

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

14 July 2023



Australian Government
The Repatriation Commission

Certificate of Appreciation

PRESENTED TO

Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

IN RECOGNITION OF

Your organization's valued support to Veterans'
and their families.

Don Spinks AM
Repatriation Commissioner
Repatriation Commission

On 22 May 2023, Secretary Greg Kennett visited Mawson Primary School to present prizes to the student who was placed first in this year's ANZAC Essay Competition. The photo shows Greg with the student, Dinaya Walakularachichi, her parents and the school's Principal following the presentation.



Photos below: Coffee Catch up on Friday 7 July with a purpose. Packing the 'Winter' The Serviceman edition.



Sergeant Ian Alford hall restoration

Dear Friends of 26 Battalion Association

I have received a fundraising request from the Longreach Scout Group to restore their Ian Alford Scout Hall and extend their current museum.

Longreach Scouts will be celebrating their 110th Anniversary on 30 Sep 2023 and they have had a very long connection with the 26th Battalion.

The scout hall is named after Sergeant Ian Alford from the 26th Battalion who died from wounds in Bougainville during WW2. His name appears on the 26th Battalion Honour Board that is currently on display in the Longreach Scout Museum.

As you may know, the 26th Battalion was formed in 1939 and raised in the districts surrounding Longreach, Queensland, under the command of Lt-Col H.W. Murray. In 1943 the 26th Battalion gained reinforcements from other States.

Although the 26 Battalion Association is not in a position to financially support this project, we will be donating a copy of Norm Turrell's book "Never Unprepared - A history of 26 Australian Infantry Battalion AIF 1939-46".

We recommend individuals give a tax deductible donation directly to the Longreach Scout Group. Details are on the poster attached. Please include "26Bn YOUR SURNAME" in the description.

The Scout Museum is also looking for physical memorabilia from WW2 that could be included in their museum. Please contact Longreach Scout Master, John Palmer, directly at palmbp@bigpond.net.au to make arrangements.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kindest regards
Colin Block



LONGREACH
SCOUTS 2023

FUNDRAISING

The Longreach Scout Group celebrating 110 years in Service. Help us maintain and preserve our history & inspire our youth leaders of tomorrow.

DONATE IN CASH OR IN-KIND

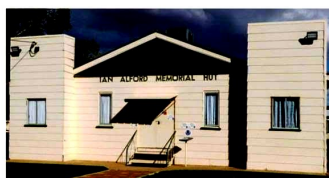
We are seeking donations to restore our Scout Den and extend our current Scout Museum to showcase our 110-year Scouting history in Longreach.

PLEASE DONATE ANY AMOUNT

Longreach Scout Group

PO Box 381 Longreach Qld 4730
(07) 4658 1136
BSB: 034-194 Account: 180 454
Contact: palmbp@bigpond.net.au

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible



DVA Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT Update

I am officially back in my role and I hope this email finds you all well. My thanks to Sonia Gregory who was acting Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT while I was on leave.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank Repatriation Commissioner, Don Spinks AM, who has finished in the role from 4 July. A veteran himself, Don enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in January 1979 and, on completion of basic recruit training, was assigned to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps. He served in many roles and in June 2018 was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for exceptional service to soldiering within the Australian Defence Force. This culminated in his appointment as Regimental Sergeant Major of the Army.

Don then continued his 'service after service' by accepting an appointment as Repatriation Commissioner and Member of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission in 2019. I'm sure you will all join me in acknowledging the life-long contributions of Don to the ADF and veterans, and wish him all the best in his retirement.

Last week, we also marked National NAIDOC Week and I would like to thank, celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those who have also served in the ADF.

Further information is available below on other key activities underway:

[NSW Government: veterans ongoing access to rego and licence concessions](#)

[50th anniversary of end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam War](#)

[DVA Offers guidance on suspected scams](#)

[DVA TV recent](#)

[Upcoming anniversaries](#)

I look forward to seeing you in upcoming events, in particular here in Sydney, the Legacy Torch relay as part of Legacy's 100 anniversary celebrations.

Regards,

Victoria

Victoria Benz

Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT

Department of Veterans' Affairs

[NSW Government: veterans ongoing access to rego and licence concessions](#)

NSW Veterans and Wholly Dependent Partners will no longer need to attend a Service NSW centre to re-establish their eligibility for a vehicle registration and license concession.

For over a decade, veterans under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 had to continually obtain documentation from DVA and verify their eligibility for a concession in person.

