

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

11 February 22

MEDIA RELEASE

3 February 2022

REMEMBERING THE FALL OF AMBON, 80 YEARS ON



The Hon Andrew Gee MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel
Federal Member for Calare



Today we remember and honour the service and sacrifice of the 1,100 Australian soldiers of 'Gull Force', 80 years on from the fall of the island of Ambon, in present day Indonesia, during the Second World War.

The Australians landed on Ambon in mid-December 1941 to support Netherlands East Indies troops defending the strategically important Bay of Ambon and two airfields at Laha and Liang.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel Andrew Gee said the Australian troops fought with distinction, despite being ill-equipped and without air or naval support.

"When the Japanese landed on the island on 30 January 1942, the offensive was swift and the battle at Ambon was short-lived, before the Australian contingent was forced to surrender on 3 February," Minister Gee said.

"In the defence of Ambon the main part of Gull Force suffered 15 casualties, and 309 officers and men who were at Laha were either killed in action or in mass executions which took place later in the month. Almost 800 Australians were taken prisoner.

"There were a number of examples of exceptional courage shown by the Australians, including the actions of 29-year-old Private William Thomas Doolan, a driver with the transport section of the 2/21st Battalion.

"Private Doolan was part of a reconnaissance patrol that encountered the attacking Japanese forces and, armed with hand grenades and a rifle, he stayed behind to hold the enemy off long enough to enable his comrades to withdraw.

"His bullet-riddled body was found some time later and, after the surrender, the Japanese allowed the Australians to bury William, and later erect a cross to mark his grave.

"After the war, William was reburied in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery located on Ambon, and the cross his mates made to mark his original resting place was donated to the Australian War Memorial, where it remains a part of the collection to this day.

"Ambon is another reminder of the horrors faced by so many taken as prisoners of war during the Second World War.

"Australian and Dutch prisoners were subjected to brutal treatment and many suffered malnutrition. One prisoner noted they were treated like slaves.

"Over half of those captured on Ambon died in prisoner of war camps by the time the war was over.

"Australia remembers the men of Gull Force with pride, and we pay our respects to all those who suffered and gave their lives, as well as their families.

"Their courage and sacrifice in the face of overwhelming odds should never be forgotten."

To learn more about the Fall of Ambon visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs [Anzac Portal](#).

Cancellation of OGM Dinner and ANZAC and Peace Ceremony.

Dear members,

OGM Dinner

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the COVID situation in the ACT, the Sub-Branch Executive has decided to cancel the OGM dinner scheduled for Tuesday 22 February 2022. We regret having to make this decision but feel that it is the most prudent course to take for our members.

ANZAC and Peace Ceremony

The Sub-Branch Board has also decided not to hold the annual ANZAC and Peace Ceremony in 2022. That decision is based on the current and likely COVID-19 health advice and restrictions, and the ACT Education Directorate's position. However, we will be conducting the ANZAC Essay Competition this year.

This decision is again unfortunate as the Sub-Branch has been conducting the Ceremony since 1993 and it follows the cancellation of the ceremonies in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID-19.

Regards,

Greg



Greg Kennett

Secretary

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Newsletter

Edition 3 - 8 February 2022



Hearing Block 2 - Sydney

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide will hold its second public hearing in Sydney at the Pullman Hotel, Hyde Park on February 14, 2022. The hearing will continue to focus on people with lived experience and will also hear evidence from a number of experts.

The Commission Chair, Nick Kaldas, said he was mindful serving and ex-serving Defence personnel have been waiting a long time for change.

“The Commission has a grave responsibility to create real and lasting change for the serving and ex-serving Defence community, their families and supporters,” Commissioner Kaldas said.

“We are acutely aware that each day of inaction puts people’s lives at risk.”

The hearing will commence at 10:00 am (AEDT).

Hearing Block 3 will also be held in Sydney between 7 and 18 March.

[More Information about Hearing Block 2 here](#)

COVID-19 Protocols

The Sydney hearing will be open to members of the public to attend in person. Due to social distancing requirements seats are limited, so please register to attend via [EventBrite](#). Attendees coming to the public hearing must be double vaccinated and wear a mask throughout the proceedings.

[Register to attend in person](#)

Please be aware that these hearings may contain material and images that are triggering or distressing for some people. The public nature of the hearings also means that there may be people in military uniform, as well as military service providers in attendance.

Those unable to attend in person can watch via livestream on the [Royal Commission website](#).

Submissions

The Royal Commission has so far received more than 1,100 written submissions from individuals and organisations. The Commission is interested in hearing from people with lived experiences – whether currently serving in the Defence force, former members, or a family member or someone who is supporting them. All voices and stories are welcome.

