

THE LAST POST

KEEPING THE ANZAC SPIRIT ALIVE FOR AUSTRALIA'S
VETERANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

ISSUE 23

INSPIRATIONAL
AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

RAAF CENTENARY

ARTS

ABC

SAM BLOOM

SHARON BOWN

POCO'S RUSTY YOUNG

The Last Post Story

Through bloodlines, The Last Post magazine started at Gallipoli. Its acorn then fought with the 2/10th in Milne Bay, Buna and Balikpapan and trekked the Kokoda in WW2. By the late-sixties, The Last Post magazine was ready to be born.

Raymond Thorsby Ross, who had fought in PNG and the son of Joseph Thorsby Ross, who had fought at Gallipoli, leased a small office in George Street, Sydney. Raymond had decided that a small magazine, designed to help RSLs and their members, should be introduced in New South Wales. To do this he would need advertising to help pay printing and distribution costs. Daily, Raymond would take the train from suburban Chatswood to the city and phone local businesses and sporting clubs, asking for their support. This ex-digger and RSL member worked long hours to get each edition out and was effectively the magazine's editor, graphic designer and distributor.

In 1974, Raymond and his partner moved to Scarborough in suburban Perth and continued The Last Post in Western Australia until his death in 1983.

Twenty-eight years later, Raymond's son and Joseph's grandson, Gregory Thorsby Ross brought his father's magazine back to life. Greg had lived with his father as a 15-year old, when he started working as a copy-boy and cadet journalist at The Sydney Morning Herald. The teenager became a first-hand observer of the early days of the ex-servicemen and women's publication. By 2011 he had put everything in place to re-introduce The Last Post to a public in desperate need of a modern, quality magazine to assist the veteran community. Only this time it would be a national. And this time, it would be for all Australians.

With this humble background, and from a history steeped in the Anzac tradition, the new national TLP was born and is now respected and read by not only Australian veterans but the wider global community.

Featuring profiles on contemporary and historical veteran issues as well as honourable Australians, organisations, institutions and companies, TLP has matured to be Australia's most recognised independent online and print veteran magazine.

Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

The reason?

It speaks to all Australians as a reminder that the legacy of the Anzac Spirit is relevant to us all.

With editor Greg T Ross' up-close interviews with famous Australians, stunning layout and production and input from great writers covering relevant topics in history, music, arts, entertainment, sport, travel, gardening, this magazine is so well received by a wide audience that reaches far beyond the veteran community.

Pte Raymond Thorsby Ross, founder of the original The Last Post, left, during his time with the 2/10th in Papua New Guinea during WW2.



from the publisher GREG T ROSS

Welcome to the 23rd edition of The Last Post.

A lot has happened since our last edition, including the hangover from last summer's disastrous bushfires. In this, our 10th anniversary year, we take a look at the impact the fires had on local community's with author Chrissy Guinery's *When the smoke clears*.

We've experienced too the Covid pandemic that has swept the world and killed millions. Here, through common sense and quick action we have managed to minimise the effect but we have still lost lives and impacted business and families on a grand scale.

Leading this issue, we have Inspirational Australian Women. This will be an ongoing series but, in this edition, we highlight the feature with interviews with Sam Bloom and Sharon Bown.

In the times of bushfires and Covid, we have been more vulnerable as a society than at any other peacetime in memory. Within our society are individuals and the stress that has resulted has taken a toll on personal health. Art is a way of dealing with and expressing stress and an opportunity to focus on creativity instead of turning the problem inwards. So we look at art as a healing force and to help us focus on that we have a Foreword from Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs, Darren Chester. Darren speaks about the importance of art and as part of our look at that we have the Australian National Veterans Arts Museum and a message from the museums Chairman and Director, Mark Johnston. The museum has an exhibition being held in Melbourne's Jane Bell Lane in April.

Mungo MacCallum was an Australian journalist and commentator of high regard. His death in December, last year signalled a loss for us all but his friend, Di Morrissey pens a heat-felt tribute to the man she knew well.

The ABC has been an important organisation for a lot of us. A conduit for communication in times of celebration and crisis. In science, education, sports, news and the arts. In this edition we look at the role and history of the ABC with Honouring Aunty.

Rusty Young is the stalwart and long-serving member of the country rock band Poco. Poco started in the late 60's. In my interview with Rusty, we look back at the band's beginnings and, in a long chat, covered a lot of ground with stories of great interest.

Photos here have been supplied by the amazing Ben Rothenberg.


Warren 'Pig' Morgan has supplied us with a vale to his close friend, the late-Ronny Peel and in arts we also feature New Zealand poet and writer, Jeremy Roberts.

2021 is the Centenary of the RAAF. The 31st of March. With the help of Wing Commander Mary Anne Whiting and Reserve Squadron Leader, writer and actor Michael Veitch we look at the history of the RAAF. As part of that we look at the 1941-45 campaign in south-west Pacific.

Sport, travel, veteran's health and welfare are included too in this important edition.

Thanks for being with us and being part of the journey that is now in its 11th year.

Greg



- The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) acknowledges the central role of the Navy protecting our vital sea lanes and borders, in both peacetime and times of conflict
- The MUA also acknowledges and salutes the role of the merchant fleet in supporting the Navy and pays tribute to the many civilian seafarers who have lost their lives in supporting the defence effort
- The Navy and the domestic civilian fleet remain as active partners in supporting and facilitating Australia's shipping dependency as an island nation
- The MUA looks forward to continuing to work closely with Navy on the many synergies that exist in Navy operations and commercial shipping operations

For more information go to www.mua.org.au

foreword



**PORTRAIT OF MINISTER DARREN CHESTER
BY ROBERT MILTON**

MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL

DARREN CHESTER

It is my great pleasure to introduce this edition of *The Last Post*, which looks at the role art can play in improving veteran mental health.

Earlier this year I sat down with Army veteran Robert Milton who asked to paint a portrait of me for the Archibald Prize. Robert is a talented artist who studied at the Glasgow University of Art, before joining the military.

I spent 45 minutes with Robert and during that time we had a chance to talk about his service, and how he spent most of his career as a sniper, both in the Scots Guards and the Australian Army. He transitioned in 2010 and now volunteers to teach art as a therapy for veterans and their families dealing with physical and psychological trauma.

Engaging in the arts can promote health and wellbeing and DVA provides funding for veterans to participate in art activities or art therapy as part of a DVA rehabilitation plan focused on improving mental health and promoting recovery from injury.

The Government is committed to supporting our veterans and their families, and my message to anyone who may be struggling is to reach out and get help. And if you know someone who's experiencing mental illness, please encourage them to get help as early as possible.

We made many improvements in this space, including through Non-Liability Health Care, which provides unlimited free treatment for any mental health condition to anyone who has served even one day of full-time continuous service, as well as certain Reservists.

All current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families can now access Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling. Open Arms is a national mental health service that provides 24-hour free and confidential counselling 365 days a year, group programs, suicide prevention training and peer support. Importantly the Open Arms website provides a range of self-help resources and wellbeing tools. Visit www.openarms.gov.au or phone 1800 011 046 (toll-free for landlines and most mobiles).

And for the first time DVA is providing psychiatric assistance dogs to help veterans manage their post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a program I have championed and I am proud that eight dogs have been delivered to veterans and that more than 70 dogs are in training to help other veterans.

The mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families is a key priority for the Government and we provided an additional \$101.7 million to bolster mental health support for the veteran community in the recent Budget.

To find out more about any of these programs, I encourage you to get into contact with DVA on 1800 VETERAN (1800 8383726).

I hope you enjoy and benefit from this edition of *The Last Post*.

Lest we forget.

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Inspirational Australian Women

"The idea for Inspirational Australian Women came to me after receiving a copy of the Wakefield Press 2020 release, Trailblazers. Trailblazers tells the stories of 100 inspiring South Australian women.

My thoughts centred on celebrating the lives and work and achievements of women, nationally.

This, Inspirational Australian Women, will be an ongoing part of The Last Post. The women celebrated within these pages will come from an array of fields. You will be amazed at their stories.

The fight for a 'fair go' for women continues today, with women still paid less and underrepresented in the top echelons of business and politics.

So here it is, Inspirational Australian Women. We aim to shine a light on the breadth of achievements of Australia's women."

– Greg T Ross, Editor

"Sam Bloom has an incredible story, a beautiful spirit, and an undeniable determination to make the best of life. She is one of the most remarkable and resilient people I know."

— Sandra Sully



Sam Bloom

GTR: Sam Bloom, welcome to the Last Post podcast. And thank you so much for taking your part in this.

SB: Thank you so much for having me.

GTR: It's wonderful. Sam, you've created some... Well you had the book, *The Penguin Bloom* Magpie, I guess this is going to be the movie from your first book with Naomi Watts and Jackie Weaver. You pulled no punches as to what life is really like in a wheelchair and your latest book, *Heartache & Birdsong*, which is a beautiful book and it's an honest book. You tell of your own story. It's brought to book by Bradley Trevor Greive of *Close Friend*, and with some beautiful photos from your husband, Cameron. So there're wonderful photos. What drove you to produce this book following up on your first one?

SB: Well, in the first book, *Penguin Bloom*, at the end of the book, it says a message from me. And like you said, it's pretty raw and pretty honest. And I think the feedback we got, I see messages of people essentially saying thank you. They didn't feel so alone, it wasn't necessarily that they sustained spinal cord injury. It could have been anything, some traumatic event in their life. So we thought, well, I had to write another book and it's more from my perspective.

GTR: Yes. And it's a good read, it's an honest read. You speak of the transformative experiences and I guess, do you believe we all, at some stages of our lives, go through a transformative experience? Tell us a little for those that don't know about your experience.

SB: You mean what happened or?

GTR: Yes, just briefly and we'll get into a bit more detail later, but just your experience and how that was transformative for you?

SB: My whole life changed about seven and a half years ago. I used to be incredibly active, loved traveling and we took our three kids to Thailand and that's when I leaned against the railing and it had dry-rot so I fell six meters and broke my back. So as far as I'm concerned, life as I knew it and loved it, was over. I had to learn how to deal with my new reality, which is incredibly challenging. I still find it challenging after all these years.

GTR: Yeah. That comes through in the book too, Sam. And it's an honest appraisal of a situation that we'd obviously rather not have had, but you know, it's a reminder that

"THERE ARE
SO MANY
BEAUTIFUL
PEOPLE IN
THE WORLD."

we are all human and that there are these different emotions that are there within us. You said you're not the woman you were, or the woman you wanted to be, but that you are so much more than that. So how is that?

SB: Well, I do. As far as I'm concerned, I'm not the person that I wanted to be. I always had this picture in my mind that I would grow with certain experiences, traveling the world and doing adventurous things but obviously that's changed. But I think I would say I'm more than... I'm so much more than that, probably because I've been lucky in a weird way, to have experienced some pretty amazing things since my accident and met some amazing people.

GTR: Yes.

SB: So it hasn't all been doom and gloom, I have been quite fortunate. Represented Australia a couple of times. And I have probably... I don't know, experienced different things that I would not have if I hadn't had the accident.

GTR: Yeah, In some ways, maybe it's opened doors. I suppose these events open doors that wouldn't have been there otherwise, obviously. But that is life, and that's the growth of life in some ways. You say that to carry bitterness is one of the easiest things. Does that make overcoming the bitterness, the greatest victory? Or is there always bitterness within all of us and a darkness inside of all of us that we...

SB: Yeah, possibly. Before the accident, I was always happy. And I lost the life I'd had and no, I didn't know I did have this darkness inside me, but perhaps we all

have it. And maybe it does come out when something traumatic or when your life changes.

GTR: Yeah. Tell us about Daisy, your best friend as a little girl. Was Daisy the self-assured you and did Daisy represent the courage that you later showed you had?

SB: It's so funny, Daisy was my little duck. I used to be quite... Well, I used to be incredibly shy as kid and even as I grew up, I've always been pretty shy. So yes, Daisy was... I guess she was the more vocal one out of the two of us, given that she was a duck.

GTR: Did she do things you wanted to do or did you imagine her doing things you wanted to do?

SB: Yeah, she's really like Penguin. She just lovely company and I've would hang out with Daisy and talk to her. Yeah, I've always found animals pretty healing.

GTR: Yeah. Actually it was, it was so appropriate that Penguin came into your life because of course you speak about the love of animals and even your mother after... tell us about Sally the Doberman, your mother was trying to... In the pool?

SB: I know, poor Sally. She got hit on my birthday. On my 30th birthday. Obviously she didn't die but her right leg was paralyzed. So I just remember mum always trying to put Sally in the pool and just trying to manipulate her leg and I guess try and get some movement back into it. Mum used to do that all the time. So yeah, I guess I did get some compassion and patience off mum, because mum spent hours with Sally, trying to fix her.



Photo by Cameron Bloom



Photo by Cameron Bloom.

GTR: So Sally still had a limp by the time she died, I believe?

SB: She died on the operating theatre. She actually ended up having the leg removed but then she didn't make it through the operation.

GTR: Oh, okay. Well, that's an alignment, I suppose, to your father, which we'll talk about shortly, which was incredible story too, Sam. But your childhood sounds good. Your parents bought a pie shop in Newport and a surf-side pie shop, if you don't mind. And the beach and surfing was always a big part of your life, what is it about the ocean? Is the stillness and strength of nature that appeals?

SB: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I've grown up, like you said, by the ocean. So I've had an amazing childhood. There's something powerful and healing, I think, about the water. Even as I grew older and had kids and stuff. I mean kids do drive you a little nuts. So I would always race off down to the beach, just have a swim and just always feel calm and I guess more grounded. Yeah, there's just something about it, I love it. I used to surf on my own a lot, I kind of really liked my own company. And my favourite surf spot where I grew up, and I just remember, I would just be sitting at the back on my board just... I don't know, it was almost like it was my little church.

GTR: Yes, isn't it incredible? I think it was Spinoza the philosopher that spoke and was aligned to Einstein that said the church is not bricks and mortar, of course, but whatever God you want to find, you'll find in nature, you won't find it in any man-made construction.

SB: No way, I've never heard that.

GTR: Yeah, Google Spinoza and Einstein, and there's a beautiful

passage written by Spinoza, which Einstein kept in his office about finding God in nature.

SB: That's great. What you said is a hundred percent.

GTR: Yeah, totally. So yes, Spinoza and Einstein, two good minds too. So yeah, have a read of that at some stage, it was beautiful.

SB: I will.

GTR: Your father was a hard-working and, as you say, a passionate man who worked in a bakery and of course made some wonderful pies, but he raised you to believe that sunshine was free but that you had to work to earn that. Can you explain that philosophy?

SB: Yeah, I think dad always had a really strong work ethic. He's always working, but he loved it. And so, not that mum and dad always put us to work but really just like have jobs and if you wanted something, you had to earn money to sort of buy it and then you can enjoy it. I don't know, mum and dad, they always worked. So I think that was instilled in myself and my sister and my brother. You need to make it work, have a good work ethic.

GTR: Yeah, it makes you feel as though you have earned it at the end of the day, if you've put in a good day and you're able to get down to the beach, doesn't it?

SB: Yeah, it's more satisfying. You're like, "Yep, I've worked my butt off today, whatever. I can go relax and have fun."

GTR: Yeah, so true Sam. So true, beautiful. But your father and mother were quite incredible in themselves because I think you were six when your father and mother pulled you out of school and went

for a drive around Australia with your siblings. Tell us about that.

SB: Yeah. Dad was always pretty adventurous. And he loved driving, camping. So they pulled us out for three months, I think it may have been. And so we drove up the East coast and then up to the Northern territory and it was awesome. And we just camped, it was very basic. I didn't know how my mum did it, personally. It was unreal. And so I think that I got a sense of adventure from my dad because he always loved. Nothing fancy, it was always pretty rugged and off the beaten track kind of thing.

GTR: Yeah. And what about that three months tour with your parents and siblings, is that an integral part of your life's history obviously? And it was a lot of good, you saw a lot of things you wouldn't have otherwise seen.

SB: Absolutely, oh yeah. I saw it on all the routes now, but when we were there, this is in the 70s, there was nothing there. There was a few Aborigines living around there.

SB: It was so funny once because my dad loves... Do you remember Harry Butler?

GTR: Yeah.

SB: We were up in Katherine and we bumped into Harry Butler, and my dad was beside himself. So I'll always remember that because we would always watch him on TV. It just seems like that, going to Cooper Pedy. I remember going to Innamincka, I remember it was absolutely beautiful. I was lucky, I had a really, really good childhood.

GTR: Yeah, that's fantastic. Our parents used to take my brothers and I around Australia too a bit, but it was a great experience. And it gives you the traveling bug too, Sam.

"I'VE GROWN UP BY THE OCEAN. SO, I HAD AN AMAZING CHILDHOOD. THERE'S SOMETHING POWERFUL AND HEALING ABOUT THE WATER... IT WAS ALMOST LIKE MY LITTLE CHURCH."



PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

Photo by Cameron Bloom.

SB: Definitely.

GTR: Did that have something to do with you? Your travels were incredible.

SB: I think so. Ever since I was in infant school, I knew that I wanted to be a nurse and I wanted to work in Africa. And everyone would just be like, where did the whole African thing come from, which I actually don't know. It was just there. That was my plan. So yeah, I think the whole travel thing did come from my mum. Well, mostly from my dad.

GTR: Tell us about the young apricot farmer that saved your life, possibly, with Cameron and you, in what was it? Turkey, I think.

SB: Yeah. We were in Eastern Turkey and we were kind of near the border of Iran and it was pretty... There were no tourists there, it's kind of in the middle of nowhere. And so we were catching a train, we were heading West because we were actually making our way down to Syria. And then we were in his carriage and these kids came in, they were probably teenagers and one was maybe early twenties, and then they pulled out a knife and I was thinking, "Oh, no." Thinking we're either going to get stabbed or lose absolutely everything. And they were kind of mucking around, being a little bit smart.

SB: And then this other boy came to the door and he had his knife, and he just motioned to us to come out. And so, yeah. And we sat with him and he fed us some of his dried apricots and he looked after us until we got off the train.

GTR: Wow, how wonderful. An angel.

SB: Yeah. That's what I've discovered traveling actually. I don't know, so

many beautiful people in the world and they may have absolutely nothing but they'll always look after you. They'll always make sure that have food or water, or whatever it is that you may need. It takes people to believe, at their most gracious.

GTR: Yeah, that's beautiful. And I guess that leads us into what you were saying in the book also, Sam, about kindness being more important than genius.

SB: Definitely. Yeah, definitely.

GTR: Yeah, fantastic. Sam, part of the book is dedicated to your overseas travels, which you've spoken about, and there's so much there to go through. I'd recommend people buy the book and have a read or some of your fantastic travels. You described the terrible accident that that happened. What was the the healing process or the treatment afterwards? And also, you had so many injuries and you were going through traffic in an ambulance and they didn't have the siren on.

SB: Yeah, I know. Personally, I don't remember it. I don't even remember going up the stairs and leaning on this railing because I did sustain quite a severe head injury. But yeah, we were quite remote where the accident happened. So I was taken to a local hospital and I think that how they stitched my head up. And then they x-rayed me and realized that the injuries were pretty severe. So that's when they did put us all in the ambulance. And Cam says they were absolutely flying through. He kept signalling to them, "Turn the siren on, turn the siren on. This is kind of serious." So the kids were in the front, no seatbelt, nothing,

just flying through the traffic. That was a three hour ambulance trip, I think, up to a big private hospital. .

GTR: Yeah.

SB: But now I have no memory of it. I think Cam does, I think he was pretty... Not traumatized, but it would have been so stressful. He had the kids to look after.

GTR: I know.

SB: Obviously they would have been so worried, and me.

GTR: Yeah. I can relate to the accident situation a bit and I hope you don't mind me saying so, but my brothers and I had a head on accident when we were in our twenties, when a driver came across the other side of the road in Victoria. And so there was a lot of trauma associated with that and trying to keep me from getting into a coma and all of that sort of stuff.

SB: Oh wow.

GTR: Yeah. So I'm totally on song with you when you talk about the ambulance and stuff. But your injuries, just to give readers and listeners an idea, when you woke up you were in terrible pain, you'd lost the sense of taste and smell and your teeth had hammered through your tongue. You had multiple fractures to your skull. Both your lungs were ruptured. You had difficult breathing. How did you survive?

SB: Yeah, I don't know. I'm tougher than I thought, I don't know. Maybe it was just luck. I had lost a lot of blood and I had a lot of internal bleeding. I don't actually remember anything, but I had a lot of blood transfusions. So I guess it's up to the doctors, they kept

Sam Bloom

Heartache & Birdsong



Samantha Bloom, Cameron Bloom
& Bradley Trevor Greive

The powerful
sequel to the
international
bestseller
Penguin Bloom

me alive. I think the first night or two, they sort of said to Cam, this doesn't look good, she might not live. So that would've been horrible for Cam and to go back and kind of tell the boys, "You might not see your mum again." But somehow I pulled through.

GTR: Yeah, a very strong spirit. You go through the treatment after the accident and the counselling. How did that go?

SB: Oh, that wasn't very good. Yeah, I saw a... I don't even actually know what it was. I think it was psychologist, when I was at Royal North Shore. I had to just tell him my story, tell him what happened. And I think he was really nice, but I just remember him sitting next to me. Obviously, I was in bed and all he did is move his head and he just kept going, "Mm-hmm, mm-hmm and I'm kind of thinking, but you're certainly not helping right now."

SB: And then I went to rehab and that was when all of us. We had, we didn't know you have a social worker and have tea. I didn't even know what she was, a therapist of some sort. And so I was meant to have a session with her the following day and I met with her the day before, and she's like, "Oh, let's go have a cup of tea." I'm like, "Yeah, sure." And that was when she said. Just tell me what she said, do you want me to tell you what she said?

GTR: What'd she say?

SB: I'm sorry. I hope it's not inappropriate for your listeners or for you...

GTR: No, go for it.

SB: Well, she goes to me. "Oh, when you get your periods, it's going to be

really tricky. So maybe you should just go and have a hysterectomy."

GTR: Oh, that's right. I read that. Jesus Christ.

SB: More operations. I'm like... So I just stood and went, "You know what? You can't help me, you can't assist me." So I just refused to see her.

GTR: Yeah, good on you. You would have felt as though you being dismantled as a human.

SB: I know. Really? Is that all you have to say to me?

GTR: "Oh geez. Thanks for the help." You would have said. That wasn't the... You had a young doctor your mother wanted to punch in the face.

SB: Well, that was the guy who... That was in my second day, when I was at Royal North Shore in Sydney. And I went down and had an MRI and that's when he came up and I asked him if I'll ever walk again. And man, he was so blunt. He just goes, "No, you'll never walk again." And I just remember I just pulled the sheet over my head and I just lost it. I was crying and I think that's when mum was going to punch him in the face because he was so blunt. If he'd just said, "You know what? It doesn't look good, but you never know." If he just gave me a little glimmer of hope, then I probably wouldn't have written it off so much thinking, "Okay, then my whole life is finished."

GTR: Yep. That's a good point too, Sam. Peter Yeo is a footballer, an Australian football who became a quadriplegic after an accident while he was running down the hallway at home, would you believe. His head

went through the wall? Yeah, I know. He was running to answer a phone, he thought it was a girl that he was hoping he could take out. But he has hopes still that they will find a cure. So you get someone that's very blunt and you wonder whether these doctors and counsellors have been dealing with these problems and issues for so long that they become numb to sensitivity.

SB: Yeah, maybe. Maybe. I know he had to do his job and I guess tell me the truth, but he could have just been a little bit more compassionate.

GTR: Yeah more...

SB: Yeah and just say, "You never know. One day hopefully they'll find a cure." Or something.

GTR: Yeah. No one knows what tomorrow is going to bring, is probably the biggest thing that's ever been said, but that is the future. We don't know the future.

SB: No, true.

GTR: And also, then a small bird, this is the magnificent thing about Penguin, brought you back to life. This bird, you were laughing instead of crying now because you had the injured penguin. Tell us about Penguin.

SB: Yeah. So when I came home from hospital, I was in hospital for seven months. And when I came home, I think that's when the reality hit. Our house overlooked the beach, I can sort of see... There's a lot of bush around us and I used to go mountain biking in the bush and stuff. And again, that was my happy place. And so when I came home, it was just like, "Wow, this is my new reality." And to be honest, I absolutely hated it. I don't like the word depressed, but I guess I was. Yeah, so I wasn't the same person. Definitely not. And so it was about three months after I came home from hospital. Noah, my middle son and I went to my mum's house for lunch. And I wasn't driving at the time, so mum had to drive us home. And then Noah... It was a really windy day and Noah just saw this little baby Magpie that had been blown out of her nest. So we thought if we left her there, she would've died. She was so little. So we picked her up, brought her home. She was amazing. It was like she made us all happy again. It was almost like when you get a little puppy and it's so cute and everyone's like... It was a bit like that. She was so adorable and yeah, I loved it. I loved it and it kind of gave the boys and I something to do together. We all feed her. We all look after her. It was amazing.

GTR: And I guess too, Sam, just looking at Penguin would have made you happy?

SB: Yeah, because she was so cute and especially because, to be honest, for the first year or so, I was so bored. It was almost like I was

"I LOVE BEING OUT OF THE WHEELCHAIR AND JUST BEING BACK ON THE WATER AND BEING SURROUNDED BY THE BUSH AGAIN."



Photo by Cameron Bloom.

under house arrest. If I went out, it'd always be with someone which was fine, but it's just like I was home all the time and I was super bored.

GTR: You wanted "me" time, but you didn't want boredom.

SB: Exactly. And so when I did have Penguin, she would always be on my lap or on my shoulder. I was used to that all the time. So she actually was great company and I would always talk to her, I'd always whinge to her. Instead of whinging to Cam because I felt bad. He'd dealt with so much and he's still dealing with it. I didn't want to bombard him, like, with all my negativity, so I bombarded poor Penguin.

GTR: Was Penguin a good listener?

SB: She was a very good listener, she never talked back.

GTR: That's right. And so, is this story true that, at one stage Penguin went away for a while but then flew back on your sons that 13th birthday or something?

SB: Yep. It was like she was getting older. I'm trying to think how old he was. It was his 13th birthday. So maybe she was a year and a half or something. So she'd go away for a few days and then she'd come back. And so this time she flew away and we're like, "Whoa." We were a bit worried, thinking maybe something had happened to her and everything. Hopefully, maybe she'd found a mate. And so she's been gone for six weeks and it was his birthday. And that morning, this isn't a joke, I said, "Oh,

maybe this Penguin will come back today." And we went to my mum's house just for lunch. And Cam got a phone call from this lady saying, "I think Penguin's inside my house."

GTR: Wow.

SB: I know, right. So he drove to pick Penguin up. I was driving at the time. And so about half an hour later, I drove home with the kids and Cam had put Penguin in the kitchen and he set up his camera to record the reaction, oh man it was so funny. If I could I should send you the link or something.

GTR: Yeah, I would love to.

SB: He was so excited, he was like, "Oh my god, it's my birthday Peng." And he was doing his little dance and it was awesome.

GTR: Oh, that'd be a blessing to see. So Penguin didn't bring a present, but the present was Penguin.

SB: Exactly. She's a perfect present. It was pretty weird, hey.

GTR: I know. It's one of those things in life that you cherish as a memory. That's incredible stuff. How did you feel when you first saw Penguin fly again?

SB: Oh, we were pretty excited. She flew inside.

GTR: Oh wow.

SB: Yeah. It was so fun. She flew from the window sill over to a computer or something. We were like, "Yes!" We were so excited. It's a bit like when your baby takes its first steps.

GTR: Isn't that amazing. Geez, fantastic stuff. And all this from a magpie. How good is kayaking?

SB: Oh yeah, kayaking was awesome.

GTR: Yeah.

SB: When I was in rehab, I used to always complain that I couldn't do any of the things that I used to do, mountain bikes, soccer, and go to the gym and stuff. And so I said, maybe I could kayak. And the man at rehab, he was the sports recreational officer. He was amazing, he's like, "Right!" And so it was like two weeks after I got him from rehab. That's when I went down and first started kayaking.

