



NASHO



An Official Journal
of the
NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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2026 1st Trimester Edition

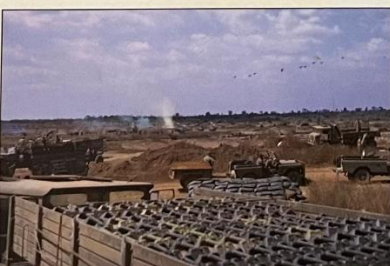
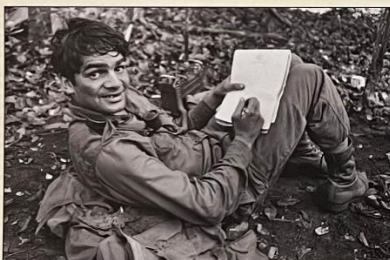


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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN:

Greetings to all and very best wishes for good health and happiness in 2026.

Operational and Planning activities have continued through the above period with the impending 75th Anniversary of National Service 1952-1972 commemoration on Saturday 14 February 2026 at the Great Hall of Parliament in Canberra taking priority.

Supported by the NSAA National Executive, I have represented the NSAA, OTU-A and Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association as a member of a consultative committee sponsored by DVA. The consultative committee is charged with the task of assisting DVA implement the commemorative service. If you haven't received notification and or advice on this activity, please visit the DVA information at website [75th anniversary of National Service 1951-72 | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) Therein you will find access to registration for attendance (please note your registration to attend is important in order that DVA can provide the best possible experience for attendees). In addition, there are opportunities for former National Servicemen to offer stories, written and or verbal, for the public record.

This historic, one-off activity, to honour former National Servicemen is a national event, supported and managed by DVA and which will be recorded and broadcast live from the Great Hall of Parliament. It is a great privilege that all former National Servicemen will be honoured for their service and sacrifice in this manner and in such a prestigious location.

Please give serious consideration as to your ability to attend and create more recorded history in memory of our Service to the Nation.

Further planning and consolidation activities have been on going as we work toward to life after 31 December 2026 and where your ability transition to the NSAA National Direct Membership Model will occur, if you have not done so already. This transition will occur where financial members of NSAA State and Territory Branches that have chosen to close formal operations as independent registered bodies transition to social or other club like entities.

As individual financial members of the National Servicemen's Association at national level, you will enjoy ongoing connection to fellow Nashos across Australia through newsletters, representation to Federal Government departments and Parliament through relevant ministers where necessary, an open invitation to the National NSAA commemorative service at the National Servicemen's National Memorial at the at the

Australian War Memorial, Canberra. And most importantly, through membership connections, you will maintain the camaraderie we have enjoyed for many years.

Critically, this membership option ensures that former National Servicemen have a 'Nasho home' called the National Servicemen's Association of Australia.

With kind regards and very best wishes to all,



Ron Brandy

National President

National Servicemen's Association of Australia

10 January 2026

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL SERVICE COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE:

(To be held in the Great Hall of Parliament, Parliament House, Canberra, 14 February 2026.)

To All Members: Please consider your availability to attend this singularly important 75th anniversary of National Service 1951-1972 event that recognises the Service and Sacrifice of all former National Servicemen and their families.

If you intend to attend the Commemorative Service, please use the on-line facility that appears in the attached DVA notice and invitation, if at all possible. If you do not have a 'smart phone' or the capacity to scan the QR code in the attachment, please ask a family member or friend for assistance to register for your attendance.

Further assistance is available by contacting DVA as the email address provided within the attached document.

Please also consider whether you would like to contribute to the event, not only by your attendance, but by contributing to our and our National Service history using the following options.

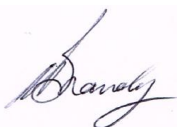
- By being prepared to offer a story verbally, or in writing for use at the Commemorate Service.
- Your story may be included in the printed Order of Service.

Be prepared to be interviewed by DVA a representative to record your story for historical purposes and or be broadcast before the Commemorative Service.

