

The Bosun's Call



Vol 28 No 8

Once Navy, Always Navy

September 2023

50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, National Commemorative Service



28 Aug 11 Oct 19 Oct 27 Oct

Last Post Ceremony AWM Tel George Bennie HMAS *Kuttabul* (Prince of Wales Hospital) Last Post Ceremony Lieut Gilbert N W Harvey HMS *Hythe* Mediterranean Sea Last Post Ceremony Ord Sea William R McGregor HMS *Victory*, Portsmouth UK Last Post Ceremony AB Geoffrey C Reeve HMAS Australia South China Sea

Events coming up



Newsletter of the ACT Section of the Naval Association of Australia

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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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General Meetings Dates and Locations Programme

2023

7 Sep Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
5 Oct Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
2 Nov Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
2024			
1 Feb Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
7 Mar Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
7 Mar AGM on completion of General Meeting			
4 Apr Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
2 May Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		
6 Jun Eastlakes Club Gungahlin	1330		

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

If you need assistance getting to the meeting and/or functions, call Alan Masters on 6281 5630 who will try to organise transport for you.

President's Message

Dear Shipmates,

On the 18th August, I had the privilege of participating in the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Service in Canberra, marking the end of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War. The service and all associated activities were hosted by DVA, who did an outstanding job and are to be congratulated on a job so very well done.

I had been asked to provide the Veteran Reading wherein they specifically wished me to recount some of my experiences serving in the HMAS *Sydney* during the Vietnam War.

Later in the Service I was accompanied by Navy Veteran Mr James Henry, who served in CDT $3 - 3^{rd}$ Contingent from February 68 to September 68, in laying a wreath for RAN Veterans of the war. James had served in the *Sydney* on deployment to Vietnam as an ORDCD before completing his CD course and then returning to Vietnam.

Mr Peter Cooke-Russell from the NAA ACT Section, with War Widow Mrs Jenny Burns, laid a wreath on behalf of the Naval Association of Australia. Jenny's deceased husband LEUT Robert Burns led CDT 3 – 2nd Contingent from August 67 to February 68 in Vietnam. Peter served in HMAS *Melbourne* on escort duty for the *Sydney*.

Yours aye,

David Manolas

President NAA ACT Section

Committee meeting Eastlakes Gungahlin 1100 Thursday September 2023

Vietnam War, National Commemorative Service

Australia marked the 50th anniversary of the end of its involvement in the Vietnam War with a national service held at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial, on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August 2023, remembering the service of some 60,000 Australian men and women who served in the Vietnam War and their families.

Tragically, 523 Australians lost their lives in the war, and over 3,000 were wounded.

The Vietnam War was the longest 20th Century conflict in which Australians participated.



Top: His Excellency, General the Honourable David Hurley AC, DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley lay a wreath at the commemoration held in Canberra

Right: Mr Keith Payne VC AM of the AATV and Vice Chief of the Defence Force Vice Admiral David Johnston AC RAN, at the commemoration

Photos Nicole Mankowski

Photo: DVA

Below Attendees at the National Service held at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial





50th Anniversary Commemoration of the end of Australia's Involvement in the Vietnam War 18 August 23, National Vietnam Memorial Canberra. Veteran Reading: provided by Mr David Manolas Naval Association of Australia

As part of this commemorative service, I have been asked to recount some of my experiences serving in HMAS *Sydney*, during the Vietnam War.

The Sydney was a post WWII era aircraft carrier, refitted as a fast troop transport in 1962. She undertook twenty-five voyages to the south of Vietnam in support of the 1st Australian Task Force between May 1965 and November 1972. These voyages earned her the nickname; "*The Vung Tau Ferry*". The Sydney, along with Australian Merchant Navy vessels *Jeparit* and *Boonaroo*, transported the majority of the Australian personnel and equipment contributed to the Vietnam War effort. The Army's 32 Small Ships Squadron also played their part in transporting stores, munitions and vehicles from Australia, and in-country in Vietnam.

I was one of the mostly 16 years old trainee sailors, who joined the ship in October 1966. On the 8th April 1967, with 7 RAR embarked, *Sydney* departed her namesake city for her fifth voyage to Vietnam, with the Destroyer *Vampire* as escort and Wessex anti-submarine helicopters embarked for the first time.