SB: It was just awesome because I love being out of the wheelchair and just being back on the water and just being surrounded by the bush again. It was just the one thing that I really missed. So yeah, that was awesome. And then I was so lucky. I ended up with the most amazing coach. So she was more like my therapist. I would tell her everything and she was brilliant. We're still really good friends.

GTR: I'll tell you what Sam, we hope, in this edition of the magazine also, Scott Bevin, he used to be on ABC television and he's had some beautiful books out, I think, about William Dobell, also about the ocean. And one of his books that we hope to feature in this edition is called *The Harbor*. And you know what he does, he goes around Sydney Harbour on his kayak.

SB: Oh, how funny? Wow. It's beautiful, it's nice being on the water.

GTR: Yeah. I used to kayak when I was in Melbourne and I remember one rough day, one wild day in Port Phillip Bay. And I haven't kayaked for a long time, but it's certainly beautiful. And it's therapeutic, as you say.

SB: It is fairly therapeutic, yes.

GTR: Talking of therapeutic, you've returned to surfing and done pretty well.

SB: I have. Yeah, because I grew up surfing and so after my accident, I remember it was my first summer and we went up to... We just went to one of the local beaches. Cam took me for a swim and friend of Alex's was out there with his surfboard and he's like, "Come on, Sam. Get on." and I was like, "No, no, no, no." And then he convinced me and he pushed on a wave and I was like, "No, that's not surfing." And so it took me five years after that to get back out on the surf board. But the one person who really convinced me is... I don't know, have you heard it of Julian Wilson? The professional surfer, trained professional surfer.

GTR: Julian Wilson, no. And I take a fair interest surfing, but I haven't. Tell us about Julian.

SB: Oh. Well, Julian's an incredible surf, an insane surfer. And I didn't know him, but I got a letter off his mum Nola. She lives up near Noosa and she just wrote me the most gorgeous letter saying, "I know you love the ocean and it's so healing and you should get back out in there." So I was like, "What!" Yeah I know, so I can say thank Nola for encouraging me to get back out on the surf board. Yeah, I'm so glad that I did. So it was about six months after I first got back on a board and that's when I went in my first competition up near Queensland.

GTR: Yeah.

SB: Got on the same team, adaptive surfing and competed over in the States in December of 2015 and I did all right.

GTR: Wow. Good on you. That's that's an incredible thing to happen and it reunites you with the ocean. But laying down on a board gives you a closer... You are closer to the wave. I bodyboard, don't hold... But you are closer to the wave. It's incredible.

SB: Yeah, definitely. And I feel it's still just it's fun, going along the face of the wave and turning.

GTR: Yeah.

SB: It's awesome. And I love competing.

GTR: Do you?

SB: I feel way more comfortable competing in adaptive surfing than kayaking.

GTR: Oh wow.

SB: Oh yeah, kayaking was so stressful, but surfing, I've grown up

with the waves, you can read the waves. And it's just the most amazing energy, the competition, because for the world championships you get people from all around the world. Everyone has a different story and it's the most amazing vibe. And you just feel good, it makes you happy.

GTR: Isn't that beautiful.

SB: And of course, it's fun winning.

GTR: Good on you Sam. Did you make many friends when you went there?

SB: Yeah, I did. And that's the best thing, they're there from Argentina and Costa Rica and America and the UK. Yeah, I love it. It's like a real community, even though we might all have different injuries and whatnot, it's still this amazing community that we all support each other and when we do see each other it's amazing.

GTR: That's beautiful. You speak about being open to love and I guess Penguin was a reminder of that. Penguin didn't know it, but you were perhaps in need of some stimulus outside of your immediate concerns and the wind provided that, that day with giving Penguin to you. We say, you still trying to be a better person?

SB: I try.

GTR: Don't we all.

SB: I know, I try. I try. I got to be honest, I do get a bit grumpy sometimes. I get frustrated. It's just like mate, I would do anything to be able to do one thing I want to do on my own. Get back out in the bush on my bike and things like that. But yeah, I try to be a better person.

GTR: Yeah. Well, some succeed and some don't, but I think you're on the right track. Actually, if it hadn't been for your father, you wouldn't have met Cam because of course Cam came into the pie shop.

SB: Yeah, that's right. You're right.

GTR: And tell us about the love that developed there.

SB: Yeah, well Cam used to come in. We went to totally different schools. So I didn't actually know Cam when I was in school. So he used to come into the shop and I thought he seemed like a really, really nice guy. And I thought he was pretty spunky and he was funny because when he'd come in and then and we'd always talk and hang out a bit. And then one night, I was at the local pub with my friend and then I saw Cam down there with his friend. I figured that maybe he had couple of beers or something. So I sucked up the courage to ask him out and it went from there.

GTR: Oh, wonderful. And you do a great job of describing in the book, describing the naturalness of it all, the goofiness of it all. But the love of it all too, I guess.

SB: Yeah. He's been amazing. Yeah, he's been extraordinary. He's always been... He's a good guy, but he's been phenomenal since this accident. He's always to find things that make me happy, that make it bit easier and things like that. I'm very lucky,

GTR: He sounds like a strong and amazing man.

SB: Yeah, he is. And I always say, I hope our boys grow up to be like Cam. He's very compassionate and very caring.

GTR: Yes. Well, you hear stories of people that are put in situations that are less than perfect and their partners walking out or being pains in the bum and Cameron has been the opposite. He's been wonderful.

SB: Yeah, I know. It's funny because when I was at rehab, that was quite a common thing people would say. A lot of marriages break up for an accident like this. I've been lucky.

GTR: I knew a woman once whose husband walked out on her when she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

SB: No way. Really? What, because he couldn't handle it?

GTR: He was probably the stressful type. People internalize things as you know, sometimes. And that's when the trouble starts, they think it's all about them, but geez. Now, you talked, finally, you say, "Go where the heart calls you. So what is the joy and the wonder of the world to you?"

SB: You mean travelling?

GTR: Just life.

SB: Life. Like what? Where do I find joy?

GTR: Yeah.

SB: Well, obviously my kids. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them. And I don't know, I guess just being in nature for me. That is still my happy place. I've got this friend who's my personal trainer, she's an awesome friend. And she discovered this place up at Palm Beach, it's like 15 minutes away from where we live. And she'll pack like this little picnic lunch and she'll wheel me through the bush and we sit surrounded by bush, overlooking water. And there's never anyone. So things like that makes me happy.

GTR: Okay. That's absolutely brilliant. And I tell you what, I'll get your email address after the interview finishes, then I'll send through that Spinoza-Einstein thing to you.

SB: My word, that's amazing, because that is so one hundred percent.

GTR: Thanks so very much for joining us here, Sam. You've been an absolute pleasure to speak with.

SB: Thank you Greg, it's been awesome.

Lowitja O'Donoghue

Lowitja O'Donoghue is a truly great Australian. She is arguably our nation's most recognised Indigenous woman. A powerful and unrelenting advocate for her people, an inspiration for many, a former Australian of the Year, she sat opposite Prime Minister Paul Keating in the first negotiations between an Australian government and Aboriginal people and changed the course of the nation.

But when Lowitja was born in 1932 to an Aboriginal mother and a white father in the harsh and uncompromising landscape of Central Australia the expectations for her life could not have been more different. At the age of two, she was handed over to the missionaries of the Colebrook Home for Half-Caste Children and cut off completely from her people and her culture. She would not see her mother again for another thirty years and would have no memory of her father.

In 2001 a bitter controversy arose over whether Lowitja was 'stolen' as a child. In search of a past she did not remember, Lowitja went back to Central Australia accompanied by journalist Stuart Rintoul. This ground-breaking and long-awaited biography completes that journey into Lowitja's life and the challenging history of her times. It is a remarkable work about an extraordinary woman.



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Bonython Hall, Adelaide.

Noel Pearson has delivered the Lowitja O'Donoghue Oration, in which he has called for constitutional reforms and described Lowitja as the greatest Aboriginal leader of the modern era. 'For she gave her all in the service of our people the continent over,' he said. 'In the twilight of a life spent in long, selfless service, I know I speak for all of us whose gratitude flows brimming from our hearts, in telling her we love and honour her so.'

Lowitja walks slowly to the stage, old age upon her, and the night ends with the singing of an old song, 'We Shall Overcome'. A gospel song that became a protest song, a protest song that became an anthem of the civil rights movement:

We shall overcome
We shall overcome
We shall overcome, some day

Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, some day

Black and white together
Black and white together
Black and white together, some day
Oh, deep in my heart
I do believe
We shall overcome, some day.

The next day, in morning sunshine, she sits talking, flicking through old photographs And there she is—a little girl dressed in second-hand clothes, full of fight and character.

And when she's done, I ask her why she lived the life she lived. 'Because I loved my people,' she says.

"I am sometimes identified as one of the 'success stories' of the policies of removal of Aboriginal children. But for much of my childhood I was deeply unhappy. I feel I had been deprived of love and the ability to love in return. Like Lily, my mother, I felt totally powerless. And I think this is where the seeds of my commitment to human rights and social justice were sown."

– Lowitja O'Donoghue

XXXIV

... At the end of November 1996, exhausted, in ill-health and suffering a heart condition, Lowitja issues a parting plea as she prepares to leave ATSIC after six tumultuous years. She calls on the federal government to take action on several shelved social justice reports, by ATSIC, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, that might allow Aboriginal people to 'take their place in the community as equal partners'. On 25 November, launching a report on black deaths in custody, 1989–1996, she laments that five years after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, there are more, not fewer deaths. 'Five years on, governments continue to regard indigenous lives as having less value—or less relevance—than others,' she says. On 27 November, she attacks the government's proposed changes to the native title laws. She says the number and complexity of its proposed changes is staggering—more than two hundred pages of amendments and explanatory documents—and Aboriginal people have been 'excluded from the negotiating table'. She laments that in Indigenous affairs, there is 'a passing of the buck almost always to the victim'.

At the beginning of December, she retires as head of ATSIC and is replaced by Gatjil Djerrkura, born at Yirrkala of the Yolŋu Wangurri and founding chairman of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commercial Development Corporation.

Tributes flow. Labor leader Kim Beazley calls her a great Australian. He says Australians owe her a vote of thanks for her contribution to reconciliation, her selflessness, her dignity and astute judgement. In the parliament, Labor MP Daryl Melham says she guided ATSIC through a tortuous inception and a harrowing change of government. 'It is not easy to hold the position that she has held,' he tells the House of Representatives. 'If you think it is hard politics in this chamber in mainstream Australia, there are no tougher politics than indigenous politics in this country . . . Lois O'Donoghue is someone special. She enriches this country. She enriches all of us. She enriches her people. She is not a bitter person. She has been subjected to some terrible things over the years—and yet she carries herself with distinction and without malice, without ill-feeling.'

Leigh Clifford, managing director of mining company CRA, writes to her: 'Your lifetime of work for your people and particularly the work for ATSIC has been marked by your courage and dignity. You have left a legacy that will endure.' In March the previous year, CRA, after a history of hostile indifference to Aboriginal interests, dramatically changed tack with chief executive Leon Davis declaring the company was satisfied with the central tenet of the Native Title Act, which had laid the basis for cooperation and partnership with Aboriginal people.¹⁸ In August 1996, CRA executive Paul Wand said p. 286 the company regretted its chequered history in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Cape York.

On 6 December, within the walls of the ATSIC tower, Lowitja makes her farewell speech. She says the months that have passed since the election of the Howard government have been 'a nightmare', but that time is a good healer. She describes the government as mean-spirited. 'I have run the race, I have fought the fight, I have kept the faith and I have finished the course—albeit the worse for wear,' she says. Later, she will say she leaves Canberra feeling 'beaten to a pulp by a new government seemingly hell-bent on removing every advance we had made for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders'.

On 9 December, she is admitted to hospital with bronchitis. Her visitors include John Herron. The former surgeon and the former nurse argue about her diagnosis.

In an editorial, the Sydney Morning Herald says that she has guided ATSIC with patience and wisdom: 'Ms O'Donoghue's life is an inspiration to many Australians—not only to Aboriginal Australians—for having overcome the disadvantages of her forcible removal from her mother at an early age and blatant discrimination against her in her attempts to train as a nurse. She has served her people, and her nation, well.'

In Adelaide, her hometown newspaper, The Advertiser, editorialises that she has led her people in extraordinary times, which have included the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and the High Court's Mabo decision. 'Through it all she has behaved with dignity and compassion,' it says. 'Her voice of reason in that role will be missed.'

On 18 December, John Howard writes, thanking her for her service:

Dear Miss O'Donoghue, On behalf of the Government, I would like to thank you for the contribution you have made in your position as Chairman of ATSIC in representing and furthering the position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

There were occasions when you had cause to disagree with the government of day [sic], but no one could ever doubt your deep commitment to your people, and in particular to improvements in those areas where indigenous Australians sadly continue to suffer profound disadvantage.

I wish you well for the future

Lowitja leaves Canberra, but not the stage. For the next sixteen years—until she is eighty and reluctantly agrees to send the dusty boxes containing the record of her life to libraries and museums, 'the little stock-pile of memories I don't want to let go of'—she continues to speak out as a leader of her people, an Aboriginal matriarch.

And she makes a decision. She will not be called Lois for much longer.

Soon, it will only be Lowitja.

Alex Spencer

Alex Spencer, an Old Girl from the Class of 1996, is a Senior Immunologist at the University of Oxford. Alex recently chatted with Director of Alumni and Community Relations, Mandy Loomes about her career as a Scientist and her work through the COVID pandemic.

Barker College Class of 1996

Barker

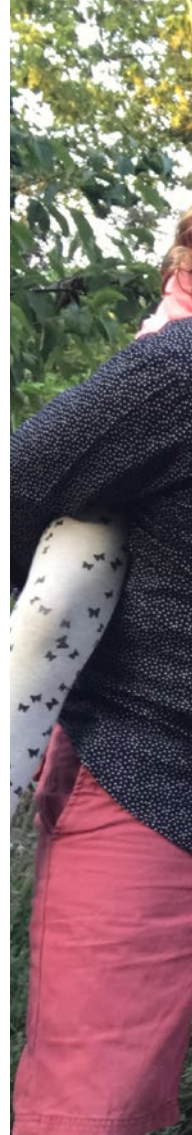
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What was the highlight from your time at Barker?

Having been involved in so many things at Barker (Cadets, Hockey, Musicals) it's hard to pick one thing, I am most grateful for the roundness of the education experience I had at Barker and the life-long friends I made.

What studies have you undertaken after School?

I wanted to study science with a human focus and therefore undertook a Bachelor of Medical Science with an additional one year honours research project at the University of Sydney. This was followed directly by a PhD in experimental medicine (Immunology) at the Centenary Institute, in the same lab where I had undertaken my research project.

How did your career journey result in you working at the Jenner Institute at Oxford?

I have always been interested in vaccine development as it has the power to transform and save hundreds of lives. Following a PhD in a very basic area of immunology (T cells), I wanted to focus more on the translational projects, so I joined the Jenner Institute who were focused on developing vaccines to induce T cells and had just started working with one particular vaccine platform. Fourteen years later, it is one of four leading vaccine platforms being tested in humans as a potential COVID vaccine.

What was it that attracted you to pursuing a field in Science?

I have always been interested in understanding how things work. In Year 11/12 the Careers Advisor at Barker arranged a visit to Children's Medical Research Institute, a scientist isolated DNA in front of our eyes and I thought it was the coolest thing ever. I never had any grand plans to undertake a PhD or stay in academia, I was just curious and kept following the questions, I still do.

What has been your primary area of research?

Normally I work on developing a vaccine against malaria, but since April I have been working as part of the enormous team developing the COVID vaccine here at Oxford.

As a Scientist how have you found the current COVID-19 situation?

Terrifying, exciting and exhausting all at the same time.

Working in infectious diseases and vaccine development, we always knew an outbreak of an unknown disease could occur but hoped the day would never come. It's terrifying to see how quickly SARS-CoV2 spread across the world, exciting to see all the new data and information coming out every day, exhausting trying to keep on top of all the information whilst also working long hours to develop the vaccine.

The world is a different place now but how have you been able to use your research skills with relation to COVID-19?

At the start, I read as much as I could to make sure the information and advice I gave to friends and family was based on evidence. At work, my previous experience with the Oxford vaccine platform enabled me to jump across and work on the COVID vaccine, ensuring the vaccine was safe and gave the type of immune response we anticipated.

How do you balance your work-life commitments?

My husband, another Aussie, has his own business, a wine shop, so it's always been a big juggling act in our family trying to balance work-life commitments. Lockdown has seen all extra-curricular activities put on hold, meaning when we do get time together we can focus on doing the things we enjoy the most.

Do you get much spare time? How do you relax?

Not at the moment, but under normal circumstances I try not to work weekends unless it's essential. We live in a little village outside Oxford, so enjoy walking our dog along the river Thames, going camping and I have become a very keen gardener over the last few years.

What are 3 words you would use to describe yourself?

Curious, hard-working, determined.

Mardi Gething

MARDI Gething was the only Australian among about 80 women pilots who flew with the Air Transport Auxiliary in Britain during World War II.

MARDI GETHING WORLD WAR II ATA FERRY PILOT

Just as the Battle of Britain is the accomplishment and achievement of the RAF, likewise it can be declared that the ATA sustained and supported them in the battle – (Lord Beaverbrook at the 1945 ceremony that disbanded the Air Transport Auxiliary)

They say you don't just fly a Spitfire, you wear it, and hovering around 151 centimetres (or 5 feet) tall, Australian pilot Margaret 'Mardi' Gething and her bolster cushion slipped comfortably into the narrow cockpit where everything was in arm's reach.

The Spitfire, a single-engine single-seat fighter aircraft – the pride of Britain – was designed by a brilliant team of men as a weapon of war. And though it was men who flew and fought in the Spitfire during World War II, there was a small band of women in a male-dominated role during that time who ferried the aircraft from the production line to the airfields from which the fighters were launched for battle. Twenty-two-year-old Mardi was one of these formidable women.

Mardi had a B (commercial) licence and 194 flying hours when she joined Britain's Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) in 1942. She quickly found herself ferrying many types of aeroplanes around wartime Britain and flew the Spitfire more than any other. Its finely balanced control systems made it a dream to fly.

In her two years as an ATA ferry pilot, Mardi flew almost 600 hours in 26 different aircraft types. Her logbook is a who's who of classic World War II fighter aircraft, including the Hurricane, Tempest, Typhoon, Mustang and Blenheim bomber. And to the envy of every star-struck aviation enthusiast hanging over the fence, 233 flights were in the British hero, the cutting-edge Spitfire. To put this in context, a modern-day military enthusiast might feel the same way about an F-35.

Mardi was born in Melbourne in December 1920, AROUND the time her next eldest sibling was finishing primary school. Her highly respected

father, Sir Herbert Gepp, was an analytical chemist and metallurgist, and a public servant. He was a self-made man whose wealth, and the high regard in which he was held, were at odds with his humble beginnings.

Mardi enjoyed the benefits of being the 'baby' of the family, sliding along in the wake of her three sisters and brother. As a 13-year-old, that meant grabbing hold of her sisters' coat-tails and begging to be allowed along for a joy flight at Essendon airport. It paid off.

As they took to the skies above Essendon, the wind roared through the flying wires of the plane and around Mardi's face in the open cockpit. She was so taken with the thrill of it all, she held a flapping handkerchief high above her head and jubilantly released it into the turbulent air.

Too young to start flying lessons, she indulged her teenage equestrian love and also competed as a school girl champion diver. Her interest in aeroplanes resurfaced when Sir Herbert and Lady Gepp prepared to fly to the outback in the famous Kingsford Smith Southern Cross.

In early 1939, as an 18-year-old new graduate from Merton Hall at Melbourne Girls Grammar School, Mardi pushed aside any concerns about Europe's political instability and boarded the luxurious SS Orford, bound for England. With her 31-year-old sister Kathleen as a chaperone, adventure beckoned.

The 18 000-tonne steamer had timber furniture and linen tablecloths in the dining room, glass doors and detailed patterned rugs in the writing room, and potted palms and cane chairs on the wide timber deck. A grand stairway with brass trim helped to bind the whole lot together. This fine ship had been at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and was one of the first in the Parade of Ships to pass under the recently completed bridge. It would now power along at 18 knots, rolling across the ocean through sunny days and dreamy twinkling nights. Mardi relished the journey and her first taste of adult freedom.

Conversations on board included other people's adventures. RAF Squadron Leader Richard Kellett and his navigator/relief pilot Flight Lieutenant Richard Gething brought adventurous tales right to the dinner table on the six-week sea crossing. They were returning to England having just established a long-distance record for their country on a flight from Egypt to Australia. The men's high mood on board the ship, celebrating their success, brought Mardi again into conversations about flying.

Upon their return to England, King George VI awarded the two men (and others) the Air Force Cross for what *Aeroplane* magazine reported as a risky undertaking of the highest skill, endurance and achievement. It was an admirable achievement, especially for Richard Gething, who was only 27 years old. He was a friendly man who enjoyed a chat and he and his companion were great company for the Australian travellers.

Mardi arrived in England to enjoy a 'season'; A presentation at court (young women could be 'presented' to the reigning monarch) followed by a summer of socialising. While they were on a preliminary ski trip to Switzerland, the BBC radio dramatically announced that the Germans had violated the Munich Agreement by invading Czechoslovakia. War in Europe was imminent. The announcer offered platitudes to try to ease public alarm, but the message was as clear in Melbourne as it was in Europe. The Gepps were no more placated than anybody else. They cabled their daughters, asking them to return to England.

With time on her hands back in England, Mardi changed tack. Why not do something useful – like learn to fly? When she asked them to fund her lessons, her parents had many questions.

In a letter to the family 65 years later, Nancy Bird Walton, who had met the Gepp family through their connections with Charles Kingsford Smith, recalled a conversation with Sir Herbert, who asked whether it was a good idea for Mardi to learn to fly.

There's no prize for guessing what Nancy's reply was and so plans took a complete 180-degree turn then, with the funds set aside for Mardi's 'season' now diverted to a flying fund.

At Thanet Aero Club near Ramsgate in Kent, Mardi enthusiastically took to the air in a Hornet Moth. Each morning she walked several kilometres to the airfield. In just under seven flying hours, she was able to fly solo. It's an event that only another pilot can truly understand and, from his nearby base, Richard came over to Ramsgate aerodrome to congratulate the new pilot.

With her A (private) licence completed, Mardi was eager to continue to her B (commercial) licence and to her utter surprise, her parents agreed. That summer, while the London Season advanced into full Jitterbug without her, Mardi immersed herself in flying, with the occasional long weekend in Cheshire as a guest of the Gething family.

This period of grace wasn't to last very long though, because, as the threat of war loomed, their parents secured a passage to North America for Mardi and Kathleen to continue on their round-the-world journey. During a few snatched days with the Gethings, the phone rang to recall Richard to immediate duty with the RAF. Within a week the sisters had arrived in Nova Scotia; Germany had invaded Poland; and Britain had declared war.

Sir Herbert kept a concerned eye on his daughters as they travelled around and he now cabled and suggested Mardi finish her flight training in Oakland, California. She gladly spent ten days at the Boeing School of Aeronautics, learning to be a flying instructor. She was the only woman on the course, but this did not hinder her results. She and Kathleen then finished their yearlong round-the-world trip by sailing on the last leg for Australia.

Arriving home just in time for her nineteenth birthday at Christmas 1939, Mardi was then old enough to qualify for her B licence. She had plans to use it, perhaps for instructing others or to organise a flying nurses corps to help with the war effort.



Sharon Bown

Sharon Bown is the Ambassador for Phoenix Australia. She served for 16 years with RAAF. After a serious helicopter accident in East Timor in 2004, Sharon was diagnosed with PTSD.



The Last Post: Sharon Bown, welcome to The Last Post Magazine.

Sharon Bown: Thank you, Greg. It's a great honor to be with you today.

TLP: And it's a great honour for us to have you here, Sharon. You're Ambassador to Phoenix. You've got a lot of things going for you that make this an alignment worth talking about. You speak about life beyond trauma and I know that you served in the RAAF, what for 16 years, Sharon?

SB: Yes. Yes. I was a Nursing Officer in the Royal Australian Air Force for 16 years.

TLP: Okay. And it was during that time that you were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress. How did that occur? You were in a helicopter crash where you actually... Well, you've had a few serious injuries there. Can you tell us about that?

SB: Yes. It was the 2nd of June, 2004. I was on my second deployment to East Timor. I was, as I said, a nursing officer, but part of a Rotary Wing AME team that was providing aeromedical evacuation services across the area of operations. And I was unfortunately involved in a very serious helicopter crash which left two of us with very serious critical injuries. Mine included multiple fractures to my jaw, aviation fuel burns to my back and shoulders, but perhaps most significantly a serious crush fracture in my lower spine. So that was immediately my enduring injury, that spinal fracture, and eventually in response to the experience of that trauma, I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress.

TLP: Okay. That's a ferocious thing to go through, an accident of that magnitude. Did you realize the seriousness of it when you woke?

SB: Yes. I mean, as a clinician, as soon as I... I lost consciousness during the impact, but as I regained my consciousness, I think I naturally began to assess my own injuries and it's only on eventually returning to the Royal Women's Hospital in Brisbane, that I got the full clinical report of the extent of my injuries. I experienced initial acute stress responses, which I think

is quite expected. You've just survived a life-threatening event, watched one of your colleagues experience significant life threatening trauma. So those early days were very, very traumatic memories. So nightmares, inability to sleep. And that was all obviously overlaid with intense pain, learning that at the age of 29, I had suffered lifelong debilitating injuries and a concern for what the future held.

TLP: Yes. I can understand that and I'll perhaps just explain why a bit later on, but it's certainly a serious accident is something that can impact for the rest of your life. And you decided there, I guess, was it an immediate... How did you come about the feeling to... I mean, self-belief must have been a big thing and a determination, but to reach out to life beyond trauma. And was this a gradual realization on your behalf that you had to do this?

SB: I think it was a staged realization. So immediately after the crash, once I was back in the safety of the United Nations Military Hospital in Dili, my colleagues thought I had lost the plot because I was smiling with a fractured jaw. So it was that initial sense of elation that I had survived because I was convinced that I was going to die. Prior to impact I'd accepted that I was going to die. So there was that initial elation of survival. And then in those early days in the hospital, as I came to understand the extent of my injuries, making a very conscious decision that I was going to continue to survive this, that I was not going to be a victim of my circumstances. So that may be, as I say, a staged approach that after that initial elation, trying to continue to build on that and say, "I'm not going to let this beat me". That of course led to the next stage of fighting for my career in the Australian Defence Force, despite the disabilities that I now carried. So each step of the way as I encountered an obstacle as a result of that day and that experience of trauma, both psychological and physical of reassessing what's next, what's within my capability and how do I make the best of a very bad situation?

TLP: Look, I guess there are people when it comes to trauma who will turn inwards. You've done that, but

you've done it in a strengthening way and then you've reached out to others through your self analysis and a positivity that well, look, I was in a serious car accident when I was 24. A head on car accident. Came out of that with the same determination Sharon. I actually had wrote down how I would return to normal. And I did. So I can align myself with your thoughts. This self belief is what carries people through. Those that aren't able to access that may fall into despair. And that's what you're doing now. You're reaching out and helping people.

SB: Yes. I was first diagnosed with post-traumatic stress, I resisted that diagnosis. I didn't want to believe that diagnosis. I admit that I saw that as a sign of weakness, and I was very aware of the mental health stigma, particularly around PTSD in the healthcare professions and within the Australian Defence Force. We're talking 2004, so some time ago now. And so I was very resistant to that diagnosis. And I also believed that what I was experiencing psychologically was a very reasonable approach to a very abnormal situation. So yes, I was having nightmares about the accident. I was afraid of flying. I was afraid of pain. I was afraid of fear itself, but I felt that they were all perfectly sane reactions to what I had experienced. What I needed to come to understand was that I didn't have to continue to experience that reaction. So I was very fortunate to be referred by my general practitioner within army, to a psychologist who had that understanding of trauma and of the treatments that were showing incredible benefits to those who had experienced trauma and were experiencing PTSD.

