950s, was selected because of his trans-Tasman appeal. And Melbourne-based instrumental group The Phantoms, styled on Britain's The Shadows, were chosen as backing band for Chester and Devlin.



The Beatles in Melbourne in 1964.

For Noel Tresider, keyboard player with The Phantoms, the experience of being thrust into the madness of Beatlemania was even more striking than for the other Australian support acts.

“I was brought in especially for the tour,” he recalls. “I was 23 years old and studying chemistry at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. My musical career was just part-time and the £50 a week contract was much more than the three guineas a week I was earning as an accompanist on radio 3DB in Melbourne.”

After a day’s rest in Sydney, the Beatles headed for the opening concerts in Adelaide in a chartered Fokker Friendship aircraft. As throughout the tour, the support acts travelled with the Beatles. Ringo Starr, recovering from tonsillitis, was yet to arrive in Australia and his place was filled in Adelaide by British drummer Jimmy Nicol.



The Beatles wave to the crowd below from the balcony of the Southern Cross Hotel in Melbourne, during their Australia/NZ tour, June 1964.



The Beatles leave Sydney airport for New Zealand, 21 June 1964.

Tresider remembers the crowds, estimated at more than 250,000 people, that lined the route from Adelaide airport to the city. The Beatles traveled in a convertible, the rest of the party in sedans. "The fans were all screaming as we went past. They had no idea who was in the cars."

Audiences paid up to 37/- (\$3.70) a seat for the concerts. There were two sessions a night, one at 6pm and the second at 8:30pm.



A fan with a ticket to the Beatles concert at Sydney Stadium during the Sydney leg of their Australian tour, 16 June 1964.

By today's standards it was an unusual format. The first half would begin with British compere Alan Field performing several Frank Sinatra songs. He would then introduce Devlin, dressed in a black leather suit, who sang four numbers including the hit *C'mon Everybody*. Chester would follow with four numbers ranging from Elvis Presley's *(You're So Square) Baby, I Don't Care* to Little Richard's *Miss Ann*. The 45-minute first half would conclude with the British instrumental group Sounds Incorporated, who were part of Beatles manager Brian Epstein's stable.

After the interval the Beatles would perform the second half of the show, a 30-minute set of just 11 songs from their then first two albums, as well as *Can't Buy Me Love* from their soon-to-be released *A Hard Day's Night*.

The Australian support acts, after finishing their performances each night, would always remain to watch the proceedings. And "watch" was the operative word. "You couldn't hear the music," Devlin recalls. "It was a mad screaming frenzy. Chester agrees: "None of us were used to anything on this scale. Although the adulation wasn't directed at us, it was hard not to get caught up in all the excitement."



In the 1950s, singers such as Johnny Ray and Frank Sinatra had attracted screaming audiences. However, this was the first time that a group, outside a Royal Tour, had enjoyed such hysteria and blanket media coverage.

Bob Rogers, then a disc jockey for Sydney radio station 2SM, was with the group throughout the tour. "To be on tour with the Beatles meant living every minute upside-down and inside-out," he recalls. "It was mentally and physically exhausting. And everything the Beatles said or did was of momentous importance, even if they'd said or done it many times before. That was part of Beatlemania."

Off-stage, the Beatles were unassuming. "Between shows, we would eat together and talk in the dressing rooms," Chester says. "I remember having a long talk with George Harrison backstage at Festival Hall in Melbourne. We shared a similar interest in cars – with one difference. He had just bought an E-type Jag while I was still driving my FE Holden."

Tresider remembers swapping jokes with Lennon and chatting with McCartney as he played his guitar backstage. He also remembers the crush to attend the after-show parties on tour. "These were mostly people who were well-connected or in society. And there were lots of girls who were very keen to party with anybody from the tour."

Devlin enjoyed a friendly relationship with John Lennon, one heightened by helping to solve major sound problems at the concerts in Wellington when Lennon threatened to cancel the remainder of the tour.

The final concert was held in Brisbane's Festival Hall on Tuesday, June 30. Afterwards, the entire tour party gathered together for a group photograph. The Beatles said goodbye and left for their hotel. The following day they flew out of Australia.

The current Powerhouse Museum exhibition "The Beatles in Australia", on show in Melbourne, suggests that the Beatles' tour was "a catalyst for immense social, political and cultural change that took place [in Australia] throughout the remainder of the decade."

But for the Australian support acts on that tour, the association with the Beatles was more varied. The performances by Devlin had impressed Beatles' manager Brian Epstein, who suggested he might do well in Britain and invited him to stay in touch with the group's press manager Derek Taylor.

"I did go to England in 1965 but, by then, Taylor had broken up with the Beatles so it all went a bit haywire," Devlin recalls. "But I managed to get some work over there as well as a recording contract with Columbia Records." He returned to Australia in 1967.