I can recall, that apart from what looked to be seasoned non-commissioned officers, most of the diggers were also very young. As it was for practically all within the Navy, most of the embarked forces were volunteers but also amongst their ranks were 20-year-old conscripts. On the journey to Vietnam the Army was kept busy with physical training, weapon-firing practice, and other training activities. The ship's crew performed their ongoing shipboard duties along with safety and emergency drills, helicopter flying operations and main armament weapon drills. Overall, the atmosphere, particularly for the embarked forces, was generally subdued.

With the crew at a heightened degree of readiness the ship had been completely darkened throughout the night as we neared Vietnam. As we made our final approach into Vung Tau on 20th April, there was a lot for the ship's crew to get on with: damage control and defence readiness measures activated; helicopters deployed to conduct patrols ahead of the ship; ladders and cranes made ready; ships boats turned out in readiness to conduct anti-swimmer patrols whilst we were at anchor; ammunition provided to the ship's armament; ship's divers readied to conduct hull searches; and, upper-deck sentries armed and positioned.

There was always so much going on: vehicles and stores being off-loaded onto barges; US Sky-crane helicopters airlifting heavy stores containers and vehicles ashore; troops ferried ashore in landing craft, US Chinook, and US and Australian Iroquois helicopters. Our mission was to see the troops and their gear safely disembarked and at another time, safely embarked for the return journey back to Australia. If this could be done in a timely manner it assisted in minimising the risks of attack upon the *Sydney* or her escort.

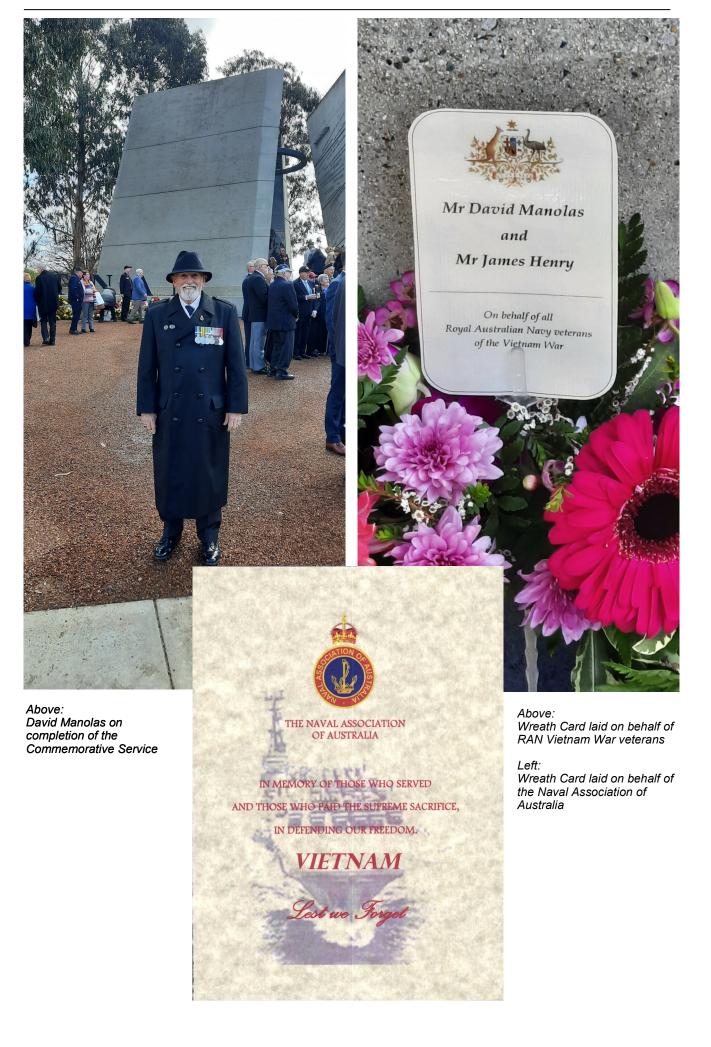
The passage home was altogether different. Whilst most of the deployed forces would sail home, those brought home by air would find themselves back in Australia having left the realities of combat just days before. Those in the *Sydney* had a number of days at sea in the company of their mates, therein sharing in natural debriefing through camaraderie. We would subsequently learn that to their detriment, few Vietnam Veterans were formally debriefed after their tour of duty.

