



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

Editor Pro Tem: Peter Norman, National Secretary

2025 3rd Trimester Edition

THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MEDAL – BELATED RECOGNITION:



Major-General Jim Barry AM MBE RFD ED Ret'd presented Nasho Jeff Rickerby with his precedent setting ADM with these words.

"It's a great privilege for me to make this presentation, because it is very close to unique. This man, Jeff Rickerby, deserves the medal. Looking after himself, and looking after another four thousand mates, in terms of beating the system and being awarded the Australian Defence Medal. I want to congratulate you sir, for your own achievement, and for setting a magnificent precedent for all those other Nashos who were cut adrift when the new Whitlam Government terminated the National Service Scheme on 5th December 1972."

The Australian Defence Medal: The Australian Defence Medal is an Australian military decoration which recognises current and former Australian Defence Force personnel who completed an initial enlistment period, or four years' service. It was established on 20 March 2006; however, it recognises qualifying efficient service of current and former Australian Defence Force Regular and Reserve personnel, including National Servicemen, who have served since 3 September 1945. It is estimated that up to one million current and ex-serving personnel are eligible for the award. At 30 June 2010, a total of 242,576 had been awarded.

ADM Criteria: The criteria also include those who could not serve the four-year qualifying period or complete an initial enlistment period for one or more of the following reasons:

- the death of a member during service.
- the discharge of the member as medically unfit due to compensable impairment.
- the discharge of the member due to a prevailing discriminatory Defence policy, as determined by the Chief of the Defence Force.

Our NSAA member Jeff Rickerby was performing his National Service when Gough Whitlam won government and immediately abolished the scheme on 5th December 1972.

On 26 April 2007, Mr Rickerby applied to Defence for an assessment of his eligibility for the Australian Defence Medal. On 15 February 2008, Defence advised Mr Rickerby that he was ineligible for the Australian Defence Medal, for the following reasons:

- An examination of your service records confirms that you commenced national service on 19 April 1972 and discharged on the ground of exceptional hardship on 15 January 1973. The obligation for national service after 8 October 1971 was 18 months full-time service and five years part-time service for those serving in the Citizen Military Forces.
- On 5 December 1972, the Australian Government suspended the operation of the national service scheme by administrative action. At this time, national servicemen had the option to discharge at their own request or continue service to complete their service obligation.
- On 23 April 2007, the Chief of the Defence Force exercised his power under the ADM Regulations to determine effective service for national servicemen for the purposes of the ADM. Under this ADM Determination, a member must complete service of no less than a minimum of 18 months full-time or five years part-time service to qualify for the medal.
- Therefore, as you did not meet the above criteria, I regret to advise that you do not qualify for the ADM.

A subsequent decision to the same effect was made on 20 January 2020. (continues on last page)

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN:

Dear members,

I am very pleased to announce a very important milestone for our member Jeffrey Rickerby, and a very likely extension to a particular cohort of National Servicemen who have not had the service recognition they deserve.

Through dogged perseverance over many years, Jeff finally won a review by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal, to overturn previous decisions declining his eligibility to be awarded the Australian Defence Medal. The Tribunal's decision reads as follows:

On 10 June 2025, the Tribunal decided to set aside the Defence decisions dated 15 February 2008 and 20 January 2020 that Mr Jeffrey Rickerby not be recommended for the Australian Defence Medal and to substitute for them a recommendation that Mr Rickerby should be awarded the Australian Defence Medal.

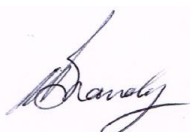
Jeff's service as a National Serviceman came to an end immediately when newly elected Prime Minister Gough Whitlam terminated the scheme. In Jeff's case, a false expedient was used in the administrative process, in that the reason for his discharge was recorded as "exceptional hardship for himself or family". Jeff based his appeal on his vehement denial of such hardship and his rightful claim that his service ended, most emphatically, because the NS scheme was terminated.

The Tribunal's thorough review extended to the critical examination of all relevant legislation, and all rules and regulations formulated for discharge administrators to implement the Prime Minister's order, some of which are now deemed to have been hastily, inadequately and erroneously constructed.

The Tribunal's decision is a wonderful reversal of the position taken by the relevant government agencies since 1972 and very likely sets a precedent for as many as 4,000 National Servicemen who ended their conscription in 1972.

I applaud Jeff on his personal achievement and for paving the way for setting a precedent for other national servicemen who were serving in 1972, to also achieve the award of the Australian Defence Medal

With warm regards to all,



Ron Brandy, National President, National Servicemen's Association of Australia

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER 2025:

Your representatives comprising the NSAA National Council meet twice a year to guide the NSAA Australia-wide. Here they are at their most recent meeting, looking towards the NSAA future from 2027, after the various states and territories and the Officer Training Unit all cease to operate in their present form.



L-R: Bob McIvor Vic, Stuart Fairbairn WA, Mike Lane NT, John Faunt ACT, Darrell Suter SA, John Thorne Public Officer, Ron Brandy National President, Noel Moulder National Vice President and NSW, Frank Miller Officer Training Unit Association, Pete Norman National Secretary, Jeff Gray Tas, Peter Kemp Vic, and Richard Tregear National Treasurer.

NATIONAL SERVICE COMMEMORATION AT THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL 19/9/2025:

The annual commemoration sponsored by the NSAA is being opened up for all National Servicemen, regardless of what ex-service organisation they may belong to. Many wreaths were laid by Nashos who are members of the NSAA across all states and territories, the Officer Training Unit (Scheyville) Association, the National Service and Combined Forces Association of Australia, Nasho Fair Go, the National Service Widows Association, the National Servicemen Association and Affiliates of NSW, (apologies if I have missed anyone). There were many other wreaths laid by many other dignitaries from the ACT and Australian governments, and most importantly, by Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the Australian War Memorial and Patron of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia.

This year's event was also celebrating the 15th anniversary of the 2010 dedication of National Service Memorial at the AWM Eastern Forecourt.



L-R: NSAA National Patron and Director of the Australian War Memorial Matt Anderson PSM and Ron Brandy National President of the NSAA addressing the assembled Nashos and VIPs.



NSAA National Council Delegate Mike Lane representing Direct National Members of the Northern Territory and Greg Mawson, President of the National Servicemen's Association of NSW and Affiliates. Derek Crawford Gosford City at rear.



AWM25.PR.126.033A4512



Frank Miller, Chairman of the Officer Training Unit (Scheyville) Association and Ron Brandy NSAA National President have just laid wreaths. The OTU-A is a member association of the NSAA.



NSAA NSW Pastor Wayne Lyons



Above and below: Some of the guests invited by the NSAA to the AWM 15th Anniversary of the Dedication of the National Service Memorial and the formal dinner the previous night.



Photo credits: David Whittaker AWM and NSAA Secretary Pete Norman

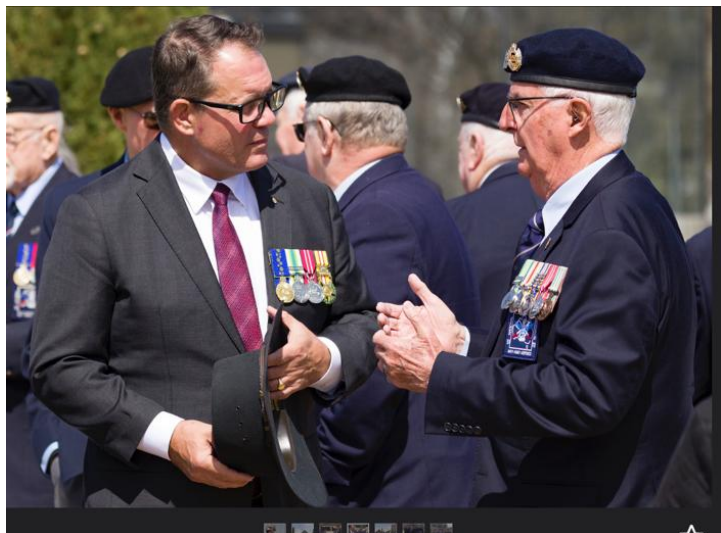
The National Servicemen's Association of Australia – Open and welcoming to all Nashos, families and friends.

National Servicemen's Association
Wreath laying Ceremony Friday 19
September 2025 at The Australian War
Memorial.