From 1 July 2023, eligible veterans will receive a concession on registration and licence products by simply providing Service NSW their file number. Additionally, as a pensioner their vehicle registration will be automatically renewed, provided their file number is recorded, and green slip and pink slip (if required) received.

NSW Veterans and eligible concession holders can also now renew their licence online if they meet the required criteria.

Visit [NSW Government](#) for more information on:

- checking your registration detail
- eligibility

concessions and benefits

[50th anniversary of end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam War](#)

The Australian Government will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War with a National Commemorative Service in Canberra on 18 August 2023.

Throughout the year, Australians are being encouraged to honour and remember the service of some 60,000 Australian men and women who served in the Vietnam War. Tragically, 523 Australians lost their lives in the war, and more than 3,000 were wounded.

The Government has produced a 50th anniversary commemorative medallion and certificate of recognition, honouring the service of Australians who served in the Vietnam War. To apply for the 50th anniversary commemorative medallion and certificate of recognition, please visit [50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

[DVA offers guidance on suspected scams](#)

Have you ever been contacted by a scammer and were unsure where to go for help and support? DVA has just published a page on the DVA website that may help you if you think you've been scammed.

Please visit [Avoiding and reporting a suspected scam | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#) for further information.

DVA TV recent

Now available for viewing :

[Lest we forget. - YouTube](#)

[WORKING WITH VETERANS: A Toolkit for Community Housing Organisations - YouTube](#)

[Carrying on their Legacy: War Widow De'Arne Prosser - YouTube](#)

Korean Veterans' Day

On 27 July each year, we commemorate Korean Veterans' Day. This year, it marks 70 years since the end of the Korean War – the anniversary of the day in 1953 when an armistice was signed to end the fighting in Korea.

This day is a time for us to remember the almost 18,000 Australians who served in the war, including some 340 who lost their lives.

Veterans of this war have suggested it is known as 'the forgotten war', making it particularly important to commemorate this year, and every year.

70th anniversary of the Battle of Samichon River (The Hook)

24 July 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Samichon River, the last battle fought as part of the Korean War.

Also known as the Battle of the Hook, it took place from 24 to 26 July 1953, just one day before the end of the fighting.

The Australian troops showed great bravery and determination, alongside their comrades from the United States and New Zealand. On this day, we honour the service and sacrifice of those who fought and remember the five Australians who were killed, and the 24 who were wounded.

Victoria Benz

Deputy Commissioner, NSW & ACT

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Tel (02) 9213 7878 Ext 417878 Mobile 0417 654 347

Victoria.benz@dva.gov.au or dc.nsw.and.act@dva.gov.au

www.dva.gov.au

RSL LifeCare Veteran Services is hosting a virtual Digital Thumbprint workshop – for current and former serving ADF members and their families.

July 12:

RSL LifeCare Veteran Services is hosting a virtual Digital Thumbprint workshop – for current and former serving ADF members and their families.

Protecting your identity. Scams and cyber criminals. Learn about:

- Common types of scams
- How to report if you've been scammed
- Combating scams
- How to report if you've been scammed
- Find more help when you need it

Date: Wednesday July 12
Time: 11am – 12pm
Location: Online via Microsoft Teams

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by & July 11 to [Winter series - Digital Thumbprint workshop - number 2 Tickets, Wed 12/07/2023 at 11:00 am | Eventbrite](#)

**Angela Burke |
Community Support
Maner**

Lived Experience and Community Strategy

**Mental and Social Health Programs Branch | Mental Health & Wellbeing Services
Division**

Department of Veterans' Affairs

P: 03 9284 6306 | W: www.dva.gov.au | W: www.openarms.gov.au

DVA General Enquiries: **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**



Support us while dining at the Canberra Southern Cross Club.

7.5% of your food and beverage spend at the Club will be donated back to us when you nominate us as your preferred Community Group on your Canberra Southern Cross Club membership.

Visit csccl.com.au/rewards



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

DFRDB UPDATE – JULY 2023

McKenzie v Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation [2023] FCA 396

Clinton has decided that, in all the circumstances, the risks arising from an appeal to the Full Court were too great.