TLP: Yes, it's an amazing thing. And the trauma of course, and people do go through trauma in life. They don't have helicopter accidents. They may not have serious car accidents, but they go through their own traumas. And I guess it's a realization of the strength within that helps carry us over the line. And that is something that you're speaking to people about. You go around speaking to people about this now, Sharon.

SB: Yes, I do. So when I first received that diagnosis, I was very proactive and said, "Okay, I don't want this, but if you're telling me I've got it, what can I do about it?". And the diagnosing psychiatrist said, "Well, there's nothing you can do about it. There is no treatment for PTSD. You will simply need to learn to live with it". And that was more painful a realization than the diagnosis itself. And again, I'm very fortunate that my GP did not accept that outlook and nor did I, and I received the appropriate support to move beyond that. And that's why I speak to people now is that there is life beyond that diagnosis. There is life beyond trauma. We all encounter trauma. Unfortunately it is a part of life, but there are great organizations like Phoenix Australia who understand trauma and are key to writing the International Treatment Guidelines for post-traumatic stress and demonstrating my lived experience as someone who has overcome that significant life-threatening trauma and been able to continue to live despite that.

TLP: Summated brilliantly. And of course, if we go back to the time of the accident in 2004, we were looking at very much embryotic stages of treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder as they call it. And you were

groundbreaking, I guess, in some ways. So there must've been some resistance to configuring ways of getting around it. So I guess that's extra strength in working out ways to do that at a time when it was looked upon as, as you say, the psychiatrist said, you will have to deal with it for the rest of your life, but you weren't going to do that. So brilliant. And Phoenix, how good are Phoenix? They've been doing a lot of good work.

SB: They have. Look, Phoenix are fantastic. I am so incredibly lucky to be able to work with them because they are an organization that share my values and beliefs. And we say Phoenix Australia, understanding trauma and renewing lives. And I think that explains my journey perfectly. It was me working with my healthcare team to understand my trauma, understand the available treatments, engage fully in those and to renew my life, to be able to continue on. And that's the incredible work that Phoenix continues to do with the University of Melbourne is to find that evidence base to be able to support people. Not just in treatment, but in understanding their experience of trauma and the unique experience of trauma that we will all experience this in our own way. So whilst I was very fortunate to receive cognitive behavioral therapy

and EMDR, which is... You can test me now, Eye Movement, Desensitization and Reprocessing I think, off the top of my head, which have proven to be the leading treatments for PTSD. But it was also my psychologist encouraging me to develop my own personal strategies for dealing with my trauma. Now for me that was exercise,



PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

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The TIRED Trial is funded by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Canadian Centre of Excellence on PTSD.

This research project has been approved by the Department of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol Number: 263-20).

it was yoga, meditation and gardening. They were my key personal strategies. For other people, it's surfing or fishing or going for a run, playing music, painting, artwork. So that's the other side that I like to talk about is that there's not one solution that fits all. We have the evidence-based treatment supported by Phoenix Australia, and also the understanding that trauma is unique and individual, and as such, each of us will navigate our own way to renew our lives.

TLP: You speak very well on the subject, Sharon. It's quite amazing that you mentioned those things with meditation, gardening and even surfing because it almost duplicates the post I put on social media about a week ago about finding that peaceful centre. And I meditate sometimes, surfing and my late wife used to garden and it can be any of these things.

SB: Absolutely. And meditation isn't about sitting cross-legged on the floor and chanting. For me, gardening can be meditation. For some, surfing can be meditation. It's that single point of focus where we're able to calm our thoughts and really regenerate and find that peaceful place because often the experience of trauma and post-traumatic stress as a result of that trauma, is not a peaceful place. And the mind is very busy, rumination of thoughts, anxiety about the future, depression about the past. So finding that activity that allows you to calm down and find that individual peace, I think is key to recovery.

TLP: Look, there's a lyrical rhythm in what you say, and this is the essence of it all too. I guess crocheting or knitting could even be meditative. So there you are.

SB: Absolutely. And it's interesting that EMDR... I'm not the expert, not the clinical expert on it, but it's about creating neural pathways between both hemispheres of the brain. So activities that involve both sides of the body, we're learning that they're effective in assisting people with processing trauma. So certainly yoga therapy for trauma. And there's a great organization called Frontline Yoga that provide trauma focused therapy in their yoga classes or trauma supported yoga. A lot of those postures are about using both sides of the body. And that comes to mind with knitting. I mentioned to a psychologist recently that I love to knit. Maybe that's one way of assisting to process those thoughts. So it also demonstrates there's still so much to learn. We're making great progress. Phoenix are undertaking a number of treatment trials and studies, and we continue to learn more and that's positive. That's positive that we don't have all the answers, but we're certainly working at finding as many as we can.

TLP: Yes, that's right. And I became aware of the evolution of treatment to post-traumatic stress disorder when I started working with Maria Humphries and Phoenix Uni Melbourne. It's an exciting time to be involved in something where you know you can assist in a positive way. And I guess you must gain great satisfaction from this.

SB: Yes. I think as a result of probably my physical trauma more than anything, was trying to re-evaluate the sense of purpose in life and what your usefulness if you like is, what am I going to do now? I always had a set career pathway. I was going to remain in the Australian Defence Force until retirement age. And that was taken away from me. So that realization that my plan A did not work and I didn't have a plan B. So re-evaluating what is my purpose now? What is my sense of purpose? How do I gain my sense of respect? And as a member of the Australian Defence Force, they are crucial parts of service is feeling that you have a purpose that is bigger than self, that you have this immense sense of respect that is given to you from the Australian public, from your colleagues and from your own sense of self-worth. So when people leave service, that's something that can take some need of support to be able to reconcile.

TLP: Again, yes, that's right. And I think those that suffer from depression, from my observations, often feel that way, Sharon, as though there is not much purpose in their existence.



SB: Yes. And that's a legitimate thought. We don't deny what people think as a result of their experience but how can we provide them with assistance to reframe that and to move forward?

TLP: You went on after the accident to become the Aide-de-camp to the Minister for Defence and also I believe you commanded a critical care team in Afghanistan?

SB: Yes. Thanks to you for bringing that up Greg, because when I talk about staged recovery, I also started to understand that my experience of trauma wasn't all bad or wasn't all negative. It enabled me to learn lessons. It enabled me to be the person that I became. So when I was appointed to command in Afghanistan, which was a great privilege, I was aware that my approach to my patients, to my team, to my experience of witnessing trauma was very different to what it had been earlier in my career. I had a much greater empathy for Australians injured away from home because I had been an Australian injured away from home. So that personal insight into a trauma victim, particularly one injured overseas, doesn't just need clinical care. They need the reassurance that they are safe, they are secure and that a little part of Australia is there with them until we can get them back to the safety of their home.

TLP: Oh, brilliant. And that's the whole thing too. Finally, Sharon, I think one of the great things that you have spoken about or allude to is how experiencing trauma can lead us on a path, a positive path that may not have been taken, had the opportunity not arisen, or that you may not have taken that path without that trauma and that can help you grow as a result. Can you just talk briefly about that, the path that you may not have taken?

SB: Yes. I'm incredibly interested in the phenomenon known as post-traumatic growth. So we're becoming much more aware of post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder. But when I speak to large audiences, very few people have ever heard the term post-traumatic growth. And it's a psychological phenomenon discovered by some research psychologists in the US about the positive changes that people experience as a result of surviving trauma. And it's a very difficult area because of course, when somebody is in the midst of serious trouble or severe trauma, they don't want somebody telling them that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. It's not what you want to hear at the time. But being able to reflect down the track and think, well, how has this shaped who I am? What impact has it had on me? And what have I gained from this experience? And in terms of treatment, and this still requires a lot of research and understanding, is how do we facilitate that pathway for trauma survivors? How do we guide them in the right direction that they will come to understand that this is something that has happened, that we wish hadn't have happened, but which can shape them and their future lives?

TLP: Well said, Sharon Bown. And we thank you very much for being part of The Last Post and speaking on such an important issue. And we wish you all the best.

SB: Wonderful. Thank you very much for having me, Greg. And thank you for your interest in Phoenix Australia.



RAAFMUSEUM

POINT COOK

Located at historic RAAF Base Point Cook, the birthplace of the Royal Australian Air Force, the RAAF Museum is home to an amazing range of beautifully preserved historic military aircraft.

Here you will find a treasure house of priceless artefacts and fascinating stories of past deeds, giving visitors an understanding of the rich history and traditions of this arm of the Australian Defence Force.

Our Heritage Gallery incorporates multimedia technology and hands-on experiential activities to take the visitors through time from the Australian Flying Corps operating during World War I through to the RAAF's peacekeeping and civil aid missions to the present day.

The displays are augmented by a large variety of historic aircraft from the entire 99 year history of the RAAF. Additionally, visitors are also treated to an opportunity to see the Museum's Restoration Hangar, where staff and volunteers are currently rebuilding a World War II Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft and a DH60 Gypsy Moth training aircraft.

Models, books, patches, clothing and mementos can be purchased at the Museum shop.

Due to COVID-19, please check our website and Facebook page for reopening and booked attendance requirements.

Tel: (03) 8348 6040

Email: RAAF.MuseumInfo@defence.gov.au

Web: www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RAAF.Museum

Women Work for Victory in WWII



During World War II thousands of women joined the workforce, many working in jobs previously reserved for men. This exhibition explores their story.

From the fields to the factories, the armed services to the home, women produced the food, clothing and munitions that supplied both the Allied troops in the Pacific region and the civilian population. Many of these jobs were difficult and dangerous, but thousands of women responded to the call.

Doctors and nurses were needed in the services. Other women joined voluntary paramilitary groups or swelled the ranks of established charities like the Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund. The National Council of Women established a Women's National Volunteer Register and most workplaces had their own Patriotic Funds, raising money for the war effort.

'Women Work for Victory in World War II' was researched and curated by the Old Treasury. It was funded by the Victorian Government's 75th Anniversary of the End of World War Two Grant Program.



FREE EXHIBITION
Women Work for Victory in WWII
15 August 2020 – 13 June 2021
Old Treasury Building
www.oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/work-for-victory

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WOMEN WORK FOR **VICTORY** IN WORLD WAR II



See **OTB.ORG.AU/WORK-FOR-VICTORY** to view the online exhibition and for detailed museum opening hours

otb.org.au | 9651 2233 | info@otb.org.au
Women Work for Victory in WWII is supported by
the Victorian Government.

**OLD TREASURY
BUILDING**





Emergency broadcasting

Australians turn to the ABC in times of crisis. The ABC's national Emergency Broadcast team works closely with its 56 capital city stations and regional bureaus and emergency service organisations, to bring audiences rolling emergency coverage when needed. This is supported by the ABC's recently updated Emergency website (abc.net.au/emergency) and localised social media posts.

To ensure the ABC meets the high expectations of the community, it has further invested in its Emergency Broadcast team to ensure it has the capacity to broadcast up-to-date and accurate information to all Australians during an emergency, no matter where they live.

The 2019/20 bushfire season involved the largest number of ABC staff ever to have worked on an emergency event. The number of emergency events covered by the ABC almost tripled from the previous year and emergency broadcast and news teams often worked around the clock to provide critical information and coverage to local communities.

At the height of the bushfire crisis (31 December-14 January), ABC Sydney and ABC NSW local radio produced 296 hours of rolling/continuous fire coverage, ABC Gippsland 134 hours and ABC Melbourne 83 hours. Over that same period, the ABC undertook emergency broadcasting for more than 200 emergency events across the country.



Independent research commissioned by the ABC showed that not only was the national broadcaster the most trusted information source at the time but lives were saved as a result of people acting on information the ABC provided. The ABC's role in providing a rolling source of information was crucial in allowing people to be informed and aware of danger, to make plans and in evacuating. For many people, when digital and telecommunications failed in bushfire impacted areas, ABC Local Radio was the only way to access timely information and helped people survive.

ABC teams also focused on supporting impacted communities as they recovered from the summer bushfires, sharing their stories of resilience and recovery. Local ABC teams have supported local fundraising events and the ABC also raised more than \$13 million in partnership with the Red Cross and City of Sydney as part of its New Year's Eve donation drive.

Arts

No media organisation does more than the ABC to promote and provide a forum for the arts and artists in Australia. More than three-quarters of Australians say the ABC encourages and promotes Australian performing arts, such as music and drama, in line with its governing charter.

In 2020, the ABC increased its support for Australian artists and creatives to help them cope with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. This support was highlighted by the ABC Arts Digital Fund for innovative new arts content and Australian Music Fund to support independent artists and musicians.

When you think of the history of Australia, you keep coming back to the involvement of the ABC, across all of their platforms. 'Aunty' has been the communicator and go-to for Australians since it was launched by-then Prime Minister Joseph Lyons in July, 1932.

Whether it's Arts, Science, Sport, Politics, Education or updates on floods and bushfires, Australians have learned to rely on accurate and up-to-date information.

Here, with the help of the ABC and Friends of the ABC, we have compiled a look at the work and history of our national broadcaster.



With the lights out in theatres and concert halls due to the pandemic, the ABC also launched its biggest-ever on-demand catalogue on iView of performances from Australian arts companies, across theatre, opera, ballet and classical music.

The ABC's unparalleled support for Australian arts and culture plays out across multiple platforms, including the national music networks of triple j, triple j Unearthed, Double J, ABC Classic, ABC Jazz and ABC Country – and Radio National programs such as The Stage Show, The Art Show, The Book Show, The Music Show, The Screen Show, The Bookshelf, Lost and Found, Blueprint, Stop Everything! and Indigenous program Awaye!.

ABC Arts on television includes ABC News' weekly arts, entertainment and culture program The Mix, plus popular ABC TV titles including Anh's Brush With Fame, Rage and the Spicks and Specks specials, as well as coverage of live events such as New Year's Eve, triple j's One Night Stand and major Australian music and arts festivals.

The ABC also works with Australian arts organisations and institutions to raise awareness about Australian artworks, performances and exhibitions, including recent partnerships with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and National Gallery of Australia.

Education

The ABC is a trusted source for Australian teachers and students seeking educational content mapped to the Australian national curriculum, delivering high-quality content for use in classrooms and at home.

The ABC Education online portal boasts more than 4000 free videos, interactive resources and games, across subjects such as English, maths, science,

history, geography, media literacy, financial literacy and the arts and technologies, including STEM.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ABC expanded its schedule of free education content to support students, teachers and parents forced to learn at home.

ABC Education worked with state and territory education departments and other education providers to deliver additional curriculum-linked content to children of all ages. This included additional education programming on the ABC ME TV channel, such as Behind The News, Ecomaths and Numberblocks.

Working in partnership with the states and territories, ABC Education also created mini lessons presented by Australian schoolteachers, on specific learning areas from the English, Maths and Science curriculum.

Pre-schoolers are also in safe hands with trusted content on ABC Kids, ABC Kids listen and the ABC Early Education website, which includes Reflective Journal blog posts for educators and shows and podcasts across the five curriculum areas of family, community and culture, sustainability and nature, creativity and self-expression, STEM and health and wellbeing.

Other recent highlights include the ABC's national Media Literacy Week, to help people of all ages navigate the modern media landscape. Such support includes video and interactive resources on media literacy, drawing on expertise from around the ABC, to assist teachers and students to understand misinformation, bias and the value of news.

ABC Education also includes Learn English, the online portal for English language learners in Australia and overseas, which has the largest Facebook community in the ABC – with more than 5 million followers.

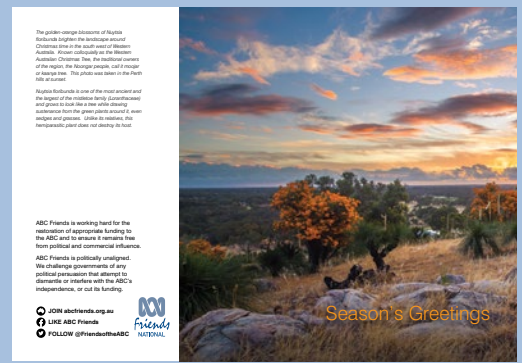
ABC FRIENDS NATIONAL

- ABC FRIENDS was first established as Friends of the ABC in the 1980s and State based groups have periodically rallied to protect the ABC from funding cuts and political interference.
- Despite a pre-election promise "No Cuts to the ABC", the first Abbott Budget of 2014 introduced serious funding reductions which have continued to impact on the national broadcaster for six years.
- In 2015 a small group of ABC Friends from all states and territories began working to establish a national entity registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission to provide a focus for advocacy and communication to defend the ABC.
- ABC Friends National has campaigned in Parliament House, through local state branches and social media to alert the community to the ongoing risks to Australian public broadcasting.
- All states have run targeted marginal seats strategies in the 2016 and 2019 Federal Elections as well as in several by-elections.
- In July 2019 ABC Friends National established a comprehensive data base which has grown from 4,500 to 11,000. During the last twelve months we have initiated three major campaigns, Defend Media Freedom, National Emergency Broadcasting and Restoration of ABC Funding,
- These campaigns have involved wide community participation and resulted in a public lecture in Parliament House, submissions to parliamentary enquiries and to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster.
- This years June 24 announcement of 250 staff retrenchments and cutbacks to services and programs is further evidence of the Federal Governments record of undermining both the funding and the independence of the ABC. The ongoing 10% reduction in ABC funding since 2014 has resulted in a major loss of 1000 professional staff.
- ABC Board Chair, Ita Buttrose has corrected government claims that ABC funding has increased every year. The Managing Director David Anderson has clearly detailed the impact of ongoing funding reduction which means that the ABC receives half as much as it did in the mid 1990s now just 0.2% of the Federal Budget compared with 0.4% nearly twenty years ago.
- The recent release of the ABC Five Year Plan demonstrates that the public broadcaster is being forced to cut services and reduce Australian content and therefore risks full implementation of the ABC Charter
- The recent October Budget did not contain any recognition of the ABC's outstanding communication during bushfires and COVID 19 and projected funding in the Budget Papers show an ongoing decline.
- In response ABC Friends has received overwhelming public support and is now planning its strategy for the months ahead. We will also continue focusing on regional and emergency broadcasting and the importance of the ABC in broadcasting internationally, especially in our region. We anticipate participating in parliamentary reviews of funding and maintenance of quality broadcasting standards in a digital age.
- ABC Friends National relies on its membership and supporters to fund the employment of a part time Social Media Administrator but all other work is contributed on a voluntary basis

Further detail about ABC Friends National can be found at www.abcfriends.org.au or by contacting the National President, Margaret Reynolds 0418181843.



LEFT: ABC Friends National President, Margaret Reynolds.



ABOVE: ABC Friends National Promotional Items.

Science

ABC Science is an industry leader in high-quality and trusted content across television, radio and digital services, supported by a team of specialist reporters and producers.

ABC Science projects serve audiences by uncovering evidence and using it as the basis to test ideas, building scientific literacy among Australians. Leading the way in 2020 was the ABC podcast Coronacast, co-presented by Dr Norman Swan, which breaks down the latest news and research to help Australians understand how the world is living through a pandemic.

Recent highlights include the award-winning television show The Great Australian Bee Challenge, which gave novice local beekeepers the chance to appreciate the latest scientific research on bee behaviour. Separately, Catalyst, the ABC's flagship science television program, presented the special "Black Hole Hunters" program off the back of the world's first photograph of a black hole.

Science content on ABC Radio has also included Radio National's science-meets-adventure series The Chase – Science on the Run, which brought a rich storytelling style to explaining new discoveries and scientific pursuits.

Every August, the ABC celebrates National Science Week with a variety of content that celebrates science and technology for audiences of all ages. Such content is designed to encourage ABC audiences to take part in citizen science projects, which empower them to make positive environmental changes.

As part of National Science Week in 2018, for example, the ABC launched the two-part Catalyst program "Feeding Australia" and the online citizen science collaboration Virtual Reef Diver, to enhance understanding of the pressures on the Great Barrier Reef.

Each year, the ABC also offers media residencies to PhD-qualified early-career science researchers to enable some of Australia's brightest minds to share their knowledge and expertise with the nation.



Radio National programs All in the Mind, Science Friction, Off Track, The Science Show, Ockham's Razor, The Health Report and Future Tense cover topical science issues such as natural history, technology, climate and health.

Beloved science communicator Dr Karl Kruszelnicki makes sense of science each week on radio station triple j, the longest running segment on the network, and brings audiences his unique podcast: Great Moments in Science.

Sport

The ABC is the home of sports stories, large and small, covering major sporting news and codes in Australia and around the world, from Grandstand on ABC Radio and digital to ABC TV's Offsiders and sports analysis on ABC News online.

ABC sports coverage includes broadcasts of the A-League, W-League, Socceroos and Matildas matches on ABC TV and iView and coverage of the cricket, AFL and NRL on ABC Radio, plus entertaining sports podcasts such as The Boot Room, Ladies who League, The Ticket and Bludging on the Blind Side with Roy and H.G.

The ABC also prides itself on covering sporting events that are too often overlooked by commercial broadcasters. As the official broadcast partner of the 2018 Invictus Games – which celebrates the achievements of wounded, injured or sick armed services personnel and associated veterans – the ABC's dedicated coverage of this extraordinary event reached 5.8 million Australians. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games were broadcast across ABC Television, iView and Grandstand digital. The entertainment program Invictus Games Today was broadcast daily on prime-time television, keeping audiences up to date on the day's events and achievements.

The ABC's comprehensive coverage was supplemented with news, documentaries and stories across social media, ABC Children's programming and flagship programs such as Australian Story, Conversations, Catalyst and Gardening Australia.

The ABC also has a strong track record of covering and promoting women's sport, including broadcasts of the Australian Women's Open Golf, the AFLW and NRL Women's Premiership and Women's Big Bash League.

Wherever sport happens, the ABC is there – from coverage of regional Australian rugby league games on local radio to ABC Radio Australia's recent three-year deal to broadcast coverage of the NRL men's and women's competitions to audiences in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and across the Pacific.

The ABC's expertise in sports broadcasting also helps train and mentor women journalists in the Indo-Pacific so they are given opportunities to cover major regional sporting events. Coverage in 2018-19 included the 2018 Commonwealth Games, 2019 Arafura Games and a podcast on female participation in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.

News and Politics

ABC News is the nation's most trusted news brand, offering news, information and analysis across an array of topics across multiple platforms, including ABC News websites, 24-hour radio and television networks and Radio Australia – a news and information service for the Pacific region.

ABC News, Analysis & Investigations pursues issues and tells stories that speak directly to the concerns of all Australians, through high-quality, in-depth journalism and comprehensive coverage of major events. ABC news and current affairs programs play a pivotal role in raising and investigating issues in the national interest.

The national broadcaster is uniquely placed to deliver the latest political news to Australians with a team of national reporters working closely with those in the ABC's Parliament House Bureau in Canberra.

Australia's best political minds are on the ABC, providing Australian

audiences with balanced and trusted coverage of the political sphere, including policy analysis, explainers and state and federal election coverage. The ABC's coverage speaks to Australians of all ages and backgrounds, from Afternoon Briefing, Q+A, The Party Room, The Drum, AM and Insiders through to triple j Hack, which focuses on the issues and concerns of younger Australians.

ABC News also broadcasts live proceedings of the House of Representatives and the Senate from Federal Parliament, giving Australians the opportunity to obtain unique insights into the policy decisions and debates that affect us all.

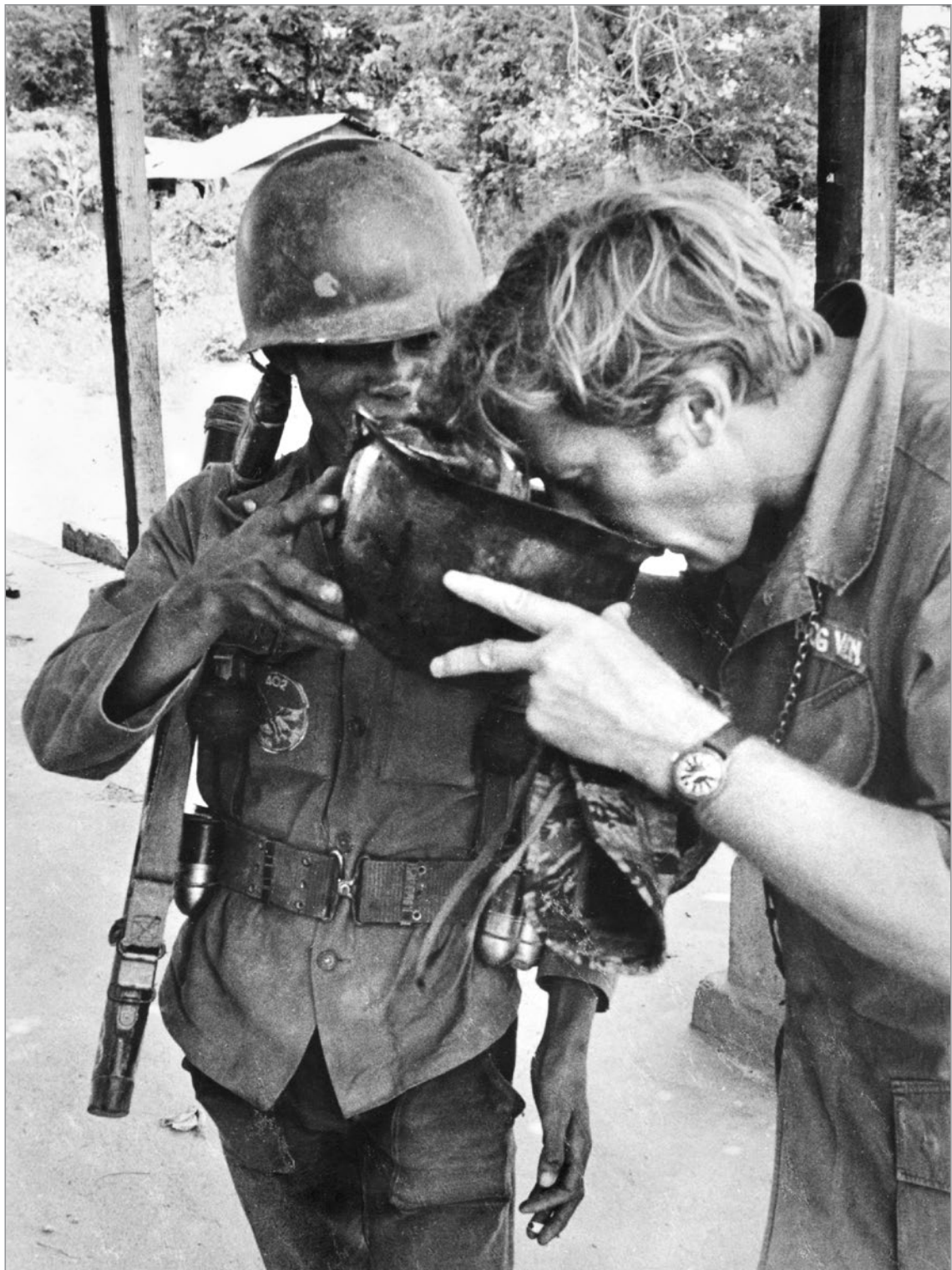
Australians turn to the ABC in increasing numbers for the nation's best politics and news coverage. ABC News websites are the nation's top digital news brands, as reported by Nielsen, with a unique monthly audience of more than 12 million. In 2019, ABC television coverage was the most watched on the federal election night, reaching 5.3 million Australians.

Throughout the election campaign, ABC Local teams across the country hosted forums and candidates' debates, ensuring audiences were able to ask questions directly of candidates and discuss their concerns. The ABC visited dozens of communities in every state and territory, producing more than 60 election-related outside broadcasts.

The ABC Vote Compass survey tool, developed by political scientists, also explored how the views of citizens and candidates aligned.

The ABC is dedicated to making every Australian part of the national conversation on major political and social issues. In 2019, the ABC launched the Australia Talks project, a landmark poll of 54,000 Australians about their lives, attitudes and experiences. The resulting Australia Talks National Survey provides an unprecedented insight into people's everyday lives and life in Australia in the 21st century.

Featured in the upcoming Anzac Day 10th Anniversary edition of The Last Post Magazine, acclaimed photographer Tim Page speaks about his time in South East Asia and his friendship with legendary combat photographer Neil Davis.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00508.007

South Vietnam, 1972. Australian cameraman Neil Davis taking a drink from a South Vietnamese soldier's helmet during the Communists' Spring offensive in the Mekong Delta. Photo courtesy Australian War Memorial.