As we neared home, the diggers would be seen cleaning their uniforms, webbing, and weapons ready for their disembarkation. As I weaved my way through a group who had taken up all the available deck space to clean their gear, one digger was carefully cleaning his bayonet. Without warning he stabbed a picture in one of the old newspapers spread out before him! Later I was told there was a story and image of an anti-war protest back in Australia and it had understandably angered him! The *Sydney* was no longer as trim as she once was; it was fortunate the bayonet had not hit a rusty spot where he may well have pierced the steel deck!

In the Vietnam War the Navy served in long deployments at sea, ashore, in the air and the inland waters of Vietnam. We also served in the logistic support role. All endured the effects to varying degrees, then and soon after, and as with so very many veterans, it would come upon us much later in life. This anniversary is a time for veterans to look back on their service and deservedly reflect with pride at the part they played in Australia's longest twentieth century conflict.

As has been said, 'Vietnam, it changed the lives of all of us!'

LEST WE FORGET





VALE

Roy (Tim) Holt

22 May 1925 –2 August 2023

Last Master at Arms in the RAN 30 July 1973

Sir Peter Cosgrove reflects on the Vietnam War

17 August 2023

As part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC (Retd) reflects on his experiences of the Vietnam War as a young officer

Sir Peter began his Army career as an officer cadet at the Royal Military College – Duntroon in 1965.

'All of us were breaking our necks to get away on operational service,' he says. 'You wanted to test yourself out. Looking back, it was a fairly immature attitude, but understandable. When we graduated in 1968, a lot of us, soon, found ourselves in Vietnam.'

Sir Peter served in Vietnam from August 1969 to July 1970 and was awarded the Military Cross for an engagement he took part in. He discusses how fighting in Vietnam was very demanding.

'The vegetation, the terrain is so constricted that it requires enormous skill,' he says. 'Self discipline [is essential] ... You tend to work in a way that is almost totally silent ... until combat. And then the silence becomes an overwhelming cacophony – explosions, small arms, people shouting ... you go from apprehension to the realisation of mortal danger.'

Sir Peter went on to become Chief of the Defence Force and Governor-General of Australia.

'I went on to a very long career after Vietnam,' he says. 'But everything I did rested on that experience. And I always enjoyed the opportunity to further be responsible for Australian men and women in uniform as I got more senior.

[•]On the 50th anniversary we look back on the entire experience, back to 1962 until January the 11th 1973 when the Whitlam government through the Governor-General proclaimed that this was the end of our combat operations ... all that's perfectly legitimate. But the demonstrations, the abuse from time to time, heaped upon the men and women who'd [served], who'd seen their comrades die, this was most unfortunate.

'Sixty thousand went off to that war. 523 were killed directly ... about 35,000 remain alive today. I like to think that on the 18th of August, Australians will pause and say "thank you".'



Violet McKenzie (Mrs Mac) recognized with a park to be named in her honour in Campbell ACT

A park in Campbell, ACT, will be named after the woman fondly known as 'Mrs Mac' this month to recognise her dedication to service including the creation of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS). The park will be behind the Campbell shops between White Crescent and Blamey Place.

Violet McKenzie was a driving force behind the early innovative work in signals, wireless and radio, even opening the country's first wireless spares shop – the Dick Smith of the time.

Head of Navy History and Heritage Miesje de Vogel said without Mrs McKenzie's work, Australia wouldn't have been prepared from a signals perspective for WW2.

"Without starting her school for

Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC) before the war, Australia would never have had enough trained Morse code operators," Ms de Vogel said.

"At the time, the services did not intend to employ women at all in technical work – until Mrs Mac successfully petitioned Navy to establish the WRANS.

"She led the way in getting people trained, with her graduates finishing quicker, and at better speeds than those being trained by the Army."

The introduction of the WRANS was achieved by McKenzie energetically campaigning to have some of her female trainees accepted into the Air Force and Navy as telegraphists. She encountered a great deal of official resistance. In 1940 she wrote to the Minister of the Navy, former Prime Minister WM (Billy) Hughes, saying "I would like to offer the services of our Signalling Corps, if not acceptable as telegraphists then at least as instructors."

Despite her suggestion being dismissed, In early January 1941, Commander Newman, the Navy's Director of Signals and Communications, visited the WESC headquarters on Clarence Street to test McKenzie's trainees. Finding they were highly proficient, he recommended the Navy admit them. Hughes still took some convincing, but some time later McKenzie and six trainees were provided third-class train tickets to Melbourne to meet with the Naval Board for testing.