Clinton's comments after reading the judgment in detail can be viewed by clicking on this link:

[McKenzie v Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation \[2023\] FCA 396 - Clinton McKenzie's Comments](#)

ADFRA's Objectives

The Federal Court outcome has not changed our objectives. We are still seeking:

1. The amendment of the DFRDB Act; to apply indexation increases to 100% of our *Defined Benefits*, and to cease *Defined Benefit* reduction, after commutation, when the commuted lump sum has been fully repaid;
2. The restoration of the rate of our *Defined Benefits* to a fair current value by applying *Fair Indexation* to 100% of our benefits from the date they became payable; and
3. The refund of *Defined Benefit* reductions which exceed the amount commuted.

The [Reduction of DFRDB Defined Benefits](#) is a 26-minute video presentation of the evidence which exposes the mistruths underlying Government policy on DFRDB and the benefit reduction measures that have been incorporated in the DFRDB Act to deny us our full entitlements. The video can be viewed by clicking on the link.

The presentation was prepared for the Hon Barnaby Joyce, who asked for more information about our issue. Copies have been sent to the Minister for Veterans Affairs and Defence Personnel, and Shadow Minister for Defence Personnel.

We have also submitted the presentation to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide.

We must drive our message home to the politicians whose predecessors put us into this position because they did not adequately scrutinize the DFRDB legislation before passing it into law.

Please send the video link to your local Member of Parliament and State/Territory Senators, with a Bcc to jghislop1937@hotmail.com, and ask for their support to have the situation remedied.

Jim Hislop OAM

ACT Budget information for Veterans

The ACT Government has provided the following information for you.

“The 2023-2024 ACT Government Budget was handed down last night. Full details of the Budget are available here [Home - Budget 2023-24 \(act.gov.au\)](#) and a spotlight on Veterans is available through the social inclusion statement here [Social Inclusion Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#)

The following key areas of focus for the Budget will have important impacts for Veterans and their families:

Cost of Living

The ACT Government is delivering a number of new and expanded measures to provide further cost of living relief to Canberrans. Full details on the cost of living initiatives are here [Cost of Living Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Housing

The ACT Government has an ambitious housing agenda and is investing an additional \$345 million to continue delivering a comprehensive package of housing measures. Full details on the housing package are here [Budget-2023-24-Housing.pdf \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Health, including mental health

The ACT Government will continue to invest in delivering more health services for Canberrans with a \$540 million healthcare package, which includes \$30 million to expand mental health services. Details on the health package can be found in the [ACT Budget at a Glance 2023–24](#)

Education

The 2023-24 Budget delivers the biggest ever investment in early childhood education and \$52 million in additional funding for skills and training. From 2024, all Canberra families will be able to access one day a week of three-year-old preschool. Details on the education package can be found in the [ACT Budget at a Glance 2023–24](#)

Veterans portfolio initiatives

While many of the above packages will have the benefit of supporting ACT Veterans and their families, we are pleased to let you know of the following standalone, dedicated initiatives through the Veterans portfolio. Information on these initiatives is included in the [Social Inclusion Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#) and can be cross-referenced with the [2023-24 Australian Capital Territory Budget Outlook \(act.gov.au\) \(p128\)](#) [Budget-Statements-G.pdf \(act.gov.au\) \(p22\).](#)”



Military super – a new tax offset

Good afternoon,

I wrote to you in February with information about the *Douglas* decision. I'm reaching out again with an update about the new tax offset that is now available for veterans who are paying more tax because of the decision.

The *Veteran's superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) ensures veterans and their beneficiaries do not pay more tax because of the *Douglas* decision.

Below is an article about the VSTO you can share with your networks and include in your communication channels.

I would really appreciate it if you could spare the time to let me know if and how you used the information provided, or if you have any feedback.

Kind regards,

Simeon

New tax offset for some veterans affected by the *Douglas* decision

Veterans who are entitled to the new *Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) will have their affected tax return/s amended by the ATO and be issued an amended notice of assessment.

The ATO advises that veterans do not need to do anything different. Include your military invalidity pension payment amounts in your tax return at question 8 'Australian superannuation lump sum payments', and they will do the rest.

The *Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) removes the additional tax some veterans would pay because of the *Douglas* decision. The *Douglas* decision covers invalidity pensions paid to veterans under the MSBS (Military Super Benefit Scheme) or DFRDB (Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits) scheme that commenced on or after 20 September 2007.

The ATO is sending letters to veterans who are entitled to a VSTO amount greater than \$0 and have lodged their 2020–21 and/or 2021–22 income year tax returns. They are advising that they are amending their tax returns to apply the new tax offset.

When you lodge tax returns in the future, the ATO will treat your invalidity pension as a super lump sum. If you are entitled to a VSTO amount, the ATO will calculate it for you and apply it to your tax return.

