

THE BOSUN'S CALL

NEWSLETTER OF THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



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ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY



Merle Hare on her 106th Birthday (January 20) with Deputy Chief of Navy Matt Buckley

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Naval Association of Australia (ACT Section)

Founded 1 July 1944

Patron The Hon Sir William Deane AC KBE

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Social Sec Bev Joce

Bosun's Call Darren Rush
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

February Birthday List

Peter Cooke-Russell

John Crawley

Michael Doyle

Francis Shugg

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Upcoming Events

15 Feb Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore

19 Feb Bombing of Darwin Day

28 Feb Last Post Ceremony Loss of HMAS Perth and ERA4 Vincent
McGovern Sunda Strait

Meeting Dates & Locations

Tables are normally booked for drinks and lunch in
the host club from 1200 prior to the meeting.

5 Mar	Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	
	<i>Committee Meeting</i>	1100
	<i>General Meeting</i>	1330
2 Apr	Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	
	<i>Committee Meeting</i>	1100
	<i>General Meeting</i>	1330
7 May	Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	
	<i>Committee Meeting</i>	1100
	<i>General Meeting</i>	1330
4 Jun	Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	
	<i>Committee Meeting</i>	1100
	<i>General Meeting</i>	1330
6 Aug	Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	
	<i>Committee Meeting</i>	1100
	<i>General Meeting</i>	1330

Social Program

*Fish & Chips - held at Snapper & Co.
(Canberra Yacht Club)
Mariner Pl, Yarralumla ACT 2600*



19 Feb	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	<i>Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)</i>	
19 Mar	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	<i>Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)</i>	
16 Apr	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	<i>Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)</i>	
21 May	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	<i>Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)</i>	
18 Jun	Fish 'n Chips	1200
	<i>Canberra Yacht Club (Snapper & Co)</i>	

Bev Joce
Social Secretary

Merle turns 106



Photos and speech by Pauline Gribble

Ainslie Club - Sunday 18 January 2026

Thank you all for coming today to celebrate Merle's 106th birthday. She has lived 38690 days. To me, there is something special about a person reaching this milestone. They are truly incredible in more ways than I could ever say in a birthday greeting.

Some people grow more stubborn and become grumpier with age, Merle just gets wiser and more optimistic. Many complain about aging, but the wisdom we gain from living for many years has its advantages. Merle embodies that wisdom.

Merle raised her family in Victoria but after the passing of Robert, her husband, in typical Merle fashion she moved to Canberra to be with family and ended up joining the ACT WRANS associations. Merle joined the WRANS in 1943.

Merle has influenced many WRANS lives by, listening to their problems, providing advice or giving a hug when required.

We look at Merle and realize aging is a gift. We truly celebrate with her as she turns 106 years old this Tuesday the 20th of January.

Please join me in raising your glasses to wish Merle a happy birthday.



Birthday Lunch at the Ainslie Club for Merle



WRANS, WRENS & current serving Naval personnel at Merle's Lunch



NAA members Pauline, Sue, Alaric, Dennis, Heather, David, Merle & Alec



Merle's Birthday Cake



Challenge Coins from CN & DCN received by Merle to mark her Birthday

75 YEARS ON

ACKNOWLEDGING THE COMMITMENT TO SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF NATIONAL SERVICEMEN

Next year marks the 75th anniversary of the commencement of the 1951 National Service Scheme.

On 14 February 2026, we will commemorate this milestone with a national commemorative service in the Great Hall at the Australian Parliament House in Canberra on National Servicemen's Day, honouring the more than 280,000 Australian men who were called up for national service in the 1951–1959 and 1965–1972 schemes.

National servicemen, also known as 'Nashos', were an integral part of our armed forces during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, serving in Australia, Borneo, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam and in the waters off the Korean peninsula.

Whether their service included deployment overseas, or on home soil, each and every national serviceman contributed to the defence of our nation and we acknowledge their dedication to duty and commitment to serve.

On National Servicemen's Day, we invite veterans, families and community members to come together and attend the national commemorative service in Canberra.

The service will be broadcast live on ABCiView for those unable to attend in person.

Whether you're attending the national commemorative service in Canberra, watching at home, or taking part in local community events, we encourage you to honour the service and sacrifice of national servicemen in a way that is personal to you.

A unique way you can share in the commemorative spirit is through a personal reflection to our Wall of Remembrance. The 'Wall' is a living, evolving, community-led tribute for all Australians to share a reflection or memory of a loved one connected to the Australian Defence Force. As National Servicemen's Day approaches, we invite you to share yours.