You will be able to register your willingness to participate in the 'story telling' if you are using the on-line registration facility and providing DVA with your contact details. DVA will provide assistance in writing a draft of your story, for your approval, provide prompt questions that may assist you to formulate your story, or prepare you for a recorded interview.

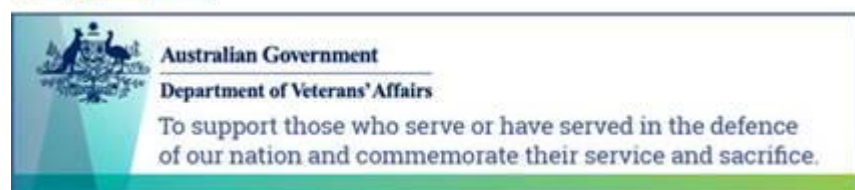
Both DVA and the DVA sponsored consultative committee, of which I am a member representing the NSAA, the Officer Training Unit Association, and the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association, recognise that the date of the Canberra event may coincide with NSAA member association and members planned Nasho Day 2026 commemorations. However, I trust members will make an effort to fit this special commemorative event at the Great Hall of Parliament into their schedule of activities and make it a very special day to record our nation's gratitude for our service and sacrifice.

Yours sincerely,



(DVA Attachment)

Sarah Kennedy | Assistant Secretary
Commemorations
Veteran Experience and Transition Division
Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ph: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)
Commemorative.Events@dva.gov.au
www.dva.gov.au



I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of this Country and pay my respect to Elders past and present.

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will be delivering a national commemorative service on Saturday 14 February 2026 for the 75th anniversary of National Service 1951-1972.

Date: Saturday 14 February 2026

Time: Pre-service program commences at 10.30am
Commemorative service and broadcast commences at 11.00am (expected duration: 60 minutes)

Venue: Great Hall, Parliament House, Government Drive, Canberra, ACT

We respectfully request that you note this date and reserve it in your calendar should you wish to attend. For your information, DVA has engaged the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to broadcast the service.

Further details regarding the program and ceremonial proceedings will be communicated in due course, including on the DVA website [75th anniversary of National Service 1951-72 | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#).

We deeply value your engagement, and we look forward to commemorating this significant date together.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any information at this time.

Service	Nationally broadcast commemorative service to mark the 75th anniversary of National Service 1951-1972
Date	Saturday 14 February 2026, 11:00am AEDT
Location	The Great Hall , Australia Parliament House, Canberra
Registration	Please register via the Online Registration System

National Commemorative Service To mark the 75th anniversary of National Service (1951-1972), the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will be holding a National Commemorative Service at the Great Hall, Australian Parliament House, Canberra ([visit Google Maps](#)) on National Servicemen's Day, 14 February 2026.

The service will also be broadcast nationally by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and streamed online to provide members of the community the opportunity to acknowledge the anniversary from their home.

More information about the National Commemorative Service will be published on the DVA website as it becomes available.

Key Timings: The National Commemorative Service will run as follows:

- 10:30am – Pre-service program commences
- 11:00am – Official service commences
- 12:00pm – Official service concludes

Background: National service refers to two conscription schemes for the armed forces that operated during the Cold War. Both schemes saw young men conscripted into Australia's armed forces for full-time and part-time service. Those who served in the national service schemes were affectionately known as 'Nashos'.

- The National Service Training Scheme (NSTS) ran from 1951 to 1959. It required nearly all 18-year-old males to be registered for national service and undergo between 3 and 6 months of full-time training in one of the armed services followed by a part-time service commitment in either the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, Citizen Military Force, or Citizen Air Force.
- The National Service Scheme (NSS) ran from 1965 to 1972. This scheme required males turning 20 and resident in Australia to register for potential national service and then men were selected for national service by a ballot system. Those selected were required to complete 2 years of full-time service with the Australian Regular Army or six years of part-time service in the CMF. Nashos in this scheme could serve in Australia or overseas, including in Vietnam, Malaysia (including in the Indonesian Confrontation), Singapore, and Papua New Guinea.