MARK JOHNSTON

CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTOR OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL VETERANS ARTS MUSEUM

As the 1st Australian Imperial Force (AIF) sailed from Albany on 1 November 1914 a young soldier, Private Ellis Silas, took out his sketch book to draw the convoy of ships. Thus began a tradition of Arts engagement by countless current and ex-serving men and women (veterans) of Australia's military that continues to this day.

Veterans' of all services, ranks and ages have engaged in the Arts to record their stories, as rehabilitation from mental and physical wounds, to form an identity, find purpose, build a community, share a common culture and pursue a career. Prisoners of war found the Arts to be vital to their survival while post service many veteran artists became household names as careers flourished. These veterans as performers, visual artists, writers and Arts patrons, together, have made an impact on Australia's cultural identity that will resonate for generations to come.

In 100 years, veterans have created a vibrant, constantly evolving and adapting veterans' Arts community. With the vigour of youth, this community has a wisdom gained through the lived experience of war and service. With a collective pride in creative achievements veterans support each other toward personal goals while continuing the tradition forged by generations in veterans' arts; a genre of art that has a special place in the Australian cultural context.

To reinvigorate, facilitate and celebrate veteran's Arts a new cultural institution dedicated to the veteran community was founded in 2013 with an emphasis on wellbeing through Arts engagement. The Australian National Veterans Arts

Museum (ANVAM) was established with a vision for a home of veterans' Arts in the disused former Repatriation Clinic in Melbourne's Arts precinct, adjacent to Victoria Barracks and the Shrine of Remembrance. This place has a spirituality linked to veterans who served from the 1885 Sudan campaign to the Vietnam War and who sought relief from suffering in that place and that now offers the ideal location to celebrate veterans' creative achievements.

Since 2013 the veterans' mental health budget has grown by over \$63million p.a. suggesting current systems are failing and a new approach, with new investments, is long overdue. Demographer, Bernard Salt states, "What we need to be doing... is investing in arts and culture to help Australians be more creative, more connective, more caring". Beyond Blue CEO, Georgie Harman emphasises, "We need to be investing in health institutions that don't look like health institutions".

The Arts, and specifically facilitated Arts engagement, are uniquely preventative, while Arts therapies are complimentary to other interventions creating an impact that is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve via traditional means. Over coming years Arts and culture will be seen as an important, if not central, tenet in veteran's wellbeing delivering cost-effective outcomes and benefits for all veterans over their lifetimes.

For more on ANVAM see www.anvam.org.au.

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Kathryn Rae,
Cruz de Ferro, 2019
(edited digital photograph)





ABOVE: Kris Kerehona - An award winning photographer, Kris' photography will feature in ANVAM's upcoming March to Art: Place exhibition, 6-25 April 2021, at No Vacancy Gallery in Melbourne.

Persona

A creative collaboration between the Australian National Veterans Arts Museum (ANVAM), Melbourne-based portrait photographer, Michael Christofas, and Australian veteran artists, has been underway for the past four years.

The project is a photographic portrait series of veterans and family members who are artists; veteran artists. Conceived by ANVAM founder and Head of Arts Programs, Tanja Johnston, during ANVAM's inaugural exhibition in 2017, March to Art: Identity, the project titled Persona captures veteran artists within the context of their space; a making space, a reflective space, a safe space.

A chance meeting between Tanja and Michael during the 2017 March to Art exhibition led to the collaboration. Tanja says of Michael "he is an extremely warm person

who brings a curiosity about veterans as artists, deep respect for their service and sacrifice, and his professional skills to the project that have allowed him to produce these stunning and insightful portraits."

Persona is now a national historical, commemorative and cultural project aimed to increase public awareness of the service and sacrifice of recent/contemporary service personnel and their families. The portrait series highlights the value those veteran artists featured have found in their engagement across the Arts. Tanja said



"PERSONA VALIDATES THE EXPERIENCES OF SERVICE WHILE CELEBRATING THOSE WHO ARE SHAPING THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE NATION, DOCUMENTING AND SUPPORTING NOTIONS OF IDENTITY AND TRANSITION IN THE GROWING AUSTRALIAN VETERAN ARTS COMMUNITY."

that "We are mindful to undertake and develop Persona respectfully while ensuring it is well researched and curated to showcase veteran artists while challenging perceptions of veterans as artists".

The project is defining a genre of art around service and the veteran community while contributing to our collective knowledge of service personnel post service representing veterans at a point in time. In capturing this record of contemporary veteran artists Persona is creating an important historical and commemorative record for future generations.

Persona validates the experiences of service while celebrating those who are shaping the creative and cultural landscape of the nation, documenting and supporting notions of identity and transition in the growing Australian veteran arts community.

Persona is grounded in relationships that reveal an alternative self, identity and truth. "What commenced as a personal curiosity about veteran artists has evolved into a cathartic experience for all involved." Michael Christofas

Over the course of 2021 ANVAM will be building Persona into a photographic exhibition, digital showcase and publication.

BELOW: Rory Cushnahan - Rory's paintings have been exhibited in ANVAM's annual March to Art exhibitions, Community 2018 and Narratives 2019. His work is currently being exhibited in the Changed Forever: Legacies of Conflict exhibition.



www.anvam.org.au

Spectacular artworks adorn free-spirited Newcastle RSL facility

Valour artwork draws on bushfire analogy to architecturally grace striking new RSL LifeCare Birdwood Park CBD development.

The Valour Sculpture, right, uses the analogy of the release of a seed from a woody pod after the stress of bushfire to symbolise bravery under the stresses of war. Celebrating valour as exemplified by Major Peter Badcoe, VC, the sculpture and artworks adorn the building's frontage and side.

A sculpture and artworks celebrating the transformational power of valour and patriotism has been unveiled at the new RSL LifeCare Birdwood Park facility in Newcastle. Its radiant themes emanate from the central works adorning the entrance to the building and extend to elegantly decorative car park screens where a walkway through to the main street is proposed.

The work by internationally recognised Sydney Sculptor Vivienne Lowe was commissioned on behalf of RSL LifeCare by leading commercial builders Hansen Yuncken, as a permanently striking memorial to the bravery of service men and women in Vietnam, exemplified by Major Peter Badcoe VC.

Designed by EYE Architects, RSL LifeCare Birdwood Park comprises of Long Tan Village and Badcoe House, a 4,900 sq m vertical aged care and retirement living facility located at 510 King Street in the Newcastle CBD. The development, the first vertical aged care and retirement living for Newcastle, includes 76 two-bedroom plus study independent living units and Badcoe House, a 60-bed residential aged care facility offering 24-hour care and incorporating the high quality and carefree environment contained in RSL LifeCare's retirement facilities and nursing homes throughout NSW and the ACT.

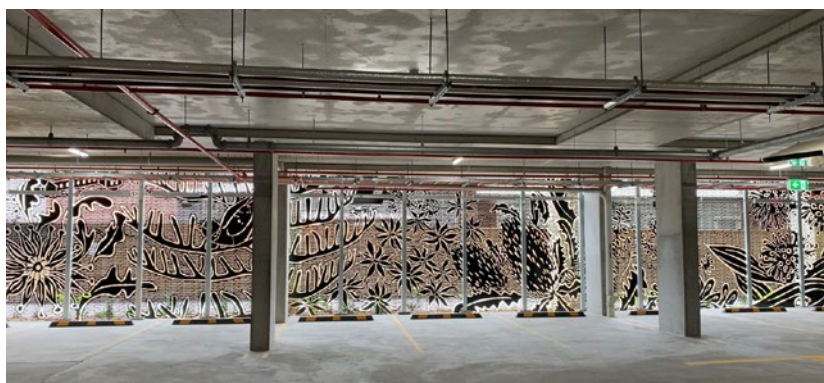
The central 2.5 metre high stainless steel and glass Valour sculpture and accompanying artworks are created from permanently beautiful materials with themes to create an enduring memorial intended to inspire the thousands who will pass by it over generations. Ms Lowe was recently recognised among international sculptors of note with the inclusion of her work in the book titled "50 Women Sculptors" – soon to be released globally. In addition to winning the RSL LifeCare commission for the sculpture and large screens, Ms Lowe won the 2019 Sculpture prize at the Ewart Art Prize Exhibition and has received numerous awards and commendations over the years. Her works feature in public and private spaces including commercial sites, council facilities, gardens and residences, coastal and TV media settings, with sculptures used in nationally televised entertainment programmes, including productions by Freemantle Media.

The Pod screens viewed from the street, marking the front entry to the building. The screens are cast stainless steel bas reliefs, 3.5 wide x 2.7m high and 3.5 m wide x 1.3m high screen above the awning

Ms Lowe says in creating the Birdwood Park Valour sculpture, she was inspired by the native Hakea seed, whose capsule is a craggy, woody and dense form which safeguards its seed. Like many native plants, it can take an extreme stress such as a bushfire for the seed pod to release the seed thus ensuring the plant species' survival.

"The Valour Sculpture uses the analogy of the seed pod and its release of the seed to symbolize bravery in our soldiers. The colours of Major Peter Badcoe's medal ribbons are introduced in the form of the glass seed, to symbolise





valour. It's sometimes said that every now and again, people "show their true colours" and similarly, this rainbow of colours in the sculpture symbolises a valour; a valour which is inside us all, and which can sometimes be revealed by our soldiers in extreme times, such as in war. "Under circumstances where extremes warrant extraordinary behaviour, it can manifest as heroic actions, such as in Major Badcoe's deeds in the Vietnam war. "The outer shell of the seed capsule sculpture is blackened as if in a bushfire, or "under fire" in our soldiers' case."

"The metallic blue highlights give the work a more contemporary, less literal look, to show it is representational. The polished mirror finish steel on the inside of the seed capsule reflects the colours of the glass "seed" creating an ethereal image of "valour" onto its surface. It reflects the viewer's image as well. In many respects, for most people, the comparison of one's own bravery contrasting with the deeds of these servicemen, reminds us of how brave they were."





At the Circle K

I'm in good company
at the Circle K –
with my green pen, green bottle,
watching tobacco slowly burn,
understanding not a word
of a dispute at the ATM.
Eleven years since the bom –
You'd think it was still
sugartime on Bali,
as backpacker eyes light up
in the free Wi-Fi zone.
There's the clink of glass,
smell of fried eggs,
beers cracked open,
coffee confabulations:
temples, money, plantations,
tourist merchandise,
the question of thighs.
A motorbike races the bulan –
no need to hati-hati.
And the beach will be back
in the morning,
along with incense
and flowers.
Is it still sugartime on Bali?
An old blue t-shirt is rummaging
in a rubbish bin –
looking for God's opinion.

*Bahasa Indonesian: bom = bomb;
bulan = moon; hati-hati = be careful

JEREMY ROBERTS

For Being You on Market Street

He was walking back to the room he shared,
a fair way from here. On the other side of the
bay actually.

He walked down Bay Tree Lane, kicking a
can he had found outside
The Walnut Tree.

He exhaled.

The condensation.

He moved through the street as slow and as
uncertain as the kiss he had shared with her
the night before. The
kisses.

Containing a passion that ignited a promise
of real ness.

They had glanced at each other the night
before in Market Street and
looked at each other in an odd way,
as if in silent agreement.

In a moment

her lips were against his.

And they hovered, in shadows. Soundless but
for the awkwardness of that kiss. Kisses.

Under street lights he looked at her and
appreciated her lack of makeup. And her lipstick. And her flatness. He looked at
her and saw beauty. She leant in. They closed their eyes and in a whisper, she said
"Thank you." Yet, here he was, the following night alone, approaching his room on
Chestnut Lane.

"For what?", he asked.

"For being you."

GREG T ROSS



Living in a compartment of colours

I was at Joni Mitchell's house and she was dancing with Jackson Browne and being cute and I looked at her skin and thought how it was a beautiful canopy for brilliance but that it

looked
like ordinary skin
except for lesions
and there were scars too
and a tattoo that ran up the back of one leg, that
had faded over the years.
She spoke of an unrequited love as she looked
at the moon.

I was reminded of a lover who had given her
heart too soon.

I was at Joni Mitchell's house and she was painting a window, with stockings on. She made a cup of tea. In the late afternoon she told me that marriage would stifle her and that she likes living alone as she offered me a cigarette.

Joni Mitchell is a recluse.
I was at Joni Mitchell's house and saw paintings on the wall. She told me she was a lonely painter who lived in a compartment of colours. "Colour was my first love", she said "then came flowers and music".

I was at Joni Mitchell's house and her parents visited with crayons. Magenta and turquoise and silver and gold,
She told me she was in the last days of autumn
But that she didn't feel like she was getting old.

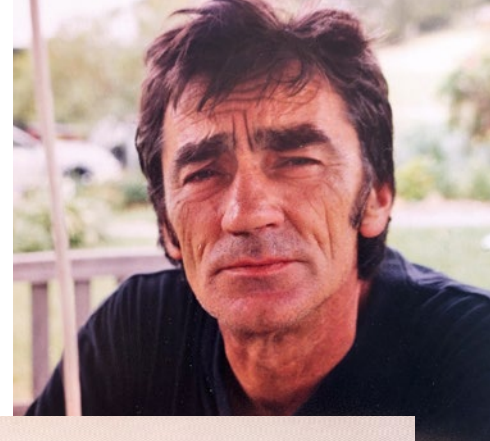
I was at Joni Mitchell's house and, playing Rachmaninoff, she told me that his music spoke to her. She told me that people were shocked by her intimacy. She asked if I would still love her if I knew what she was really like and that she read books on spiritual development and that she was really Beethoven in drag.
She told me she was a soul trying to find itself
and that the only thing she wants from death is
for it to be a long way off and that the start of
River sounds like Jingle Bells.

I was at Joni Mitchell's house
and she was dancing.

GREG T ROSS

Ronny Peet

1946 to 2020 RIP



I first met Ronny in 1969 at a gig in Prahran - a suburb of Melbourne. Before that his first band was The Mystics, second The Missing Links and then The Pleasers which took him to live in New Zealand for a while.

In the 90's he returned to NZ for a reunion with them. He went on to play in Italy and England where he joined Thunderclap Newman. We crossed paths at many gigs for the next 6 years and during this time he joined The Browns and The La De Da's. In late 1974 i had just completed a Stevie Wright tour when i was invited to go out again with Stevie in mid 70's. The first one was 3 Aztecs and 3 Easy Beats. This second one was totally different. The All Star Band was formed with Ronny on board as bassman. The support (1st half) was the band doing a few plus a new kid on the block John Young (Paul added later) singing Pasadena and Yesterdays Hero and backing vocals for Stevie. When this tour was over John's rising success meant he was offered a lot of live work for which he invited the band to join him. We lasted until late '79 then regrouped again in '83. Ronny wasn't on board because in '83 he formed the Scattered Aces giving him the opportunity to do things more or less his way. Ronny rejoined the All Star Band in 85 and remained with us up until last year when emphysema made it impossible for him to carry on. During '77 to '79 Ronny played rythm guitar and this can be spotted on the Evie video clip from the Opera House 1979.

In '77 I moved from Melb to Sydney and lived with Ronny at the notoriously famous unit in Double Bay called Boystown. He had just appeared on the centrefold of Cleo magazine. We knocked around together and those days were great. Being alongside the Cleo man meant there was many a romantic fringe benefit for me. Ronny also recorded an album and a few singles as Rockwell T James with Sherbet backing him. This put him on Countdown. Boys Town folded about '79. In '88 he and i shared a home in Bondi for a short time whilst we were seperately buying into Lake Macquarie thus leaving Syd behind.



During the Recession of 92 he took a delivery driver's gig out of Newcastle to earn a needed quid. Pretty sure it lasted two days but as he put it "been there and done that".

About 6 years ago he teamed up with a Newcastle muso mate Bobby Fletcher and Bobby named their duo "The Rockwells". The days that John wasn't working were the ones available to them.

Bobby was born Nov 1st the same day Ronny died It was about the same time that Ronny learned he had a lung disease. About a year later they decided to record "Cover Story".

I was invited to play a few and I could tell that this cursed condition was taking affect but nevertheless it was done and Ronny remained focused and did not falter. For me he was once again doing music his way.

Seems like 3 years ago the Rockwells recorded their 2nd album "Red Back". A bunch of local musos and I were invited and we got into it. Although the writing was on the wall and his singing, along with all functions were getting harder by the day, Bobby and R wrote the entire album. So this really and truly was now his music his way, same for Bobby who got a nasty disease that took his life a few years back.



At a gig in Mount Pritchard Aug 24th 2019 during soundcheck Ronny declared "I've got a problem" and did not / could not, do the gig.

Shane Crooks our roadie stood in and R watched.

So the previous gig July 13th at Anitas down Wollongong way was his last performing gig.

Ronny kept going until the day he was stopped but never opted to stop-- such is the animal. His funeral was full of praise, admiration, respect and love for a man who was a brother to all.

One of the last things he said in reply to "how's it goin' Ronny" was "I'm circling the drain". Ronny always led with the hand of friendship. He shared the stage with JPY and the band for over 40 years.

The day after he passed away their neighbour's dog came inside and immediately jumped on his bed searching for him.

When I heard this it reminded me of what another friend of mine once said "in the end there's only tears".

We are all better off for the life of a man born Ronny Peel and known to so many as Rockwell T James.

Bless ya heart mate.
Pig.

WARREN MORGAN

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A musical consoling

Shortly before my wife Wendy's death in 2017 from pancreatic cancer I dreamed a song, Let it Be Love, which I ended up singing at her funeral.

Before Wendy fell ill, I had been friends with Australian singer-songwriter, Keri McInerney. Keri is an amazingly talented artist and has "runs on the board" as they say. She has had a string of top-5 hits in Australia and overseas. Keri has built a wonderful musical career and toured and played with The Flying Burrito Brothers, Renee Geyer, Troy Cassar Daly, Normie Rowe, Brian Cadd and more.

When I sent the song to Keri, I was after some help to round it off, to make it presentable to the public. Keri liked the song and kindly offered to co-write it with me. Let it Be Love has now reached number one internationally and is also currently riding high in the Australian charts. This beautiful ballad has been shaped and crafted into an international hit and for that we are eternally grateful.

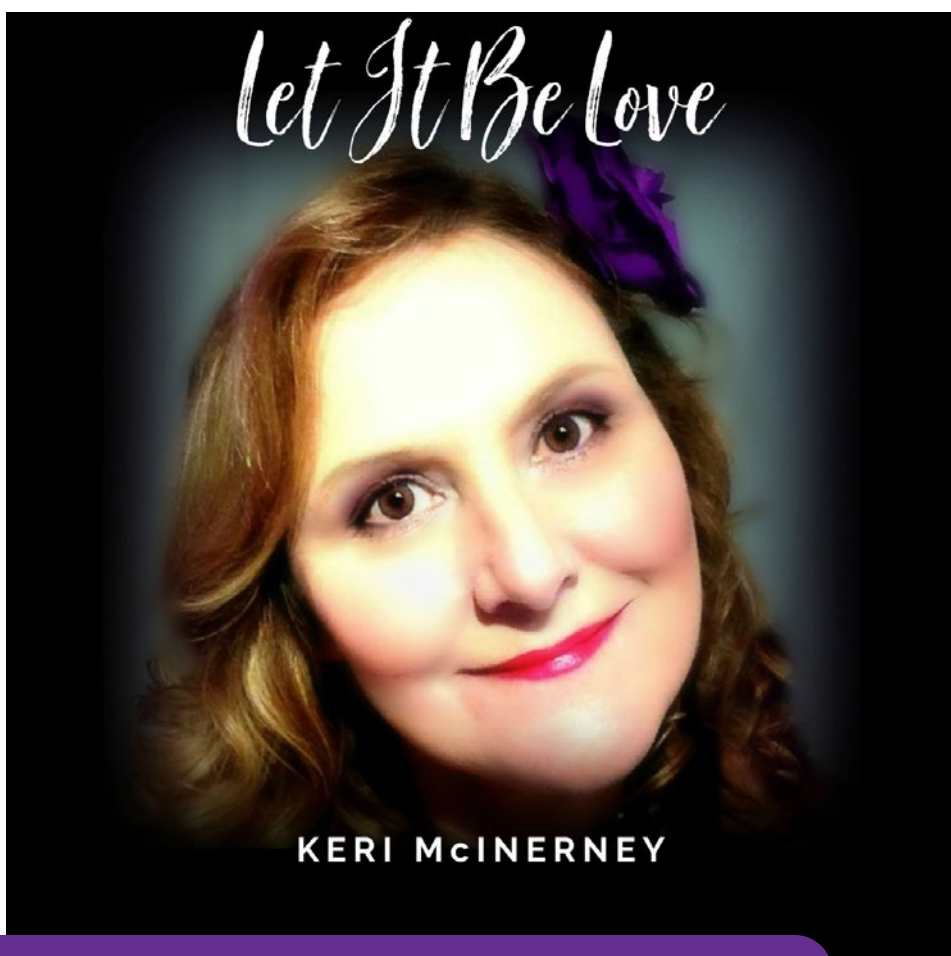
Keri has had her own health issues with a brain aneurysm. The symptoms, the operation and recovery have all played a major part in this beautiful woman's life. The Last Post magazine set about raising funds for Keri's treatment. We are pleased here, to lovingly thank those that contributed.

Keri's vocals are legendary and she is a multi-award winner and nominee in a many major awards; The World Performing Arts Awards, The European Country Music Awards, The Golden Guitars, The Tiara's, the list goes on.

This period of Keri's life, this post-brain aneurysm stage is one that is already full of examples of what makes this woman a loving part of so many lives. To have the opportunity to honour and thank her and to co-write with Keri is of monumental enjoyment.

GREG T ROSS

Let it Be Love
Co-written by Greg T Ross and Keri McInerney
Performed by Keri McInerney
www.kerimcinerney.com



The Last Post Magazine and Pancare Foundation continue to work together to raise awareness and raise funds to fight this killer disease.



MAINTAINING HOPE

despite the odds

For patients and their families diagnosed with low-survival, aggressive cancers, the fight for survival is met with devastation and heartbreak. But for leading pancreatic, liver and biliary surgeon, Dr Mehrdad Nikfarjam, finding new ways to support patients on their journey and improve outcomes is a lifelong dedication.

Collectively this year, over 11,000 Australians will be diagnosed with an upper gastrointestinal (pancreatic, liver, stomach, biliary and oesophageal) cancer. Sadly, the majority of those diagnosed, will not live beyond five-years. In fact, these cancers have some of the lowest survival rates on record in Australia.

"The low survival rate for these cancers is largely due to how notoriously difficult they are to detect and diagnose at an early stage says Nikfarjam. "Particularly, for pancreatic cancer, the organ lies deep within the abdominal cavity. For many patients, symptoms can be vague and are often overlooked for less serious health issues. Combine this with no effective early detection tests, and with the majority of patients only being diagnosed when the cancer is already advanced, and the success of treatment options or surgical intervention to remove the tumour is significantly reduced."

"For the first time this year, pancreatic cancer achieved a survival rate of just over 10% - that's the first time it's reached double digits. When you compare this with other cancers, such as breast and prostate cancer which have over a 90% five-year survival rate, you can see that there's a lot of work to be done," he says.

It's the driving force that led Nikfarjam to establish cancer charity, Pancare Foundation, in 2011 together with the support of colleagues, patients, their families and friends. The Foundation is a leading not-for-profit committed to raising awareness, supporting patients and funding research for pancreatic and upper GI cancers.

"Providing care, compassion and support is a key philosophy of mine, and for Pancare – no one should have to face their journey alone. An important component of the work the team at Pancare deliver is supporting families through the continuum of their cancer journey. This ranges from telephone support to understand a recent diagnosis, facilitating support groups and providing information and support throughout treatment and surgery," he said.

Despite being one of the most lethal cancers, it receives a fraction of the total cancer funding dedicated to research. Nikfarjam firmly believes that only a collaborative approach and funding from government and non-government sources will deliver a real impact.

"There is a direct correlation between cancer funding and improved survival rates," says Nikfarjam. "One of the key research areas Pancare funds is in the area of improving early detection, through identifying biomarkers and developing early detection screening protocols as well as new, novel treatments and therapies that can treat the disease – both vital components that will improve patient outcomes. Continued progress is critical, but we need the funding to do so," he said.

Despite slow progress and the long road ahead, Nikfarjam remains optimistic about the future. "Increased attention and funding for breast cancer over the years has seen the survival rate dramatically improve – and we believe that this can happen for pancreatic cancer too. We're committed to being that leading voice that accelerates change, drives national awareness and inspires hope. Together, we can turn this story around."

"Because, despite the odds, you must have hope. You must fight for a brighter future. And that's something every Australian who has been impacted by pancreatic cancer is relying on us to do."

Pancreatic cancer has one of the lowest survival rates out of all the major cancers.

It's time for this to change. **Donate today.**



November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

pancare.org.au

Rusty Young

GTR: Hello, Rusty. It's a pleasure speaking with you.

RY: Yeah. Hi. Likewise, Greg.

GTR:How are you?

RY: I'm fine. Boy, you're a long way away, aren't you?

GTR: Yeah, yeah, yeah. What's it like there?

RY: Well, the weather has just turned cold and kind of fall-like. And the leaves are all turning and it's been pretty rainy, but we live in the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri, you know, in the middle of the United States. Yeah. So, you know, we virtually live in a forest and so it's a lot of fun to see the seasons go by, the four seasons that we get here. We built a place that overlooks a river that runs through the Park and we sit way up high on a cliff. And it's very cool.

GTR: Well, Rusty, it sounds absolutely beautiful. And in its own way, very Poco-like.

RY: It is very Poco-like. Yes.

GTR: Thanks for joining us here, Rusty, and taking the time for a chat. Look, Rusty, you're the mainstay, really, of the legendary country rock group Poco. How did it all start?

RY: Well, it started in the late sixties. In '67, I was asked to go out to Los Angeles and do a session for Buffalo Springfield. And they were doing their Last Time Around record, which was their final album. And it was an album that the band didn't really want to do because they'd already really broken up, but they owed Atlantic Records one more album. They were working on fulfilling their contract. And so I was asked to come out and join Jimmy Messina and Richie Furay. We had a friend in common who recommended me, and I flew out from Colorado to LA and played on a Richie Furay song on the Last Time Around record. And that's how I met Jimmy and Richie. And the three of us... They didn't have a band, you know. Springfield was broken up. And Richie and Jimmy didn't have a band. They wanted to put a band together. And when I met up with them, we had a lot in common, because I played or I play all these country instruments, like mandolin and banjo and Dobro and steel guitar. I was... The combination of, with Jimmy's guitar playing, and my stuff that I could do, and then Richie's songwriting and his great vocal, it was obvious. We just needed a rhythm section of bass and drums and we had a band. And so that's how Poco got started.

GTR: Well, it's wonderful that that should occur, too, Rusty. And to just borrow a line, when you say about the Dobro and the banjo, was that you at the end of Rose of Cimarron? It was wonderful.

RY: Oh, well, thank you. Yeah, that's a blessed, indirect thing. We were on the road, it was the middle seventies, and I think it was '76 when we released that song. So, it was probably '74, '75, when I wrote it. But we were traveling through Oklahoma and at a hotel, they have these racks full of brochures about things that you can go see in the area. And I was looking at the rack while we were checking in and there was a brochure and the headline on the brochure was, Rose of Cimarron. And I thought, "Boy, what a beautiful phrase that is." And I picked up the brochure and read about going to Rose of Cimarron's house and visiting her cabin and the whole story. And I started looking into it and that's what gave birth to that song.

GTR: And how beautiful and what a poetic title, too, for a song, Rusty, and a great utilization of lyrics and tune, too. So, fantastic. Where did the name Poco come from?

RY: Well, it was great. It always is difficult to find a band name that everybody likes. So, when we first started playing at the Troubadour in LA, in like '69, we didn't have a name. So, we would throw names in a hat, everybody would throw their favourite name in a hat before we played that week. And our manager would pull a name out of the hat and that would be the name we would use. We had RFD, which is, you know, like Rural Free Delivery, was the name. It was in the hat. And there were Popcorns. Somebody wanted to call it that. And all, you know, all different names. Jimmy Messina's name was Flintlock Pepper Box.