For more information about the national commemorative service, including accessibility and transport options, and to register your attendance (for free), please visit dva.gov.au/Nashos75



REGISTRATION FOR TICKETS TO INTERNATIONAL ANZAC DAY SERVICES NOW OPEN

Since the first Anzac Day was observed in 1916, 25 April is a time for all Australians to recognise the more than 1.5 million service men and women who have served our country in all conflicts, wars and peacekeeping operations.

Attending an international Anzac Day Dawn Service is a meaningful opportunity for Australians to come together and commemorate Australia's wartime history on the very lands where these events took place.

The Anzac Day Dawn Service in Türkiye will take place at the Anzac Commemorative Site, Gallipoli, followed by a mid-morning Australian Memorial Service at Lone Pine Cemetery.

In France, the Dawn Service will be held at the Australian National Memorial near Villers-Bretonneux. An Australian Service will be held later in the afternoon at the 'Digger' Memorial, just outside the town of Bullecourt.

Those planning to attend the international Anzac Day Dawn Services in Türkiye or France will need to register for an attendance pass for entry. It's free and now available online at commemorations.teg.com.au.

DVA also supports Anzac Day Dawn Services in Sandakan (Malaysia), Hellfire Pass (Thailand) and Isurava on the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

Those not attending an international Anzac Day Dawn Service in person can share in the commemorative spirit by watching the live ABC broadcast of the Türkiye and France services.

We encourage Australians travelling overseas to become familiar with the entry requirements for each country and stay up to date with the latest travel advice via smartraveller.gov.au.

More information on all overseas services is available at dva.gov.au.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY



HMAS CANBERRA

February 4, 1942

While escorting the troopship AQUITANIA to Batavia, Netherlands East Indies, HMAS CANBERRA, (cruiser), sighted a Japanese submarine directly ahead of the troopship. The submarine dived and escaped before CANBERRA could launch an attack.



HMAS CANBERRA (PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE PERSONAL EFFECTS OF CAPTAIN F. E. GETTING WHO WAS IN COMMAND WHEN THE CANBERRA WAS SUNK IN 1942-08)



In her name city of Canberra, a memorial is located next to Lake Burley Griffin, [39] adjacent to the National Carillon. It incorporates a naval anchor and a section of chain cable (of the same type carried by Canberra),[39] and it has two plaques detailing the purpose of the memorial and the details of the cruiser.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A REVIEW OF THE NAA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

At the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the National Council of the Naval Association of Australia (NAA), the Council approved the establishment of a Sub-committee to review and modernise the NAA Constitution and By-laws. The sub-committee is made up of the following members of the association:

Russell Pettis (Chair) - VIC Section
Bruce Kafer - NSW Section
Gordon Fuller - TAS Section
Cheryl Fittock - SA Section
Kaye Morgan - QLD Section
Lorraine Grey - NSW Section

The sub-committee held its inaugural meeting on 21 October 2025. It was agreed at that meeting that the group's first action would be:

- Advise all NAA members that the Constitution Review has commenced, and
- Seek input from all members regarding their opinions of the current constitution, its strengths and weaknesses, where it can be improved or where it should be reduced in content or coverage.

The consultation period will last until the end of February 2026. The sub-committee would appreciate comments from all elements of the NAA – Section Executive Committees, Sub-section Executive Committees and individual members. Feedback should be sent to the State Section Secretaries for collation and submission to the Constitution Review Sub-committee.

Russell Pettis

Chair, NAA Constitution Review Sub-committee

Bombing of Darwin Day

19 February

We observe Bombing of Darwin Day on the anniversary of the day in 1942 when Darwin, in northern Australia, was first bombed by Japanese warplanes. The people of Darwin suffered terribly during this time and many civilians were evacuated. To this day, this action remains the largest and most devastating modern attack by a foreign power on mainland Australia. Bombing of Darwin Day is a time for us to recognise and remember the allied service personnel and civilians who suffered through that experience.

Since the 1930s, Darwin had been a strategic trading port at the top end of Australia. During World War II, the Allies used Darwin as a military base and transit point for the defence of the Netherlands East Indies. With Australian and allied troops stationed there, Darwin's population had more than doubled by 1942.

At 9:58 am on 19 February 1942, 27 bombers accompanied by fighter escorts began the first Japanese air raid on the Australian mainland. Closely followed by aircraft, their goal was to destroy the Allies' military base in Darwin. From Darwin, the Allies could contest the Japanese invasion of nearby islands, Timor and Java.

The Japanese mounted 2 air attacks that day.

The first attack focused on the town centre and the harbour. Many buildings and ships were destroyed, including public buildings like the Darwin Post Office, the police barracks and the office of the Administrator of the Northern Territory.