Over 280,000 young men were called up for national service between 1951 and 1972 with the last Nashos discharged in 1974. More than 200 died on active service overseas and others died while serving in Australia. Although many young men were proud to serve their country in uniform, national service came at a personal cost for all Nashos, irrespective of the nature and location of their service.

Registering your attendance: You may also register by scanning the QR code:



Alternatively, you may provide your name and contact details for registration to DVA via email to Commemorative.Events@dva.gov.au.

A ticket/attendance pass will not be required to enter. However, the registration process will ensure that adequate arrangements can be put in place for seating.

Attendees with an accessibility requirement will be able to provide details through the registration form. This will allow DVA to plan appropriately and send you relevant details about the service.

Planning your journey: Attendees are encouraged to plan their journey and arrival times carefully. We encourage you to arrive early to ensure you have sufficient time to progress through Parliament House Security and find a seat. A pre-service program will commence at 10:30am and we advise attendees to arrive early and be seated by 10:15am. Further Information about public transport arrangements will be made available in the days prior.

Media: The service will be broadcast live across Australia by the ABC. There will be media present at the service. Attendees should be aware that camera operators move around the site, and that cables may be laid along the ground. Please take care. Accredited media will be restricted to designated media zones.

Resources: DVA develops a range of commemorative and educational materials to further help recognise and remember Australia's National Servicemen (NASHOS). To learn more about Australians in the National Service schemes from 1951 to 1972, visit our [Anzac Portal](#).

Open Arms: Open Arms provides free mental health and wellbeing support to anyone who has served at least one day of continuous fulltime service in the ADF and their immediate families. Available at any time of the day or night, every day of the year. To find out more call [1800 011 046](tel:1800011046).

Contact information

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Phone: [1800 838 372](tel:1800838372) within Australia

Tel: [+61 2 6289 1133](tel:+61262891133) from outside Australia

Email: Commemorative.Events@dva.gov.au



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)

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 South Australia currently transitioning.

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.

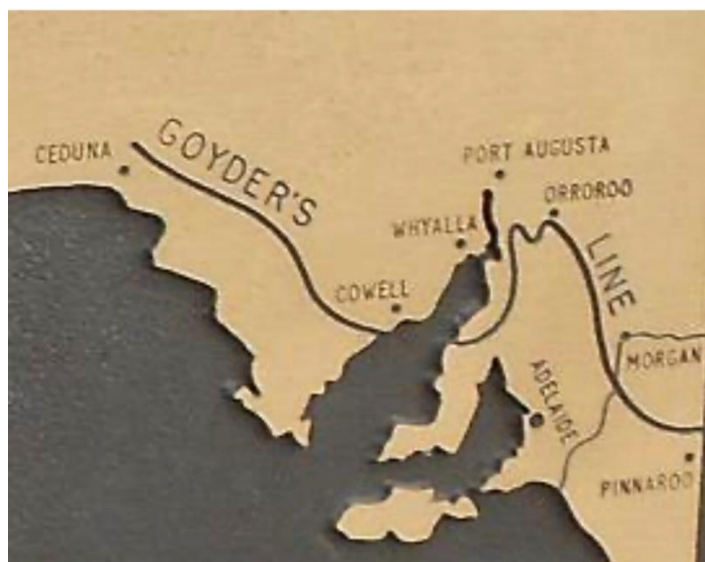
Pete Norman, NSAA National Secretary, “Nasho” Editor Pro Tem.

LINES IN THE SAND?

This is a general interest feature, following on from the feature “The Brisbane Line Revisited” of the previous edition of NASHO. A line in the sand is generally considered to be an idiom, rather than to visit the beach to draw one literally. Lines in the sand may be ephemeral or impermanent or are invisible ... just existing notionally ... as was the Brisbane Line, theoretically dividing Australia into two, which parts would be defended or given up to the Japanese in WW2. Here below are some other examples.