These stories might not relate to suicide but could be about military service, mental health and individual experiences in the Defence force. The Commissioners want to discover themes and common experiences and identify ways to bring about real change for future serving and ex-serving Defence communities.

All submissions will be recorded, reviewed and used to inform the work of the Royal Commission. You can remain anonymous when you speak to the Commission.

Information about the [submission process](#), appearing as a witness and applying for a [private session](#) is available on the [Royal Commission website](#).

[Make a submission](#)

[Private session](#)



Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

No. A0108026R

We represent the interests of Defence Force Retirees regarding their Superannuation
www: <https://www.adfra.org/> Email: admin@adfra.org

FEDERAL COURT HEARING

Today's short hearing of Clinton McKenzie's matter in the Federal Court took an unexpected but positive turn from ADFRA's perspective. Justice Perry recognized the potential significance of the outcome of the matter for a large number of former members of the Australian Defence Force, their widows, widowers and dependent children and orphans. Accordingly, her Honour issued an order requiring the Federal Court Registrar to attempt to arrange Pro Bono legal assistance for Clinton.

One remarkable aspect of the hearing is that Counsel for the Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) said that the issues in dispute affected only a few hundred people. Clinton clarified that the issues affected tens of thousands of people, which seemed to be a revelation to CSC's Counsel.

To be clear: Clinton is not making any argument based on members being misled about the effects of commutation. Clinton is arguing that, properly interpreted, the DFRDB Act does not have the effect of permanently reducing the rate of commuted retirement pay. Clinton is arguing that the reduction only lasts until a member reaches the age on which the applicable expectancy of life factor in Schedule 3 of the DFRDB Act is based.

If the Court accepts that argument, the previous apology given by the Commonwealth for failure to provide adequate information about how the DFRDB Authority and the CSC were going to permanently reduce commuted retirement pay (and commuted Class C invalidity pay) will have been unnecessary. The necessary apology will instead be for not administering the system in accordance with the law, quickly followed by payment of the pay unlawfully withheld beyond a member's Schedule 3 life expectancy.

We are under no illusion that there are strong arguments for the DFRDB Authority's/CSC's interpretation. However, the judge will ultimately decide the correct interpretation.

Members should rest assured that they are not at risk of losing anything as a consequence of Clinton's Federal Court action. If the DFRDB Authority's/CSC's interpretation prevails, nothing will change. Our commuted pay will continue to be permanently reduced as a consequence of commutation, in accordance with the DFRDB Authority's/CSC's usual practice. That would be a disappointing outcome which – sadly – would merely confirm that the generous scheme used to entice us into and remain in the Defence Force was deliberately less generous than was marketed to us at the time.

In any event, the most significant and important fight for us remains the indexation methodology which continues to result in the inexorable reduction in the buying power of our entitlements.

One practical matter that has become obvious is how difficult it can be to utilize video conferencing technology (Microsoft Teams) used to stream the Court hearing. It was evident that quite a number had difficulty obtaining and/or accessing the link to the hearing and some who were successful made unintended virtual appearances in Court today. Fortunately, they were not too disruptive, and Justice Perry was lenient.

Nearer to the date of the next hearing, we will organize an 'anyone can join' Teams Meeting to enable members to master the technology. Clinton is happy to make himself available to field any questions members may have. We will circulate a link to the meeting at the appropriate time.

The next hearing in Clinton's matter is a case management hearing on 28 February, so that the judge can get an understanding of how preparations for resumption of the 'main' hearing are going. We will keep members updated.

Jim Hislop OAM

President

From RIOTACT

<https://the-riotact.com/campbells-rsl-park-to-get-much-needed-upgrades-but-organisers-want-your-help-with-the-design/520016>



Friends of the RSL Park Campbell are calling on the wider community to help them design the landscape plan. Photo: Supplied.

Campbell's RSL Park to get much needed upgrades but organisers want your help with the design

Max O'Driscoll 19 December 2021 1

RSL Campbell Park

Friends of the RSL Park Campbell are calling on the wider community to help them design the landscape plan. Photo: Supplied.

Weeds and rabbits have called the RSL Park in Campbell home for the better part of two decades. Last year, a group of Campbell locals decided enough was enough and the Friends of RSL Park Campbell group was formed.

Kate Morioka is a member of the group and a new resident of Campbell. She has been amazed by the level of cohesion in the community, despite the obvious differences in background.

“What we like about the group is that traditionally in an established suburb like Campbell, you get a lot of people who are older and have been there a long time that get involved in something like this,” said Ms Morioka.

