

NASHO



An Official Journal
of the
NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
ABN: ABN 67 616 946 831

Patron: Matt Anderson PSM, Director Australian War Memorial
President: Ron Brandy
Editor Pro Tem: Peter Norman, National Secretary

Winter 2024 Edition



Anzac Day Parade Darwin 25th April 2024 – There was no formal group of NSAA Nashos in the march.



Anzac Day Parade Darwin 25th April 2024



Anzac Day Parade Sydney 25th April 2024 - see also [page 13](#).

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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. Andersons 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-Branched. 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.

This is the third edition of “Nasho”, the newsletter for Nashos who were previously members of NSAA states and territories which have closed along the way. Former Northern Territory members joined in 2023 and New South Wales members joined for 2024. “Nasho” will achieve the best readership if readers make comments and suggestions for subsequent editions.



Pete Norman

NSAA National Secretary, Nasho Editor Pro Tem.

**Those who like my
posts are happier,
more intelligent and
better-looking than
those who don't;
according to a study
I made up.**

FEATURE ARTICLES: PUBLIC SOCIAL ATTITUDES DURING THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS:

Our Nasho fraternity may be interested in an abbreviated summary of the social attitudes of ordinary Australians during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. These wars were the catalysts for the introduction of the two National Service schemes, 1951-59 and 1965-72. This article is not an original analysis. The abridged summaries below were copied from secondary sources, being the National Museum Australia (Korea), from Jane Tibby in her 1996 work "National Service Training at Puckapunyal 1951-1959" (Korea) and from the DVA Anzac Portal (Vietnam).

When I was a 20 year-old Nasho in 1965, I was too green and too limited in my formal education to have much of a knowledge of history, world politics and global threats. I really had no opinion. But I was happy to do my bit, in honour of my ancestors who I was now following. I figure now that I was not alone. As you read on below, note that the emphasis is about the thoughts of the Australian general public, as was tabulated by historians in retrospect 20-30 years after the ends of both wars.

1. KOREAN WAR - PUBLIC SOCIAL ATTITUDES RETROSPECTIVE:

Prime Minister Robert Menzies, though fervently anti-Communist, was not in favour of sending forces to the Korean War. However, his External Affairs Minister Sir Percy Spender recognised the importance of forging a closer relationship with the US. Within days of the North Korean invasion in June 1950, Spender pressured the acting Prime Minister Arthur Fadden to commit Australia to the war while Menzies was overseas. Spender realised that Britain was about to announce it would send ground forces to Korea. He judged that if the British became militarily engaged, Menzies would eventually follow suit, but Canberra would gain more credit in Washington if it made the commitment first. Menzies, when presented with the fait accompli of Australian military action in Korea, publicly proclaimed his support. Within Australia there was very little political or community opposition to involvement in the Korean War. At the time there was strong anti-communist feeling in Australia as shown by Petrov affair and the Australian Labor Party split.

The Korean War was primarily a land war. In September 1950 the government sent the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), followed by 1 RAR and 2 RAR. Australia did not introduce conscription for the Korean War even though this commitment required almost all of Australia's regular infantry troops.

The Australian military served with distinction during the war. At the Battle of Kapyong an Australian battalion (approximately 800 soldiers) along with another from Canada defeated an entire Chinese division (approximately 15,000 men) and prevented it from taking Seoul. Both battalions were awarded US Presidential Unit Citations. Nearly 18,000 Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses served in the war. It is not known exactly how many people died in the Korean War, but an estimated four million Korean and Chinese people died. More than half were Korean civilians. About 37,000 UN troops were killed; 339 Australians died and 1216 were wounded.

Australian servicemen and women returning from Korea were largely greeted with indifference. The Australian public was unsupportive of a war that had become mired in stalemate with an enemy that posed no direct threat to Australia.