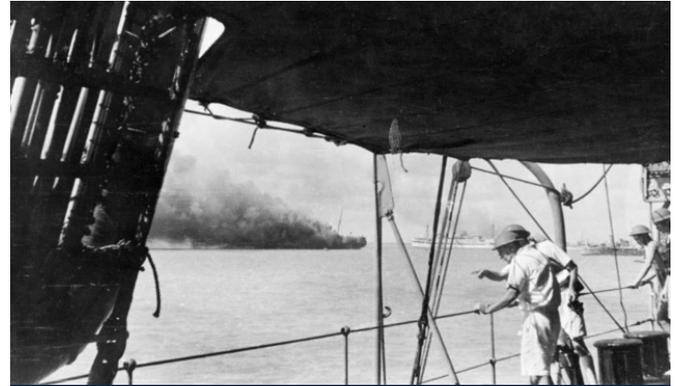


In World War II, HMAS Deloraine escaped damage from the first Japanese air attack on Darwin, 19 February 1942. The above-ground oil tanks on Stokes Hill, in the background, were bombed by enemy aircraft. AWM 128108

Of the 47 ships in Darwin's harbour that day, 8 were sunk, one was beached and lost, and 11 were damaged. One bomb fell through the several decks of the hospital ship HMAS Manunda before exploding.

At 11:58 am the same day, the second air attack began.

The Japanese bombed the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Darwin in an attack that lasted 25 minutes. Two hangars and a central store were destroyed, and blocks of the airmen's quarters and a hospital were severely damaged.



Crew members of the depot ship HMAS Platypus survey the harbour after the first Japanese air raid on Darwin, 19 February 1942. In the centre, the transport ship HMAT Zealandia is burning, and the hospital ship HMAS Manunda is to its right. AWM 304981

Continued attacks

Between 19 February 1942 and 12 November 1943, the Japanese mounted 97 air attacks on towns and military bases across northern Australia. Broome was attacked on 3 March. More air raids were made on Wyndham, Port Hedland and Derby in Western Australia, Darwin and Katherine in the Northern Territory, Townsville and Mossman in Queensland, and Horn Island in the Torres Strait.

On 31 May 1942, the war came to the east coast of Australia, when 3 Japanese midget submarines entered Sydney Harbour. In June 1942, a submarine lightly shelled coastal suburbs of Sydney and Newcastle.

Japanese submarines also attacked coastal ships, causing the loss of around 29,000 tons of shipping.

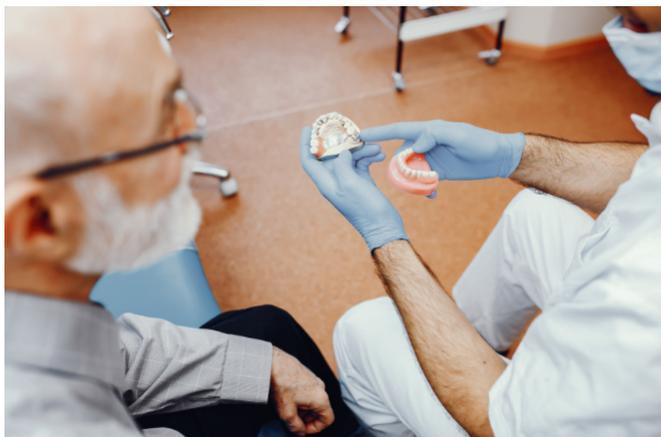
Commemoration of those who died

More than 250 people, both allied service personnel and civilians, died in Darwin on 19 February 1942.

Members from all 3 Australian armed services were among those who died, ranging from wing commanders right through to cooks. Members of the United States Navy and Air Force were also among the casualties. A large number of lives lost included merchant seamen, postal workers and civilians. These were everyday Australians simply going about their daily lives.

The names of civilians who died are not recorded on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Instead, they are commemorated by name in Darwin, where many of them are buried.

The Darwin Cenotaph and memorial garden in Bicentennial Park overlook the harbour. This is where the first shots were fired in defence of Darwin by the 14th Anti-Aircraft Battery. The monument continues to be a place of commemoration for all those who died and suffered in the Bombing of Darwin.



What are dental services

Dental services are treatments to keep your teeth and mouth healthy. They may include:

- regular check-ups and cleaning
- prevention of tooth decay
- treatments for cavities
- dentures
- treatments for dental injuries or conditions

Who can receive it

You may be able to receive dental services if you have an assessed clinical need and a:

- Veteran Gold Card; or
- Veteran White Card and your treatment is for an accepted service-related condition

What you can receive

If you are eligible for dental services, your dentist may:

- assess the health of your mouth and teeth at regular check-ups
- treat any dental injuries or conditions
- repair cavities in your teeth with fillings or crowns
- provide you with dentures
- re-line your dentures every two years
- replace your dentures every 6 years, unless your dentures have been re-lined in the past year, or if your dentist recommends a replacement sooner

You are also able to receive treatment from other approved dental providers, including dental hygienists, dental therapists and oral health therapists.