Goyder's Line:

The Goyder Line is a boundary in South Australia that marks the northern limit of land considered reliable for agriculture. Drawn in 1865 by Surveyor-General George Goyder, the line effectively separates the southern, more fertile lands from the arid northern regions suitable only for grazing.



Background and accuracy

- A drought-driven survey: Following a severe drought in 1864–65, Goyder was tasked by the colonial government to assess the damage and determine the boundary between the drought-affected pastoral lands and more reliable areas.
- A feat of observation: Goyder surveyed the line on horseback, relying on his observations of vegetation changes. To the south of the line, he noted mallee scrub, while to the north, the landscape transitioned to saltbush.
- Remarkably accurate: Despite being surveyed without modern technology, the line has proven to be highly accurate over time. It closely aligns with the 250 mm (10-inch) annual rainfall isohyet.

Barassi's Line:

The Barassi Line is a hypothetical line that divides Australia between the two dominant football codes. It runs from the south coast of NSW, through Broken Hill and Birdsville, and into Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. On either side of the line, crowd figures, media coverage, and participation rates tend to favour the locally dominant code.

(rugby is in green; Aussie rules is in yellow).



The dominant football code in Broken Hill and the NSW Riverina is Australian rules football (AFL), despite their location in rugby-dominated New South Wales. This is due to the city's historical ties with South Australia and Victoria, states where AFL is more popular and where many early settlers came from.

The dominant football code in Qld's Birdsville is Australian rules football (AFL), as the town sits on the Barassi Line, which separates AFL and rugby league territory. While the line represents a cultural and historical divide, Birdsville's position means that the AFL code has historically been dominant.

The Continents:

The Suez and Panama Canals are mostly observed these days as the continental borders between Asia and Africa and between North and South America. However, both canals are man-made structures not there until the 19th Century. Geophysical borders don't attract as much attention as geopolitical borders, which are fought over in wars.

Australia's Internal Borders:

Many on the international borders of the world are lines drawn on the map. The Anzac countries of Australia and New Zealand are islands which are not shared with any other country. However the internal borders between states and territories are quite different matters, being straight lines or rivers or ridge tops.

The original South Australian and Victorian Border – a line in the sand:



A border dispute between S.A. and Victoria concerned a surveying error in the 19th century that incorrectly placed the border between the colonies. While the border was legally defined as the 141st meridian east longitude, the surveyors' early measurements were inaccurate, leading to a decades-long legal battle over a 1,295 square-kilometres strip of land.

Historical context:

- The initial survey (1840s): Due to crude instruments and harsh conditions, surveyors marked a border line that was several kilometers west of the actual 141st meridian.
- Discovery of the error (1860s): More accurate surveying techniques later revealed that the marked boundary was incorrect. The territory in question was a narrow strip of land, 3.6 kilometers wide, between the surveyed line and the true 141st meridian.
- Victorian land sales: Before the error was resolved, Victoria had already sold or leased nearly half of the disputed territory. This complicated the matter, as many properties were established in what turned out to be legally uncertain territory. The dispute went all the way to the British Privy Council

Latte Lines:

The "latte lines" in Melbourne and Sydney are used for the invisible boundaries used by urban planners to describe the socioeconomic divide between the more affluent, inner-city suburbs and the outer areas. Similar derogatory terms like "the other side of the tracks" or "the other side of the river" are used. They are notional demarcation lines that are in the local vernacular but not declared on maps.

NEWS FROM VICTORIA:

The Victorian Branch intends to close at the end of 2026 and the Victorian Branch Council has passed a motion that it will fund all members into Direct National Membership for 2027.