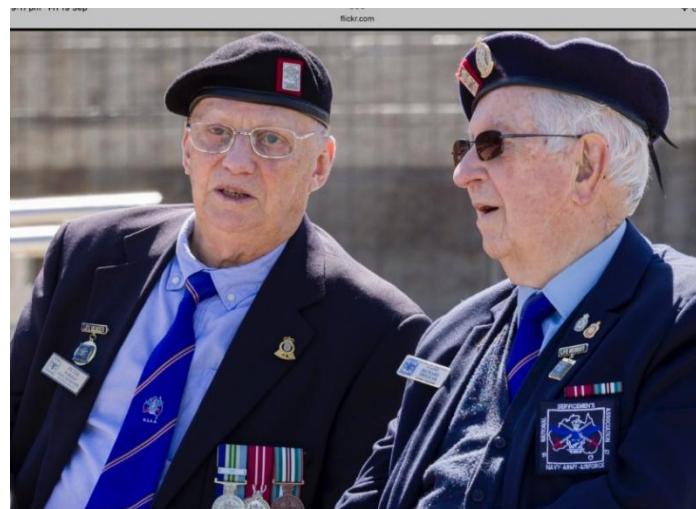


Movement 1 • Representing the Chief
Minister of the Australian Capital
Territory, Ms Suzanne Orr MLA
Movement 2 • Representing the
Minister for Veterans' Affairs and
Minister for Defence Personnel, Mr Luke
Gosling MP • Representing the Shadow
Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator
Jessica Collins
Movement 2 • Mr David
Smith MP, Member for Bean •
Representing Secretary, Department of
Veterans' Affairs, Mr Kahlil Fegan
Movement 3 • Mr Ron Brandy, National
President of the National Servicemen's
Association of Australia • Mr Frank
Miller OA, Chairman of the Officer

Training Unit Association of Australia
Movement 4 • Mr Tony Stevenson OAM,
State President, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia Queensland
Branch • Mr Robert McIvor OAM, State
President, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia Victoria Branch
Movement 5 • Mr Jeff Gray, State
President, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia Tasmania
Branch • Mr John Faunt, Territory
President, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia ACT Branch
Movement 6 • Mr Stuart Fairbairn,
Branch Treasurer, National
Servicemen's Association of Australia
Western Australia Branch • Mr Darrell
Suter, State President, National
Servicemen's Association of Australia
South Australia Branch
Movement 7 • Mr Mike Lane, Branch Treasurer,
National Servicemen's Association of
Australia NT Branch • Mr Greg Mawson,
State President, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia and Affiliates
NSW Branch
Movement 8 • Mr Robert
Owen, President of the National Service
and Combined Forces Association •
Representing President of Nashos Fair
go, Mr Brian Stephens • Mrs Florence
Tancred, National Servicemen's
Association of Australia Widows
Movement 9 • Representing the
National President of the Returned and
Services League of Australia, Brigadier
Phil Winter AM CSC ADC.



The National Servicemen's Association of Australia – Open and welcoming to all Nashos, families and friends.



Pete Norman and Richard Tregear
Photo credits: David Whittaker AWM

For images from today's ceremony please visit:
www.flickr.com/photos/australianwarmemorial



All photos taken by the AWM official photographer can be accessed by pointing your smartphone camera at the QR code.

**National Servicemen's Association of Australia
 Dinner speech – 18th September, 2025**

National Executive Fellow State Presidents and Secretaries ... Ladies and gentlemen ... and friends

Good evening all On behalf of Gosford City Sub Branch of the NSW National servicemen's Association & Affiliates I would like to sincerely thank the National Servicemen's Association of Australia For the kind invitation to join you tonight for dinner And to share in the 15th Anniversary of the National Service Memorial tomorrow at the War Memorial.

It is a privilege to be here on such a meaningful occasion reflecting on the Service of so many It is also wonderful to see all our organizations getting along so well working together in the spirit of mateship and respect that has always been at the heart of National service.

Thank you once again for your warm hospitality and for allowing us to be a part of this important milestone

Thank you

Greg Mawson, President

NSW National Servicemen's Association & Affiliates Incorporated



NASHO DOCTORS AND DENTISTS IN PNG:

We have recently welcomed to the NSAA as a Direct National Member, Prof Graeme P Young, AM, FTSE FAHMS AGAF FGESA, MB BS MD FRACP. Since his Nasho service in 1971-72, he has had a distinguished career in medicine, and is acknowledged appropriately as follows: Matthew Flinders Distinguished Emeritus Professor, Research @ Flinders, Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute Cancer Impact Program, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University, Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer, Flinders Medical Centre.

In his own words he said *"I am a typical lottery winning Nasho. Comments below will explain this and how doctors and dentists are ignored in the DVA website piece on National Service."*

Graeme has also told us he entered Nasho from Melbourne and now lives in retirement in Melbourne. He has three service medals: the Australian Service Medal 1945-1975 (with PNG clasp) The Australian Defence Medal, and the Anniversary of National Service 1951-1972 Medal.



The route Graeme took to gain officer status is different to most NS officers. Atypically, he is not a graduate of the Officer Training Unit (Scheyville) as were most NS officers. Doctors were able to complete the full six years of Uni and the first year as an intern, before being sent to Pucka in the January intake of 1971. Dentists went straight in after their degree. All doctors and dentists in Australia who were called up *"spent a 2-week familiarisation period at Pucka then were transferred to Healesville School of Army Health for an 8-week accelerated infantry course for officers, which culminated in the rank of temporary captain (which became confirmed at the end of Nasho). There was great scepticism that we could complete a full infantry course for officers in 8 weeks, but we all did, including in the bush with Vietnam Vets"*. He was then *"posted to Watsonia doing medicals, then posted to PNG, where I first went to PIR2 as medical Officer, and then back to Goldie River Training Battalion as the medical officer for 14 months"*.

After the Whitlam Government came into power and abolished the NS scheme, Graeme elected to stay in PNG until December 1972 *“because I was enjoying it so much”*. So did his friends who were over there. Some Nasho docs went to Vietnam, but most stayed back in Australia.

The DVA site mentions how teachers got specially treated in the lottery intake, but the DVA site does not at all mention doctors and dentists, which is a major omission. He has said *“the story about medical and dental lottery winning Nashos has not been told clearly, nor is it documented where it should be”*.

<<<<<>>>>

When Graeme first contacted me, I recognised immediately that I was talking to a man with a Nasho story which has not yet been told. When I outlined his circumstances to the NSAA National Council on 18/9/2025, the Council Executive and Delegates unanimously agreed that he was an atypical new member, and so they supported his immediate secondment to the National Management Team to undertake the necessary work to secure proper recognition of Nasho doctors and dentists.

Graeme’s statements about inadequate recognition of Nasho doctors and dentists is evident when one examines the DVA Anzac Portal website which states

National servicemen served in support units in Australia, Malaysia and the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

Some 600 national servicemen who were qualified schoolteachers were promoted to sergeant and posted to Papua and New Guinea for 12 months. They taught soldiers of the Pacific Islands Regiment at Port Moresby, Goldie River, Lae and Wewak.

National servicemen in Papua and New Guinea also served in Signals, Ordnance, RAEME, Small Ships, Surveying and other units *.

* Graeme’s initial challenge will be to have the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps National Servicemen specifically acknowledged. Conversely, the National Servicemen of the Royal Australian Army Education Corps are very well represented, having a dedicated website from which the following extract was sourced.

‘Goldie’ was the Papua New Guinea Training Depot, to give it its full name. It was known universally as ‘Goldie’ because of its location on the floodplain of the Goldie River. Its purpose, in what was then known as PNG Command (of the Australian Army), was to provide training for newly-recruited soldiers and as well, provide specialist courses for medics, drivers, cooks, clerks and signallers.

Goldie's differentness was defined not only by these particular functions but also by its isolated location. The thirty kilometre-long winding gravel road to Port Moresby was never a particularly fast trip. As well, we had to contend with flooding of the road in the wet season and the one or two settlements of local people along the way who were generally regarded as being not particularly partial to army types. 'You did not want to break down along this road,' we were always told.

The brown and rather turbulent Goldie River which flowed past the camp was rarely visited by most. Apparently, a crocodile attack some years before guaranteed its unpopularity. On the upstream boundaries of the camp were the Koiari village lands and this was well and truly out of bounds to army personnel.

Physically, Goldie was a relatively new, well-designed island of buildings in the wilderness. The soldiers were housed in large, three-storey cement block buildings. There was a chapel, a squash court, several tennis courts, a hospital and one large mess hall for the troops. As well, there were a variety of other buildings essential for the functioning of a military establishment such as the Q Store, main administration building, theatre/hall and the canteen/shop/post office. The trouble was that everything was built of grey cement blocks. Grey was the colour of Goldie.

Midway through our time at Goldie (1971), the Prime Minister, Billy McMahon, announced a reduction of the time National Servicemen were required to serve. It went from two years to eighteen months. We could have left immediately but we chose to stay to complete our work with the second intake of recruits for the year. It was good work as the new soldiers were keen to further their education both for themselves and their country. It was a pleasing view of what they needed to do and also demonstrated an awareness of the bigger issues facing their country. It was an attitude that I fondly looked back upon as I later taught more than a few adolescents in Queensland high schools who cared little about their education and certainly even less about the contribution they could make to the betterment of their society.

None of us were in any doubt though, as to the value of the PNG experience. It was an exotic adventure which used our professional skills and opened up a country and its cultures in a way not available to the vast majority of people. It was the best thing that could have happened to a Nasho. As well, it made an indelible imprint on our lives that enriched us immeasurably.

Written by Ian Ogston, Nasho Sgt Teacher (1970/71)

NUCLEAR TEST MEDALS:

On 30 March 2023, the UK Government announced nuclear test programme veterans, civilian staff and their descendants to come forward and claim commemorative medals in recognition of their significant contribution to the UK's nuclear deterrent testing programme. Potentially thousands of veterans and civilian staff, and next of kin, across the UK and Commonwealth can now apply for a commemorative medal.