In most cases you won't need to pay for your dental treatment. However, a Biennial Monetary Limit (BML) does apply for certain high cost items such as some bridges and crowns. If your high cost items exceed the BML of \$5,980.30 over two calendar years (indexed), you may need to make a co-payment.

You are exempt from the BML and don't need to make any co-payments if:

- you are an ex-prisoner of war (POW)
- the treatment is for an accepted service-related injury or condition; or
- the treatment is for malignant cancer that affects your teeth or jaw

How you access

Contact your dental provider to make an appointment. Check first that they will accept your Veteran Gold Card or Veteran White Card.

Things you should know

- If your regular dentist does not accept your Gold Card or White Card, you may need to visit a different provider.
- Regular check-ups are usually once every 6 months. If you need more frequent check-ups, your dentist can contact us for approval.
- If your dentures get lost or broken, we may pay for a replacement. Please speak with your dental provider, they may need you to complete a signed written declaration stating why you need a replacement.

Dental changes leave veterans smiling

The annual monetary limit for high cost, clinically needed restorative items, such as crowns or bridges, has been doubled and the time you have to use your capped amount has been extended from one to two years.

This means:

- From 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027 your total limit is \$5,980.30
- From 1 January 2028 to 31 December 2029 your limit is \$5,980.30 (subject to annual indexation).

This will be your new biennial monetary limit for Schedule C items. You don't need to do anything to activate the new biennial monetary limit.

Importantly, you will not be able to roll over the amount into the next two-year period because the monetary limit resets.

The capped amounts apply even if you hold a Veteran Gold Card or have dental related conditions accepted on your Veteran White Card.

In addition, dental therapists hygienists and oral health therapists have also been added to the approved list of dental service providers. This means it is now easier to access a dental practitioner suited to your needs.

To learn more about DVA's Dental Program, visit the DVA website.



Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs

DVA Contact Numbers

Provider invoicing & billing enquiries: 1300 550 017

Provider enquiries: 1800 550 457

Transport bookings: 1800 550 455

Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre (VAPAC): 1800 552 580

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) (NRS):

Talk To You (TTY) users phone 1800 555 677 then ask for 1800 838 372

Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 1800 838 372

Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1800 838 372

Information on health services may be obtained from DVA. The contact numbers for health care pro-viders requiring further information or prior financial authorisation for all States and Territories are listed below:

TELEPHONE: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

INTERNATIONAL CALLERS: +61 2 6289 1133

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Health Approvals & Home Care Section

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE: <http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/allied-healthprofessionals>

DVA EMAIL: For prior financial authorisation: health.approval@dva.gov.au

The appropriate prior approval request form can be found at: <https://www.dva.gov.au/providers/servicesrequiring-prior-approval>

CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

For information about claims for payment visit: www.dva.gov.au/providers/how-claim

CLAIM ENQUIRIES: 1300 550 017 (Option 2 Allied Health)

Claims will take a variety of times to complete based on whether or not the claim is prioritised for allocation to a decision maker and the complexity of the claim itself. For example, if the service of the individual crosses two or more Acts or contains a lot of health conditions and injuries or both. This results in some claims being decided faster than the average time, while some claims take longer.

For any condition, to make the claiming process smoother, follow these 3 steps:

- Step 1: Get your medical practitioner to con-firm your diagnosis.
- Step 2: Supply the documents you need to;
- Step 3: Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

CLAIMS PROGRESS

As at 31 October 2025, DVA had 89,597 claims on hand, comprised of 22,820 unallocated claims and 66,777 claims being processed.

In the financial year to date (FYTD) (1 July 2025 to 31 October 2025):

DVA received 39,032 claims

DVA made 36,099 determinations

For all claims on hand including older claims being processed the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 333 days, up from 304 days in the previous FYTD. The median TTTP was 271 days.

There have already been some significant improvements in processing timeframes for new IL claims received and determined within the last 12 months.

For claims received within the last 12 months, the average TTTP for MRCA IL was 110 days. The median TTTP was 96 days.

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

Open Arms provides 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.

1800 011 046

SAFE ZONE SUPPORT

Free and anonymous counselling line for all current and ex-serving ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

1800 142 072

DEFENCE FAMILY HELPLINE

Available 24/7 or online at www.defence.gov.au/members-families/defence-helpline.asp. Staffed by qualified human services professionals including social workers and psychologists.

1800 628 036

DEFENCE ALL HOURS SUPPORT LINE

24/7 confidential telephone service for Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families to facilitate access to ADF or civilian mental health services.

1800 628 036