Although McKenzie threatened to take her offer to the Air Force instead, the urgent need for trained telegraphists prevailed, and on 21 April a Navy Office letter authorised the entry of women into the



Navy. This was the beginning of the WRANS. The Minister's condition was that "no publicity...be accorded this break with tradition".

McKenzie accompanied 14 of her WESC trainees (twelve telegraphists and two domestic helpers). for their medical tests on 25 April and arrived at HMAS Harman on 28 April 1941. The women were dressed in their green WESC uniform which had been designed by McKenzie herself- it was several months before a female Navy uniform was ready. Francis Proven became WRANS number 1. From this initial intake of 14, the WRANS ranks expanded to some 2,600 by the end of the war, representing about 10 per cent of the entire Royal Australian Naval force at the time.

In May 1941, the Air Force appointed McKenzie as an honorary flight officer of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, so she could legitimately instruct Air Force personnel. This was the only official recognition McKenzie received during the war for her efforts.

The school provided more than 2000 women to the WRANS and Women's Auxiliary Air Force and an additional 12,000 men from Navy, Army and Air Force with the ability to transmit Morse code. This included American forces who were under-trained on arrival.

Violet McKenzie helped with rehabilitation after the war, keeping her school open for as long as there was a need for instruction in wireless signalling. In the postwar years, she trained men from the merchant navy, pilots in commercial aviation, and others needing the trade qualification known as a "signaller's ticket". In 1948, a reporter from Sky Script visited the school and described the scene, and diversity of the students

In 1950, she was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for 'voluntary service to the WESC'.

Mrs McKenzie died at Greenwich, in northern Sydney, on May 23, 1982.

In late 2022, the local community was encouraged to nominate names for an existing park area in Campbell. The theme agreed on by the ACT government was 'female Defence personnel'.

From 21 candidate submissions, although only an honorary WRANS, Mrs McKenzie appeared several times and the ACT Place Naming Committee selected her name.

Edited text from Seapower and Wikipedia

Statement from the Department of Veterans' Affairs— Veterans' MATES program

10 August 2023

The Veterans' MATES program has been operating for more than 18 years to provide a valuable proactive service addressing 'real life' health care problems in the veteran community. Specifically, the program seeks to positively change veteran medicine usage, and increase the uptake of complementary DVA funded health services, all to support veteran wellbeing and a reduction in adverse medicine events.

The University of South Australia is contracted by DVA to deliver the Veterans' MATES program on DVA's behalf.

The program takes an evidence based, targeted approach, using a team of clinical experts to develop current health and medicine information, using secure and private billing data to identify members of the veteran community who would benefit from receiving this information.

Identified data is only used to determine veterans who are at risk of medicine related problems, writing to the veteran and their doctor to bring them together to have a positive conversation that is tailored to the veteran's specific health care needs. All other data used in the program is de-identified.

DVA takes privacy very seriously, and we would like to assure veterans and families that DVA and the University of South Australia have strict policies in place to ensure the appropriate protection of personal information, and that ethics approval remains in place, guiding the delivery of the program.

Since the program's inception, the Veterans' MA-TES program has reached more than 300,000 veterans. Each year approximately 77,000 veterans receive health educational material from Veterans' MATES, specific to their health care needs. Veterans report they find the information useful, and that it empowers them to take an active role in their own health. This targeted and timely information and support for veterans, and their healthcare teams, has achieved many positive health outcomes across a range of health issues affecting the veteran community. Evidence shows that adverse medicine events have been reduced and that veteran access to suitable health services has increased.

We would like to reassure veterans and families that there has not been a breach of their data, and there is no systemic data security issue. The recent determination by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) relates to an individual case in 2017 whereby the individual opted out of participation in the program and DVA did not fully implement this request. DVA has unequivocally apologised for this.

Veterans have always had the ability to opt out of the program, however DVA has taken steps to more prominently communicate this, so veterans can make an informed decision about their participation.

The OAIC determination has highlighted that DVA's notices to veterans could include more information about how their billing information would be used for the purpose of the MATES program. More information about privacy, and the ability of veterans to opt-out of the MATES program has been added to DVA's website and MATES program materials.

The Secretary has requested a review of the MA-TES program to ensure that all requests to opt out of the program have been actioned appropriately, and to provide further assurance of compliance with the opt out provisions under the program.

DVA is engaging with the OAIC openly and in good faith, as it looks to improve its processes.