The medal recognises the critical role and contribution of veterans and civilian staff to the UK's nuclear deterrent testing programme in the 1950s and 1960s.

The UK Government will be issuing Nuclear Test Medals to eligible service personnel and civilian staff, including posthumous awards to next of kin. Further information relating to this award including the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found on the <http://gov.uk/> website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-test-medal-eligibility-criteria>

Further information in relation to the official announcement can be found via the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/call-for-veterans-and-civilian-staff-from-across-the-commonwealth-to-claim-commemorative-nuclear-test-medals>

The operation involved British and Australian forces conducting two atomic tests on the islands off the Western Australian coast.

RAN Ships involved were *Sydney* (carrier), *Tobruk* (I), *Hawkesbury*, *Macquarie*, *Murchison*, *Shoalhaven*, *Mildura*, *Karang*, *Koala*, *Limicola*, *Reserve*, *Wareen*, MRL 252 and MWL 251.

The Royal Australian Navy along with the Royal Navy were heavily involved with both Operation HURRICANE in 1952 and Operation MOSAIC in 1955.

Operation HURRICANE, which involved the detonation of one atomic device, involved the Australian component of Task Force 4 made up of the aircraft carrier HMAS *Sydney* and HMA Ships *Tobruk (I)*, *Hawkesbury*, *Macquarie*, *Murchison*, *Shoalhaven* and *Mildura* who carried out patrol work.

Smaller vessels *Karang*, *Koala*, *Limicola*, *Reserve*, *Wareen*, MRL 252 and MWL 251 performed useful work laying moorings, marking channels and providing valuable logistic and personnel support.

Operation MOSAIC, which involved the detonation of two atomic devices, saw the Australian component of Task Force 308 made up of HMA Ships *Junee*, *Fremantle*, *Karang*, MRL 252 and MWL 251.

Sydney played a significant role in the British Nuclear Tests conducted at the Montebello Islands in 1952 and 1956. *Sydney* was present at the first British atomic test on October 3 in 1952 and later participated in Operation Mosaic which involved two more tests in May 16 and June 19 in 1956.

Eligibility Criteria for the Nuclear Test Medal – Revised 6 Nov 24

Introduction

1. The Nuclear Test Medal is awarded to UK Service and civilian personnel, and individuals from other nations, who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up¹ phases, between 1952² and 1967 inclusive.

This includes the following named tests:

- (1) Operation HURRICANE
- (2) Operation TOTEM
- (3) Operation MOSAIC
- (4) Operation BUFFALO
- (5) Operation GRAPPLE
- (6) Operation ANTLER

2. The Medal is also awarded to UK personnel who served at locations where any United States atmospheric nuclear tests took place, including, but not limited to Operation BAGPIPES in 1954 and Operation DOMINIC in 1962.³

¹ Including Operation CLEAN-UP, Operation HERCULES, and Operation BRUMBY.

² This date has been selected as the UK's first atmospheric nuclear test took place in October 1952.

³ The vast majority of US tests under Operation DOMINIC took place at British proving grounds at Christmas Island and involved British personnel. Additionally, some Operation BAGPIPES tests similarly involved British personnel.

Operational Areas

3. The operational areas for the medal will be defined as the territories, waters, and airspace of the following locations where the tests were conducted:

- (1) Christmas Island (Operation DOMINIC)
- (2) Emu Field, Australia
- (3) Malden Island, Kiribati
- (4) Maralinga, Australia
- (5) Montebello Islands, Australia
- (6) South Australia
- (7) Western Australia
- (8) Marshall Islands (Operation BAGPIPES)

Qualifying Service

4. The Medal is awarded for service of any length.⁴

Eligible Personnel

5. Eligible personnel are defined as follows:

- (1) UK Service and civilian⁵ personnel, and individuals from other nations, who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up phases, between 1952 and 1967.
- (2) UK Service and civilian personnel who served at the locations where any United States atmospheric nuclear tests took place, including, but not limited to, Operation BAGPIPES in 1954, and Operation DOMINIC in 1962.
- (3) Foreign nationals who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up phases, between 1952 and 1967.
- (4) The medal can be awarded posthumously to the legal next of kin of eligible individuals who have since died.

⁴ Defined as any period of time during one day.

⁵ Considered to be predominately from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment and the Atomic Energy Research Establishment.

THE MILITARY SHOP:

The Military Shop in Canberra is undoubtedly the best place to find personal military apparel, hats and berets, badges, replica medals, memorabilia and all sorts of things navy, army and air force. The Military Shop also makes a good donation to the NSAA each year based on commission of sales of Nasho gear. Keep The Military Shop in mind if you have a need for any of this stuff. You don't need to go to Canberra, because their catalogue is online. A Google search for "Military Shop" will get you started. Tell 'em you're a 1951-1959 or 1965-1972 Nasho. The logo of the Military Shop is displayed in the Nasho newsletter as quid pro quo for annual donations received from the Military Shop. If you are reading this NASHO newsletter electronically on your smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop, click on this link to get you there quickly www.militaryshop.com.au .



If you link to <https://militaryshop.com.au/organisations/veterans-organisations/nashos-collectables/> you will see many NSAA relevant items which are otherwise difficult or impossible to obtain.

The Military Shop incorporates the Navy Shop, the Army Shop and the Air Force Shop, all under the Brandnet banner as illustrated below.



THE NATIONAL PRIDE ROSE:

The National Pride Rose was created exclusively for the National Servicemen's Association of Australia. It is available for purchase Australia-wide from rose stockists, but it may need to be ordered in for you. Google "National Pride Rose" for more information. Every rose sold generates a donation from Corporate Roses to the NSAA, so make sure you tell them you're a Nasho when you place your order.



“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 closed so far, Northern Territory and New South Wales, with more to follow as age wearies us all.

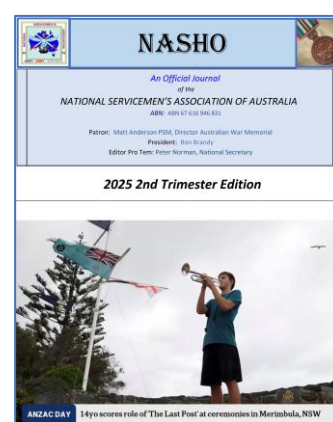
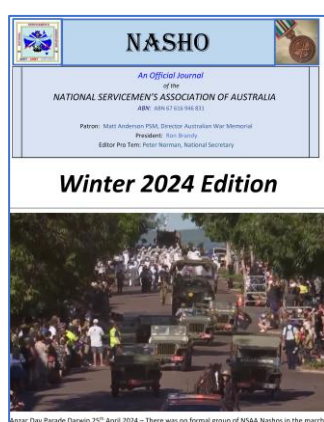
Many such disenfranchised members have wished to remain with the NSAA, so a special category of NSAA membership was set up for them in late 2023. These members are referred to as “National Direct Members”.

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

The target audience has recently been expanded to include the NSAA National Council Delegates, to also keep them informed about what is happening within our NSAA community Australia-wide.

“Nasho” newsletter will achieve the best take-up if readers make comments and suggestions for subsequent editions. If there is anything published in any edition of “Nasho” which needs clarification, please come back to me.

Pete Norman, NSAA National Secretary, “Nasho” Editor Pro Tem.



THE BRISBANE LINE REVISITED?

During WW2, when mainland Australia was under threat of a perceived Japanese land invasion, an arbitrary defence line stretching inland from the coast north of Brisbane was vaguely promulgated. This line gained notoriety as the Brisbane Line, and was used as a political football to the extent that a federal election was won and lost because of an associated scare campaign. This subsequently resulted in a Royal Commission which, due to lack of hard evidence, discredited the claims that Australia north of the line was to be abandoned to the Japanese. Over the years many investigative authors have drawn their own Brisbane Lines, one I recall in particular illustrated a curve running from just north of Brisbane, through Toowoomba, Broken Hill, to just west of Adelaide at Whyalla.



Regardless of the absence or surfacing of any official documents in Australian archives, a report by General MacArthur to the US Government in 1942 included such a map. It showed a line stretching between the coast north of Brisbane to Toowoomba.

Editorial Note: I wrote this article in 2016 as part of a travel blog compiled during a caravan trip with my wife Anne and our Jack Russell pup Jaffa, from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast and return, travelling the byways rather than the highways. Having just read the blog again after nine years since writing, I thought that many of our Nasho members may be interested in my interpretations. Pete Norman.

The reason for me including this discourse on the Brisbane Line is this: Here at the caravan park at Tenterfield is a wall map that attracted my interest. It marks the site of WW2 tank traps. I was in disbelief, in New England! To the west of the Great Divide! Surely it couldn't be. This warranted a visit to the local historical society where I learned that Tenterfield was indeed earmarked as a key battleground for the contingency of a Japanese land invasion of Australia. It appears that during 1942 some 10,000 infantry soldiers were set up under canvas in emergency camps

dispersed over a wide area around Tenterfield, unbeknown to the Australian public.