For Chester's career, the raised profile from being associated with the Beatles presented a different opportunity. "Several months after the tour, ABC television offered me the opportunity to host a national television show with my group, The Chessmen. That was *Teen Scene*, which was broadcast in 1964 and '65. Going to work in England was an option I never considered. By that stage, I'd made my mind up that I wanted to get into country music. I don't think that I could really have made any more of the Beatles tour than I did."

Meanwhile, for Tresider, it was back to chemistry studies as well as his part-time musical career with radio 3DB and rock and roll band The Premiers. He went on to have a successful career in chemical engineering. "A year after the tour, my association with the Beatles was forgotten. Now, when I'm introduced, it's mentioned all the time."

The Phantoms, the group with which Tresider played with on the tour, eventually split up with bass player Pete Watson going on to form the band MPD Ltd. And that points to one important effect the Beatles had on the direction of Australian music at the time.

"The Beatles tour changed Australian pop music completely," Tresider observes. "Previously, the popular style had been been a lead singer with his backing band or instrumental bands in the style of The Shadows. Now, the fashion was for bands, like MPD, where everyone sang."

But the Beatles' influence on Australian bands was even more significant because of the large population of young, British migrants in Australia at the time, argues Melbourne-based academic, writer and broadcaster Lawrie Zion. "Many of these British-born immigrants, especially in Adelaide, identified closely with the Beatles," he says, adding that most of the successful Australian groups that emerged in the wake of the Beatles' tour – including the Twilights and the Easybeats – had at least one British-born member.

There were also more tangible influences in hairstyles and fashion. Chester recalls that, after the Beatles' tour, the accepted brushed-back ('Rocker') hairstyle for men was now challenged by the brushed-forward ('Jazzer') style favoured by the Beatles.

And Tresider remembers how the tour made unfashionable the gaudy band uniforms of the earlier 1960s: "For the Melbourne concerts, the Phantoms wore bright blue lamé suits with patent leather, pointed-toe boots. When the Beatles saw us in this attire they fell about laughing. Those suits were never worn again."

STOCKTON BIGHT DISASTER COMMEMORATED:

Soldiers from the 5th Combat Services Support Battalion (5CSSB), veterans, and community leaders recently assembled at Fort Scratchley near Newcastle to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the 1954 Stockton Bight disaster to honour the three soldiers who perished in the training exercise tragedy. The three soldiers who perished - Corporal N Moran, Trooper N Mornement and Private R Blackie - were members of the amphibious Citizen Military Forces units the 15th Northern Rivers Lancers (15NRL) and 16th Company, Royal Australian Army Service Corps (16 Coy RAASC).

At 2am on March 8, 1954, they were part of a contingent of 184 soldiers and 21 amphibious vehicles from the two units that departed Camp Shortland for an amphibious move to Mungo Brush near Myall Lakes to conduct their annual camp. At about 3.15 am, the weather suddenly changed and the convoy encountered high winds and large seas, causing many of the amphibious vehicles to flounder. By dawn the amphibious convoy was scattered 16km along Stockton, with several vehicles sunk, and many others under tow.

A funeral with full military honours was held two days later at Christ Church Cathedral Newcastle for Corporal Moran and Trooper Mornement. Private Blackie's body was never recovered.

The commemoration was organised by 16th Combat Service Support Team (16CSST) of 5 CSSB, which traces its lineage to the two units involved in the tragedy. Officer Commanding 16CSST Major Jack Wachsmann said it was important to remember the sacrifice of those who lost their lives that night while in the service of their country, as well as those who were affected by the incident. "We had nine wonderful veterans of the tragedy with us at the event – all in their early 90s -and it was extremely humbling to see what the commemoration meant to them," Major Wachsmann said. "To this day many are still troubled by the tragedy, but they and their families said this commemoration, in many ways, brought a sense of closure around it for them."

Major Wachsmann said the tragedy brought out the best in the local community, with many helping with the rescue operation. "There were many brave acts during the

rescue, including by members of the Stockton Surf Life Saving Club [SLSC] who were woken during the night, and rushed to assist rescuing members from the surf,” Major Wachsmann said.

Bravery medals awarded during the rescue included a George Medal, British Empire Medal, and Queens Commendation for Brave Conduct.

Major Wachsmann said formally commemorating the tragedy was important not only in acknowledging the sacrifice of those who perished and were affected by it, but it also provided an important opportunity to reaffirm the Army’s strong connection to the local community.

“Our links to the local community are very important and we were glad to be joined by nine survivors and their families, and representatives from 16 Transport Association, Stockton Beach SLSC, Fort Scratchley Historical Society, and 1/15 Royal NSW Lancers to mark this tragedy,” he said.



A report in the Sydney Morning Herald on 9 March 1954 (source: trove.nla.gov.au).



The 70th anniversary commemoration of the Stockton Bight Disaster, Newcastle NSW

The next edition of “Nasho” is due out circa 1/8/2024.



NASHO