Many Victorian members have indicated that they wish to continue to participate in annual state events such as National Servicemen's Day at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, Navy Nashos Day at HMAS Cerberus, Army Nashos Day at Puckapunyal and Air Force Nashos Day at Point Cook. The Victorian Branch also wishes to open up all such events to all Nashos, regardless of whether they are members of the NSAA or any other ex-service organisations (ESOs) such as Nasho Fair Go, the Airforce Association, the Vietnam Veterans Association, the Officer Training Unit Association, etc.

To achieve this after 2027 when the NSAA will no longer exist in Victoria, an unconstituted "Nasho Events Committee" has been formed by Nashos with the informal titles on "Event Champions", because those people are sufficiently keen to promote and champion such events for another few years to keep alive. The Victorian Branch has made allowance for funding for five years. The next meeting of the Events Committee will take place early in 2026.

NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

The WA Branch formally closed at the end of 2025. They will fund all their members as National Direct Members for 2026. Members are still hoping to get together socially going forward especially those in the Mandurah area.

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY:

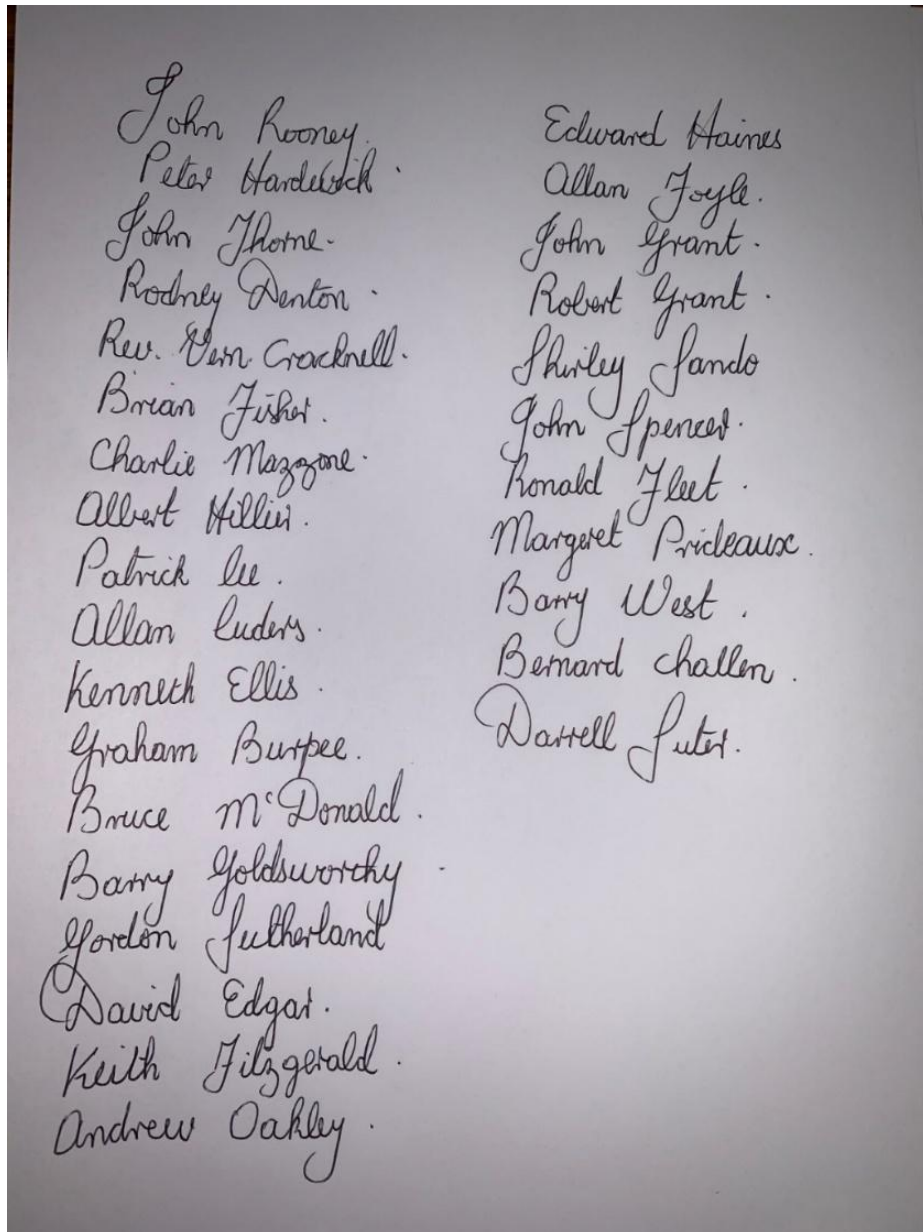
The ACT Branch intends to fund all members into Direct National Membership for 2027.