The majority of Tenterfield is laid out on a square grid. Most houses and business establishments in the town remain as they were originally constructed, with very little modification. There does not appear to have been any urban renewal, and very little new construction within the grid. I understand that there is a new housing estate just to the south of the grid, but we will not see that until we head off to Armidale. The bulk of the shops in the main street were constructed circa 1914, with another batch stylised in art deco, dating them late 1920s to early 1930s. Most were originally built with posted verandas over the footpaths. Because the road camber listed heavily toward the gutters, much damage was caused to both vehicles and veranda posts. A delegation of shop owners asked the town council to fix the road camber. This resulted in the council banning veranda posts, the least-cost solution for council. (Don't you just love it?). Hence the heritage look of the main street was changed forever by council statute.

When I dug out some more precision in the local history of Tenterfield, I discovered that there were, and remain in residual form, two sets of tank traps. The first set was quite close to town, only about eight kilometres away, so I'll talk about that set first.

They are on road towards Mt. Lindesay, only a couple of hundred metres to the south-west of the Great Dividing Range cross-over, with the Clarence River catchment to the north-east. Until the 1950s, this road was the New England Highway and was the most

direct all-weather road between Sydney and Brisbane. Although all-weather, it was gravel. I have assumed that the trap was installed to halt tanks coming over the range from the north-east. The trap is situated in Thunderbolt's Gully, a deep and narrow ravine only 30 or 40 metres across.



The tank traps at Thunderbolt's Gully near Tenterfield NSW

The trap consists of rows of many wooden posts, about thirty centimetres in diameter, well sunk into the ground, about a metre high, and spaced about a metre and a half apart. There are many very large boulders in the ravine as well. It was a formidable obstacle. Latter day interpretive signage is posted nearby. The London Bridge Army Camp was situated just a kilometre down from the ravine. There is no doubt in my mind that this area was considered as a key defensive installation, not a line on a map and not a line in the sand.

The second set of traps is about eighty kilometres distant as the crows fly, north-east from Tenterfield. However, it was worth a hundred kilometres byway side trip to see for myself. So bright and early I set off; just Jaffa and I. Anne, who is not into WW2 history, elected to stay home to catch up on a few chores. It was a sunny day, so the doona was a good candidate for the washing tub. Five kilometres from Tenterfield on the Bruxner Highway I crossed the Great Divide heading east. The ridge at this point defines the catchment of the Clarence River which I have mentioned in earlier blogs. However, despite crossing the range from west to east, I was still in the New England region, just.

The Bruxner Highway connects Tenterfield with Casino. My route took me sixty-eight kilometres to the east until I turned off onto Paddy's Flat Road. I needed to drive a further thirty kilometres to the crossing of the Clarence in its upper reaches. The first twenty kilometres was on bitumen before giving way to gravel, then dirt, then mud. One surprise along the way, at a locality called Pretty Gully, was a magnificent little pocket of sub-tropical rainforest.

I had precise instructions on where the tank traps were, and sure enough as my GPS counted down to zero, I spotted the traps on the slight slope between the road and the river, just one hundred metres downstream from the Clarence River Bridge at Paddy's Flat.



The tank traps at Paddy's Flat in the upper Clarence River NSW

The valley flat is no more than eighty metres across at this point, a river bottleneck. The barrier as originally installed stretched from one side of the flat to the other. The bed of the river is mostly exposed granite and water worn pebbles and sand, with the water less than a metre deep and perhaps fifteen metres wide. The valley sides rise precipitously on each side of the flat. When the tank trap was first constructed in 1942 it consisted of a row of twenty-six concrete pyramids each about a metre square, with separations of less than two metres. Each pyramid was linked to its neighbour with steel cables. The whole row stretched through the river and across the flat from bank to bank. Theoretically, tanks could neither climb over the pyramids nor squeeze between the gaps. Okay, that scenario is easily understood, I am sure. The more important issue to comprehend is this: Why were tank traps put across the bed of the Upper Clarence in this truly remote corner of New South Wales, and also on the (then) New England Highway at its narrowest approach to Tenterfield? Perhaps the question will always remain rhetorical.

I don't have the answer, so I can only speculate at this stage. If the so-called, but denied, Brisbane Line curved vaguely from the coast north of Brisbane to Whyalla west of Adelaide, it is quite possible that Tenterfield was on the curve. The nine or ten thousand infantry troops reportedly camped throughout the district is one supporting theory. Another theory is the terrain. The Queensland/New South Wales border presented great difficulty to travellers and engineers, not conquered fully until well after WW2. Firstly the northern rivers, and their long and wide estuaries, had no bridges. Japanese tanks would not be able to easily traverse such lowlands with their impassable water obstacles. Then there was the border escarpment, also a formidable obstacle. As an acknowledgement of the terrain challenges of a direct route, the course of the first Sydney to Brisbane rail line ran through Tenterfield, until the much later route through Kyogle was constructed, with its 360-degree loop to climb the range.

Because I have no ability to examine the terrain myself, I have come to the uninformed and perhaps naïve conclusion that the South West Pacific Area defence strategists feared that the Japanese would likely select this area to transit their tanks from Queensland into New South Wales.

The bottlenecks of the narrow aperture valley of the Upper Clarence River and Thunderbolt's Gully on the Mt. Lindesay Road near Tenterfield could have been tactically selected as the best places to stop them.

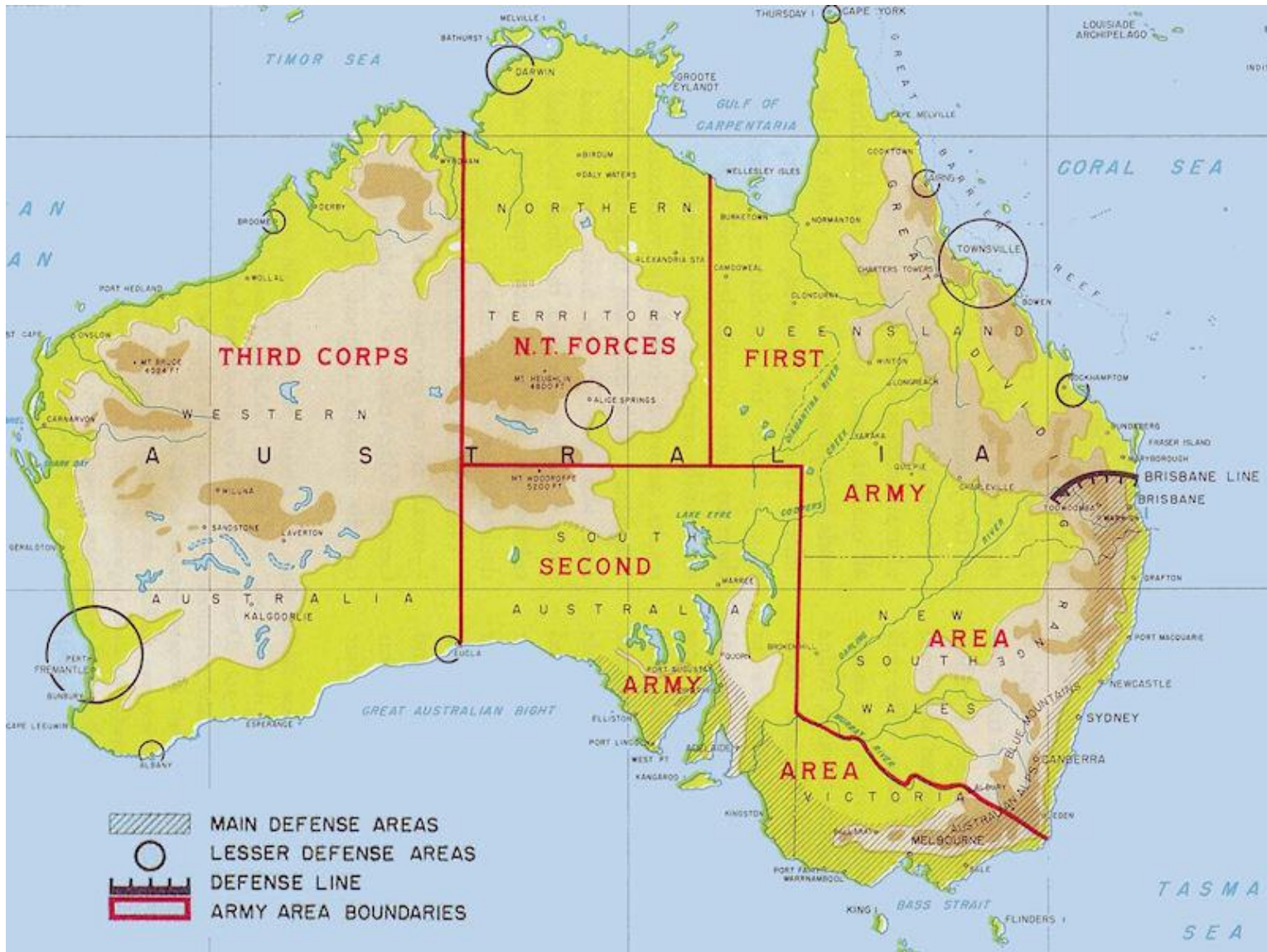
So that's my theory, which may be shot down in flames by anyone with geographical knowledge of the region, or with access to specific wartime archives and the basis for the strategic and tactical decisions of 1942. My question still stands for anyone who wants to venture opinions or facts: Why were tank traps installed at Paddy's Flat and on the approach to Tenterfield, and possibly at other places on the nebulous Brisbane Line curve?