Source: <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/korean-war> - National Museum Australia:

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Australian Gallup Polls Nos. 537 - 547 published In August-September 1948 showed that 75% of those polled favoured compulsory spare-time military training for young men. In answer to the question "Do you favour, or oppose, compulsory military training for young men?" 83% of Liberal/Country Party voters and 69% of Labour Party supporters answered in support of such a scheme. The accompanying report suggests that a large group of those polled believed discipline to be good for young men and quotes a Brisbane mother as saying "My boys would be properly trained in case of war." Throughout the nineteen forties, regardless of whether Australia was at war or at peace, over seventy per cent of those people polled supported training for young men: 1943 it was 79%; 1945-74% and 73% in 1946.

The need for preparedness in case of war is reflected In the November 1948 poll in which 67% of respondents expressed the belief that there would be another world war within

ten years. These figures compare with only 35% of Britons and 57% of Americans sharing this view. This is not to say that Australians were overwhelmed by pessimism, In the February/March polls of 1949, Australians expressed themselves as "happy".

As the push to establish a national service scheme gained momentum, an Australian Gallup Poll Report In July/August of 1950 highlighted the findings of poll no. 700 In the headline - MILITARY TRAINING - 9 OUT OF 10 ELECTORS FAVOUR 3 MONTHS' CAMP

87% approve.

11% against

2% undecided

This was seen as one of the biggest favourable majorities ever found by the Australian Gallup Poll, with 94% of LCP respondents and 80% of Labour supporters favouring the scheme. However, voters were less well disposed to the prospect of sending young conscripts overseas, with 77% of ALP voters and 59% of LCP voters opposed.

By the time the call-up system was actually operating and the first Intake about to embark on the initial three months' training, voters were asked about the ideal age to call up young men. Of the 1600 people polled:

14% responded 17 years

66% 18 years

4% 19 years

5% 20 years

8% 21 years

3% had no opinion.

Poll No. 866 taken in July-August 1952 showed that three out of five people polled favoured spare-time military training for men aged between twenty and twenty-nine. In this poll, a breakdown of 64% of women and 58% of men favoured such a move. In terms of the existing scheme, by 1953, after two years of compulsory military training, and at a time when changes were being considered, eight out of ten people responding to Australian Gallup Poll No. 926 still favoured the National Service Training Scheme.

In November 1954, the question of whether all young men should be liable for call up was posed in Australian Gallup Poll No. 1049. Two months previously, the government had announced that rising costs meant that the scheme would have to be curtailed. Nevertheless, 66% of respondents still believed in universal training; the most common reasons given for this belief were that training "makes men out of them", "good for one, good for all", and "readiness for an emergency".

When further cuts were proposed in 1957, the July-August poll No. 1252 canvassed responses to economically driven cuts to the National Service Training Scheme. In a report headed *Opinion on training cuts divided* it was pointed out that the public had yet to decide on the wisdom of a restricted intake of one in five eligible men. When asked whether they favoured or opposed the change, the 2000 respondents indicated as follows:

Favour	42%
Oppose	44%
Undecided	14%

Men tended to favour the cuts while women were generally opposed. Those in favour of the "one in five" plan usually indicated a belief that a large army had become obsolete and that military training under the current scheme was a waste of money and manpower. On the other hand, opponents argued that all men should experience the discipline of military training, which was seen as being good for the youths' development.

In Australian Gallup Poll No. 1352, published in October-November, voters expressed strong disagreement with the government's moves to discontinue compulsory military training, even its limited form. Sixty-four per cent indicated a preference for a return to universal training, another 20% favoured a call-up of 15,000 young men each year, while 10% supported the abolition of the scheme. Six per cent had no opinion. The final Australian Gallup Poll on the nineteen-fifties National Service Training Scheme was published in January-February 1960. Poll No. 1435 revealed that only 26% of respondents approved of the cessation of compulsory military training.

In **Policies and Partisans - Australian Electoral Opinion 1941-1968**, Murray Goot suggests that party allegiances in relation to compulsory military training were "an issue of slight partisanship" early in the period 1950-1959 "but of none in the second" (Goat, 1969, p.