More information about the MATES program and the use of personal information can be found at Veterans' MATES | Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au) and https:// www.veteransmates.net.au

Free financial literacy workshops

21 August 2023

A message from UCare Gawler & Veterans Financial Wellbeing

Free financial literacy workshops are available online for veterans, transitioning Australian Defence Force members and families. The workshops are also free for ex-service organisation volunteers and wellness advocates.

The next workshop will take place online via Teams on Thursday 21 September from 1.00pm to 3.00pm (**South Australian time**). Book via

Eventbrite.

The My Money Basics program is run by UCare Gawler in South Australia and sponsored by Good Shepherd Australia and New Zealand. Veterans Financial Wellbeing is funded by the Ecstra Foundation.

The objective is to help participants live within their income, plan for the future, reduce stress and enjoy life more.

You can take part online from anywhere in Australia. However, if you live in the Adelaide region and would prefer a face-to-face workshop, get in touch with UCare Gawler via the email address below. Date and location by arrangement.

Email: veteransfinancialwellbeing.ucg@ucaregawle

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2023

Special operations forces from Australia and the United States combined to conduct an audacious 1600km force projection mission from Sydney, Australia, to Norfolk Island as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2023.

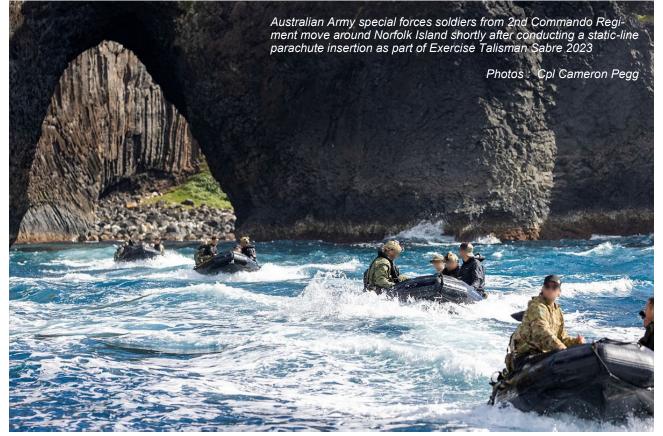
A small force of Australian special forces soldiers from 2nd Commando Regiment 'seized' the Norfolk Island airport after parachuting in several days earlier. That force element was reinforced by more Australian and US special operations forces on board an MC-130J Commando II (Hercules) aircraft from the US Air Force 353rd Special Operations Wing.

A Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster aircraft arrived some time later with a United States Marine Corps high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, which 'fired' a rocket salvo against a small 'enemy' naval warship fleet as part of a coordinated multidomain strike also involving other land, air, maritime, space and cyber capabilities.

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2023 has seen Australian, PNG and US special operations forces conducting training side-by-side in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and on Norfolk Island from 20 July to 4 August. Canada, New Zealand, South Korea and the United Kingdom also sent special operations forces as observers. More than 30,000 military personnel from 13 nations are taking part in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2023.

Exercise Talisman Sabre is the largest bilateral military training exercise between Australia and the US. Occurring every two years, Talisman Sabre reflects the closeness and strength of our enduring military relationship with the United States, as well as our commitment to working with likeminded partners across the Indo-Pacific.





Minutes of NAA (ACT) General Meeting held at the Eastlakes Gungahlin Club on 3 August 2023

Meeting started at 1330 with the Odes recited by David Manolas. Members paid respect to Roy (Tim) Holt who crossed the bar 2 August 2023.

Present: 12 members and one visitor as per attendance book.

Apologies: Mike Hardwick, P. Gillin, J. Small, K. Reid-Smith, J. Slaats

Minute of Last Meeting. The minutes of the General meeting on 1 June appeared in the July 2023 edition of the Bosun's Call

Motion: The minutes of the General Meeting held on 1 June 2023 be accepted.

Moved: Dennis Lyons Seconded: Stewart Gordon Carried.

Business arising from the Minutes. Nil

Reports.

- **President.** The President attended the commissioning of USS Canberra (2) in Sydney and in Canberra on the following day the Freedom of Entry to USS Canberra and HMAS Canberra crew members.
- Vice President. Volunteers are sought to lay the Section wreath at Last Post ceremonies. Names to the Secretary please.
- Secretary. Business as usual.
- **Treasurer.** Section funds remain in a healthy financial state.
- **Membership.** Numbers remain static. Mrs Pauline Gribble has applied for membership of the Section. She served in the WRANS from May 1976 to June 1983.

Motion: Full Membership be offered to Pauline Gribble.