Further questions arise for me to think about. Was the Brisbane Line a line in the sand, to be washed away by the next wave? Was it notional, covert or overt? Was it just a political football? MacArthur's map, which clearly illustrates a "Brisbane Line", begs some questions.

The existence of tank traps and infantry troops in the Tenterfield region does support the case of a plan to defend mainland Australia south of the Sunshine Coast. Is the residual evidence of tank traps sufficient demonstration that the implementation of such a plan was commenced? Were there similar obstructions thrown up elsewhere along this line in the sand?



Cropped from a map used by Allied Commander General Douglas MacArthur. The full map is presented next page.



Map used by Allied Commander General Douglas MacArthur.

Just to the south of Port Stevens is Anna Bay, at the northern end of the Stockton Dunes. These dunes stretch all the way from the mouth of the Hunter River at Newcastle. At their widest point the dunes would be a kilometre across; the span from the crashing waves to the swamp-paperbarks on the land side. There are only occasional small patches of vegetation on the dunes. At Anna Bay there are four-wheel-drive safari tours, camel rides, and ruggedized 4WD vehicles to hire for the intrepid. Our adventure was limited to the carpark viewing platform. We were surprised to see concrete tank trap pyramids in the dunes. I checked it out on Google and found that many of these tank traps, as well as barbed wire entanglements, were re-exposed by severe weather in 2015.

FORMER VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES FUNDRAISING:

(A general interest story for Vietnam era veterans: By Stan Middleton OAM)

Hello Everyone,

I would like to thank all those who made donations earlier this year to our former Vietnamese Employees. Also, those who have donated previously! Over the last 23 years we have raised more than A\$150,000 now to help them. There are no admin costs so they get the lot!

Thanks to everyone's generosity we were able to take over A\$8,000 cash to distribute at the dinner (& after) we put on for our former employees. Those (35 people) on our Middleton 2025 Vietnam Tour paid for all the food & drinks for our guests so nothing came out of the fund for the dinner.

Also thanks to everyone on tour who shared carrying the A\$8,000 cash to Vietnam. It was better than myself & Sinh carrying the lot in case either of us were robbed! Then if only one robbed only a small loss!

The minimum anyone received was A\$360 which goes a long way in Vietnam. Our Vietnamese workers were very good to us during our tour of duties during the war. Most are still very poor so it is our way of thanking them.

We also help a lady (My Hanh) who is extremely poor whose father was an Australian soldier who we have not been able to locate or identify (we don't know his name). We would like to be able to help My Hanh on a monthly basis. Anyone interested in donating A\$50 or more monthly ongoing let me know. I will get you more details about her before you decide to commit or not. Most of you who have been on our tours have met My Hanh! Saying she is extremely poor is an understatement! Photo of My Hanh from 2010 attached.

As well we help a boy (now in his 60s) whose nick name was "Rabbit" that used to warn the Aussies when the VC were in town in Hoa Long. A long search located him herding cattle at Nui Dat. Thanks to Ken Cumming's determination to find him! A wonderful story! The tour group visited "Rabbit's" home which Ken has raised money in Warrnambool to rebuild from a bare 2 room house with no bathroom or kitchen. A very memorable visit on our tour! On tour was Alan Erskine from Mildura. Alan has done a story on Rabbit hoping to get it published. Alan did the story on Sinh & I in the Mildura Weekly in 2008. Alan is a retired journalist although not a Vietnam Veteran. He was fascinated by Rabbit's story.



Rabbit with an Australian Nurse in 1967 or 68



Lt Terrie Roche holding Rabbit

We also help an Australian Babylift lady (father US soldier/mother Vietnamese) who has returned to Vietnam to live many years ago. She does an enormous amount of charity work at both Vung Tau & in the Mekong Delta where she now lives. My Huong Le is an amazing lady! Her life story is full of incredible highs & lows! This year My Huong was unable to attend our Vietnamese Dinner as she usually does! A photo with My Huong at Noble Park RSL is attached.

My wife Sinh tracked down three more ladies after the dinner and distributed the last A\$1,000 of cash. Two were found at Xuyen Moc (60kms from Vung Tau) and both are extremely poor. We thought they may have passed away since we last saw them. Hoa & Phi Nha (Bones) both worked in our stores area at 2AOD. Many tears were shed when money in envelopes were handed out!

I would like to thank Sinh for the enormous amount of time she spent locating those to invite them to our dinner and after looking for ones we had not found! I could not do without her support!

Vietnam Dinner March 2025 Vung Tau



**Stan Middleton with On (Thom Johnston's sister)
On worked at 2AOD in the stores!**

Putting the dinner on at the Imperial Hotel was an enormous task! However, all came together very well at the end. I provided a slide show from our war days featuring many of our Vietnamese Employees. The huge screen we were able to show them on was brilliant!

The slide show had 818 photos mostly from 1ALSG (Australian Base) at Vung Tau during the war. However, there are many photos also taken since the war. They are in random order but are a very excellent collection from many Veterans I have obtained from over the years! Some of the photos have been enhanced & some haven't. Particularly for all Vietnam Veterans based in Vung Tau you should really enjoy going through this collection of photos. Here is the link: VIETNAMESE EMPLOYEES DINNER IN VUNG TAU 2025 Slide Show Flickr or <https://www.flickr.com/photos/aodcurator/albums/72177720328160050/>

Dinner for Former Vietnamese Employees at Imperial Hotel Vung Tau March 2025



From left first 4: Ian Harty (Aussie Infantry Vet), Buck (was 14/15yo when worked at 2Comp Ord/2AOD), Hong who worked at 55 Engineers & in July married Buck in Geelong and Sinh who worked at Badcoe Club is now married to Stan Middleton

For those who were on the Middleton 2025 Vietnam Tour, many have asked to see the show in full again as they missed quite a few of the photos due to the conversations etc. going on during the night. So here is your chance to go through all the photos without interruption!

Regards

Stan Middleton OAM

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 6th August 2025

(Editor's Note: Stan Middleton is a Nasho, 2RTB, RAAOC, Vietnam 2AOD veteran. Stan has been awarded the Medal of the Order (OAM) for his "service to veterans and their families").

“NASHO” TO GET YOUNG WORKERS TO REGIONS – A MEDIA REPORT:



A radical plan for young Australians to spend a year of national service working in the regions has been floated as a way to boost skills and develop deeper understanding of the needs of remote communities driving the nation's economic output.

Pastoralist Garth Camm said the concept, which mimicked previous visa conditions for visitors seeking to extend their stay in Australia, would open the eyes of young Australians to the realities of where the nation's food comes from, and the infrastructure and hard work needed to deliver it.

"We used to make backpackers do a year in remote Australia as a part of their visa conditions. I'm not against a national service concept for younger Australians to do a year's national service in remote locations," the Fitzroy Crossing cattle farmer told The Australian's Bush Summit. "Look at someone like me and my family; at the end of day, if it would bring only a small percentage of people who live in the cities out here to see how everything works (it would help). Do you know the statistics of how many people in Australia live within 100km of the coast? It's about 98 per cent. So, there's not a lot of people looking in, that's for sure."

According to the latest State of the Environment Report, about 87 per cent of Australians live within just 50km of the coast, equating to more than 22 million people. Industry leaders are tempted the regional service proposal, saying advocacy groups are always encouraging young people to experience life in the bush, and some end up falling in love with life on the land, settling down and helping sustain struggling communities.

"We work closely with organisations like the Aboriginal Pastoral Academy, where young people from Indigenous communities get the training to go on stations" Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association chief executive Bron Christensen said. "I would love to see that opportunity expanded to any young kid or young adult who wants to come out here to work on stations."

"Having just been through the Derby and Broome camp drafts and rodeos and seeing all these young people that are just enthralled and getting to have phenomenal experiences up here in the northwest is brilliant," the fourth-generation farmer added.

Western Australian Agriculture Minister Jackie Jarvis ruled out "agricultural conscription" but said more needed to be done to lure and retain young people in regional areas, despite the latest Mood of the Bush data indicating more young Australians are hoping to live regionally at some point in their lives.

"A lot of it would be reliant on the employers to guarantee the work, which is seasonal. My husband is a farmer, and I think he would struggle to say, hand on heart, 'yes, I can offer 12 months of full-time work'" Ms Jarvis said.

She said one tangible impact the government is having in pushing kids to get out of their city comfort zones is via support of regional TAFE courses, which account for more than 30 per cent of enrolments despite the region's small population in WA.

The skills shortages that permeate cities are also acute in regional areas, with Aboriginal Pastoral Academy Coordinator for the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, Belinda Duffy, telling the Bush Summit childcare and after-school care were incredibly difficult to secure.