“With our group, it involves people from all different ages and backgrounds, and most importantly, people who live in detached dwellings as well as the highrise apartments.”

In addition to the issues with weeds and rabbits, the park also lost its RSL plaque which had been at the park since it was given its name as a dedication to the Returned Services League in July 2002. This naming is significant as Campbell remains a central location for Canberra's Defence Force personnel, as it has been for much of the post-World War II era.

Ms Morioka says the loss of the plaque not only removed the special connection to the RSL from the park but also left it “nameless”.

Draft landscape

The proposed draft landscape plan for the RSL Park upgrades. Photo: Friends of RSL Park Campbell.

After months of working bees and planning, the Friends of RSL Park group recently had a big victory, successfully securing an ACT Nature in the City grant.

“There are two components to it: one is to remove weeds from the southern section of the park, the second is to put together an integrated landscape plan,” said Ms Morioka.

“We have a draft plan [pictured above] and that's been prepared based on previous input from members of the Friends of RSL Park, as well as a workshop with our key stakeholders including RSL ACT branch, RSL national and the TCCS [Transport Canberra and City Services].”

With lots of users of the area from outside the immediate Campbell community, the group would like to see anybody with an interest in the park make a submission on their draft plan. All necessary information is available on the Friends of RSL Park Campbell website.

GROUP PROGRAM SCHEDULE

JANUARY – JULY 2022

ONLINE PROGRAMS

MANAGING PAIN

2 x 90 minutes sessions - Instructor Led

TIME: 1230hrs – 1400hrs AEST

Tuesday & Thursday | 1st & 3rd February
Wednesday & Friday | 23rd & 25th February
Tuesday & Thursday | 15th & 17th March
Wednesday & Friday | 6th & 8th April
Tuesday & Thursday | 26th & 28th April
Wednesday & Friday | 18th & 20th May
Wednesday & Friday | 8th & 10th June
Tuesday & Thursday | 28th & 30th June

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

2 x 90 minutes sessions - Instructor Led

TIME: 1230hrs – 1400hrs AEST

Tuesday & Thursday | 18th & 20th January
Wednesday & Friday | 23rd & 25th February
Tuesday & Thursday | 15th & 17th March
Tuesday & Thursday | 12th & 14th April
Tuesday & Thursday | 10th & 12th May
Tuesday & Thursday | 31st May & 2nd June
Tuesday & Thursday | 21st & 23rd June

RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA

2 x 90 minutes sessions - Instructor Led

TIME: 1300hrs – 1430hrs AEST

Wednesday & Friday | 23rd & 25th February
Tuesday & Thursday | 15th & 17th March
Wednesday & Friday | 6th & 8th April
Monday & Wednesday | 27th & 29th April
Tuesday & Thursday | 17th & 19th May
Tuesday & Thursday | 7th & 9th June
Monday & Wednesday | 20th & 22nd June
Tuesday & Thursday | 1st & 14th July

DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY

2 x 90 minutes sessions - Instructor Led

TIME: 1300hrs – 1430hrs AEST

Tuesday & Thursday | 8th & 10th February
Tuesday & Thursday | 1st & 3rd March
Tuesday & Thursday | 22nd & 24th March
Tuesday & Thursday | 12th & 14th April
Tuesday & Thursday | 3rd & 5th May
Tuesday & Thursday | 24th & 26th May
Tuesday & Thursday | 14th & 16th June

****Please note all times are Australian Eastern Time**

Refer to your state or territory time zones for the time in your area

To register your interest and for the most up to date information visit:
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/get-support/treatment-programs-and-workshops>

OPEN
Veterans & Families
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1800 011 046
OpenArms.gov.au



GROUP PROGRAM SCHEDULE

JANUARY – JULY 2022 cont.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

SLEEPING BETTER

2 x 90 minutes sessions - Instructor Led

TIME: 1230hrs – 1400hrs AEST

Wednesday & Friday | 16th & 18th February
Wednesday & Friday | 9th & 11th March
Wednesday & Friday | 30th March & 1st April
Wednesday & Friday | 27th & 29th April
Wednesday & Friday | 18th & 20th May
Wednesday & Friday | 8th & 10th June
Wednesday & Friday | 29th June & 1st July

BLENDED MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Self-paced eLearning plus 2 x 2.5hr Instructor led sessions

TIME: 1300hrs – 1530hrs AEST

Wednesday & Friday | 16th & 18th February
Tuesday & Thursday | 29th & 31st March
Wednesday & Friday | 16th & 18th May
Tuesday & Thursday | 26th & 28th July

OPERATION LIFE – ASIST Tune-Up (ASIST Refresher Workshop)

1 x 3 hour workshop – Instructor Led

TIME: 1230hrs – 1530hrs AEST

Wednesday | 25th May
Thursday | 25th August

****Please note all times are Australian
Eastern Time**

**Refer to your state or territory time zones
for the time in your area**

To register your interest and for the most up to date information visit:
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BEATING THE BLUES

A skills-based group program to help understand the situations and thinking patterns that contribute to depression, and identify strategies to help manage symptoms.