74). While the ALP had long held to a position of opposition to compulsory military training, Goot suggests that.

In the early 1950s it [the ALP] moved away from a position of unequivocal opposition to C.M.T. (Goot, 1969, p. 169).

Labor supporters had clearly differed from the official party line for some time, for, between 1942 and 1950 only 8% - 36% of Labor voters "..... opposed the Introduction of compulsory military training "(Goot, 1969, p. 179). The question of sending conscripted men overseas was, however, opposed by both Labor and non-Labor voters (Goot, 1969, p. 180).

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Source: Secondary source "National Service Training at Puckapunyal 1951-1959" by Jane Tibby 1996, confirmed 2024, contact C/- Pete Norman, editor Nasho magazine.

2. VIETNAM WAR - PUBLIC SOCIAL ATTITUDES RETROSPECTIVE:

Australian public opinion about the war in Vietnam moved through several stages over the decade-long involvement. In the beginning a largely disinterested public paid little attention to a war that involved very few Australian soldiers, especially as they were members of the regular Army engaged in a training role. At the same time, most Australians were wary of communism's spread through Asia and when Australia's commitment to Vietnam increased to a regular Army battalion in 1965 there was little negative reaction.

News that Australia would contribute a task force to the war in 1966, and that this expansion would mean front line service for national servicemen, sparked a rise in the number of anti-war groups. Some were opposed more to conscription than to the war itself. In 1967, when the deployment of an extra battalion to Vietnam was announced, public opposition to the war increased. An opinion poll revealed that 46 percent of the electorate disapproved of the decision, 17 percent were undecided. Only 37 percent were in favour, marking the first time that opponents of the commitment outnumbered supporters. In the period before this, opposition to the war, as the ALP had learnt to its

cost in 1966, was not a vote winner. Despite the 1967 opinion poll results, it took until 1969 before it was electorally popular to oppose the war. In August that year an opinion poll found, for the first time, that a majority of Australians favoured a withdrawal from Vietnam. But public opinion and public protest played a relatively small role in policy decisions about Vietnam. Australia's withdrawal from the war was already underway in the early 1970s when widespread protests, known as moratorium marches, took place in the country's major cities. All through the war Australia followed America's lead (often with regional concerns at the forefront of government thinking) and once the United States decided to leave Vietnam, Australia was left with no choice but to follow suit.

Twenty years after the North Vietnamese victory, in April 1995, an opinion poll marking the thirtieth anniversary of Prime Minister Menzies' commitment of a battalion to Vietnam and the twentieth anniversary of Saigon's fall found that 55% of Australians thought that it was wrong to have sent troops to Vietnam and 30 percent considered it the right thing to have done.

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Source: DVA Anzac Portal.

THE NSW NASHOS:

The following letter was sent to all NSW NSAA Members following the closure of the NSAA Branch.



THE NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

ABN 67 616 946 831

Patron: Matt Anderson PSM, Director Australian War Memorial

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WELCOME TO EX-NSW BRANCH MEMBERS

Greetings to all ex-members of the NSW Branch who have now transferred into direct membership of NSAA National.

I welcome you on behalf of the NSAA National Executive, President Ron Brandy, Vice President Noel Moulder, Treasurer Richard Tregear, Public Officer John Thorne ESM, and myself National Secretary Pete Norman.

You have decided to continue as a member of our association because you wish to maintain a connection to the Nasho community, but in a different way to your NSW membership. The direct membership group is now spread around NSW and the Northern Territory, so meetings and get-togethers are impracticable. However, we will connect with you via a periodic "Nasho" newsletter such as the edition accompanying this letter. I particularly draw your attention to the National President's Bulletin on page 5 of "Nasho".

Also accompanying today's letter is your new membership card. Please retain it as a perennial card because it's a once-only issue for your wallet.