NEWS FROM TASMANIA:

The Tasmanian Branch & its two Sub-branches will continue until the end of 2026, when all will close. The Tasmanian Branch, through its two Sub-branches, then intends to fund all remaining members into Direct National Membership for 2027 & 2028.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

The South Australian Branch intends to fund all attending, active members into Direct National Membership for 2026. The list below covers the first batch. The National team welcomes them with open arms for keeping the S.A. members within the Nasho community. Thanks to John Thorne and Darrell Suter for making this happen. The next batch expected into Direct National Membership will cover members from the Para Hills Sub-Branch.



NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

The number of Nashos who were formerly members of the NSAA Northern Territory Branch has reduced to just five, as loss of about 50%, as age wearied them. It is hoped that all five will renew their National Direct Memberships for 2026.

NEWS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES:

The number of Nashos who were formerly members of the NSAA NSW Branch remained steady in 2025 at 46. It is hoped that all will renew their National Direct Memberships for 2026.

NEWS FROM OFFICER TRAINING UNIT (SCHEYVILLE) ASSOCIATION:

The OTU Association is affiliated with the National Servicemen's Association of Australia. Through that body's involvement, a monument commemorating all those National Servicemen who served in the Armed Forces has been erected. This is located adjacent to the National War Memorial in Canberra, ACT. Also through their efforts, the Anniversary of National Service Medal has been made available.

A National Executive, which is based in Melbourne, manages the Association. This body meets on a mostly monthly basis to ensure the organisation runs effectively. A National Council meeting whereby delegates from each of the States/Territories have their formal input is held annually.

At national level, it was decided that due to the age of the participants, first members of the later version of National Service having turned 80, there would be no more national activities. Consequently, the need for a national organisation no longer exists. From 1 July 2026, the National Committee will cease to exist. However, the Chapters will arrange the production of a combined newsletter and the association website (<https://www.otu.asn.au/>) will be funded for the next few years and will eventually be handed over to a like-minded organisation.

NEWS FROM QUEENSLAND:

The Queensland NSAA is working towards closure before 31 December 2026. Several Queensland Branches are expected to close before the end of 2025 including Ingham, Redlands, South Burnett and Tableland. The latter Branch have chosen to be absorbed into the Malanda RSL Sub Branch. More information will be available in the next edition.

MCDONALD'S CORNER:

McDonald's Corner: 9°23'5"S 147°25'38"E

The distance between McDonald's Corner and Ower's Corner is 9.2 kms. Much of the material in this post is copied from reports in the public domain.

These days of the 21st Century, the Kokoda Trail is of significant importance to Australians, like Gallipoli, and attracts many pilgrims wishing to pay homage to the servicemen who fought the Japanese invaders there more than 80 years ago.

In 1942, McDonald's Corner marked the terminus of the road for motor vehicle traffic from Port Moresby. It was here, on the 12th of July 1942, that members of B Coy, 39th Infantry Battalion disembarked from their vehicles and advanced on foot to engage the enemy. Some short time later, the track past McDonald's Corner was improved for jeeps as far as Ower's Corner. The distance between McDonald's Corner and Owers Corner is 9.2 kms quite a distance when one was on foot with full kit. Ower's Corner has now entered the Australian vernacular as the recognised start point of the Kokoda Trail, but it wasn't always so.