'Being a mother and having children at school, there's not enough childcare here," Ms Duffy said.

"Everyone has to employ an au pair or nanny just to go to work. If you don't have support from employers to say you can work from home ... you can't sustain a job.

Ms Duffy said many people came to work in the pastoral industry but, while some stayed, many left. "They're generally here for a year, for a bit of fun, a gap year, and go back to uni or life somewhere else. Generally, they're not here for a long time."

A great appreciation for the regions was needed in government as well, Ms Christensen said.

"Every time I go to Canberra I'm overwhelmed with people who work in government agencies who have never met a farmer," she said.

(Source: The Australian newspaper)



CONSIDERING THE HERETICAL: WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT UNIVERSAL SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA:

(Editor's Introduction: This article is an extract from an article by McLeod Wood which discusses how national service is undertaken around the world and proposes a model that could be applied to Australia.)

In mid-2022, Lt. Col. Wood attended the US Army's Advanced Military Studies Program at their school in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This program afforded him the opportunity to dive deeper into the history of conscription in Australia. In April of 2023, he submitted a monograph titled "A Heretical Notion: Proposing a Universal Service Scheme for Australia". This short paper is a summary of that research and is intended to spark conversation.

(Editor's Comment: Before reading it, it is useful to understand the meaning of "heretical" ... one definition is "opposite to or against the official or popular opinion, or showing no respect for the official opinion". The subject matter could also be called conscription or national service, but those are heretical words to many. If you're interested, read on.)

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Introduction

Let's jump straight to it. Conscription in Australia is not popular. It typically sparks memories of National Service members fighting in Vietnam and young Australians being compelled to action that is contrary to their moral convictions. Despite these issues, conscription has been introduced on four separate occasions during our nation's history. The increasing threats posed by great power competition, extreme weather events, the spread of pandemics, the threat of political instability, and the difficulty with accessing human resources would appear to be placing ever mounting pressure across the whole-of-government enterprise.

Balancing these increasing threat scenarios, with limited resources, warrants an examination of a universal service system that could safeguard Australia's interests and provide security into the future. Whilst this may be a heretical approach, the dangers

posed by a combination of political, militaristic, environmental, and health risks warrants this discourse and is the primary purpose of this short paper.

Furthermore, the strategic shift from the 'Defence of Australia' to 'National Defence – A Whole-of-Government Approach', as outlined in the 2023 Defence Strategic Review, opens the door for an examination of a holistic universal service system.

Storm Clouds on the Horizon

There are several dark clouds looming on our horizon and quite often military professionals only see threats that exist through the lens of their own paradigms. This paper argues that it is necessary to break from just considering military threats, and that the idea of a citizen's duty towards the state's security warrants broader consideration.

The most threatening clouds on our horizon are extreme weather events, health crises, food security, great power competition, and labour shortfalls. A universal service system might enable Australia to weather these storms by providing improved capability across the whole-of-government enterprise.

In late 2019 and early 2020 the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and state-based emergency services were hard pressed to deal with wide ranging bushfires, floods, and the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. COVID 19 alone saw over 14,000 ADF personnel deployed to support the people of Australia – equivalent to 25% of the permanent force.

Things do not look like they will get better or lessen in intensity. In a 2022 Climate Study, the Bureau of Meteorology highlighted that there have been increases in extreme heat events, extreme fire weather, more intense heavy rainfall events, and that flooding is now one of the major natural hazards facing Australia.

Climate change does not just affect citizens through disasters. It also has the ability to affect our food chain which is already short at least 172,000 workers from paddock to plate. Australia produces close to 89% of its food requirements and exports nearly 72% of total agricultural production into the global food supply. The emerging threat in this sector is one of securing labour to ensure our own food supply and that to global markets is maintained. However, access to labour is not only threatening the agricultural sector.

Great power competition is increasing and its impacts felt in the Indo-Pacific region. In response, the Australian Prime Minister announced in March 2022 that the number of ADF personnel would increase by approximately 30 percent, or 18,500 personnel, by 2040. However, growing the ADF by nearly 30 percent over the next 18 years is no small

feat and as Figure 1 displays, the ADF has not been able to achieve its recruiting targets since 2013.

It is clear that access to labour represents a significant threat to the ADF's ability to recruit and retain a viable workforce out to 2040 and beyond.

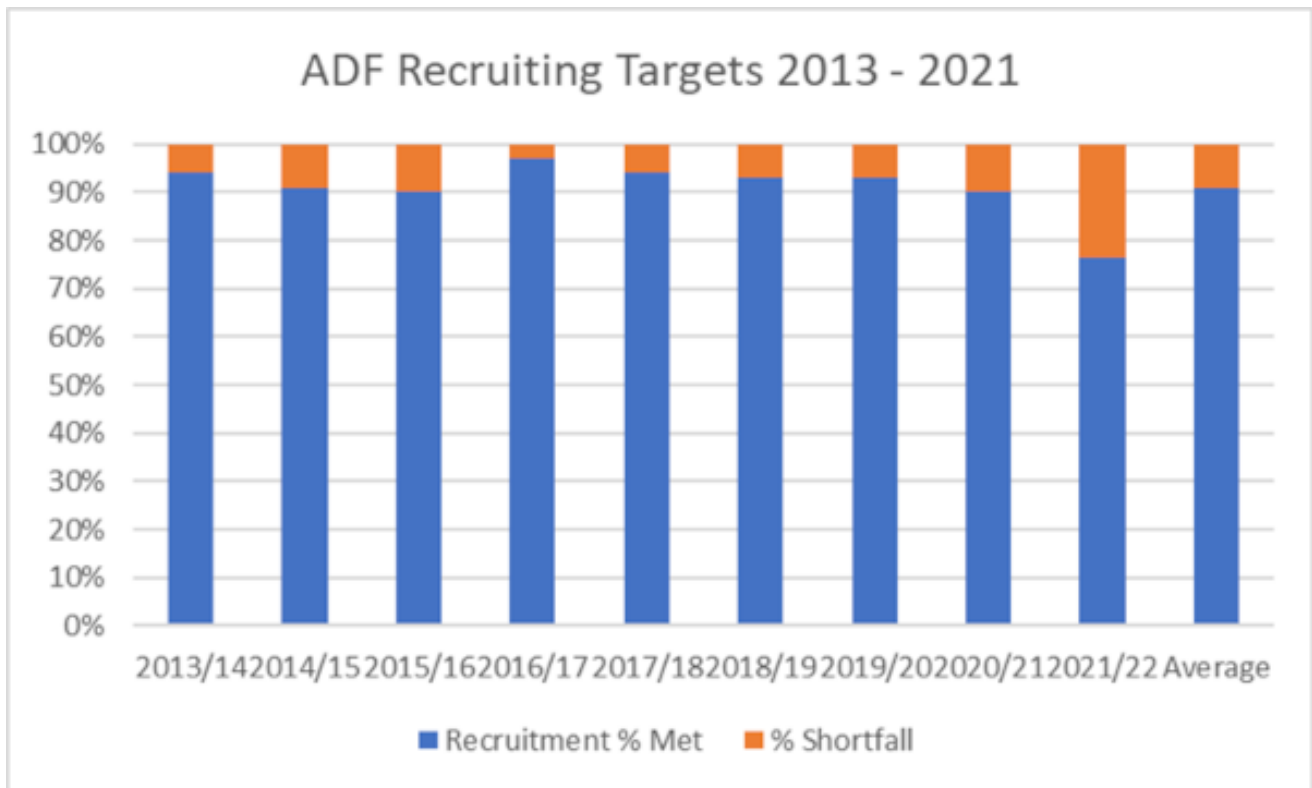


Figure 1: ADF Recruiting Targets 2013 – 2021. Created by the author using data from the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence, Annual Reports, 2013 – 2021.

A universal service system could help not only the ADF, but also the agricultural sector, the emergency services, and civil sector of Australia cope with labour shortages and boost access to personnel during times of crisis. Before jumping straight into how a universal service might work in Australia, it is valuable to briefly review how other countries use it.

What Options Exist?

Universal service is not something new. It has been, and is, used by many countries to mitigate security risks in their home nations. Very briefly, the systems of Israel, Singapore, and Sweden will be explained as it is useful to compare how other nations use universal service to mitigate against whole-of-government threats in their own nations.

Israel – the adoption of compulsory military service occurred nearly simultaneously with the declaration of Israel as an independent state. Since 26 May 1948, it has remained as

an integral part of their defence strategy. Interestingly though, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) wasn't just to be used as a tool to shield Israel. Their first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, also foresaw the IDF as a tool for modern Jewish nation building.

In this way, the IDF have been used as an additional labour for Jewish agricultural settlements, the supplementation of teachers in underprivileged communities, and the use of engineers to construct facilities for the influx of immigrants.

As a result, the IDF's compulsory service model has exhibited the characteristics of a people's army – one used for the defence of the people and for the nation's development. It is important to note, however, that the IDF compulsory service model is a military model, meaning that the primary purpose of the system is to defend against external military threats.