Should you have any issues now or in future, please contact me as per the contact details in the letterhead above. Please note that for the time being I will occupy the position of "Nasho" newsletter editor, thus I will be constantly seeking suggestions and contributions for subsequent editions. Letters to the editor are also welcome for publication.

Best wishes for your ongoing health and well being, and may your continued membership of NSAA be a good decision for you.

Pete Norman, National Secretary, 10/4/2024

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National Service Honour Roll: 287,000 served; 212 died on active service

KEITH PAYNE VC SAYS:

Reprinted from THE AUSTRALIAN APRIL 24, 2024

Keith Payne says the Victoria Cross he earned in Vietnam in 1969 was the signal honour of his long and decorated life. At 90, he is the doyen of Australia's living VC recipients, the soldier's soldier who never doubted where his duty lay. "What happens in war, stays in war," Mr Payne insists, and on this day-of-days for our veterans and service personnel he has come out with guns blazing in defence of fellow VC holder Ben Roberts-Smith.



Keith Payne VC OAM, Mark Donaldson VC, Daniel Keighran VC and Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG together in 2015. Picture: Alex Coppel, The Australian.

Until now, Mr Payne has kept his distance from the claims and counterclaims swirling around Mr Roberts-Smith's conduct in Afghanistan that led to him launching an ill-fated Federal Court defamation case against the Nine newspapers last year and being branded a war criminal by the trial judge. Mr Roberts-Smith is appealing the decision.

While Mr Payne won't be drawn on the detail of the devastating civil finding against Mr Roberts-Smith, he told The Australian he wouldn't turn his back on a fellow soldier either, just as he refused to abandon the 40 wounded or cut-off comrades he was credited with saving all those years ago in Vietnam.

"In Ben's case, I am very, very sorry and a little angry that that sort of thing happened to him," he said ahead of a round of Anzac Day appearances in Melbourne.

"Because what happens in war, stays in war. There are many, many things that happened during the First World War, the Second World War and the campaigns since that have never been mentioned because it belongs to war and it should remain in the war."

Asked if he counted Mr Roberts-Smith as a friend, Mr Payne said: "Of course. If I could, I would offer him a job ... I wish Ben all the best of luck." Contrary to some accounts, Mr Roberts-Smith, 45, is not Australia's most decorated –living soldier.

That honour belongs to Mr Payne, who holds four medals for gallantry, including the VC, and 27 other military decorations, against Mr Roberts-Smith's still impressive tally of three bravery awards and 11 decorations.

Mr Payne also holds the distinction of being the last Australian to receive the VC as an imperial honour; the other three surviving VC holders, Mr Roberts-Smith and fellow Afghanistan veterans Mark Donaldson and Daniel Keighran, were awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia, instigated in 1991.

What does it take to earn the ultimate recognition for bravery in war? A reflective Mr Payne said: "You know, what occurred was pure and simple doing my duty, what I was responsible for. That goes back to a lot of the –holders of the Victoria Cross ... as hard as it is, you've just got to do your duty."

Mr Payne remains surprised that he survived that chaotic night in May 1969 when he was on secondment to the US special forces command, leading a company of elite South Vietnamese troops stiffened by Australian and American combat specialists.



Warrant Officer Class II Keith Payne VC at the time he was awarded the VC in 1969.

Confronted on three sides by a vastly superior force of North Vietnamese regulars, most of Mr Payne's men were driven back and separated from the stragglers and wounded. He was determined to reach them.

After organising a defensive perimeter, he spent hours crawling through the jungle to make contact with the 40-odd survivors. He carried some back to safety and organised the rescue of the rest, then led the battered company past the North Vietnamese positions to a nearby US base.

Remarkably, Mr Payne himself was injured: a rocket splinter had slammed into his skull and he didn't want to touch the heavily bleeding wound, reasoning if he didn't know how bad it was, he wouldn't have to worry about it. He was knocked off his feet by a mortar explosion and also hit in a hand and arm.

"A few minutes in there were pretty hairy," he said. "Yes, I was bloody scared. But your concern is not only for yourself, it's for your men and your family in case things don't work out."