GTR: Well, that's a good one.

RY: Our manager, he would throw a name in there, too. And he looked like there's a cartoon character called Pogo. And he looked just like that cartoon character, a very strange little guy. And he threw Pogo in the hat. And it just so happened one week when we were playing at the Troubadour, that was the name we pulled out. So, we were playing as Pogo and it turns out that about half a dozen different labels came to the shows that week. And at the end of the week, we had three or four offers for record deals for Pogo.

RY: And so we played as Pogo, and we were going to sign a deal as Pogo, when Walt Kelly, the guy who wrote

the comic strip, sued us. Said we couldn't use that name. So, because everything was moving so quickly, we thought, well, if we just change the G to a C and call it Poco, maybe they won't even notice. So, that's how we got the name Poco. Plus I liked it. Here's to my high school Spanish, you know, poco meant little and I thought that was, you know, it's a cool little band. And I thought, so, Poco makes sense.

GTR: Well, in many ways, actually, and well said, too, Rusty. And thanks for explaining that to everyone that will be enlightened, because for some reason Poco, to me, sounds cool.

RY: Yeah. And the manager that we had that came up with the Pogo thing was an idiot. And he had been the Buffalo Springfield's road manager, and he was really not qualified to be on the big stage. And he had a great comment about Pogo. He said, "Oh, that's terrific. Because on a billboard, you know, outside a theatre, because it's only four letters, the letters can be really big where, you know, a Buffalo Springfield or Jefferson Airplane has so many letters, they have to be small." Which was so foolish of a guy who'd actually been in the business because you know, the letters that go on those places, they're all the same size.

GTR: That's fantastic. That's fantastic. You can fit more letters on the back of a postage stamp.

RY: This is the same guy who... I was at the office when we got a call from our agent and he said, "They're doing this big festival up in Woodstock, New York. That's never been done before. And it's going to have Hendrix and the Who and CSN is doing their first show and all this kind of stuff, and they want Poco." And he said, "Well, when's the date?" And they told him, and he said, "Well, I'm sorry, but we've got a better offer." And so we didn't play Woodstock. Because Woodstock was only... They were only paying \$500 to the acts. And I think we got \$700 and we played a gymnasium in Long Beach, California. So for \$200, we missed out on Woodstock. So anyway, yeah, we made some big mistakes in the very beginning and the first one was not having a professional manager.

GTR: Actually that, thanks. That's such an enlightenment to hear that incredible stuff. Because, of course, if you see the movie, the original movie at least, a lot of people didn't realize there were some acts that actually appear there, like Creedence and everything. And to imagine that Poco could have been there, too, would have been icing on the cake for everyone,

— INTERVIEW —

TLP Editor Greg T Ross
speaks with Rusty Young,
backbone of the legendary
country-rock group Poco.

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews



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I know. But, well, it's another part of the legend, I guess, of the group, too. You started playing musical instruments at a early age, Rusty. Was it something your parents forced you into or did you feel an allegiance with music from a very early age?

RY: Well, no. Yeah, I was six years old when I began lessons on steel guitar. And you know, that was back in the fifties. And so, from the time I was born, my parents were big country music fans, and every Friday night they would go to a country bar in Denver, Colorado, called The Anchor. And they'd dance and spend the night and listen. There was always a live country band. And my dad loved, you know, country music and the steel guitar. And so, they would take me when I was a baby and sit me up on the bar. They dressed me up like a little cowboy. I had a little cowboy outfit when I was, you know, like four years old. I would sit on the bar and eat those horrible pickled eggs and drink, what they called, a Roy Rogers.

GTR: What's a Roy Rogers?

RY: A Roy Rogers is a drink with 7-Up and cherry juice, you know?

GTR: Wow. Pour me one.

RY: And so, yeah, they propped me up at the bar and probably scared the hell out of the... By midnight everybody was so drunk and they'd look over and see this little midget cowboy on the bar, they probably... But anyway, so I've always listened to music, especially country music, since I was born. And so, like I said, I was a natural. I loved steel guitar and I loved music. And it was something that was important because of that contact with my parents and that kind

of music. And it turned out that I had a talent for steel guitar, in particular. And so, you know, by the time I was 10 and 12, I was winning amateur contests. And I even started playing for money when I was 12 years old. I'd play weekends up in the mountains in Denver, Colorado. My dad would pass the hat. We played at a little bar and my dad would pass the hat and I'd make maybe \$10 on a Sunday afternoon. And I was the richest kid I knew.

GTR: Rusty, back in those days, that's quite a bit of money for a little kid.

RY: It was. It was.

GTR: Did you spend it wisely?

RY: I don't remember.

GTR: Well, you know, the world is thankful to your parents for this instillation of music into your soul and spirit. But it was always there, I guess. It was always going to evolve, but maybe it evolved early because of your parents' insistence, but Rusty Young, the little cowboy, getting the hat passed around. That's incredible. Geez, wow. And such a beautiful image. Yeah.

RY: I think a lot of the gifts that I got came from my grandparents. My grandmother was a piano player and my grandfather had a big band in Colorado. They used to play up at all the resorts in the mountains in Colorado, back in the twenties and thirties. And my grandmother would play the piano for silent movies in Denver at the theatre's. And at the time there wasn't really sheet music for them to play that went with the movie. So, what she would do is, she would sit down and watch the movie and just play what she felt as she was watching the movie. And so, I think that creative

thing from her when she was doing that, that's just what I do. And, you know, that's what happened is, I think that I gained that probably from her and have my grandparents to thank for that kind of edge that they gave me in creativity.

GTR: Actually, you're probably right, Rusty. It's something that, I mean, geez, when I was, been a student of music in your genre for a long time, and I was thinking about this some years ago about, I was looking at the different line-ups of Poco and the changing themes, but also the fact that Poco's music remained very much the same in many ways and quite brilliant. You've been a mainstay of that group a long time, and you've actually carried the flag for a long time. So, I guess, yeah, we can be thankful for that from you. What was your first group?

RY: Actually, well, you know, I played in country bands. Like by the time I was 14, I was playing in country bands with guys who were much older, in their thirties. So, I'd been in a lot of bands, but the first rock and roll band I joined, that was where I met George Grantham, who I got into Poco. And that's where, you know, Randy Meisner and I were friends in the mid-sixties and we were doing, you know, Beatle and Rolling Stone covers back in Denver, Colorado. My local band was called the Doenzee Cryque, which is very bizarre. They rehearsed in a room above a hardware store. And the hardware store was named Doenzee Cryque. And so they used that name. D-O-E-N-Z-E-E C-R-Y-Q-U-E.

GTR: So, you learned from an early age, too, Rusty, I guess, as you said, with lots of older people, so your observations of the music, was it anything... Was it all a big

"WELL, IT ALL STARTED IN THE LATE SIXTIES. IN '67, I WAS ASKED TO GO OUT TO LOS ANGELES AND DO A SESSION FOR BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD."

thing for you back then? Or did you take it in your stride?

RY: What? Well, no, it was great because I was kind of a child prodigy and, you know, here's this 14, 15, 16 year old kid playing with the pros, you know. And I played in the very best with the very best people in Denver, Colorado, and playing country music. But country music, you have to understand, was the perfect training ground for Poco and for the country rock movement that we started in California in the late sixties, because country bands back in the sixties, we didn't play just country. Sure, we played, you know, Ernest Tubbs or Hank Williams, but we'd also played Buddy Holly and we'd also play Chuck Berry. That's what you had to play in those bars in order, you know, to be popular. And so, it was a perfect thing. You know, Everly Brothers. It was the perfect combination of country and rock that we were playing before they called it country rock.

GTR: So brilliant, too. I mean, when you look at it, by accident or by intention, the music of Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers mixes with country music so well.

RY: Yeah, it was, well, it was country rock, for sure. I mean the Everly brothers were probably the first country rock band. And then I got to be really good friends with Ricky Nelson. He loved Poco. And you know, Ricky, those early mid-sixties records that he was doing, that's country rock with James Burton playing guitar. Come on now. That was really country rock. So, that to me, and then Ray Charles, you know, actually doing that country stuff that he did, you know, Georgia, and all of the country. He even put out that country album in the mid sixties, that everyone thought was- ... and it was brilliant. There was that before Poco came along, but that wasn't really popular. The English invasion came in and wiped out the Ricky Nelson's of the world. And, you know, as far as music went. But then with the Buffalo Springfield having a country edge to it, and me being a little small part of that, we led the way, when we were doing Poco, we led the way for country rock music. California country rock music. And you know, that was the whole scene. The thing about it was, is that when we were playing at the Troubadour, it was, you know, the big critic of the LA Times, Robert Hilburn, came to a show and the headline of the review was, "Poco is the next big thing." There was a lot going on with us. There wasn't anybody else playing country

rock music or playing that music, but everybody went, "Oh, yeah, this is, you know, this makes sense." And we'd been rehearsing. We rehearsed with a lot of different people, or practiced, trying to put our band together. And one of them was Gregg Allman. Gregg hung out with us for a while. And, you know, obviously that was not the perfect choice. He had a, you know, bigger fish to fry. And one of them though was Gram Parsons. Because he was an old friend of Richie's.

GTR: Yes.

RY: Gram came and hung out and we played together and talked about doing that kind of music. And we showed him what we were doing. It was Richie's rock and roll songs with country instruments as the background. And at a certain point, he left the band. He and Jimmy Messina didn't get along. And so he left the band and joined The Byrds because The Byrds had just fired David Crosby and they needed a rhythm guitar player. So, he went to The Byrds and he took what we were doing. And, you know, those guys had all come and seen us at the Troubadour and said, "You know, this is what we should be doing". And they did. But they'd had a record contract. They were signed to CBS. So, when they said, "Well, let's do this, you know, try this country rock thing Poco's doing," they could go into the studio the next day and start recording. Where we didn't have a recording contract. It took us another six months before we signed with Epic Records. So, Sweethearts of the Rodeo actually came out a little before our first album. And it was simply because they had a record contract and we didn't. We had to finalize, you know, do the lawyers and all that kind of stuff and pick out which one. So, we were behind them, even though we were ahead of them.

GTR: Yeah. Well said, Rusty, and thanks for explaining that because actually I was going to, I Feel a Brand New Heartache Coming On. I was going to ask that about The Byrds and Gram and the Flying Burrito Brothers. But you're actually ahead of that. But this record contract thing actually meant that yours came out after.

RY: Right. And you know, what happens is people, well, journalists, or people who are interested, will go back and look and see that Sweethearts came out before Pickin' Up the Pieces and assume that they had the idea before Poco, which just isn't the case. It was just a matter of contracts.

GTR: Yeah, that's fine. It's brilliant to hear you explain that. Now look, I was going to say, too, Rusty. You've had some great musicians go through your group, Poco, you know. Randy, Tim, Richard, Jim Messina, Paul Cotton. And what's the classic line-up to you? Just without wanting to... But what's the classic line-up that you feel that you're at your best? Maybe it's what's happening now, but what is that line-up, do you think?

RY: Well, the magic line-up was the very first one with Randy Meisner and Jimmy and me, Richie, and George. And that was playing... It felt like the Beatles. It was really special. The music was something that hadn't really been done, like we were doing it. And there was a real excitement. You know, at a concert we'd play at the Troubadour, there'd be George Harrison in the audience and sitting next to him would be Waylon Jennings, you know? And like I said, Ricky was a huge fan. And Ricky would come with Ozzie and David, his brother, and, you know, sit right next to the stage. Like every time we played. And there were just, you know, movie stars and, you know, big producers and all that kind of stuff, there was a real excitement. And the band was doing something new. And it was such a great grouping of original musicians. I mean, I'm a huge Randy Meisner fan. You know, we've been friends since high school and his voice and his touch on the bass to me is just like nobody else. And some of those records, like One of These Nights without Randy as vocal, it's just not the same. And of course, you know, Take It to the Limit.

GTR: He's a great vocalist. He's almost like a Roy Orbison. The notes he gets is beautiful.

RY: Well, yeah, a little. Really unusual, a very, very cool voice. And I'd always wanted to be in a band with him. So, when I got the chance to get him in Poco, I did. But he didn't get along. He and Richie didn't get along and unfortunately brought that to an end. But that band with Jimmy Messina and his guitar playing like James Burton style. And then I could bring to it with the steel. Steel guitars weren't in rock and roll bands. They didn't, you know, that didn't happen. You didn't have banjos and steel guitars in a rock and roll band. So, what I brought to it. And then George was a really good original drummer, and he has a great high voice just like Randy. Those two high voices were unbelievable together. And then, you know, Richie with it, and he's such a great singer and

"AND I WAS LOOKING AT THE RACK WHILE WE WERE CHECKING IN AND THERE WAS A BROCHURE AND THE HEADLINE ON THE BROCHURE WAS, ROSE OF CIMARRON. AND I THOUGHT, 'BOY, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PHRASE THAT IS'."

songwriter, you know, and a special artist in his own way, his own right. That band was magical. And that was something. If Randy would have stayed. If things would have worked out with that particular, you know, because he left before Pickin' Up the Pieces came out. If he'd have been able to... If we'd have been able to keep that band together for, you know, another two years or three years, I think history would have been a lot different.

GTR: Yeah, it was a very cool lineup.

RY: Yeah.

GTR: You were just explaining to me about how cool it felt and everything, which means you had an understanding, too, Rusty. It must have felt quite unique playing that music that you knew that you were just doing something completely new in many ways. Must've been beautiful.

RY: Yeah, it was really great, but you know, I don't regret... I do wish it could have gone on a little longer in the beginning, but I don't regret how things have gone down because it's been such a great learning tool for me. Because when we started the band, I was just an instrumentalist. That was my job in the band was to bring that instrumental side to it. And then as people have moved through the band, I've learned I've been able to be around great songwriting. I mean, like Neil Young used to come over to Richie's house before his first solo record. And play songs he was working on. And so I, you know, I could sit there and there'd be a fire in the fireplace and like just the two of us. And he and I would play a song and say, "What do you think about this?" And then, you know, and on his first album, Jimmy and George were the rhythm section on his first album. He used the Poco guys. And then the next album, Mountain, he hires Ben Keith as a steel player.]

GTR: That's right. And what were they called? What was that, that he was a part of the back up group of Neil's? Yeah, that was incredible. Incredible stuff. So, look, Rusty, I've got a couple of friends that are really devotees and fans of your music. And someone asked me to ask you about the Paul Cotton era. Was that a good, Paul Cotton? What happened with Paul?

RY: You mean when he joined the band?

GTR: Well, yeah, how did that evolve? Because, actually, I must admit, I didn't know much about the Paul Cotton era or Paul being in the band.

RY: Yeah. Well, once again, after about three years or so, Richie and Jimmy weren't getting along and which is kind of a theme of the band in the early days. And so, Jimmy left the band. But what was happening and it was the same thing happened to the Eagles, with the Eagles, as Poco. We were out playing, Eagles and Poco. We had the same booking agency. And the booking agency had mainly English acts, like Yes, and The Moody Blues, Peter Frampton, and Elton John. And so, we'd end up doing concert tours, you know, six months with Yes. And they were so rock and roll and they were headliners. They were the popular selling records groups, you know, Moody Blues and that. And they were more rock than we were, and than the Eagles were. Because Bernie Leadon's a brilliant, you know, a great guitar player. And country rock. The classic country rock guitar player. And so was Jimmy, but they didn't rock like, you know, Peter Frampton.

GTR: Steve Howe and such, from Yes.

RY: And yeah, both the Eagles and Poco, we wanted to go more rock and roll. And so when Jimmy left, I knew Paul Cotton through Pete Cetera, who was a friend of mine. And you know, they're both Chicago guys. He had introduced me to Paul. And Paul, actually, opened a couple of shows for Poco with the band he was in. And so, we'd heard him play and thought he was brilliant, loved his voice. And so that's how he got in the band. We wanted to go more rock and roll. And he was definitely a rock and roll guitar player. And, you know, like I said, he had that great voice and some really brilliant songs, like, Bad Weather he had from the very beginning. So, both the Eagles and Poco went down that same road and we got more rock and roll. Those records became more rock and roll after Paul joined the band. And then we had a long run and it just got to the point of where it wore down. I think Richie called me in the eighties and said, "Boy, wouldn't it be great if we could go back and do the original band? Do an album with the original band?"

GTR: That's right. Yes.

RY: "Wait a minute. You're the guy that broke up the original band originally."

GTR: That's right.

RY: And so, we did an album called Legacy. And I was real keen on doing it because we never did get a record out with Randy on it. And I thought it was really important to do that

Legacy record because it reflected... That record, I think, is overlooked in the world of rock and roll history.

GTR: Did that have Call It Love on it?

RY: Yeah. It had Call It Love on it. It was a combination. On that record, you can hear Randy Meisner and you hear the Eagles.

GTR: Yes. Yes.

RY: With Jimmy Messina, you hear Loggins and Messina. With Richie, you hear Buffalo Springfield. With me, you hear, you know, that kind of classic crazy love Poco that, you know, survived in Call It Love. So, here you had the Buffalo Springfield, Eagles, Loggins and Messina, and Poco all in one band. And all those bands came from that one band in 1968 playing at the Troubadour.

GTR: That's right. It's funny. It's funny you explain that, Rusty, because that's exactly what I felt. I was so wrapped when that album came out because you were getting airplay in Australia with Call It Love and all the other stuff from that album. And I thought the same thing. Here is a combination of some of the great country rock groups and duos in one group. And this is where it all started.

RY: Yeah. Yeah. Look at the impact those bands had on American music. Period. And it all came from that one little band playing at the Troubadour in '68. So, I think that's an amazing album. I'm really proud of that. And at that point, that's when Paul was having some issues, you know, and so it was a good point for us, for me, to do a project besides, you know, doing the touring with Paul. And at the same time, I got offered a chance to be in a band that was signed to RCA Country in Nashville with Pat Simmons, who is an old friend of mine from the Doobie Brothers. The Doobies weren't working and Pat and I, and a couple of our friends in Nashville, Bill Lloyd, who was in a band called Foster and Lloyd, who was a really great country rock band that broke through that barrier in Nashville. And then John Cowan, who was in a band called the New Grass Revival, which was a totally unbelievable bluegrass rock band. The four of us got together and had a band. And we made a couple of records, actually.

GTR: Was that the Sky Kings?

RY: Yeah. So, that project was going on at the same time. So, I just wasn't doing the Poco thing except for a few dates. Richie didn't want to tour. He



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gave us a limited number of shows that he would play. So, we weren't playing very much with Poco. And the Sky Kings was a really fun thing to go do. So, that was going on. And so, that's why Paul was not part of the picture at that point. But then, you know, all that stuff kind of wound down and there was a lot of call for Poco shows. And I had an old manager of ours call up and say, "If you want to go out and do shows, there's a market out there." And so I called Paul and then when we started doing shows together again.

GTR: How wonderful that happened, Rusty.

RY: Yeah. I love Paul. He actually, I'm going to put... He's going to come join us here in Missouri for a show, a series of shows.

GTR: Cool.

RY: Later this month. So, it'll be fun to see him. Every once in a while, we get together and he joins the band, but we're all getting so old.

GTR: Geez, mate. It's hard to believe isn't it? But actually before we get on about pensions and pensioners, it's

incredible because the Sky Kings thing was some friend, Michael McDonald, a friend of mine, who's not the Michael McDonald, but he is a wonderful person, asked me about the Sky Kings. And he wanted to know why the album was delayed. Why it was delayed? Was that true? Was it delayed in its release?

RY: Well, yeah, it was crazy. The country music scene in the eighties, in the mid to late eighties, was just, it was crazy, because business was starting to build. And I don't think the people that were running the labels and in the music business there were able to cope or had the forethought to figure out how to make things work. So, anyway, besides. RCA came to us, they had their A&R guys, the head of the label virtually, came to us and said, "We'd like to have a country rock crossover record." They had just had Restless Heart. Cry, who had a song that'd crossover from the pop charts and the country charts, and everyone's going, oh, and you know, all of a sudden country music was selling more records because they were appealing to a wider audience. So, they literally came to us and said, you know, "Would you put a band

together?" And so we put together the Sky Kings and we made a great record. I mean, it was just Pat Simmons had a couple of songs on there that were just, you know, Old Black Water revisited was so cool. And I had a couple of really good songs and it was just... We were really proud of that record.

GTR: Yeah.

RY: Worked hard on it. Like I said the head of A&R produced it. It hit every go button you could have. When we finished the record, the head of the label, who I'm not going to mention his name, came to the studio and we played the record for him. And he dropped the act.

GTR: What?

RY: And they spent a million dollars making that record. A million dollars is what the studio cut, because there was no budget, the guy who was running the label is who was producing the record. So, he didn't care. And, you know, so, we worked in all the best places and took as much time as we wanted and made the record that we wanted to make. But I just thought that was so insanely foolish, but I've been around the same guy, the head of the label. I was there when he dropped Vince Gill and told Vince that he didn't think he had a future in music. Yeah. Vince was a buddy of mine. And I was with him when... We should have known better than to put any faith in that guy and that label. But anyway, so, and then Warner Brothers picked us up and we did a record for Warners, but by that time, the Doobies were playing again. So, that record didn't include Pat. My favorite was the first one we did with Pat. I just thought that was really a great record. And it's such a shame that it didn't get released until it was picked up by a smaller label. An artist who started his own label.

GTR: That's incredible, actually. Yeah, that's incredible. And that's an education in itself hearing about Sky Kings. And look, I don't want to, I mean, you're well aware of the whole thing, I guess. And some say, even Dylan went more country after hearing acts like Poco, because it seemed to gel. We talked about Neil Young and everything else. It all seemed to come to a point where a lot of the brilliant music that was being done was being expressed with the genre of country rock. And Poco magnificently responsible for that, too, Rusty. It's been an incredible journey. What are you doing now?

RY: I'm doing shows. I'm signed as a solo act. After all these years.



GTR: Okay.

RY: Everybody in the band has done a lot of solo records, you know, Richie and Jimmy and Timothy B, and everybody's done solo records, except for me. At one point I was going to retire. It was about five years ago. I thought, you know, it's about time to hang it up. And I was just, I like going out and playing shows with my friends, and I was doing a series of dates in California with Jimmy Messina, who I like to go out and work with. One of my best friends ever, probably my best friend from the Poco years. And so we were out playing in California and after a show, a guy came up backstage and he introduced himself, and he said that he had a label and that he was really interested in releasing a solo record on me. And had I ever thought of doing that? So, you know, I hadn't really. And I was going the opposite direction, but then I thought, "Gee whiz, you know, it'd really be a drag after all these years and everything, if I didn't have, you know, something that represented me, you know, where I am not hiding behind the Poco banner." Or not, you know, sharing songwriting and that kind of stuff, but where it was just straight ahead me. And I guess it's a, what do you call it? An Eagle project or something? Anyway, I came home and I finished a few songs I had been thinking about. And called him back and said, "Let's do it." And the label's Blue Elan and Blue Elan is just the neatest label I've ever been on, really totally artist-related and artist-friendly and protective and helpful. And it's a great place to be. So, I did Waitin' for the Sun. I wrote here at the cabin. And it's a pure Rusty Young record, but I think it was

a chance for me to show my part in Poco over the years. Because if you listen to it and you know anything about Poco, you can really see, you know, the impact. My part in Poco over the years. And so, it was really great. And I have, there's a song on there called My Friend. That is one of my favorite songs I've ever written. And it's a song about the band and the 50 years and all of this, you know, the fact that we still are friends. Well, most of us are still friends.

GTR: My Friend, it's called? My Friend.

RY: My Friend. So, it's really, I just love hit. Richie and Timothy B sang on it with me. And so anyway, I did that. I'm going out cutting a few more songs with them this December. And I'll probably do another project with Blue Elan. And so that's what I'm doing. Plus Poco's doing... You know, there's this whole thing about people appreciating the bands from the seventies, and so, we're touring quite a bit. And we do pack. You know, we go out and play with Firefall and Pure Prairie. We're playing shows with Firefall and Pure Prairie and Jonathan Edwards, and us, these little packages like that. And then we, you know, we do shows that we headline. We've headlined a lot of PACs, they call them. Performing Arts Centre's. In the summer, we do a lot of, you know, Orange County festivals and, you know, all these outdoor, the big outdoor festivals that they have in the summertime. So we, you know, we have a lot of work if we want to do it. And between that and my Blue Elan thing, I'm a busy boy.

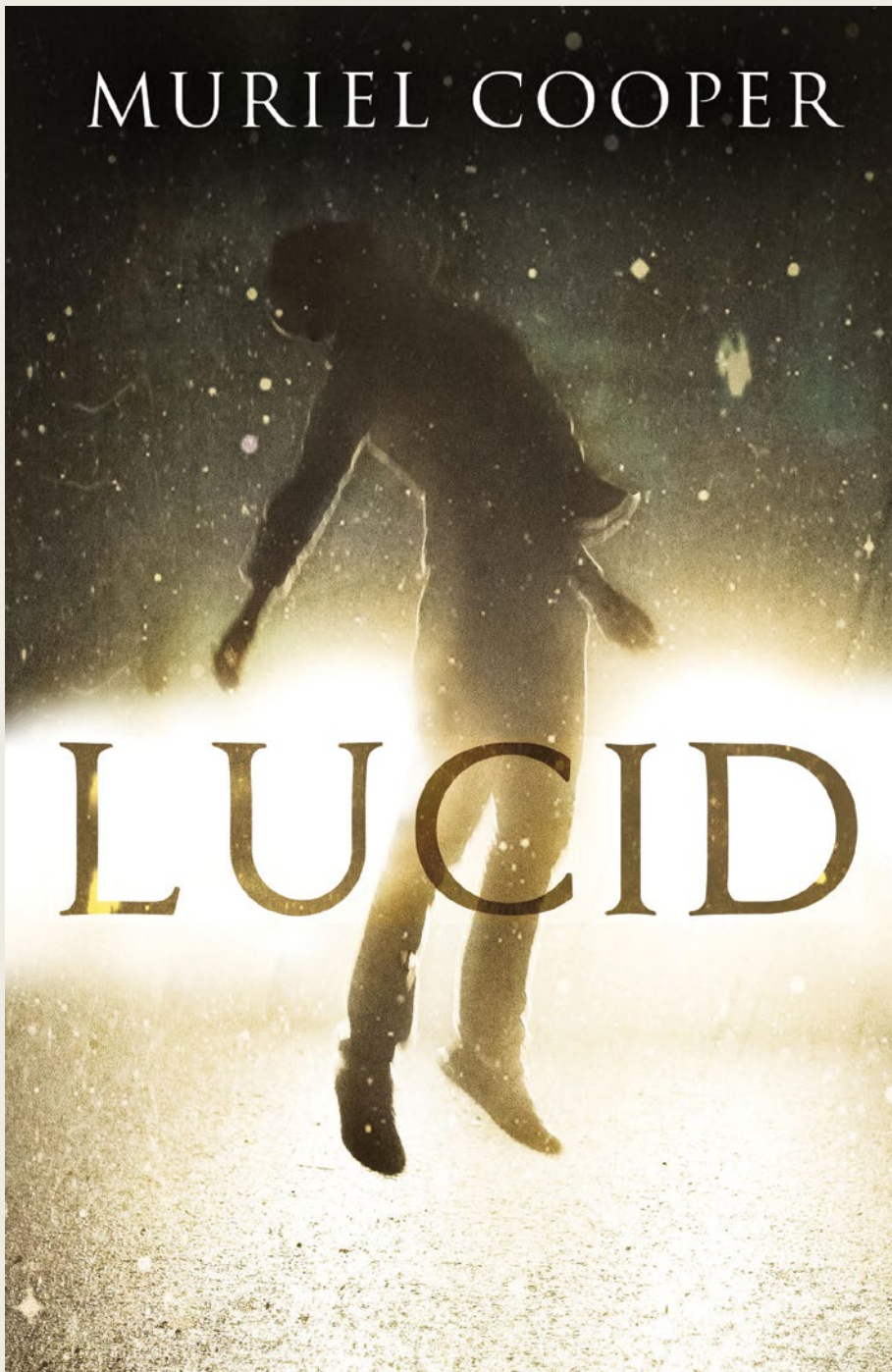
GTR: Okay, Rusty, isn't that beautiful? I must get over there and get to see you. I was saying the same thing to the

Young Rascals' Felix, and just wanting to get over there and seeing some legendary people like yourself. Rusty, just briefly, you spoke about the ego thing with the solo album and the Rusty Young name ahead of Poco, for just a moment. And to me, Poco have been an ego-less band. They have provided so many great.. A springboard for so many acts and they've remained. And they haven't lost their relevance or their brilliance of music.