The alternative naming convention "Kokoda Track" has also entered the Australian vernacular, but it wasn't always so. "Kokoda Trail" was the naming convention adopted in 1942. The Kokoda Trail takes its name from the village of Kokoda, which was the site of the only airfield between the north coast and Port Moresby during World War II. While the footpath was unnamed or had various pre-war unofficial names like the "overland mail route," the specific designation "Kokoda Trail" emerged and became official through several key sources:

- Journalists (1942): Australian war correspondents in Papua New Guinea are widely credited with coining and popularizing the name. Geoff Reading, a correspondent

for Sydney's Daily Mirror, claimed he used the title "Kokoda Trail" in an October 1942 story specifically to save typing out the names of all the individual village tracks.

- Military Designation (1942): The Australian Army's 2/33rd Battalion diary recorded the route as the "Kokoda Trail" as early as September 1942.
- Battle Honours (1957–1958): The Commonwealth Battles Nomenclature Committee officially adopted "Kokoda Trail" as the battle honour for the units that fought there.
- PNG Government (1972): The name was formally gazetted by the Papua New Guinea Place Names Committee on October 12, 1972, at the recommendation of the Chief Minister at the time, Michael Somare.



1966 photo: 2nd Era Nashos at McDonald's Corner

The naming remains a point of historical and cultural debate and dispute in Australia. Some Australian veterans and historians often preferred "Track" as it was more common in the Australian "bush" vernacular of the time. "Trail" is frequently characterized as an Americanized term, though "Trail" has remained the official legal name in Papua New Guinea since 1972.

I will always refer to "Trail" because when I was there as a Nasho in 1966 sixty years ago and just twenty-one years after the war, the residual in-situ signage declared "Kokoda Trail". But the reality is that both terms are now used interchangeably in Australia..

Kokoda Track/Trail, and there is now a memorial at McDonald's Corner, as well as a sign, announcing the beginning of the 'Kokoda Trail'. Nearby was the village of Iloilo, and it was here in July 1942 that officers of the Australian and New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU), such as Lieutenant Herbert Kienzle and his medical officer, the elderly Captain Geoffrey Vernon, brought together the groups of native carriers who were needed to support the Australian advance into the mountains.

In 1942, the route to McDonald's Corner was described thus: is reached by a road that leaves Port Moresby and winds its way 40 kilometres up a steep hill, past the Rouna Falls and onto the high plateau which includes the Itiki Valley and the Sogeri River. This area provides a slightly cooler climate and in 1942 was considered suitable for training of the units about to cross the mountains. Later it became a retraining and rest area for units that had fought on the track. It was also the site of a number of military hospitals.

From Iloilo, Lieutenant Kienzle set out with his carriers to establish a series of staging camps along the Kokoda Track to support the troops of the 39th and later the 53rd Battalions. Staging camps were established at approximately 16 kilometre intervals, which meant that the troops would take about eight days to cross the mountains to Kokoda.

Many of the troops who fought on the Kokoda Track have clear memories of Iloilo, and McDonald's Corner – a short distance beyond where they disembarked from their trucks before beginning the march. The first unit over the mountains, B Company 39th Battalion, under Captain Sam Templeton, left Iloilo on 7 July 1942. C Company of the Battalion began the trek on 23 July. The first company of the 53rd Battalion left Iloilo on 11 August and the first elements of the 2/14th Battalion began moving on 16 August.

Later an effort was made to push the road beyond Iloilo and a jeep track was constructed to Ower's Corner, but still the troops disembarked at McDonald's Corner. The first company of the 2/33rd Battalion departed McDonald's Corner on 10 September.

Eventually, as the track was improved, more troops could be carried forward to Ower's Corner and thus McDonald's Corner lost some of its importance. It is still regarded however as the beginning of the Kokoda Track. Beyond Iloilo the first staging camp at the end of a day's journey was the village of Uberi.



We Nashos went everywhere, including to McDonald's Corner, in the back of a Holden ute.





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