He agrees wholeheartedly with advertising guru John Singleton, who recently issued "an apology ... from a coward" to Mr Roberts-Smith in a paid spot in *The Australian*, that people who haven't gone to war shouldn't judge those who have. "That is why things that happen in war, remain in war," Mr Payne said.

Rejecting the contention that the former SAS trooper should be stripped of his VC, he said: "You can't take the action away from the man ... it is not allowable under the record."

His wife, Florence, 89, who has shared his life for the past 65 years and a home in Mackay, north Queensland, said the marriage might not have lasted if their "love for one another wasn't as strong as it is".

He and friend Rick Meehan, a former navy man, have set up a charity, the Keith Payne VC Veterans Benefit Group, to raise funds and agitate on behalf of ex-servicemen doing it tough. They will be together in Melbourne on Thursday when Mr Payne is hosted at an

Entering his 10th decade, Mr Payne is not done fighting – for better treatment of the veterans who, like him, came home with PTSD and other psychological injuries.



Mr Payne with wife, Florence, at the Anzac Day march in Mackay in 2021. Picture: Lillian Watkins

Anzac Day brunch by the Essendon Football Club and the blockbuster at the MCG between the Bombers and reigning AFL premiers Collingwood.

He's certainly in demand. Mr Payne has received word that King Charles would like to catch up when he makes his first visit to Australia as sovereign in October, health permitting.

They go back. After the late queen presented his VC in 1970, he got to know the then Prince of Wales, who backed his campaign on PTSD.

"I've corresponded with him on the post-traumatic stress disorder situation for years," he said. "It's just a real natural sort of friendship."

He's also got a project going in Fiji, where he's trying to repatriate from PNG the remains of World War II VC recipient Sefanaia Sukanaivalu, killed on the island of Bougainville in 1944.

Like Mr Payne, the Fijian corporal put himself in harm's way to rescue comrades; when he was hit, Sukanaivalu deliberately broke cover so he could be

finished off by the Japanese, ensuring no one would have to come for him.



Keith Payne is awarded the Victoria Cross by Queen Elizabeth II during a ceremony on-board the Royal Yacht Britannia in Brisbane in 1970.

If he can get the selfless soldier home, Mr Payne hopes to persuade the Fijian and Australian governments to fund a "rest and recuperation" centre for ex-service personnel from across the Pacific at the new gravesite in Fiji.

He's in touch with Fijian President Wiliame Katonivere and Anthony Albanese, arguing the plan is a good fit with Australia's diplomatic efforts in the Pacific to keep the Chinese at bay.

"If you do that, you've got the spokes of a wheel going up to a lot of other islands," he said. "I think I'm getting somewhere ... but we'll see."

Although the long, tender goodbye for the WWII veterans will rightly be front and centre at commemorations around the country on Thursday – many more marches will take place without a living link to that great generation – Mr Payne is acutely aware that his peer group is not getting any younger.

He first saw combat in the 1950-53 Korean War, whose veterans are also fading fast, aged on average 93. Their number is forecast to dip below 1000 next year, according to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The average age of Australia's 34,000 (64,000 served Vietnam veterans is 78.

Asked what Anzac Day meant to him, Mr Payne said: "It means everything ... a show of respect each year for those who made the supreme sacrifice in carrying out their duty against an enemy of our nation.

"That's why the general public stands and watches the old Diggers marching up the street. It's a day when the country says thank you."