Moved: Peter Cooke-Russell Seconded: Alan Masters. Carried.

- Welfare. John Small continues to make progress with his recovery despite an eye problem.
- **Social:** Fish'nChips will resume when renovations at the Yacht Club have been completed. Watch this space for further info.

Motion: The reports be received.

Moved: Dennis Lyons Seconded: Glen McNamara. Carried.

General Business:

- **HMAS Canberra Memorial Service**. Arrangements for the service have been finalised and the weather is looking promising.
- NAA / RAN liaison. The President is working on improving the liaison between NAA and the Navy on those issues where there is a sharing of common interests and goals. Such issues include the use of the Australian White Ensign in NAA printed materials.
- **AWM Annex.** Glen McNamara is a volunteer guide at the AWM and advised members the AWM Annex would be open to the public on 2 September. Bookings are necessary so interested members are advised to visit the AWM website or watch out in the local Press for details.
- **Meeting Closed.** There being no other business the President closed the meeting at1410.
- Next meeting will be on Thursday, 7 September 2023 at 1330 at the Eastlake Football Club Gungahlin.

Alan Masters Secretary NAA (ACT)

Notes from the Committee Meeting 3 August 2023

Present: David Manolas, Alex McGown, Peter Cooke-Russell, Dennis Lyons, Alan Masters, Alaric O'Neill, Stewart Gordon.

Apologies: Joe Slaats

Discussion focused on finalising arrangements for the HMAS Canberra Memorial Service.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be at the Eastlakes Gungahlin Club on 7 September 2023 at 1100.

Alan Masters Secretary NAA (ACT)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

\$40 for 2024

Action to renew membership for 2024 can now undertaken in a number of different ways. The following, in order of preference for the Treasurer, are listed below, but any of them can be utilised.

The use of e-banking provides for ease of payment and your bank records act as your receipt. The annual subscription for 2023 is \$38.

- 1. Direct transfer of funds to the NAA (ACT Section). Using e-bank facilities, transfer funds to Naval Association of Australia –ACT Section Account BSB: 633 000. Account Number 162 834 097 Please ensure you have identified yourself as the payer in order that the Treasurer can correctly credit your payment.
- Payment using the mail system. Please do not send cash through the mail system. Cheques can be forwarded to Membership Registrar, 4 McEachern Crescent, MELBA ACT 2615. Receipts will NOT be mailed to payers.
- 3. Direct payment to Treasurer. The Treasurer will gladly accept cheques or cash from members at General Meetings. A receipt will be given to payers.

IF YOU HAVE CHANGED ANY OF YOUR CON-TACT DETAILS SUCH AS HOME ADDRESS, E-MAIL ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBERS PLEASE ADVISE THE MEMBERSHIP REGIS-

Social Trogram

Fish 'n Chips is on the program, Snapper has reopened . .

- 7 Sep Lunch Eastlakes Gungahlin 1200
- 21 Sep Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200
- 5 Oct Lunch Eastlakes Gungahlin 1200
- 19 Oct Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200
- 2 Nov Lunch Eastlakes Gungahlin 1200
- 16 Nov Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200

7 Dec Christmas Lunch

2024

- 18 Jan Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200
- 1 Feb Lunch Eastlakes Gungahlin 1200
- 15 Mar Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200
- 4 Apr Fish 'n Chips CYC 1200

Social Secretary Joe Slaats

DVA CONTACTS

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

PHONE NUMBER:

Telephone: 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)

International callers:

+61 2 6289 1133

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES:

Health Approvals & Home Care Section epartment of Veterans' Affairs

GPO Box 9998

BRISBANE QLD 4001

DVA WEBSITE:

http://www.dva.gov.au/providers/alliedhealthprofessionals

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



A Happy Birthday to you September 2023

Mick Hardwick

Rex Kendal

- Steve Youll
- John Coombe
- Harry Beardsell
- Mike Taylor
- Ian Holmes



His Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Stalwart sends over the fuelling probe to HMCS Montreal as the two ships conduct a liquid Replenishment at Sea (RAS) as part of exercise TALISMAN SA-BRE 2023 while deployed on Operation PROJECTION on 31 July 2023.

Photo by: Cpl Connor Bennett Canadian Armed Forces Imagery Technician.



If undeliverable return to NAA ACT Section 26 Nelson Place CURTIN ACT 2605 POSTAGE PAID AUSTRALIA

Paste Address label Here

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