The ATO says it is committed to amending prior year tax returns as quickly as possible.

You can get the latest information about the *Douglas* decision and the VSTO on the ATO's website at [Military invalidity pensions – Douglas decision | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](https://www.ato.gov.au/military-invalidity-pensions-douglas-decision)

Simeon
Public Relations
Australian Taxation Office

Intimate, raw in places, sometimes shocking, always authentic. To those who would aspire to lead that part of the Nation's treasure, our men and women in military uniform, read this book.

Peter Cosgrove, Infantry Platoon Commander, Vietnam - 1969/70

A most accurate and enduring example of Australian Infantry operations at platoon level; comparable in quality and impact to the classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

LTCOL Russell Linwood, ASM - Bibliographer Royal Australian Regiment Association

Dave's book is well worth reading and young officers would be well advised to get a copy and understand what makes a good platoon, commanded by a very good platoon commander.

Harry Smith SQ MC

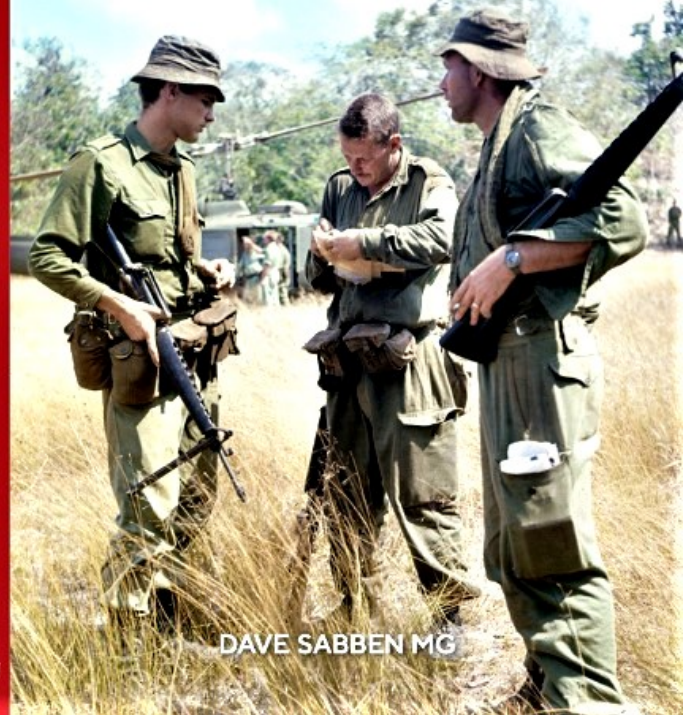


MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

DAVE SABBen MG

MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

An Infantry Platoon in Viet Nam, June 1966 - June 1967



DAVE SABBen MG

VIET NAM

We know about the politics that got us into and out of the 'war'. We know about the big battles: Long Tan, Coral, Balmoral, Binh Ba... We know about the social issues: conscription, drugs, moratoriums, the uneasy returns home... And we know about the legacy: the trauma, the PTSD, the divorces, the suicides...

But do we know what actually happened there? Do we know exactly what our soldiers did, day-by-day, week-by-week? Do we understand what they experienced? What they did? What they thought about what they did?

This book will take you into an average Infantry Platoon for a 12-month 'Tour of Duty' in the year the Task Force base was set up.

It will take you from the early days - June 1966 - when a bare rubber plantation was occupied in the middle of an enemy controlled province, and a new operational base established.

Hundreds of soldiers endured getting six two-hour sleeps every three days for weeks on end. In between those sleeps, they patrolled with heavy kit in dust-dry or monsoon-wet (but always-dangerous) conditions to clear the enemy from their own bases. And when not on patrol, they were digging pits, trenches, command posts and latrines. When not on patrol or digging, they were clearing the undergrowth and erecting barbed wire fences.

And when they did sleep, it was on groundsheet under plastic 'hoochies' without lights and always with a weapon within reach. Showers were rare but mildew was everywhere. Food was mostly out of ration cans; feet were rarely out of boots.

It was only later, when the base was a little more secure, that tents and stretcher beds became available. Then the pace did slacken, but only slightly. One- and two-day patrols gave way to one- and two-week operations, as they cleared further out from the Nui Dat base.

ORDER NOW

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dave@sabbenmidbook.com

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DAVE SABBen MG

David Sabben was born in Suva, Fiji in 1945 but moved to Australia in 1958 to attend High School in Sydney, where he boarded through to Leaving Certificate in 1962.