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Reprinted from THE AUSTRALIAN APRIL 24, 2024

OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING – A DIGGER DIED TODAY:

*He was getting old and paunchy
And his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the R.S.L.,
Telling stories of the past.*

*Of a war that he once fought in
And the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his mates;
They were heroes, every one.*

*And 'tho sometimes to his neighbours
His tales became a joke,
All his mates listened quietly
For they knew where of he spoke.*

*But we'll hear his tales no longer,
For ol' Jack has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer
For a Digger died today.*

*He won't be mourned by many,
Just his children and his wife.
For he lived an ordinary,
Very quiet sort of life.*

*He held a job and raised a family,
Going quietly on his way;
And the world won't note his passing,
'Tho a Digger died today.*

*When politicians leave this earth,
Their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing,
And proclaim that they were great.*

*The Media tell of their life stories
From the time that they were young,
But the passing of a Digger
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.*

*Is the greatest contribution
To the welfare of our land,
Some smoothie who breaks his promise
And cons his fellow man?*

*Or the ordinary fellow
Who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country
And offers up his life?*

*The politician's stipend
And the style in which they live,
Are often disproportionate,
To the service that they give.*

*While the ordinary Digger,
Who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal
And perhaps a pension, small.*

*It is not the politicians
With their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom
That our country now enjoys.*

*Should you find yourself in danger,
With your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out,
With his ever-waffling stand?*

*Or would you want a Digger
His home, his country, his kin,
Just a common Digger,
Who would fight until the end?*

*He was just a common Digger,
And his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us
We may need his likes again.*

*For when countries are in conflict,
We find the Digger's part,
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the politicians start.*

*If we cannot do him honour
While he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage
At the ending of his days.*

*Perhaps just a simple headline
In the paper that might say:
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,
A DIGGER DIED TODAY."*

If you are proud of our Armed Forces,
then send it to ALL your friends ... you'll
be glad you did.

NEVER LEAVE A MATE BEHIND - MILITARY ETHOS – BY BERT HOEBEE:



Bert Hoebee

As the sun rises on each Vietnam Veterans', Remembrance, National Servicemen's and ANZAC Day, many of the 19,000 NS men who served in Vietnam will be looking forward to a day of camaraderie, respectful honouring of comrades lost, tall tales and true and the odd drink or two with old mates. They will proudly wear their full array of medals during the activities around the country to reflect and to honour and recognise every individual who served in Vietnam. That is only right and proper.



Not necessarily so for some 2,500 National Service conscripts, who, if they choose to or are still able to attend, may face opprobrium and offensive questioning by others, including friends and family, and worst of all, even ostracism as 'short timers' from some of their former comrades-in-arms, in clubs and pubs; simply because they do not wear the Republic of Vietnam's Campaign Medal (RVCM), pictured. That is definitely not right or proper. Not to express support and understanding of the predicament of these men, and engage the Ministers on their behalf, would seem to be needlessly vindictive. Must it really continue in this way?

Despite having served just as bravely as their comrades, they have not been equally respected, honoured and recognised. They have long been denied the campaign medal which was made available to all allied military personnel who served meritoriously in support of the Republic of Vietnam. Eligibility is determined by Australian authorities who are doggedly applying the 181-day eligibility criterion. They seem to go to extraordinary lengths to find ways to deny these men, instead of working with empathy to find a way to award them the medal. The denial of the RVCM came about due to an unforgivable government blunder many years ago. Even now, there is a lack of bureaucratic and political will to recognise the unfairness and inequity that these men seek to have righted.

The Campaign seeks a determination that those NS-men who served fewer than 181 days in South Vietnam (SVN), and who were returned home for discharge at the end of their prescribed service in the ARA(S) having served at least 60 days in SVN, be awarded the RVCM. This period was chosen to mirror the Republic of Vietnam's approved 60 day 'end-of-war' rule and applying it to each NS man who necessarily reached their own 'end-of-war' at the end of their compulsory service.

Meanwhile and paradoxically, in March 2022, also after a long period of similar denial, all members of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) in which all battalions contained NS men, gained retrospective eligibility for the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (RVCGWPUC). That is rather incongruous since both awards have similar intent: either for recognition of individual 'meritorious service' (RVCM), or for 'noteworthy achievements along with noble sacrifices' for 1 ATF units and their members (RVCGWPUC). We all know that from day one in Vietnam, the NS men also faced all the horrors of war. They did their duty to the maximum according to law and had no obligation at all to put off their return back to work, study and family and risk their

repatriation entitlements. Those who were killed or wounded did, of course, receive the RVCM.