Table 1: Israeli Conscription Model at a Glance

GENDER	AGE OF SERVICE	TIME OF COMPULSORY SERVICE	RESERVE SERVICE	ALTERNATE SERVICE
MALE	18-54	30 Months	Based upon calling-up officer: Monthly Service or Annual Service (up to 31 days)	Available to those who do not meet military requirements or have exemptions.
FEMALE	18-38	24 Months		

Source: Created by the author with information from the Basic Laws of Israel: Defense Service Law 1986.

Singapore – national service is one of Singapore's most fundamental and longest running public policies which pre-dates its independence from Britain and subsequently, Malaysia. Its structure incorporates the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Singapore Civil Defence Force, and the Singapore Police Force.

Other options exist within the firefighting, rescue and emergency services, medical services, hazardous materials, and safety compliance for those citizens unwilling or unsuited to military service to contribute positively towards their society and support the concept of nation building.

The unifying nature of the Singapore national service system can also be seen in their adoption of the 'Total Defence' strategy in 1984. The strategy is aimed at responding to challenges that threaten Singapore's independence, its economy, and its wellbeing –

think physical and mental health. The core message of this strategy is that “every Singaporean has a part to play to help strengthen our defences against these threats and challenges.” It must be noted though that whilst the Singaporean model expands beyond the military it only incorporates service for male citizens.

Table 2: Singaporean National Service System at a Glance

GENDER	AGE OF SERVICE	TIME OF COMPULSORY SERVICE	RESERVE SERVICE	ALTERNATE SERVICE
MALE	18-40 (Enlisted) 18-50 (Officers)	Not greater than 24 months	Not greater than 40 days annually	Available in: Singapore Civil Defence Force and the Singapore Police Force.
FEMALE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Created by the author with information from The Statutes of the Republic of Singapore: Enlistment Act 1970.

Sweden – various forms of conscription have been used in Sweden since 1611. Their current system was introduced as the Total Defence Obligation Act in 1809. It is important to note that the name of the act avoids the words national service or conscription; rather Total Defence demonstrates the Swedish commitment to combat threats across their entire society.

Interestingly, The Act was suspended from 2010-2017. However, by 2017 the deteriorating security environment in Europe and the inability to recruit sufficient personnel into the military saw the Swedish Government reintroduce it.

Some of the issues faced by Sweden were the large forest fires (2015, 2018) that required significant emergency response operations, the migration crisis of 2015, the 2017 Stockholm terrorist attack, and cyber security breaches at the National Transport Authority in the same year.

Notably, compulsory service is now gender neutral and covers the military, civilian service (think schools), and general national service (think food production). The Swedish model is truly a whole-of-government approach to security.

Table 3: Swedish Total Defence System at a Glance

TYPE OF SERVICE	GENDER	AGE, SUBJECT TO FULL MILITARY SERVICE	AGE, SUBJECT TO CONSCRIPTION	TIME OF COMPULSORY SERVICE	RESERVE SERVICE
Military Service	Male/ Female	16-70	18-47	Max. 20 mnth	Ends after 5 years
Civilian Service				Max. 10.5 mnth	N/A
General Compulsory National Service				N/A	N/A

Source: Created by the author with information from the Swedish Riksdag Act (1994:1809) on Total Defence Obligation.

What Could we Build?

Before we get building, it is important to emphasise that the primary purpose of this short paper is to spark a dialogue and thought around the utility of a universal service system in Australia. It is not, in any way, designed to propose the way or to suggest that universal service must be adopted in Australia.

When proposing a model, it is important to consider the name of a system and its meaning. This paper suggests that the system could be called the Universal Civil Service Scheme. The below list highlights the meaning behind each word:

Universal – indicates the inclusion of all Australian citizens serving across whole-of-government.

Civil – highlights the fact that this system delivers outcomes beyond the military, supports the government in executing its plans during times of crisis, and supports all citizens.

Service – demonstrates the interrelationship between the citizen and the state and the duality of duty that exists between them.

Scheme – demonstrates that this is a large-scale, systematic approach to attaining strategic advantage and security for Australia.



Figure 2: Proposed Universal Civil Service Scheme for Australia. Created by the author.

Figure 2 visually depicts the Scheme. It is built upon the foundational concepts of service to the community and the deep reciprocal sense of duty between the state and its citizens. The scheme's four pillars of service – built upon the foundations – are the military, emergency services, rural service, and public service.

Fundamental to this concept is that citizens be given the opportunity to preference service (1-4) across the four pillars. The purpose of this is to limit forcing citizens into areas of service that might conflict with their conscience or capacity. The foundations and pillars of the Scheme build up to provide Australia with a method to shield itself and provide security to the nation and her people.

Under the first pillar of military service, citizens are conscripted to conduct basic training within any service of the ADF. Training and service would not exceed 24 months. As with the systems explored in the case studies, the primary purpose of military service is to protect Australia from foreign nations and their militaries. Unlike the previous four national service systems in Australia, military service personnel must be eligible for service outside of Australia for peacekeeping or warlike operations.

Under the second pillar, citizens would be conscripted to service within emergency services. Much like the Singaporean Civil Defence Force, citizens are conscripted to then train with fire, police, ambulance, and state emergency services across Australia. Training and service would not exceed 24 months, and personnel would form the basis of the first response to domestic crises.

Emergency service personnel would provide the backbone for Australia to deal with extreme weather events, domestic crises, and reinforce the ability of these institutions to provide services across the country.

Under the third pillar of rural service, citizens are conscripted to train at agricultural schools which provide basic skills in vehicle and machinery operation, animal husbandry, and cultivation practices. Once training is complete, citizens would be billeted across agricultural regions to support food production and reduce labour shortages in a similar way to how Israel uses its conscripts to support agricultural programs.

Under the final pillar of public service, citizens would undergo training to perform roles within areas such as childcare, primary healthcare, aged health, and social welfare. This training and service will support Australia's universal healthcare model and provide improved access to care nationwide. This pillar has significant opportunities to specifically reduce pressures within the childcare and aged care sectors. It also provides those citizens who may eschew military or emergency service with a viable means to contribute to their communities and society.

Table 4: Proposed Universal Civil Service Scheme at a Glance

TYPE OF SERVICE	GENDER	AGE, SUBJECT TO INITIAL COMPULSORY SERVICE	TIME OF INITIAL COMPULSORY SERVICE	AGE, SUBJECT TO RECALL FOR DUTY	RESERVE SERVICE
Military Service	Male/ Female	18-20	24 months	18-55	14 days per year until age 35, stand-by from age 36-55.
Emergency Service					
Rural Service					
Public Service					

Source: Created by the author.

Table 4 summarises citizen eligibility for the Scheme and provides an overview of time periods and reserve service. The model demonstrates no bias or discrimination towards gender, physical capability, or mental capacity. The variation in pillars of service are designed to enable meaningful roles for all Australians.

It is necessary to highlight the value of the reserve component within the Scheme. While the conscripts between the age of eighteen to twenty would provide the Australian Government flexibility to deal with rapid change whilst in service, the reserve component truly holds the latent power. As the Scheme matures, it provides the Government with ever-increasing flexibility and scale for it to tackle identified threats.

A large reserve component of trained citizens enables the Government to tailor their response options, scale it according to requirements, and ensure its responsiveness.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that there are diverse and difficult challenges in Australia's future. As we progress through the 2020s and into the 2030s, conscripted citizens could hold the key to minimising the impacts of great power competition, extreme weather events, and other domestic crises. The review of Israeli, Singaporean, and Swedish national service models helped to identify three key themes. These were the use of national service as a tool for nation building, the concept of Total Defence (from a societal perspective), and the tension in systems and governments that choose either all-inclusive or selective models of service.

These themes should fuel the emerging discourse regarding the utility of universal service in Australia. Global uncertainty and the dangers posed by a combination of political, militaristic, environmental, and health risks led this paper to consider what a Universal Civil Service Scheme for Australia might look like.

The proposed model incorporated the four pillars of military service, emergency service, rural service, and public service. These pillars were designed to deal with Australia's diverse range of threats. Whilst the exploration of a Universal Civil Service Scheme for Australia may be seen by some as a heretical approach, the purpose of this paper has not been to dictate the exact way forward. Nor has this paper tried to argue that compulsory service must exist. Rather, this paper has articulated and described what a model of universal service might look like based on Australia's history and current threats.

Its overarching purpose has been to explore options and deepen the discourse on methods that might combat the future problems faced by Australia, her government, and her citizens. Without a willingness to explore all options available, we may miss the opportunity to best steal ourselves for the future.

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(Editor's Comment: Lieutenant Colonel McLeod Wood's discourse was written prior to the commencement of the present conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. As this conflict is very fluid, the final outcome cannot be predicted. The IDF is heavily engaged in calling on its resources).