RY: Well, thank you. Yeah. You know, to this day, I can still feel that respect that Poco gets, because, you know, we're playing shows with all these other bands. There's a real difference in what Poco brings to it, and the audiences that we bring. And a lot of the other bands are envious of the people that keep up with the band. And I appreciate that. Poconuts, they're called. And they really come out in force and they're a great asset for the band. The band wouldn't still be around, if it had... Two or three things. We've always had great musicians and great players. So, you know, if you go see a Poco show, you're always going to see great playing. And we've always had great songs. We're able to place it with the musicianship and the songs and the audiences that, you know, grew up with us. And you put those three things together and it makes for a really great evening of music. We've got so much music to draw on.

GTR: If I had two lives, Rusty, I would want Poco in both of them. It's beautiful. So, yeah. Thank you so much. It's been an absolute pleasure, Rusty Young.

RY: Thanks. Thanks. I appreciate the call.



Successful criminal lawyer, Rick Peterson, puts his newfound ability of lucid dreaming to work to create a nostalgic dream destination, Wellstone; a perfect country town where it's always 1959, until a grisly murder shakes his lucid world.

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For Rick Peterson, life in both worlds is anything but dull.

Lucid is a psychological murder mystery exploring lucid dreaming and the nature of reality, as well as relationships, Rick's struggle with his feelings towards women and his growing relationship with Lisa.

Muriel Cooper is a writer, psychologist, and blogger at The Talking Room. Muriel's highly successful media career included mornings on ABC radio and afternoons on commercial talk station 3AW. Muriel has also written a successful children's book, *The Tiger and the Bridge*, and a young adult novel, *The Wound*. *Lucid* is the first in a series of mystery fantasies based on lucid dreaming. She lives on the beautiful Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne, Australia.

LUCID by Muriel Cooper. Published by Pegasus Publishers.

When The Smoke Clears

The whole world held its breath as 2020 dawned and Australia was on fire.

In *When The Smoke Clears, Surviving the Australian bushfires*, fire survivor and author Chrissy Guinery presents the human face behind the shocking figures of destruction and loss, through first-hand accounts of the day to day struggle to breathe, to believe, to love – under a pall of smoke and in the path of fire.

'My middle-daughter's house is burning down and I've lost contact with my eldest daughter as the fire front threatens her home. It's the last day of 2019 and it feels like the end of the world.'

So begins this fast-paced, personal and grassroots account of living through a torturous fire season and finding a way to push through to recovery.

And while the eyewitness accounts of being caught in a bushfire emergency are remarkable, so too are the insights, advice and lessons learned about what it will take to recover, including from a range of experts.

It's the story of survival that represents the experience of thousands of Australians from the 2019-2020 bushfire season, right through to the impact of the coronavirus. And it also begins to answer the question – how do you live, laugh and hope again after your family has been threatened, homes lost, children terrified and the countryside blackened.

When The Smoke Clears is essential reading for anyone in the world who grieved for Australia as it burned, and for anyone at anytime who is wondering where they will find the strength to go on.

(A percentage of every book sold goes toward bushfire recover on the South Coast.)



CHAPTER ONE: THEIR HOME IS GONE

From the fireground—December 31, 2019

My middle-daughter's house is burning down and I've lost contact with my eldest daughter as the fire front threatens her home. It's the last day of 2019 and feels like end of the world.

I'm bawling now. I don't want my daughter's house to be burned to the ground. I'm desperate to hear from my eldest daughter, caught in the fire further south, out of contact, out there—somewhere. Is she safe? Were they able to get out in time?

My mumma-heart is grieving, I long to gather my chickens and snuggle them all close and safe. I want to turn back time. I want to change this crazy day. I want to run. I want to hide. I want to hold my grandchildren. I want to hug my daughters. I want to cry and I want to scream. I'm desperate to see these family members, but I don't want to leave the ones I'm with.

I have five children with partners and all of them have children of their own. Four of these families are surrounded by fires. That means 11 of my 14 grandchildren are somewhere amidst this chaos! Our son Caleb was down visiting from the Gold Coast and left a couple of days ago. I thank God that he and wife Tess and three daughters Peaches, Hopps and Junee are out of harm's way. They were amazed by the amount of smoke and haze everywhere. Most of the time we try to ignore it, (it has kind of become our 'norm'), but truth be told, we are sick of living like '40-a-day' smokers. Since mid-October we have been breathing smoke, and that, combined with constant stress and anxiety, is making us all feel so tired.

And now this. Now the unthinkable.

I feel like I've failed my family because I couldn't keep them safe and protect them. I feel failure creeping up the back of my neck. I know it's a lie, but it doesn't stop the feelings, the overwhelming emotions, the grief. It frightens me to think how quickly our world can unravel.

I want my family to be with me, to all be together—all my children and their families—so I can take them somewhere safe from all of this. But where? There is nowhere to run. Nobody knows where safety is. Everything is burning. We are blocked on every side. The Princes Highway north and south is closed. The Kings Highway to the west is closed. We're trapped!

I have to get to Kelita, my middle daughter who has just lost everything. I need to hug her, to comfort her, to help her process this tragedy. How could this happen to our family? I desperately want to make everything right, but how can I? It isn't right. It's so wrong. No young family should lose their home and everything they own in one fell swoop.

It is a cruel waiting game, and I'm torn. I want my family to be with me; to be together. And then, in an instant, I also desperately want to go somewhere by myself and sort this mess out with God. I want to know how and why this happened—to us? I think of all the Scriptures stored up in my heart. I know I can trust Him and rely upon His unconditional love and faithfulness. For more than 40 years I have made a habit of doing just that, and He has never let me down. My heart reassures me that it's okay, but my mind is all over the shop. Where is my eldest

daughter and her family? 'Have you got them God? Please look after them and keep them safe,' I plead.

I need a little time out. I jump in the shower, turn on the taps, and cold water hits me like a slap in the face. There's no hot water because there's no power. The petrol generator in the shed drives the pump for the water, but the gas heater needs electricity to spark it into life. I don't mind. I don't need to be comfortable. Being comfortable somehow seems wrong in these circumstances. How can I be comfortable when one of my daughters is out there somewhere trying to escape the fires while another daughter and her family have no home to go back to?

I bury my head under the cold spray and I cry. I let the tears flow. It's a safe space and I need to let things out. Once I start, it's open the flood gates. I double over and get lost in big, hard, full-on sobs. It's not controlled and is not pretty. Not even under the flow of the cold water can I pretend to be okay. I don't want to get out looking puffy-eyed and snotty-nosed but I've got no choice. After too many minutes, I realise I have to get out and stop wasting precious water. We're in a drought and haven't seen rain for months. I want to curl up and spend more time feeling sorry for myself, but I can't. I have things to do and people to care for. 'Get your act together girl,' I tell myself. And I do— well at least for the moment.

Hubby, Step, recognises 'that face', of course he does, we've been together for 42 years. He knows how upset I am and wraps his arms around me the moment I emerge from my bathroom refuge. We hug and cry together. We're going to get through this, we assure one another wordlessly. We're going to stand together. We're going to stand on our faith. We've made it through some tough times and we'll make it through this. But the enormity of what we're going through, reeling from, trapped within, is too much to carry. Too much to hold in. Later, we'll be brave for the family, we know we will. We'll be their rock... after we cry together in this unguarded moment. Though words may fail us, our hearts don't. Our faith does not fail us. Our hope will not fail us. We'll weep in one another's arms because that's what married folk do in the midst of crisis.

Once dressed, tears and snot in check, I busy myself. I can't sit back and do nothing, and neither can Step. We have so much adrenaline and nervous energy coursing through our veins, we have to stay busy—or else. I can't be dwelling on my fears about my eldest daughter or that my middle daughter's home is now a pile of rubble and ash. I scramble around, picking things up and putting them down again. Step continues to prepare the property so that if the fire does threaten our 'Long Beach Love Shack', which the doomsayers are certain will happen, we might have a chance of saving it. As we hear reports of hundreds of homes lost up and down the coast, the likelihood of our place in the bush surviving seems slim indeed. In spite of this, we choose to be optimistic about believing for a good outcome.

I have a trained mind. Forty years of walking with God and discovering the Father's heart, has instilled in me a confidence in the power of prayer. I talk with Him all through the day and night. I feel His presence as strongly as I felt Step's arms around me earlier. He has protected us in the past and He will protect us in the future. He knows our every need and He promises to hold us and support us through it all. Together, we will get through. He comforts us so that we can go and share the same comfort with those in need. He makes us strong so that we can be 'a shoulder to cry on' for those that are hurting. He calls us to be his hands, His feet, His mouthpiece, but most of all He wants us to reveal His heart to those that don't know Him.

A difficult night passes and finally we are able to venture out to try and find our daughter. We drive slowly and cautiously, with headlights on, through thick smoke, past roadblocks and burning buildings, and through deserted streets that are normally spilling over with tourists and holiday-makers. The air is thick, the stench is putrid—almost unbearable with so many homes, shops and businesses burning around us and belching out plumes of toxic smoke. Not surprisingly, more and more people are wearing facemasks to protect themselves, but I can't help but think their efforts are probably futile. Every second person has had sore eyes and an irritating cough for weeks and now my nose won't stop running.

And then I see Kelita, with her oldest son.

Finally, we've found them! As we jump out of the car to run to them, my throat tightens as I try to keep myself together. I give her a big mumma-hug, before turning my attention to grandson Harper, who gets called 'H'. I squeeze him tight and don't want to let him go—this boy who has endured so much.

'My house burnt down, Granny,' he says without emotion. The poor little fella! He is six-years-old.

We walk to find Kelita's husband and the other two kids and we give them their share of hugs and kisses. Step, my 81-year-old Mum, my daughter, her hubby, their three children and I, head to where they are staying for now, grab a cuppa, and settle in to hear about their ordeal.

I nurse one-year-old Lennox, while he messily consumes a nectarine, dripping juice onto my tights. I hug three-year-old London. And then I am riveted as their story unfolds of evacuation and being trapped and fires bursting alight in front of them. They tell of how they received news of their home burning and how Kelita's brother-in-law was attempting to save it. News that it was too late. News that their home had gone.

They share with us about heading back toward their home through what seemed like a warzone, with fires taking down tall trees on both sides of the road, witnessing other people's houses alight. We're gripping our seats as her hubby tells of rushing up to Catalina just in time to see the last of the flames engulf what was once his family's home. He had taken his mobile phone out and filmed his home's final end, flames leaping from every shattered window, the top story already just rubble on the ground.

We gather around his phone and watch the short video together, speechless. It comes to an abrupt end. Our minds can't fathom it. And we play it again. It is incomprehensible. Nothing seems real. My grandson climbs up onto my lap and looks up at me. He tells me, 'The fire is a baddie. It's big and mean and I want to punch it and knock it down.'

Don't we all, mate, don't we all.

I've brought some clothes for each of the kids from my youngest daughter, who has five children of her own. Her kids also raided their toy boxes and H receives the red motorbike his cousin Hayz has generously chosen for him. I leave him sitting on my lap as the adults talk over his head. He drives his motorbike on the table, backward and forwards, props it up on its stand, picks it up, drives it again, turns it over, spins the wheels, and drives it some more. The motorbike, this priceless gift from his cousin, means the world to him.

He looks up at me after half an hour and says, 'I have one toy now Granny'. I swallow hard and fight back the tears. My heart breaks into a million pieces.

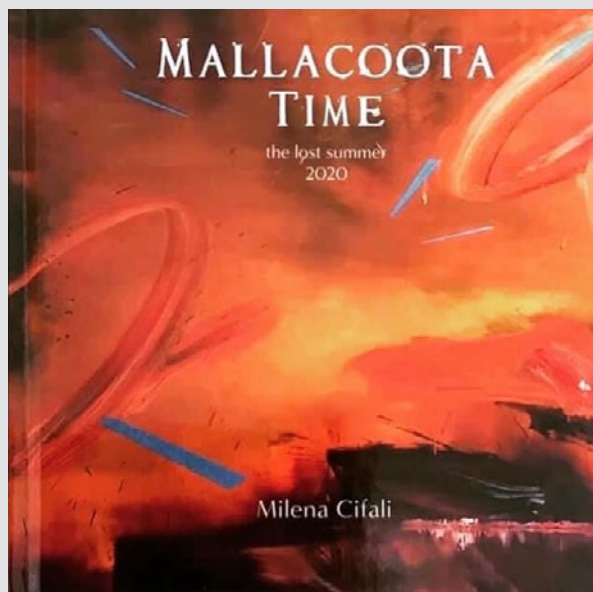


Award winning Musician and Poet Milena Cifali lost her home instruments and beloved parrots in the Mallacoota bushfires New Year's Eve 2019.

Out of adversity Milena shares her journey towards recovery, aiming to connect with and provide solace to fire ravaged communities as well as others who have suffered loss. Set against the backdrop of the unprecedented bushfires season and the coronavirus pandemic, *Mallacoota time* showcases Milena's writing, poetry, lyrics and photography in a stirring and timely work.

Milena Cifali, Canberra based award-winning songwriter, published poet and author, lost her home and slice of paradise in Mallacoota on New Year's Eve 2019. Milena studied classical guitar at the ANU with Timothy Kain graduating in 2000, going on to be a founding member of the Canberra classical guitar Society and a well respected performer and teacher. In 2011 she left Canberra and began touring and performing along the eastern seaboard with her partner Jim Horvath. In March 2019

Milena was invited by Canberra Poet John Passant to collaborate on his published anthology and set about composing music for their CD 'Whose Broken is this?' which they toured with great success. In late 2019 Milena was selected as a semifinalist in the UK international songwriter's competition receiving a judges commendation. Having performed to acclaim at national folk festivals, COVID-19 restrictions slowed her travels. After losing her home Milena and her partner settled in Canberra where they currently reside tending to the local wildlife. Milena is a keen photographer and birdwatcher



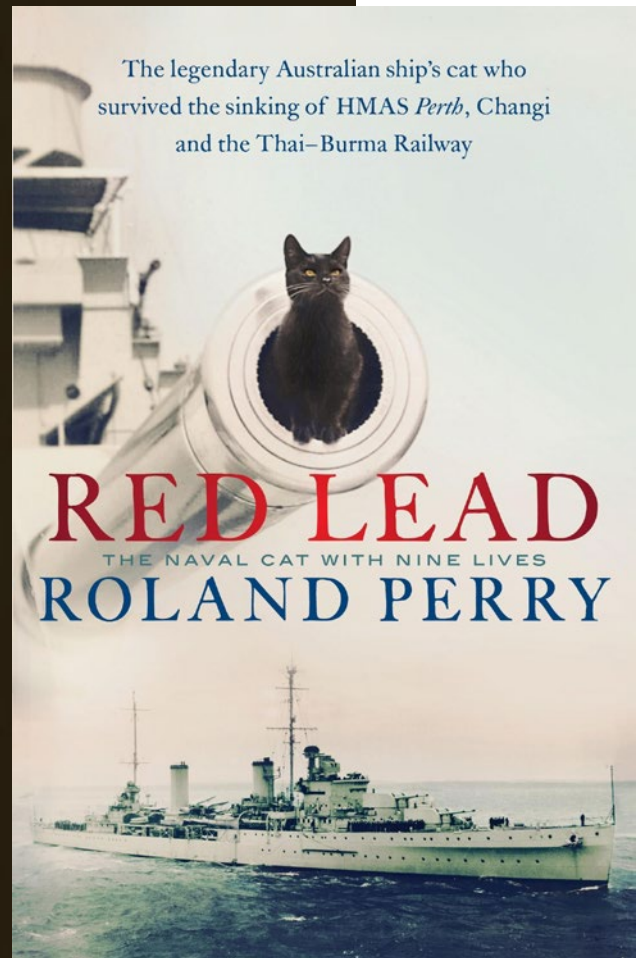
REVIEW:

Amidst the background of the recent fires that devastated Australia's East Coast and then the social dislocation of the coronavirus, Milena Cifali, having lost her home to the fire in Mallacoota, has created a meditation on life, loss and renewal. This is a poignant account of the thoughts and emotions that flare up and affect the soul when one's home has been taken away. All through this moving account is a yearning for 'home' and a search for connection, and always the restorative power of music and storytelling.

JIM SAKKAS

Award-winning author and Mallacoota resident.

Mallacoota Time by Milena Cifali. Available online at www.mallacootatime.com.au.



Roland Perry is one of Australia's best known authors. He has written 35 books, many of them bestsellers, including *The Queen*, *Her Lover* and *the Most Notorious Spy in History*, *Horrie the War Dog*, *Bill the Bastard*, *Don Bradman*, *The Changi Brownlow*, *The Australian Light Horse* and *Monash: The Outsider Who Won a War*.

The legendary Australian ship's cat who survived the sinking of HMAS Perth and the Thai-Burma Railway.

Just after midnight on 1 March 1942, Australia's most renowned cruiser, HMAS Perth, was sunk by Japanese naval forces in the Sunda Strait off the coast of Java. Of the 681 men aboard, 328 survived the sinking and made it to shore - and one cat. Her name was Red Lead, and she was the ship's cat, beloved by the crew and by the Perth's legendary captain Hector Waller.

Roland Perry was only 8 years old when he first heard about the cat who survived the sinking of the HMAS Perth in WWII. This tantalising fragment stayed with him over the decades and he has finally written the whole extraordinary story in *Red Lead: The Naval Cat with Nine Lives*.

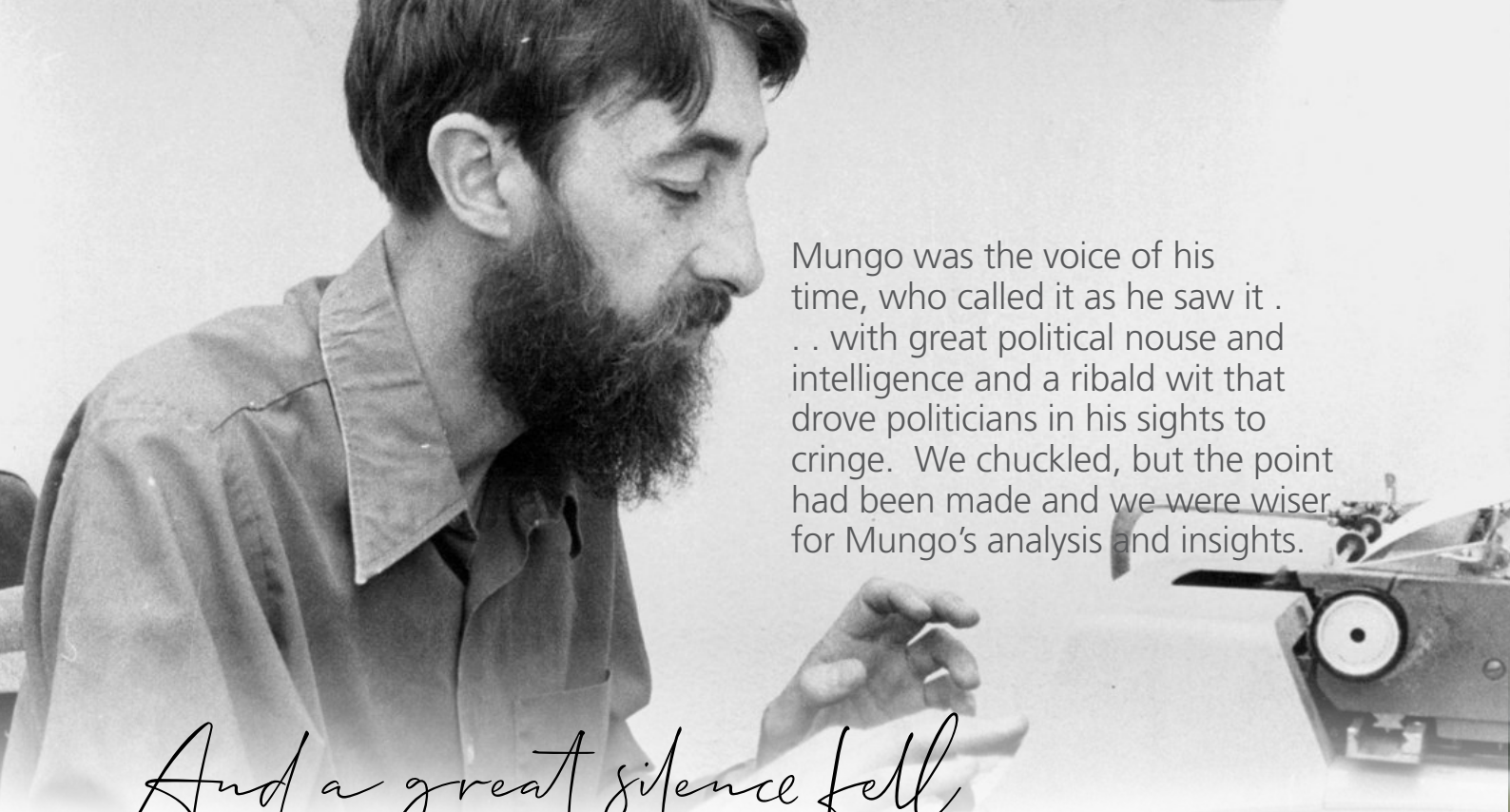
Surviving shellfire, torpedoes and the fierce currents of the Sunda Strait was only the beginning of the terrible trials Red Lead and the surviving crew were to face over the next three-and-a-half years. From Java to Changi and then

on the Thai-Burma Railway, Red Lead was to act as companion, mascot and occasional protector for a small group of sailors who made it their mission to keep her alive in some of the most hellish prison camps on earth.

In Perry's inimitable style, this incredible true story is based on extensive research and the facts brought to life through dramatisations of events and personalities, and their interactions. Perry first researched the background of Red Lead in Java in 1979. He continued with further research in 2018 which included the AWM files on HMAS Perth and on-the-ground research throughout South East Asia.

Red Lead's extraordinary story of courage, loyalty and love amidst battle, imprisonment and death is brought vividly to life by bestselling author Roland Perry.

Red Lead, The Naval Cat with Nine Lives by Roland Perry. Published by Allen & Unwin.



Mungo was the voice of his time, who called it as he saw it . . . with great political nous and intelligence and a ribald wit that drove politicians in his sights to cringe. We chuckled, but the point had been made and we were wiser for Mungo's analysis and insights.

And a great silence fell across the land Vale Mungo MacCallum

As a descendent of a line of wealthy colonial adventurers and political conservatives – the Wentworths – Mungo did an about turn to become a rebel writer with a cause in a pack of colourful rabble rousing heroes including... Clive James, Richard Walsh, Kerry O'Brien, Germaine Greer, Martin Sharp, Bob Ellis and a line of editorial keepers of the flame of honest tell-it-as-it-is gonzo journalism.

His father was serious print journalist and a senior programmer as the ABC entered the new world of television.

But Mungo got down and dirty in Vietnam, had his eyes opened to the ongoing racism towards indigenous Australians, and sharpened his pen to puncture political spin, pompous posturing and instead talk common sense. If he was too left leaning for some on occasion, there was no disputing his analytical, rational, skewering put down of what he saw as pompous, possibly corrupt, impractical and a waste of time, effort and money.

Where he saw failure of care and duty, injustice, corruption, political pomposity, ratbaggery and arrogance, he called it out with bluntness, brilliant incisiveness and cutting humour.

Mungo was always on the money more often than not, and in later years his pen sharpened as he saw the censorship, intimidation, oppression and press constriction from politicians and big business. Sending in the Feds to the ABC was a final straw.

When I alerted him to the fact I was starting this newspaper nearly six years

ago, he advised me to . . . "Just be brave. Stand up. Have a bloody go." And allowed me and other struggling and independent newspapers to run his brilliant columns, gratis.

As I had grown up with journalism, (ABC TV journalist Uncle Jim Revitt from Wingham) Uncle John Hutchinson (political lecturer and writer BBC, Berkley University and UCLA) and a family in film and the Arts, journalism was natural affiliation. And, as it turned out, the best training for novel writing.

I didn't meet Mungo in person until I moved to Byron Bay in the late 1980s which was a blissful backwater of ageing hippies and surfers, a new clutch of wannabes, and 70s protestors. Mungo was writing a fearless column in the Byron Bay Echo, a freewheeling, spirited local paper started by the late indomitable Nick Shand.

As I made my way and name as an author, the town began to look outside itself, so we started a modest Writers Festival... ("no wankers, no literary snobs, and only Aussies" was the original format) which was held in the rustic grounds and cabins of the old Byron Bay Beach Resort (now sadly reborn and seriously up itself.)

Mungo and local identities like Bob Ellis outdid themselves in shocking audiences, stirring the pot and, in Bob's case, leaving a string of Ellis anecdotes and antics in his wake as he stumbled from the midnight bushes to one identical cabin after another in search of his bed.

I started Di's Drinks at my home for those first guests, an event which over a decade swelled in size and reputation, and where Mungo was inevitably a stand out performer in a hotbed of egos and talent.

Over the years Mungo and Jenny's New Year party are happy remembrances as are many Saturday lunches in the garden of the old Brunswick Hotel with the weekend papers, our dogs at our feet. Until the place got gentrified and banned dogs to Mungo's disgust.

I last saw Mungo at the now overflowing Byron Writers Festival two years ago. Frail, in a motorised chair, and, while silenced by throat cancer, we managed to converse, agreeing things were not like they used to be and we had had the best of it.

Far from silenced however, he continued emailing, as his brilliant and piercing observations, fearless jibes, wonderfully blunt, wise with the hindsight of history and knowledge, poured from his pen, (via computer) revealing a rapier mind that pierced egos and explained where the country should be, and why.

The last email came a week before he died announcing to us all . . . "That's all she wrote".... ending with a typical saucy, to the point limmerick.

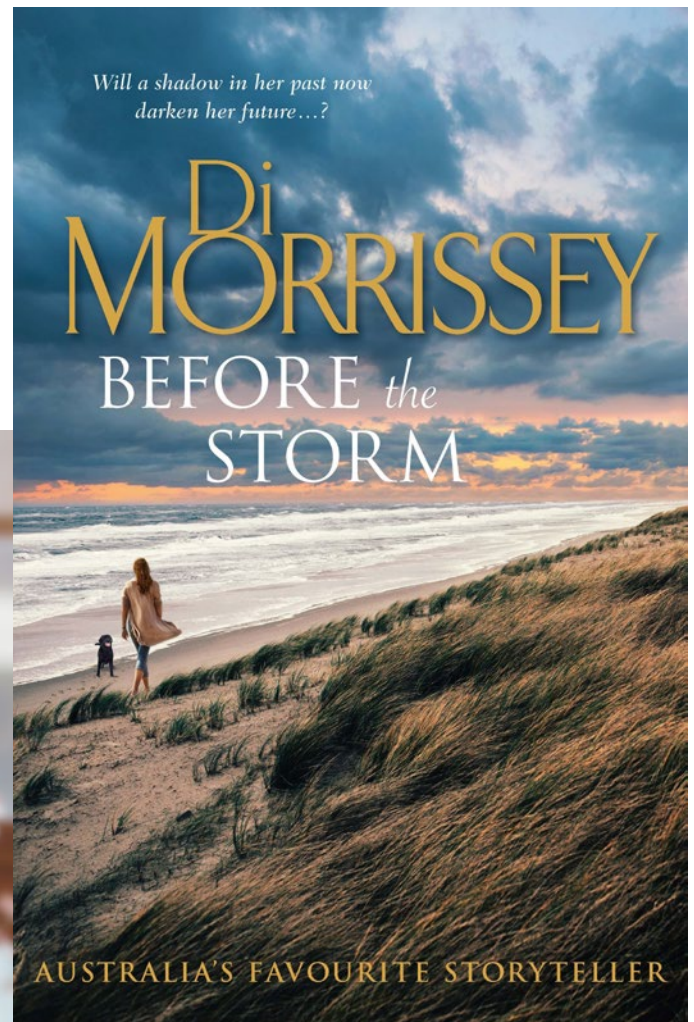
Mungo you will be missed. However, inspired by you, we shall stand up, be brave and call it as we see it.