Senator Paul Scarr

These NS men have been joined by Senator Paul Scarr (LNP, Queensland), who has

undertaken not to let the Campaign rest while ever he is in the Parliament. You may have heard of his impassioned speech on it in the Senate recently. Following powerful submissions by the Campaign's proponent, Mr Richard Barry, OAM, as well as Senator Scarr and others, Senator Scarr and the author briefed the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel on it in detail last year; yet the Minister refused to make a decision, on grounds that he believed that it would be unlawful to do so. All this after more than a year in office during which he was fully aware of this distressing situation, as was the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Really, Minister?

This non-decision was made even though the previous Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, with agreement from the then Minister for Defence, had recommended that approval for the issue of the RVCM be put to whole of government consideration, when the last election intervened. This was known by the cohort concerned. They were nearly there, especially when senior members of the then-opposition, even some now-Ministers had written: 'I can assure you that Federal Labor supports your campaign to have the RVCM awarded ... , on the grounds of individual justice, fairness and equity.' Many others wrote in the same vein. Due to an unconscionable betrayal and breach of trust the Campaign needs to battle on even now, despite this and overwhelming support from numerous members of all parties and many leading Australians. Notably, Australia's ex South Vietnamese servicemen and their wider community, also came out in strong support of these men. The continued denial and lack of recognition has led to even deeper withdrawal into isolation, contributed to frustration, despair and worse; even for those who were not already suffering from war-caused PTSD that is now being aggravated by their own government's obstinance and unreasonable delay in seeing them equally and properly recognised. This inhumanity needs to stop. Time is now of the essence and the Minister, guided by equity, fairness, his conscience and the Executive, has the power to resolve this matter for the benefit of these veterans. When will the Minister finally act equitably and empathetically and show

determined leadership to let these veterans now have this medal? It would be an immense contribution to the trust and morale of our armed forces of tomorrow.

© Bert Hoebee, April 2024

NSAA Disclaimer: It is the intention of the NSAA to be and remain apolitical in all matters articulated to members. However, the preceding article is critical of the present government and minister, as well as previous government and ministers. It is included verbatim in this edition of **NASHO** because the matter of the non-issue of the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM) to a small cohort of veterans on the basis of truncated tour duration, remains a concern to all members regardless of their political persuasions.

Pete Norman, Editor.

DEAR MUM AND DAD:

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am. But I like sleeping in now, cuz all yagotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, or eggs ta get or feed to stack - nothin'!! But ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz there's lotsa hot water and even some soap and a light to see what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Mum makes. You don't get fed again until noon and by that time all the city kids are bugged because we've been on a 'route march' -strewth... its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!!

This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shootin' - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's bum and it don't move and it's not firing back at ya like the Johnson's did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year! All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of piss!! You don't even load your own cartridges they comes in little boxes and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

WARTIME GOLF RULES:



TEMPORARY WARTIME GOLF RULES

1. Players are asked to collect Bomb and Shrapnel splinters to save these causing damage to the Mowing Machines.
2. In Competitions, during gunfire or while bombs are falling, playes may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.
3. The positions of known delayed action bombs are marked by red flags at a reasonably, but not guaranteed, safe distance therefrom.
4. Shrapnel and/or bomb splinters on the Fairways, or in Bunkers within a club's length of a ball, may be moved without penalty, and no penalty shall be incurred if a ball is thereby caused to move accidentally.
5. A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or if lost or destoryed, a ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.
6. A ball lying in a crater may be lifted and dropped not nearer the hole, preserving the line to the hole, without penalty.
7. A player whose stroke is affected by the simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place. Penalty one stroke.

RICHMOND GOLF CLUB
SURREY, ENGLAND
1940

The next edition of “Nasho” is due out circa 1/1/2025.



NASHO