Aged 20 in 1965, Dave volunteered for the first intake of Australia's National Service scheme. He applied for officer training and completed the first course of the Scheyville National Service Officer Training Unit (LOTU).

In January 1966 Dave was posted to 6RAR in Brisbane and appointed commander of 12 Platoon. 6RAR was sent to Viet Nam in June 1966. Dave served the full 12 month tour and was a platoon commander at the Battle of Long Tan for which he was recommended for a Military Cross (MC) but that award was downgraded to an MID. In 2008, the award was upgraded to a Medal for Gallantry (MG).

After returning to Australia in 1967, Dave was discharged from his National Service obligation but served a further four years with the CMF, attaining Captain rank. He resumed his civilian career first in Sydney and then Melbourne, finally working as a Project Manager in the computer (IT) industry.

Dave retired in December 2004 and has spent his retirement mostly writing. He lives on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria with his Melbourne born wife, Di.

The Flowers of Peace Latest News

June 2023

Peacekeeping Symphony update and request for help please

Dear Friends

We are writing to ask for your support and assistance to realise the next concert – the *Peacekeeping Symphony* planned to be premiered on National Peacekeepers Day - Thursday, 14 September 2023 - at Llewellyn Hall, Canberra.



We received some unfortunate news of late regarding our two major government grant sources who have supported us in the past, but not on this occasion. This has left a large hole in our budget and we are uncertain whether we can still produce a concert telling the story of our nation's peacekeeping efforts over the past 75 years.

We have faith that if we can raise funds from other sources in a very short period of time, that we will still be able to forge ahead. We are writing to you in the hope that you share our conviction that we should be seeking peace over war. Each of the major works we have produced ends with music of reconciliation and peace, so as to lighten their load of those burdened with trauma, and their families. All these works are intended to help those harmed to heal. Those who witnessed the recent *Vietnam* and *POW Requiems* will remember them as memorable and moving occasions.

Through music, text and images, the *Peacekeeping Symphony* will recognise the rich and diverse contributions of Australian peacekeepers as far afield as Indonesia, Kashmir, the Middle East, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bougainville, East Timor, Solomon Islands, and elsewhere. This concert created over the last year, consists of 24 works in total, and includes a large component of 'world' music. The first half consists of the *Peacekeeping Songbook* and the second half, the *Peacekeeping Symphony*, written by our finest composers for our leading soloists.



Our concern is that all the commissioned music which has already been written will not have an opportunity to be performed if this concert does not go ahead.

We have launched a [tax deductible donation drive](#) (via the Australian Cultural Fund) that will help to perform this concert and enable it to be recorded. We have set a modest target, but need ten times this amount realistically which we are seeking from philanthropic sources. Sadly, there is no other way of raising this shortfall.

Any gifts large or small are greatly appreciated.

Thank you so very much for your generous consideration of this request.

Chris, Jo and the Flowers of Peace team

[Learn more or donate now](#)

[Artist Project: 'Peacekeeping Symphony' \(australianculturalfund.org.au\)](http://australianculturalfund.org.au)

AVCAT Scholarships

Hello,

Applications for AVCAT scholarships open soon.

Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au) including the Long Tan Bursary | Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au) are tertiary scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Scholarships are \$4000–\$6000 per year, for up to three years.

Applications open on 18 August 2023, Vietnam Veterans' Day, and close at midnight AEDT on 31 October 2023.

Apply online at Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Applicants must be:

- Enrolled or planning to enrol in a full-time course for one or more academic year's duration at a university, TAFE, or RTO in 2024
- The child, stepchild, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident

In receipt of, or eligible to receive, a means-tested Commonwealth educational payment – Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy or Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) in 2024

The Long Tan Bursary is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs. View the complete list of AVCAT Scholarship sponsors Sponsors | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Find information about scholarships, the application process or scholarship eligibility at Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Spread The Word

Share on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), hang a [poster](#), hand out a [flyer](#), or drop [this notice](#) into your newsletter.

Kind Regards

Len Russell

CEO AVCAT

Find Out More : [Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)



**COFFEE CATCH UP
EVERY FRIDAY 10-12**

Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee & cake with former service mates. Every Friday from 10 to 12 in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.

The Eddison Day Club will continue to meet for a lunch each Friday at noon until we can once again meet at a reinvigorated Day Club.

Come and join us for lunch.



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information
or access to our services
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62851931

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www.rslwoden.org.au

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