Thank you Mungo. And love to Jenny and the girls. And of course, the dogs.

DI MORRISSEY

"There's no denying the beauty and opulence of Morrissey's rendering of place... She is a master of the genre."

– *Weekend Australian*



Face her demons? Or run?

After being double-crossed by a devious colleague, career woman Ellie Conlan quits her job on principle. With no idea what to do next, she retreats to Storm Harbour, an idyllic Victorian beach town.

Ellie's grandfather runs The Storm Harbour Chronicle, the trusted local newspaper. As Ellie is drawn into a story about a development which could split the coastal community - and involves her with the influential O'Neill family - an event she has long suppressed threatens to overwhelm her.

Dark clouds gather as rumours fly and tensions mount. And when a violent storm breaks and rages, Ellie will finally have to confront her past.

Di Morrissey AM is one of the most successful and prolific authors Australia has ever produced, publishing twenty-seven bestselling novels. She trained as a journalist, working in newspapers, magazines, television, film, theatre and advertising around the world. Her fascination with different countries, their cultural, political and environmental issues, has been the catalyst for her novels, which are all inspired by a particular landscape. In 2017, in recognition of her achievements, Di was inducted into the Australian Book Industry Awards Hall of Fame with the prestigious Lloyd O'Neil Award. In 2019, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia.

Before the Storm by Di Morrissey. Published by Pan Macmillan Australia.

CHARLIE RUNGA MM



ABOVE: Raymond Charles 'Charlie' Runga MM (Ouyen District History & Genealogy Centre).

RIGHT: Charlie Runga's grave at Leeton (Karleen Reilly).



Raymond Charles 'Charlie' Runga was a son of Charles Runga and Eliza Runga (nee Bourne). Charles, a widower, had married 21 year old Eliza in 1887 when Charles was 44. Charles was a renowned railway ganger and ploughman, having been the first Aboriginal man to have competed in a ploughing match, at Mt Barker Springs in 1865.

Charlie had been recommended for the higher-level Distinguished Conduct Medal, but was awarded the Military Medal instead. The citation read:

For conspicuous gallantry on the 23rd day of August 1918 at Herleville Wood. During the attack, when the left portion of his company had come under exceptionally heavy machinegun fire from a wood in front, this soldier taking charge of a small party dashed forward to the wood and succeeded in capturing two hostile machineguns and their crew of 16 men. On another occasion, later on in the day, this soldier rushed forward alone over 70 yards of ground without a vestige of cover and despite point blank machinegun fire succeeded in bombing the enemy from a communication trench, thus enabling the remainder of his platoon to continue their advance. This latter feat was a heroic example of utter disregard of personal safety and the desire at all costs to worst the enemy, any man of which with one shot calmly aimed could have killed Private Runga.

He left the UK for Australia on 22 July 1919, disembarked in Melbourne on 2 September 1919 and was discharged on 25 October 1919.

On 24 January 1920, Charlie was presented with his Military Medal at Government House, Melbourne. Shortly afterwards he was passing his medal around a group of men in Swanston Street when the medal was not returned. It is not known if he ever received a replacement. The theft was reported in The Argus newspaper.

His mother Eliza had married another Aboriginal man after the death of Charlie's father. Two of Charlie's half-brothers also served in the First World War, Arthur Henry Fox (who survived the war) and Samson Daniel Fox (killed serving with the 38th Battalion in May 1917).

After the war, Charlie returned to the Wimmera, but then travelled widely, in 1933 he was in Moree. Charlie was church deacon and treasurer at Darlington Point church in the Griffith region of NSW, and led the group that built the first church in 1937, and rebuilt it in 1944-45. In 1936, he married Emily Glass (nee Kennedy), a Wiradjuri woman, who already had several children from her previous marriage. Emily died not long after her son Jack passed away in 1940. Charlie offered to help at other missions, and built and maintained churches at Cowra and at Moonahcullah mission near Deniliquin in the 1940's. In 1947, Charlie was living and working at Narrandera.

Charlie Runga passed away at Leeton, NSW on 21 March 1956 at the age of 66 years, and is buried in Leeton Cemetery. His name is inscribed on the path of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial at the Torrens Parade Ground, Adelaide.

IAN SMITH

This is an edited extract from the upcoming book 'For Love of Country' to be published in 2021.

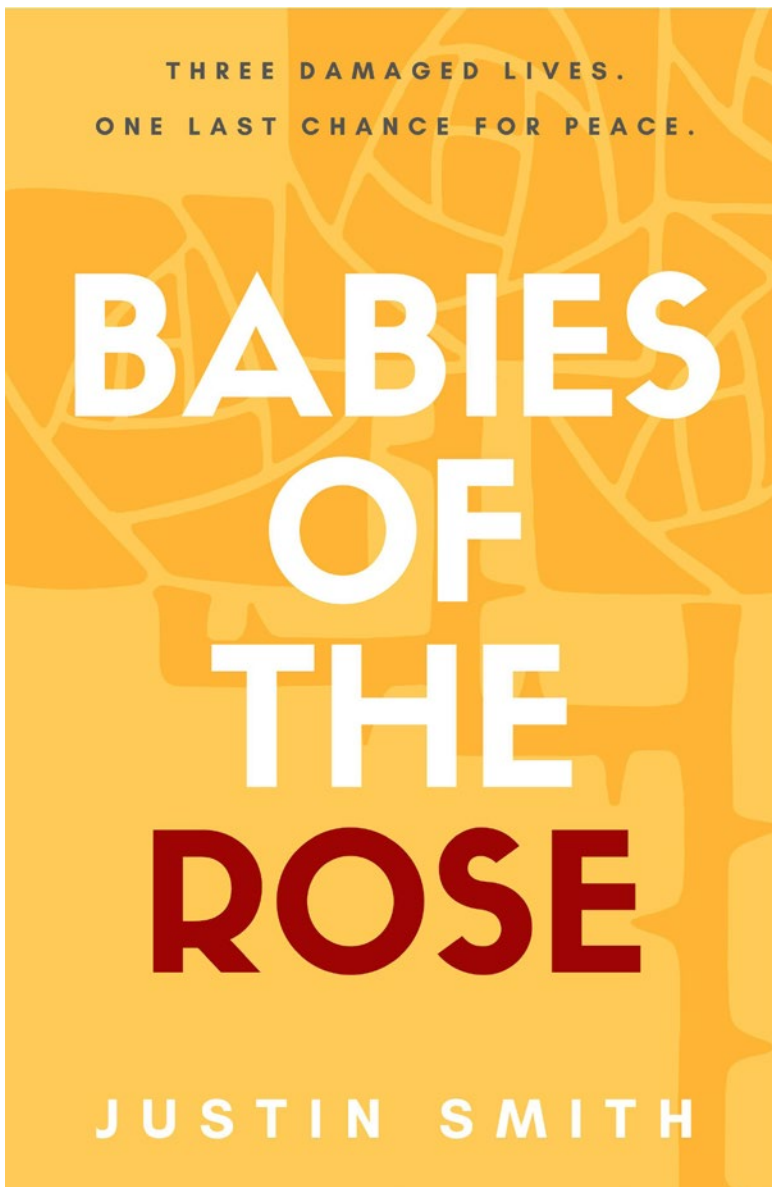
We believe Eliza was not of Aboriginal background. We understand that Charles was originally from Tjowilla country north-east of Renmark. Charles subsequently worked on the Kingston SE to Naracoorte railway line in the years before Charlie's birth, and Charlie was born at Naracoorte on 21 September 1889. He had two brothers, Arthur, who died in infancy, and Frederick.

Charlie worked as a farm labourer prior to the First World War; in April 1914 he was working at Renmark, and in October 1915 near Balranald, NSW. He had been working at Hopetoun in the Wimmera region of Victoria when he enlisted at Mildura on 28 February 1916, alongside Daniel Hodgekiss, another Aboriginal soldier. After some much needed dental treatment, Charlie embarked with the 17th reinforcements to the 6th Battalion (a Victorian-raised unit) on the Euripides at Melbourne on 4 April 1916.

They spent two weeks at Alexandria in Egypt before re-embarking for England on 31 May, arriving at Plymouth on 12 June 1916. After intensive training in England, Charlie embarked for France on 22 October, finally reaching the 6th Battalion on 29 December 1916 where it was performing rear area fatigues near Albert.

In late January 1917, Charlie entered the trenches for the first time near Albert, and the battalion rotated in and out of the front line in February and early March. Charlie reported sick in mid-March 1917 with scabies, but returned to the unit in early April for intensive training due to a re-organisation of the battalion structure. They spent more time in the trenches near Frémicourt, after which the battalion participated in the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May, and the Battle of the Menin Road in September.

Charlie was wounded in both arms on 26 October 1917 on the first day of the Second Battle of Passchendaele. He was sent to England to recover, and stayed there until May 1918 when he returned to France. He participated in the Battle of Amiens, then was gassed on 23 August 1918 after the battalion's attack near Herleville Wood as part of the Second Battle of Bapaume. Charlie was again evacuated to England. Whilst in England he received news that he had been awarded the Military Medal for his actions at Herleville.



James Kite is a Vietnam veteran. He's alone and at the end of his life, haunted by his role in the death of a mentally disabled Vietnamese boy during the War.

Grace Moore spent her teenage years hiding her body before becoming a plus size model and getting the attention she'd always craved. After she's assaulted during a street robbery, she finds herself in a new battle, with depression.

The Soldier is a serving military professional. After a failed suicide attempt, he returns to duty in Afghanistan. One day while on patrol in the mountains, he cradles a local woman as she dies — an event that follows him home to his wife and newborn child.

James, Grace and the Soldier meet on Anzac Day while watching the dawn service at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. Has fate brought them together for one last chance at finding peace?

Justin Smith is a Melbourne based journalist, broadcaster and writer. He's currently the presenter of a national radio program across the Macquarie Network (2GB, 3AW, 4BC, 6PR), a columnist with the Melbourne Herald Sun, and a weekly guest on Seven's Sunrise program and Sky News Australia. He has covered Australia's war history through his writing and broadcasting — including Afghanistan in 2013 when he was embedded with Australian troops, for which he received an award from Commercial Radio Australia, and a live national broadcast of the 100-year Gallipoli ceremony.

Babies of the Rose by Justin Smith. Published by Wilkinson Publishing.

The names of the 41,265 Australians and
New Zealanders who left on
First and Second Convoys are recorded here.





City of Albany National Anzac Centre

The centre is home to unique and special histories, with the funding for the construction of the Princess Royal Fortress itself borne from a rare act of pre-federation cooperation between all Australian states bar Tasmania.

Step back in time to 1893 and slowly return to the present day as you explore original gun batteries dug into the hillside of Mount Adelaide while surrounded by the natural beauty of Albany's coastline.

As you enter the National Anzac Centre, Albany's very own connection to the Anzac's is captured through a series of interactive visual and audio content displays that creates a deeply personal connection with the past, while paying tribute to those who served and still serve today.

Assume the identity of an actual service man or woman and follow their experience of the Great War, from recruitment through training, what life was like on convoys, the conflicts of WWI and whether they survived.

Remember the experience forever with a visit to the Forts Store, located within the historic grounds of the heritage listed Princess Royal Fortress.

The boutique shopping experience offers a variety of giftware, local produce, artisan products, books, jewellery and an impressive range of commemorative memorabilia and military based literature for those wishing to carry out further research or take home a special memento after their experience at the National Anzac Centre.

Immerse yourself in the rich history of Australia's Anzac legend, sit in anti-aircraft guns, explore underground magazines, take in the incredible views and reflect on the stories of the men and women who served in Australia's military.

Perched atop Mount Clarence overlooking the beautiful Princess Royal Harbour, Albany's award winning National Anzac Centre guides visitors through the unforgettable journey of local Anzac legends through a modern lens.

Plan your next visit today by visiting www.nationalanzaccentre.com.au



— INTERVIEW —

Greg T Ross chats with David Theodore about his role as curator at the National Anzac Centre and the Princess Royal Fortress.

PODCASTS: www.thelastpostmagazine.com/tlp-interviews

The Last Post: David Theodore from the National Anzac Centre in Albany, Western Australia, welcome to *The Last Post*.

David Theodore: Thank you for having me, Greg.

TLP: It's an utmost pleasure, David. Now, can you just let listeners know what's your role there at the National Anzac Centre?

DT: Right. So here at the National Anzac Centre and the Princess Royal Fortress, I'm the curator who takes care of the displays at the old Princess Royal Fortress site, and also maintains the collection as well.

TLP: Yeah, it's a rather unique establishment, a unique venue. It covers a lot of things that are now and modern, and yet it looks back with great reverence to the history of the Anzacs. David, just go through a bit of what is offered there at the Anzac Centre.

DT: Well, here at the National Anzac Centre, since 2014, since it was opened by the prime minister, Tony Abbott, and the New Zealand prime minister, John Key, we present the visitors the ability to go through and discover Anzac stories of not only Australian and New Zealand, fighters and Diggers, but also that of nurses, those that were actually reporting on the war, like Charles Bean, but some Turkish perspective and also a German perspective as well. So you take on a character of 30... there's 32 to choose from all that you're given, and then you go through and explore pretty much their side, their experiences through war, through the Great War and whether they returned or not.

TLP: Yeah. Look, and I guess David, that's a very important feature of what is offered there at the National Anzac Centre and the Princess Royal Fortress. I think, probably, it's a great thing to be able to personalize these experiences as Anzacs and nurses, and even journalists like Charles Bean, as you mentioned, went through. Can you give us a run down exactly, how many are on offer there for people to be partaking?

DT: Yeah. So there's 32 characters, all the way through from New Zealand perspective, Australian. We have a lot of visitors from international as well, so if they wish to experience what it was like leaving Australian shores and heading off to a war that was a distant land. We have throughout the whole center there're touchscreens that you go through and you can read about and experience the war in general,

but then also when you place your card down onto one of the activated sites, their story comes out. So you actually follow their story all the way through the centre, right until the end. And then once you've experienced that, you can actually then leave a message pretty much explaining how you felt going through it.

TLP: And it must be, I guess, an exciting and historical thing for you to be involved in, David. Tell us your feelings on you're lucky enough there to be the curator.

DT: Yeah, I started 2009 up here at the Princess Royal Fortress. So back then we knew that the centenary of the Anzacs of the Great War was coming, but we didn't have planned anything until about 2010. So my first couple of years here was solely about understanding what the Princess Royal Fortress actually meant to our community and how we could actually sort of present it. And into 2009, the site had been restored for 20 years, and it was a fantastic opportunity to actually understand what war and conflict meant to visitors to Albany and how we could present it. So the site actually changed dramatically since the concept of interpretive center in 2010 came about. So when it all started getting built, we've had some fantastic upgrades. And personally, for me, it's been a great discovery of what we can actually accomplish if we all put our heads together and find a story that we believe that should be told to the community.

TLP: Yes. And I guess also, you do have a lot of things there, interactive things, obviously, which encourage visitors to get involved. And I think this has been one of the successes of the National Anzac Centre there too, David, is that it is modern, and as I said before, yet historical. So I guess this is the secret. And you must be proud of to be partaking in something that, I know for example, the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, obviously gets a big niche of visitors, but increasingly so they're Albany too, because of the standard of what you present.

DT: You make a good point there. We do have the modern technology in the National Anzac Centre. It's immersive, it's one that, although I just can come through, it's quite easy to operate and actually go through. And it is really a most amazing experience. But the Princess Royal Fortress has the old historic buildings that have been restored by the city of Albany. And also that we still had the gun emplacements that protected the harbor since 1893. So people can still walk the ground

and actually walk in the footsteps of those who actually would have to defend Australia for 60 years.

TLP: Oh, I see David, so you get that perspective also.

DT: Yeah. So we have a precursor to the First War of 20 years. We talk about and show how if there was going to be an enemy attack on Australian soil and Albany was probably going to be one of the most likely places of invasion, if we can put it that way. Albany had been talked about 100 years before that, about how important the natural harbour was for shipping and trades, and it kind of bad when Eastern States started picking up their ears about the possible threat of the Russian invasion back in the 1880s. And that sort of caused us to start taking the defence of Western Australia very seriously.

TLP: Well, yeah, I guess too, it allows a trip back in time with the convenience of what you have to offer from a modern technological point of view. And I guess also, what about the Fort's store there too, David, people purchasing stuff. How do they go about that?

DT: Yeah, well with just in debit, on online shopping as well. The Fort store, the visitation was, it's a beautiful, restored old building that we've had. It was called the Military Institute and it was where the officers actually ate and dined. Here it's a beautiful stone building. So inside, we've got one of the largest arrays of military books and there's a whole myriad of t-shirts, souvenirs, and also we do stock replica medals. So for those families, the generations that know that the medals have gone down a certain lineage in the family, and they wish to sort of express their gratitude to the grandfathers or grandmothers that actually served in the Forces. So it caters for everything. And even caters obviously to the children that come in, they're able to take up a little souvenir or something to remember the visit by.

TLP: Isn't that absolutely magnificent David. I've been to Albany. I lived in Perth for a couple of years and we visited Albany on a couple of occasions. It's a beautiful area. And that alone is enough encouragement for people to visit.

DT: Yeah, well on site, so we're contained within the Albany Heritage Park. And in that it's 250 hectares of pristine A class reserve bushland. There's 15 to 20 kilometres of walking trails and art trails, throughout the place. And from there, we have 180 degree view of the sound, the harbour, all the way to the Porongurup

Stirling Ranges and then back into the town. So being caught between the ocean and the town centre, it's fantastic for people to actually come and see the breathtaking views and actually understand the layout of Albany and why we were so important to shipping and trades.

TLP: Yeah. Its history is attached to that of the National Anzac Centre, and the National Anzac Centre is displaying a history that's attached to Albany. So it's a beautiful part of Australia. It's an historical part of Australia and increasingly important in our remembrance of world events and our engagement in war through the eyes of soldiers, nurses, and indeed the journalists that you help people understand there at the centre.

DT: It's a fantastic place. It is actually a delight to come up here every day and a privilege. It's fantastic to drive around and to sort of understand that this beauty, we haven't really touched too much. And it's very similar to what it was like pre-European history with the local Menang Noongar people that used the land and the mounts for camping and also hunting. So that history is starting to be told and at the dual naming of Mount Clarence, which Coorndarup and also Mount Adelaide, Irirup, is a fantastic thing with the city of Albany is actually going through that process right now and having that recognition throughout the site.

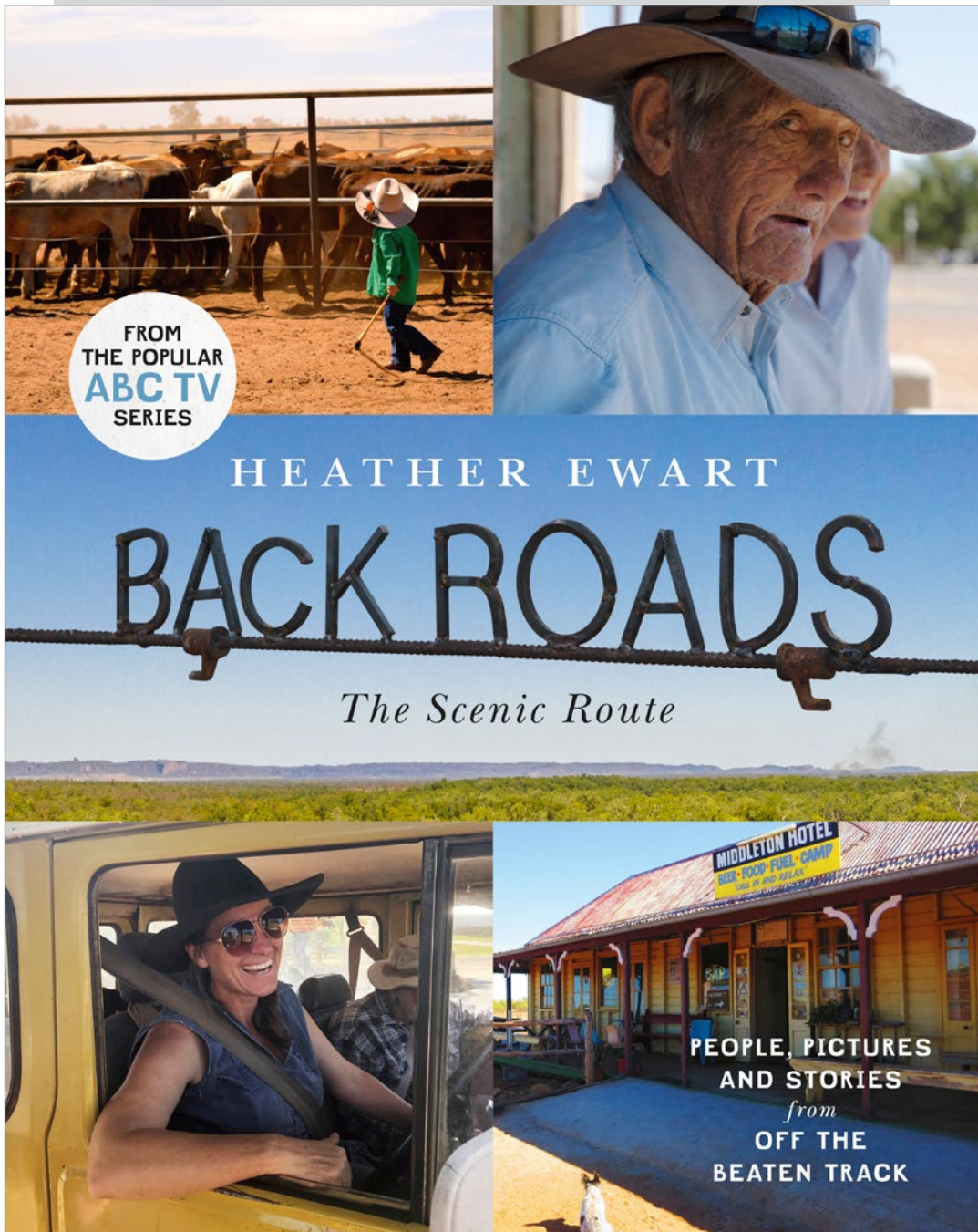
TLP: Isn't that absolutely fantastic. And David, just for listeners now, the best way to have a look at the National Anzac Centre online?

DT: Yes, nationalanzaccentre.com.au. Throughout there it's got the visits, the understanding of what you're going to experience. You can actually purchase online ticket for the centre. Tickets cost you \$25 for an adult, and there's also concessions, children as well. And there's also a DVA and Active Service Cards as well. So you just go there and you can book online. Obviously with the current climate in there with COVID-19, we do have limitations now on the building about 100 people into the centre. But if you pre-book you can get in there and if you turn up nice and early and experience the centre in itself. And then there's plenty of other things to see throughout the site.

TLP: Isn't that wonderful David, and we encourage all of us here at The Last Post, encourage people to not only go online to the National Anzac Centre but buy something, engage yourself with the history and you'll have a great time. So thanks again very much, David.

DT: Yeah, no problem. Thank you.

From the ABC Back Roads team, Australia's inspiring rural communities in splendid, vivid colour.



During the five years it has been appearing on our screens, ABC TV's Back Roads has taken us across Australia, through scorched deserts, along sapphire coasts, up breathtaking mountains and over gentle, rolling plains. It has shown us the rugged landscapes, the resilient communities and the extraordinary individuals who make a life in those areas outside the big cities.

In this book, we capture in vivid colour some of our favourite people and places. Full of glorious photos that show us the spirit, purpose, difficulties and humour of outback life, this book is a tribute to the surprising characters, the rarely told stories and the sometimes beautiful, sometimes strange places that exist along the back roads of our extraordinary country.

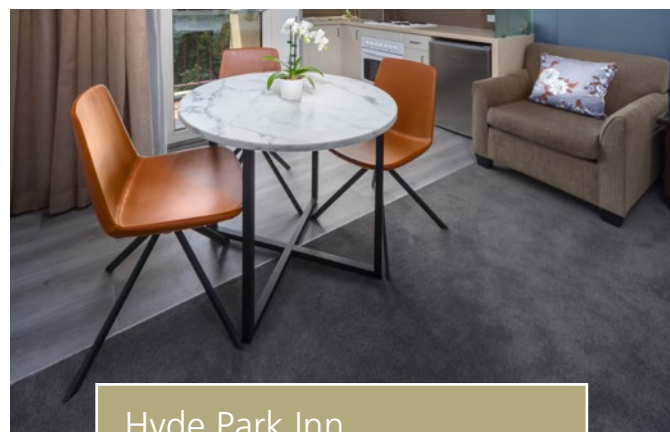
Heather Ewart is a much loved, award-winning journalist and the popular host of Back Roads. In a career at the ABC spanning four decades, she's been senior political reporter for flagship TV and radio news and current affairs programs, and a foreign correspondent posted to London, Washington and Brussels. Heather grew up on a farm in country Victoria and has now come full circle, travelling regional Australia to present Back Roads.

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'The Little Digger'

It was Christmas Day 1918, and the men of the Australian Flying Corps 4 Squadron had just sat down to enjoy a sumptuous Christmas lunch when a small French boy wandered in to the airmen's mess at Bickendorf Air Base in Germany.

Cold, hungry, and alone, the boy invited himself to the feast, sharing in the festivities as the men celebrated their first Christmas since the Armistice was signed on the 11th of November 1918.

He introduced himself as Honore, but the Australians couldn't pronounce it, so he became known to them as Henri, and was nicknamed "Little Digger" or "Digger".

His parents had been killed during the war, and he had survived four years on the battlefields of the Western Front, aided by the kindness of allied soldiers.

He was "adopted" by the Australians and quickly became part of squadron life, skating and joking with the men, catching rats, and hitching rides on planes. They chose Christmas Day as his birthday, and it was the one he would use for the rest of his life.

One of the men, Tim Tovell, became his unofficial guardian, giving the boy his name and smuggling him back to Australia, where he raised him as his son.

Australian War Memorial Historian Dr Meleah Hampton said the story of how Henri Hermene Tovell was adopted by the men of the Australian Flying Corps and smuggled into Australia was remarkable.

"He is one of those little kids who is a true casualty of war," Dr Hampton said.

"His father was killed in the early weeks of the war, possibly as a soldier, and his mother – and possibly a sister – were blown up and killed when the Germans shelled their house.

"From what we can work out, he had been going from unit to unit, spending a little bit of time with them, getting food and whatever, before moving on to the next one, and that's what he was doing when he wandered into the Australian Flying Corps mess on Christmas Day 1918.

"We don't know when he was born, and we're not even sure what town he really came from, or what his surname really was, or anything.

"He didn't know how old he was when he arrived in the Australian Flying Corps mess, but the Australian doctors said they thought he was about nine years old at that stage."

The boy became something of a mascot for the squadron, and the men determined to smuggle him home to Australia. Tovell wrote to his wife, Gertie, telling her that he didn't think one extra in the family would make that much difference.

"Tim Tovell was an air mechanic who had recently joined 4 Squadron," Dr Hampton said.

"He has quite an interesting story as well. He was English, and he got married in 1911, but his lungs were no good.

"The doctors thought dry air would be good for him, so he migrated to Australia with his new wife, and they set up home near Dalby in the Darling Downs in Queensland.

"He gave his age as 38 when he enlisted in 1917, but I think he might have been closer to 40 ...

He was a husband and a father, so when this little boy walked into the airmen's mess, he really felt for him, and they formed quite a bond.

"Tovell determined that he was going to bring the boy home to Australia, and that created quite a stir.

"The French and the English authorities didn't want him to go. They wanted him to go and live in an orphanage, so the Australians decided to smuggle him home with them on a troopship. They carried him on board in a kit bag, and then hid him in a bag of bread, or a bag of oats, until it was too late to turn back.

"On the way home, another passenger on the ship happened to be the Premier of Queensland, and he was able to arrange for the paperwork for the little boy to get off the ship and enter Queensland."