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Building better relationships can help you rediscover what's important in your relationship, and rebuild a relationship with your partner.

DOING ANGER DIFFERENTLY

Doing anger differently will help you to understand anger and manage it more effectively, so that it doesn't have a negative impact on your own, or others' lives.

MANAGING PAIN

This program will help you learn about pain and teaches you strategies and skills for effective pain management.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Mental Health First Aid is a two day workshop that teaches practical skills for helping a family member or friend who is experiencing mental health problems.

OPERATION LIFE: ASIST

The two day workshop aims to help you see, hear and respond to suicide signals. Preparing you to work with people at risk, increase their immediate safety and to get further help.

OPERATION LIFE: SAFETALK

In the safeTALK half day workshop you will learn how to become more alert to suicide prevention opportunities, and how to offer help.

PARENTING PROGRAMS

Parenting programs are tailored to the needs of attending veteran families, to help build strong and positive relationships between parents and their children.

RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA

This program will help you to understand the possible impact of trauma, and teaches you strategies and skills to help you to manage its impact on you and your family.

RELAXATION AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Relaxation and stress management provides practical skills that can be used in everyday life to de-stress via mindfulness techniques.

RESIDENTIAL LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

The Residential lifestyle management program is designed for veterans and their partners who want to enhance their wellbeing and relationships.

SLEEPING BETTER

Sleeping better is an educational and skills-based group program to help you manage disturbed sleep.

STEPPING OUT

A two day program for ADF members and their partners who are about to, or have recently separated from the military.

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

This program will help you to understand anxiety and teaches you strategies and skills to reduce anxiety and associated stress.

Free 12 Month Health and Fitness Program

- Returned Veterans, Peacekeepers & ADF Firefighter Scheme -

Registrations open

Run on behalf of the DVA by Corporate Health Management, the program aims to help you increase your physical health and wellbeing through practical exercise support and 12 months of telephonic health coaching and advice on healthy lifestyle choices provided by one of our team of highly qualified allied health professionals.

The Heart Health Program is flexible and able to accommodate participants living in metropolitan areas, rural or remote areas, those still working or retired, studying or with other time constraints.



Am I eligible?

Started over 20 years ago for those returned from Vietnam, the Heart Health Program is free and open to all veterans with operational service, peacekeepers and those covered under the ADF firefighters scheme who have not previously participated in the Heart Health Program before.

To check your eligibility visit
<http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility>



How it works: Individual Heart Health Program

Each participant receives 12 months of healthy lifestyle coaching from a highly qualified and dedicated allied health professional via fortnightly health coaching calls with information and advice tailored to each individuals health and fitness goals.

The health coach will use their extensive knowledge along with health surveys and food diaries to guide you through the program.

The program covers a range of topics including:

- Setting healthy goals
- Nutrition and diet advice
- Advice on lowering alcohol consumption
- Developing better sleep patterns
- Stress management
- Managing diabetes
- Taking care of your body
- Managing your weight
- Maintaining a healthy heart

Program Exercise Resource – Exercise how you like to

The program can provide an exercise resource to help participants to exercise the way they like to or provide an opportunity to try something that's different than the usual.

Resources can take the form of:

- Assistance with the cost of a gym or pool membership or
- Provide a piece of exercise equipment for use at home or
- Provide assistance with accessing new exercise or training gear



Registering Your Interest

Registering your interest or checking eligibility is easy.

Visit <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility> and follow the steps.

Call the program phone number **1300 246 262** at any time to speak to one of our team.

Heart Health Team - DVA Heart Health Program

Program proudly delivered on behalf of the DVA by:

CHM Corporate Health Management Pty Ltd

Toorak Place, 521 - 529 Toorak Road, Toorak VIC 3142

Direct: 1300 246 262

Email: hearthealth@chm.com.au

Web: <http://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au>



We regret that Coffee Catch Up FRIDAY has been cancelled due to the Covid situation.

Please note that the Eddison Day Club is currently meeting on only a very casual basis for lunch at midday Fridays.



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information or access to our services

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PS.

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