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The author, Lieutenant Colonel McLeod Wood, is an Australian Armoured Corps Officer who is currently posted to the Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC). He has recently returned from a two-year posting to the United States of America where he studied with the US Army and multi-national partners. He has operational experience on three combat and one domestic deployment. He holds a Master of Arts in Military Operations, Master of Military Art and Science, Master of Project Management, a Master of Business, and a Bachelor of Arts. He is a distinguished graduate of both the US Army Command and General Staff College Art of War Scholars Program and the Advanced Military Studies Program (SAMS). (Biography written 2022)

NEWS FROM VICTORIA:

News from Victoria: As the news spread that the Victorian Branch will close at the end of 2026, many members asked what will happen with annual Nasho state events from 2027. The Victorian NSAA Executive Committee was pleased to advise them that the four major events, being National Servicemen's Day at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, Army Nashos Day at Puckapunyal, Navy Nashos Day at HMAS Cerberus and Air Force Nashos Day at Point Cook, now have "event champions" to carry them forward for another five years. The event champions, being representative Nashos from the NSAA, The Air Force Association, Nasho Fair Go, the Officer Training Unit Association and the Vietnam Veterans Association, have already met for the first time as an

unconstituted committee, and will meet again in November to flesh out the details. These four main events are all being opened up to all National Servicemen, regardless of whichever ex-service organisation they may belong to.

The majority of current Victorian sub-branches will all cease to exist after the end of 2026. Some may reconstitute as standalone entities, but most will fold into their local RSLs as unconstituted social groups, to continue to meet regularly for camaraderie.

NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

Hi Pete, Good yarns in the newsletter, well done!

I had earlier described our NAASA (NT) Inc. as “9 remaining members in contact”. We now seem to have none in contact, as we drift further into older age, widowerhood and failing health, shared by all of us around the nation, of course. I shall send this newsletter around to see whom I can find, these days. There is, thus, nil report from NT. Nowadays I fall in with Legacy for the ANZAC Day March. I hope for several more!

I am unable to make the September meeting in Canberra, given our attendance at the youngster’s graduation ceremony in Darwin, however, I plan to accept Noel’s invitation for the wreath-laying on Friday 19 September. At best we shall likely arrive some time on the Thursday, subject to travel bookings.

I look forward to seeing you and the cobbers shortly.

Best Regards

Mike Lane.

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY:

As from August 2025, the stance from the ACT Branch of the NSAA has not changed on the post 2026 closure of the National Council. We will continue to function as a stand-alone branch subject to the rules and regulations of the Incorporated body. Should our numbers fall below the prescribed levels or that we are unable to hold regular meetings, the members have indicated that we may morph into a form of social group.

We do have a dedicated number of members who will provide a presence at several commemorative services during the year.

- Members attend the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial on February 14th dedicated to honour fallen Nasho's.
- Members attend the Long Tan Day service at the Vietnam Memorial on August 18th each year, again honouring the sacrifice made by National Servicemen during the Vietnam campaign.
- A service is to be held in Canberra this year on August 31st commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Malayan Emergency.
- The Battle for Australia Day which is held on the first Wednesday in September.
- The 15th anniversary commemoration of the dedication of the National Servicemen's Memorial on September 8th.

The Canberra members wish to remain members of the NSAA National body under the current arrangements. We will continue on after 2026. The Branch has the funds to do so. We will provide a representative for liaison purposes and continue support for the NSAA.

Kind regards, John Faunt and Brian Harry

NEWS FROM OFFICER TRAINING UNIT (SCHEYVILLE) ASSOCIATION:

The Officer Training Unit Association has been in existence for some forty years. It consists of a Chapter in each State and the ACT and an overarching National Committee. There is also a National Council, with representatives from all Chapters, that meets yearly to discuss National and Chapter activities and pass on direction to the National Committee. This year the first members of the later version of National Service have turned 80. At national level, it was decided that due to the age of the participants, there would be no more national activities. Consequently, the need for a national organisation no longer exists.

The states have been running state-based activities, mainly in the capital cities, with no real input from national. The state chapters can therefore continue to run without the need of a national body. Individual classes, with members in all chapters, have been running their own activities for decades and can continue to do so without the need for a national body. From 1 July 2026, the National Committee will cease to exist. The State Chapters will continue, with little change in their operation. The association website will

be funded for the next few years and will eventually be handed over to a like-minded organisation. Between them the Chapters will arrange the production of a combined newsletter.

Neil Leckie, Editor The Scheyvillian, Newsletter of The Officer Training Unit Association.

NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND:

On 16th August, as a fundraiser for the NSAA Tableland Branch, John Hardy OAM lead a coach load of locals and visitors on a WWII History Tour of the Tolga Museum, Rocky Creek Igloo and War Memorial Park, and Kairi and Tinaroo training areas. The NSAA National Committee Secretary Peter Norman from Victoria was also present for the various events over three days. His father had been a stage entertainer here at the Rocky Creek Igloo during WWII.



John Hardy OAM, Pete Norman and Stan Carswell MBE - after the VP80 wreath laying.



Pete Norman at the NSAA Memorial Plaque at Rocky Creek.

The previous day John did an on-air interview for ABC regional radio in relation to VP80.

As an initiative of the Tableland Branch, he was involved in the unveiling of a 1st Australian Field Hospital, Vietnam memorial plaque. This acts as a synergism between the WWII hospitals here at Rocky Creek and the Vietnam war. To finish off the weekend, John was guest speaker at the Atherton RSL Vietnam Veteran's Day service. He spoke about National Servicemen and the Vietnam War.



The Rocky Creek Igloo restored to its former WWII glory.

National Secretary Pete Norman also got involved in the Queensland WWII VP Day+80 events and was asked by the Tablelands Regional Council Event Coordinator to be guest speaker at the Saturday night dinner dance. Naturally Pete spoke about his father Tom Norman's time in 1943 when he was part of the 2nd6th Australian General Hospital and a member of the Sunshiners Concert Party in this same venue, the Rocky Creek Entertainment Igloo, in 1943. A synthesised version of Tom's 1943 song "The Rocky Creek Stagers" was played several times over the course of the weekend. This song is currently being recorded in the studio of the Cairns based jazz band "Carruthers and Others", and when finished is likely to be accessioned into the collection of the Australian War Memorial, with the personal endorsement of Matt Anderson PSM, Director of the AWM and NSAA National Patron.

Neal Freier has advised that Qld President Alex Garlin OAM has stood down and Tony Stevensen OAM has been appointed as Qld President. Well done Alex for your magnificent contribution to the NSAA and all Nashos.



NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

The WA Branch is due to close at the end of this year and we are proposing to pay for National Membership for all our people for 2026. Just need to get my head around a few things and I hope to talk with you next month in Canberra to work out the best way to achieve this. Kind regards, Stuart Fairbairn

NEWS FROM TASMANIA:

Our two remaining Sub-Branches are just 'hanging out' until they both close at the end of 2026 and become unincorporated Social Groups, to maintain some social contact for existing members. This means that our State Branch will also cease to exist after the end of 2026. There will be no formal NSAA in Tasmania after the end of 2026.

Cheers, Jeff Gray.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

I remember back in 2023 when I attended a meeting at The Shed, for ex Servicemen located at Port Adelaide. After only a few meetings I knew, it wasn't for me. A good friend and myself asked if we could join The National Servicemen's Association at Keswick. We were welcomed with open arms and thoroughly enjoyed the following meetings. As time continued, I was asked to consider if I would like to stand for President. The rest is history. We have a regular group of fantastic Servicemen, who all look forward to our weekly meetings. Currently we have between 20 and 25 members. In the near future we will be having the Cyber Crime Unit of the S.A. Police at our meeting, to discuss issues to protect our members, now and into the future. Early next year, our current facilities will be demolished, and a brand-new community hub will be built by the local West Torrens Council & The Federal Government. Temporary accommodation for our weekly meetings will be provided. We have lost a few more members this year, and a few more going into nursing homes. We will carry on as per usual and expect to still be around in 2027. I look forward to meetings every week and will be standing for President again in 2026, as is John Thorne for Secretary. John Thorne & myself will be attending the National AGM & War Memorial in September.

Best Regards to all Members

Darrell Suter

President, NSAA Adelaide

THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MEDAL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2):

On 22 October 2024, Mr Rickerby made application to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal seeking review of the decisions.



The Tribunal diligently and thoroughly examined all relevant legislation and cumulative decisions by the Department of Defence, and recommended the reversal of Jeff's eligibility status. Thus, he has now been awarded the Australian Defence Medal.

As Jeff's circumstances also apply to many other National Servicemen who were serving when Prime Minister Whitlam terminated the scheme on 5th December 1972. The Tribunal's decision has set a precedent, but not an automatic precedent ... every such Nasho will probably need to individually apply for the medal.

Although Jeff's ADM is a significant achievement for him personally, and potentially for all other Nashos in the same circumstances, the wording on their discharge certificates is another matter entirely, not within the jurisdiction of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal. The declaration that Defence explained that when the Whitlam Government was elected in December 1972, it immediately implemented an administrative action that gave National Servicemen a choice to leave the Army or to continue to serve. It said this administrative action was not yet, in 1972, supported by formal legislation and had to be implemented within the provisions of the extant National Service Act. To enable a discharge at the earliest possible date, Defence submitted that the most expedient mode of discharge at the time was under Section 35(B)(5A) of the National Service Act on the grounds of **exceptional hardship**.

These exceptional hardship grounds were false and were rushed into place as an administrative expedient without due diligence consideration.