Tovell and his wife, Gertrude, adopted the boy and he lived with them and their family in Queensland. Their four-year-old son, Timmy, had died in 1919, while Tovell was overseas.

"It's a really interesting story," Dr Hampton said.

"This little French boy was all alone and one man said, 'Nope, I'm not going to watch him walk out the door,' when plenty of people had watched him walk out that door before.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

111 2592

Henri in a tailored AIF uniform made for him in London at the expense of the squadron's members.

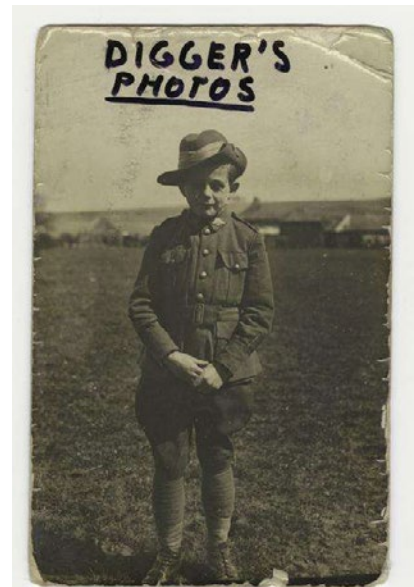
"COLD, HUNGRY, AND ALONE, THE BOY INVITED HIMSELF TO THE FEAST, SHARING IN THE FESTIVITIES AS THE MEN CELEBRATED THEIR FIRST CHRISTMAS SINCE THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED ON THE 11TH OF NOVEMBER 1918."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P02658.004

A group portrait of No. 4 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps taken after Christmas dinner, 1918. In the centre, sitting on the knee of an airman, is Henri Heremene.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AWM020.22.318



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00867.004

Henri boxing at Hurdcott Camp, England, with two unidentified members of the AIF.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H13588

Private (Pte) Timothy William Tovell, an air mechanic with No 4 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, with the French orphan boy Henri Heremene. France. c. February 1919.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H13589

Timothy Tovell showing an oat sack used to smuggle Henri to England. March 1919.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P00867.001

Studio portrait of brothers Private Edward John (Ted) Tovell (centre) and Private Timothy William Tovell (right) with Henri (left). May 1919.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A03673

Tim, Henri and an unidentified soldier on deck of transport ship Kaiser-I-Hind en route to Australia. c. May 1919.

“THE BOY BECAME SOMETHING OF A MASCOT FOR THE SQUADRON, AND THE MEN DETERMINED TO SMUGGLE HIM HOME TO AUSTRALIA. TOVELL WROTE TO HIS WIFE, GERTIE, TELLING HER THAT HE DIDN'T THINK ONE EXTRA IN THE FAMILY WOULD MAKE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE.”

“There is a story that suggests a British artillery officer became quite close with him at one point as well, but he was killed-in-action too.

“He's only young when he wanders into the airmen's mess, and he can't remember names and ranks and surnames and all of those sorts of things, so it is difficult piecing it all together ...

“He can't explain to the Australians who he is, where he came from, and who these other people were that looked after him, so we've never really been able to work out exactly who he was, and I don't think he really ever knew who he was either.

“Tim Tovell was a steady and strong person for Henri to cleave to. He really needed that, and I think Tovell was happy to be the person that he needed.”

Henri became a much loved member of the Tovell family, but his story has a tragic ending. He was killed in a motorcycle accident in Spring Street, Melbourne, in May 1928.

He had moved to Melbourne in the 1920s to work as a mechanic with the Royal Australian Air Force like his adopted father. He had been staying at Point Cook, and applied to join the air force, but because he was a French citizen, he was stopped from doing so by the French High Commissioner.

Despite not being a member of the air force, Henri was buried with military honours at Fawkner Cemetery in Melbourne.

The story of the “Little Digger” resonated with the public, and The Argus newspaper launched an appeal to pay for a memorial headstone to be erected over his grave.

The headstone featured a statue of the young Henri as he looked when Tovell and the men of the Australian Flying Corps first met him. It disappeared in the 1950s and a new stone was paid for by the RAAF Association of Victoria and the Federal Government.

Tovell and his wife, Gertie, were never told about the desecration. It was thought it would be too much for them.

CLAIRE HUNTER



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL PO3638.002

Honore (Henri) 'Digger' Heremene c. 1919.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL H13597

Timothy and Henri. c 1925.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL P00067.003

Henri on the motorcycle he was riding when he was killed in May 1928.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL P03001

The grave in Fawkner Cemetery of Henri Heremene 'Digger' Tovell.

“DESPITE NOT BEING A MEMBER OF THE AIR FORCE, HENRI WAS BURIED WITH MILITARY HONOURS AT FAWKNER CEMETERY IN MELBOURNE. THE STORY OF THE “LITTLE DIGGER” RESONATED WITH THE PUBLIC, AND THE ARGUS NEWSPAPER LAUNCHED AN APPEAL TO PAY FOR A MEMORIAL HEADSTONE TO BE ERECTED OVER HIS GRAVE.”

Reducing Criminal Offending by Australian Defence Force Veterans

Australia's allies, Canada, the United States of America, Scotland and England, have been researching the connection between military service and criminal offending for decades.

However, while ex-service organisations in Australia have long suspected that veterans are over-represented in prisons, there have not been any Australian studies that identify veterans in the criminal justice system or try to understand why veterans commit crimes.

Research Unit on Military Law and Ethics (RUMLAE) researchers from the University of Adelaide, Kellie Toole and Elaine Waddell, have been undertaking an Australian-first, pilot study in South Australia on veterans and criminal offending. Since 2018, they have been interviewing veterans who are in prison, on home detention and on parole, to identify the offences they commit after their release from the Australian Defence Force (ADF), and to understand what experiences before, during and after their military service contributed to their criminal offending.

The veterans who have been interviewed have been convicted of a range of serious offences including manslaughter; attempted rape; domestic violence; cultivation, manufacture and importing drugs; assaults; armed robbery; property damage; and causing injury through dangerous driving.

The interviews show that, in most cases, experiences in and after the military do not themselves result in criminal offending. Rather, problems that veterans faced before they joined the ADF, often while they were young children, led them on a path toward offending that the military reversed. However, most interviewees found their discharge from the military was sudden and traumatic, and contributed to a downward spiral of mental health, substance abuse, relationship breakdown and criminal offending.

The issues identified in South Australia are consistent with international research findings, and suggest that all military services need to provide more support to veterans transitioning into civilian life.

Veterans have suggested that their transition experience would have been improved through: more time between deciding to leave the military and actually leaving; more guidance on career options; written references and explanations of military skills and qualifications they could provide to civilian employers; peer mentoring; and opportunities for maintaining regular contact with the service after their release.



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Recalling that, in cases not covered by the law in force, the human person remains under the protection of the principles of humanity and the dignity of the human person.

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Departments of corrections could also help to reduce veteran reoffending by offering support services for people who wish to identify as a veteran, and connecting veterans to ex-service organisations that can assist them with support, accommodation and employment upon their release from prison.

The research team wants to connect with organisations that work with veterans who have had contact with the criminal justice system, and to hear directly from veterans who have been convicted of criminal offences, and are willing to share their experiences of serving in the military, criminal offending, prison and community sentences, and rehabilitation.

KELLIE TOOLE

Research Unit on Military Law and Ethics, Adelaide Law School, University of Adelaide.

If you are a veteran or work with veterans anywhere in Australia and are interested in the project, please feel free to contact: Kellie Toole at kellie.toole@adelaide.edu.au.



The Holocaust through the lens of Australian Jewish refugees

Two UNSW academics are on a quest to unearth Holocaust stories more Australians can relate to as survivors pass away.

Australian Jewish refugee Symcha Gausman thought his wife and children were safe where he left them in Poland. The 26-year-old arrived in Australia in 1939, hoping to establish himself with a job and a home before sending for his family to join him.

In 1943, he managed to send them a food parcel with the help of a Jewish humanitarian agency from Portugal. But by that time, his young family had already been murdered by Nazis in Auschwitz. His children were four and six years old.

"The year before, the community had been liquidated and sent to Auschwitz," Dr Lanicek, a Holocaust scholar with UNSW Arts & Social Sciences, says. "And if a young woman with two children arrived in Auschwitz, we know there was no chance of survival."

This heartbreaking story is one of many Dr Jan Lanicek will be unearthing from

the State Library of NSW archives to piece together a strand of Australian history rarely revisited until now.

"It's very easy today, with different databases, to find out about the fate of people at that time," Dr Jan Lanicek says.

Dr Lanicek says he is collating these stories with colleague Dr Ruth Balint to ensure newer generations have access to first-hand experiences of the Holocaust as survivors pass away.

"We rely on survivors to tell their stories," Dr Lanicek says. "In this way, we make the connection between ourselves and the Holocaust. But in a few years, even now, it will be very difficult to get them to talk to students and other audiences."

So, he says, we need to find new ways of connecting people to the Holocaust, "especially in Australia which is so far from Europe".

He says many migrants in Australia can identify with the stories of Jewish refugees who arrived here before their families were expected to join them.

One of his students noted similarities between the story of Mr Gausman and that of his own father who lived for 10 years in Australia before his wife from India could join him, he says.

"Of course, it was a completely different situation [and outcome] but this connection, it brought it home to him, the feeling of a separated family," Dr Lanicek says.

Dr Lanicek also highlights the situations of many people in Australia who are from the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere who "read the newspapers" about ISIS, the Taliban or persecution in places like Myanmar.

"It's not some vague comment about human rights violations. It's about the families or relatives who still live in those countries," Dr Lanicek says. "Their situations are not exactly the same, but they are fairly similar to what the Jews experienced during the Second World War."



Desperation and despair exacerbated by distance

Dr Lanicek says men often migrated first because the Nazi regime posed a greater threat to them in 1930s Germany. It was the strategy for the man to get settled with a job, a house and then his family would follow.

But in World War II, “very often the man managed to emigrate, then war broke out and his wife, children and parents remained in Germany or in Poland ... So, the man [may have] lived in Sydney, Adelaide or Melbourne, with his wife and small children in Nazi-occupied Europe, and he reads the news, so he knows what’s happening there.

“He’s no [financially] better off in Australia but he still tries to contact humanitarian agencies and sacrifices all his money to pay for parcels to be sent because he feels so powerless but still feels like he has to do something,” he says.

“He knows they’re put into a ghetto. And he has postal communication – up to 30 words [at a time] via the Red Cross. But then silence

comes. And he doesn’t know what is happening [to his family].”

Dr Lanicek has uncovered many accounts of feelings of desperation and powerlessness as men lost communication with their loved ones, and migration between Germany and Australia became practically impossible.

“We read it in the letters: ‘I don’t know what to do. I know it’s unlikely the parcels will get there, but I feel I have to do something otherwise I can’t live like this anymore’,” Dr Lanicek says.

Australian history in the Holocaust

An expert in Holocaust studies originally from the Czech Republic, Dr Lanicek says he had little idea about Australia’s connections to the Holocaust before arriving in Sydney eight years ago.

He says the only time Australia is mentioned with any significance in historical studies on the Holocaust is when the Australian politician Sir Thomas Walter White spoke at the July 1938 conference in Évian, France.

The 32 nations, including the UK, France, US, Australia and New Zealand, had gathered to discuss opening their borders for Jewish refugees fleeing persecution from Nazi Germany.

Australia’s delegate, Sir White infamously declared, “as we have no real racial problem, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration”, capping Australia’s annual refugee quota at 5000.

Australia welcomed nearly 8000 Jewish refugees from 1933 to 1938, with another 5000 arriving in 1939. By 1961, Australia’s Jewish population increased from 23,000 in 1933 to 60,000, with many seeking refuge following the horrors of WWII genocide.

Deaths at the hands of the Nazis

The UK and France declared war two days after Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. It officially ended six years later in May 1945, with the Nazis surrendering to the Allied forces.

But during that time the Nazis killed about six million Jews, nearly nine million Soviet, Polish and Serbian civilians combined, 250,000 Romani, 250,000 people with disabilities, possibly thousands of homosexuals, about three million Soviet prisoners of war and countless more.

The mass killings prompted lawyer of Polish-Jew descent Raphael Lemkin in 1944 to coin the word genocide, from the Greek word ‘genos’ meaning race or tribe, and ‘cide’ from Latin meaning killing.

The responsibility rests with individual moral choice

Among the many lessons to be learned, Dr Lanicek says we need to emphasise that the Holocaust happened in what people considered even then one of the most civilised nations in the world.

“Very often people believe that such human rights violations can only happen in third world countries, in Africa, or in military dictatorships in Latin America and Asia,” he says.

“But this happened in Germany which even at that time was one of the centres of Western civilisation; so, this shows that no society, though it would not be easy, is immune from slipping into brutal persecution of one group of the population.”

The United Nations was established in the aftermath of World War II in 1945, and among its four guiding principles, committed itself to “maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights”.

But the responsibility also rests with individual moral choice, as Dr Lanicek says; “people then as now have a choice in how they respond when they know something wrong or unjust is happening or being said.

“[Because] the other option is to be silent and not do anything. So, maybe the lesson to learn is that if more people speak up and point to problems in societies then it prevents the reverse from happening.”

It was Germany’s own Chancellor Willy Brandt from 1969-1974 who said, of the atrocities of the Holocaust, years later, “Too few people made conscious decisions against evil”.

By contrast, Dr Lanicek gives the example of Aboriginal elder and Yorta Yorta man William Cooper who in 1938 led a protest of Australian Aboriginal League members to the German consulate in Melbourne after hearing about the persecution of the Jews.

Mr Cooper’s actions show how talking about these stories can create the kind of empathy required to speak out against human rights violations and to take action.

“But it is true that people often don’t care until it touches them personally. And they always try to justify to themselves why not to react when they witness some human rights abuses, as long as they are not directly threatened or impacted by it.

“One of the main slogans that comes from the Holocaust is ‘never’ again’.

“I mean, we should learn [from it]. But the question is, have we learned from the past? I don’t think so.”

RACHEL GRAY, UNSW

CENTENARY

On March 31st, 2021, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) will commemorate 100 years of service to the Nation. From modest beginnings in 1921, the Air Force has grown into a potent, world class Air Force which Australia relies upon in both conflict and peace. When Australia calls, the Air Force is ready to respond.

A series of national events and initiatives are planned for 2021 that will honour the sacrifices and service of the last 100 years, to demonstrate today's highly capable force, and foreshadow the Air Force's continued evolution into the future.

One of those initiatives is to recognise and honour the service of Air Force Centenarians. That is people who have already turned 100 or will turn 100 during 2021. This will include RAAF Nursing Service, the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, and the Women's Royal Australian Air Force, but will be dependent upon how activities may be affected by COVID restrictions.

Follow our Centenary Commemorative activities on our website www.airforce.gov.au/100 to keep up to date.

CALL OUT

Two Air Force Centenarians who turned 100 during 2020 were Squadron Leader Jim Beckingsale, AFC and Flight Lieutenant Roger 'Brian' Winspear, AM.

SQUADRON LEADER JIM BECKINGSALE, AFC BY SQUADRON LEADER MICHAEL VEITCH

*'So, Beckingsale, how do you feel about flying-boats?'
'Wouldn't know, Sir. Never even seen one'
'Excellent! You'll be piloting one tomorrow'.*

With these somewhat alarming words, then Flight Lieutenant Jim Beckingsale was introduced to the famous Consolidated PBY Catalina, to fly maritime missions lasting up to thirty hours at a stretch during World War Two.

Born in Castlemaine 100 years ago on 23rd May 1920, Jim remembers having to be driven to Melbourne by his father to join the RAAF in 1940, as he hadn't yet obtained his driver's license. For this quiet country lad however, it was the start of the greatest adventure of his life.

Like many of his generation, Jim had been bitten by the flying bug as a kid, when the heroic figure of Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith dropped down onto his local football field and – for a shilling a head – offered locals a twenty-minute joy ride over the town in his trusty Ford Trimotor (Smithy – legend of aviation though he was – was permanently cash-strapped).

Thus, when war was declared, Jim's choice of the RAAF was a simple one. "Everyone wanted to be a pilot", he recalls, "but I was lucky – I was selected to be one before I was even asked". Swept up in the organisational goliath of the Empire Air Training Scheme, Jim was one of the relatively few Australians sent to train in Rhodesia, then South Africa and finally to No. 1 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit at Silloth, in England's North-west.

Settling into his training on Lockheed Hudsons with Royal Air Force Coastal Command, Jim was surprised one morning to be brought before the Commanding Officer. "Ah, Beckingsale", asked the senior officer, "how would you like to go home?" Jim had no idea what he was talking about. "But I've only just got here, Sir", he pleaded innocently.

Unbeknown to Jim, Japan's recent entry into the war had prompted Australian Prime Minister John Curtin to recall as many Australian forces as Churchill

would let him get away with, prompting one of the mightiest personality clashes of the war.

In fact, Jim didn't quite make it home, but in October 1942 arrived at Koggala on the southern tip of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to join No 205 Squadron RAF, flying the Catalina flying-boat on convoy escort work and long-range anti-submarine patrols out over the vast turquoise-blue expanse of the Indian Ocean.

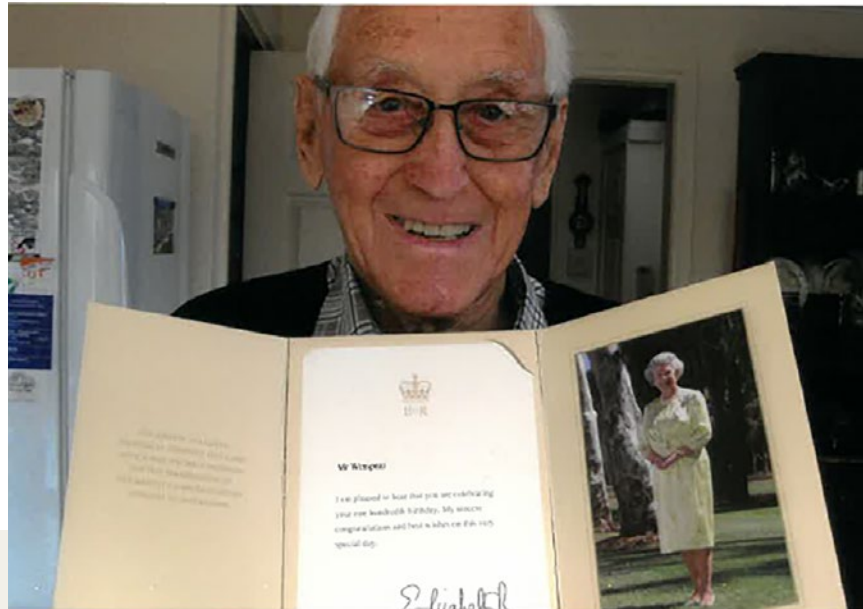
Anti-sub patrols were gruelling affairs, involving hour upon hour of criss-crossing vast stretches of ocean in all weathers. It was mentally taxing, and often tedious work, which never allowed for one's alertness to slacken even for a moment. As Don Brown, his trusted navigator – another Australian from Melbourne – once remarked down the intercom, "You know Beck, there's a bloody lot of water in this war".

Sightings of the enemy were rare, but often fatal. On one occasion, one of 205's Cats was jumped by five Japanese Ki-27 'Nate' fighters, setting the flying-boat ablaze, which then exploded just above the sea with the loss of all seven crew.

Living conditions at Koggala were primitive, and the food was meagre "Mainly William Angliss Bully beef and rhubarb", recalls Jim. "There weren't much heroics in the job". His medal row however, belies this with the inclusion (along with the rare combination of both the Atlantic and Burma Stars) of the distinctive silver shield and red and white stripe of the Air Force Cross, awarded for bravery in the air, but not necessarily in combat. While remaining tight-lipped as to the official reason for the honour, Jim recounts a surprise visit to the station by no lesser figure than Lord Louis Mountbatten.

"He turned up one afternoon, accompanied by three or four beautiful ladies, uttered some brave things, then drove off in a jeep, throwing a few gongs out the back. I happened to be standing behind the jeep".

Though perhaps not as glamorous as flying the Spitfire or Hurricane, airmen like Squadron Leader Jim Beckingsale contributed to the war effort nonetheless, risking their lives doing the jobs that needed to be done in the dark days of World War Two, bringing to the task that characteristic Australian sense of duty, modesty, and humour.



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT ROGER "BRIAN" WINSPEAR, AM BY FLIGHT LIEUTENANT LAIN THORN

Not even COVID-19 could dampen the enthusiasm of former Roger "Brian" Winspear when he celebrated his 100th birthday on 26 September 2020, with a small gathering of friends in Hobart.

With war declared in Europe in 1939, Tasmanian born, Flight Lieutenant Winspear signed up to become aircrew with the Royal Australian Air Force. He became a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner in 1940 and his first posting to No.2 Squadron at Laverton Victoria flying in Douglas DC2 and Lockheed Hudson light Bombers.

The squadron relocated to Darwin and then Kupang in West Timor where they provided air cover for 1500 Tasmanians of the ill-fated 2/40th Battalion, and conducted many reconnaissance missions over Indonesia.

During a bombing raid in Darwin, Flight Lieutenant Winspear said, "I looked up at them, the sun glinted on the side of the bombs and there were thousands of them, they were directly overhead. *"I stuck a cork in my mouth to help with concussion from the bomb blasts and I got down, right in the bottom of the trench and was lucky to only sustain bomb splinter injuries to my hands and eye."*

Flight Lieutenant Winspear continued to provide service through to November 1945, with 600 hours flying in his log book, he discharged with 700 pounds (deferred pay) and a ticket home.

Never one to rest, on his return to Tasmania he moved to Bicheno where he became a well-known business owner, tourism developer and community figure. In 1993 he was awarded an Order of Australia for services to the tourist industry and the community.

He also fought for his squadron's recognition for their outstanding performance in the Darwin and Indonesian theatres in 1942-43 for which the Squadron was awarded a United States President's citation.

The RAAF's 100th birthday is not too far away and Brian Winspear has every intention of celebrating. *"I'm in good health and I intend donning my original uniform for the Air Force's 100th birthday celebrations in March 2021"*.

ABOVE LEFT: Jim Beckingsale - Jim's impressive medal tally includes the unusual combination of both Burma and Atlantic Stars, as well as the even rarer Air Force Cross, and over the War Medal, the leaf denoting Mentioned in Despatches.

ABOVE RIGHT: Brian Winspear - Brian with his 100th birthday greetings card from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Royal Australian Air Force and the South West Pacific Air Campaign 1941-45

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, few in Australia could have predicted that, by December 1941, the nation would also be fighting a war against Japan.

Even those who were concerned about Japan's growing military power and expansionist policies would not have thought that, by February 1942, Darwin would be bombed and that Japan would occupy a region encompassing parts of Burma, China and across the south west pacific.

For Australia, the emerging threat to national security meant a major rethinking of the entire war effort was required. The experience of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) in shifting to meet the new threat is a story of a small training focused force's remarkable transformation into the fourth largest air force in the world.

When war came to the Pacific in 1941, the RAAF was in a poor state to conduct operations in what became known as the South West Pacific Area (SWPA). The main focus of the RAAF's efforts had been directed towards training aircrew for service with the Royal Air Force (RAF), to conduct operations in the European and Mediterranean theatres. Under an agreement known as the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS), the RAAF was committed to providing 194 aircrew a month, rising to 784 a month from December 1939 to March 1943. The RAAF was investing heavily in aircraft and facilities focused almost entirely on training. So when Japan entered the war in December 1941, the RAAF did not have a single modern fighter aircraft in Australia, no modern bombers and no means to deploy and sustain personnel into the remote regions to Australia's north.

The first hint of an emerging RAAF able to meet the Japanese threat was the formation of No. 75 Squadron in Townsville on 4 March 1942. The unit was equipped with modern P-40 Kittyhawk fighters and led by experienced squadron and flight commanders brought back from postings with the RAF in North Africa. No. 75 Squadron went into action over Port Moresby on 21 March just hours after flying in to the beleaguered town. On that day a Japanese reconnaissance aircraft was successfully ambushed and shot down. On the following day the squadron attacked a Japanese airbase at Lae, destroying 11 enemy fighters on the ground and in the subsequent dogfighting. For the next six weeks the aircrew fought a lone air campaign against the Japanese bombers and fighters which were attacking Port Moresby in preparation of a ground invasion.

In the following years of the war, the RAAF underwent a massive expansion program. This resulted in not only sustaining the training program demanded of the EATS commitment, but in developing a radar network around Australia and into the SWPA. RAAF Catalina aircraft had been the first Allied aircraft to go into action in the Battle of the Coral Sea, while the fighter and bomber aircraft had been the decisive factor in the victory at the Battle of Milne Bay in August 1942.

The RAAF was not only being equipped with modern aircraft, but was fast becoming capable of deploying and sustaining air operations in the remote areas of the SWPA. Airfield construction squadrons were formed, as were



ABOVE: The RAAF Catalina aircraft proved to be a versatile long range strike and maritime patrol aircraft ideally suited to operations across the SWPA.



BELOW: RAAF Hudson aircraft circa 1941. These aircraft and crews were the first Allied units to go into action against the Japanese in World War II, some hours before the Pearl Harbor air raids.



RAAF Airfield Milne Bay circa 1944 (RAAF Museum)



RAAF armorers prepare a Kittyhawk fighter for another attack during the crucial Battle of Milne Bay, August 1942.

airfield defence forces alongside logistical, engineering and medical units. All were able to deploy to the SWPA sustained by a fleet of some 2000 RAAF marine craft.

Fighting alongside American forces and the Australian Navy and Army, the RAAF was part of the great fightback through the region, being part of the forces in the retaking of New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Borneo. The RAAF could even offer critical capability to the massive US forces deployed to the SWPA, with a highly secret RAAF signals intelligence unit and an airfield construction squadron – the only Australian ground units to be included in the American forces which liberated the Philippines in 1944-45.

MARTIN JAMES, AIR FORCE HISTORIAN

GETTING YOUR HERITAGE READY FOR THE FIRE SEASON

This Fire Season Preparation Guide is not a replacement for a bushfire plan, but should supplement it. A bush fire plan (including air quality plan) should be prepared by following guides from your local government or organisations like the Red Cross.

Personal safety is always about making risk assessment and practicing the implementation of strategies to negate the worse case scenarios. Unfortunately in Australia, we know that fire can move fast, and shift suddenly with wind. Access roads can be hazardous and exits impeded. Having a plan and activating it swiftly and confidently is essential. This guide is to tweak your memory on things that often get overlooked in the heat of the moment.

What can you do now?

In an evacuation scenario there are many things which need to be left behind. Some family items, such as grandfather clocks, Persian carpets, large art works, pieces of furniture are likely to be too heavy to move or have no hope to fit in the car. Before the fire season begins consider;

- Take photos of these items and document their story (It may be possible for a copy of the item to be made if it is lost, so make sure these are good images that catch all the details necessary),
- If they are valuable, you may want a conservator to visit the house and do an independent condition report and take images,
- Consider an alternative family custodian away from fire risk regions to care for these items during the season,
- Make sure the family all agrees that the risk is acceptable. (Many family feuds have begun when an irreplaceable item is lost and other family members feel that is could/should have been out of harms way),
- Ensure these items are known to your insurer,
- Make sure things you do plan to take are accessible. Roof spaces and the back of sheds are not safe places and it can be impossible to get a ladder and retrieve items stored there when you have limited evacuation time,
- Return borrowed items prior to the fire season. This will save you worrying about getting them out,
- Make sure you have digital files backed up and in a form that is portable,
- Swap duplicates and photo negatives with a friend so you have your photos and their negatives just in case,
- Make sure you know what each person in the family would want to take. Have a shelf where these things are kept, teddy, favourite books, jewellery, trophies etc.,
- Have a shelf in a communal area for the family photos, family bible, spare hard drive so these things are all in one place and easy to grab,
- Consider how you store things. Having precious items in a chest or camphor box, which is too heavy to lift and wont fit in the car is not helpful,
- Make sure you have empty plastic tubs in the shed or under the house so you have something, which will fit in the car, to put things in. (There is no time to head to the shops during a fire),
- If you are away on holiday, make sure the person feeding the cat or checking on the house knows which items matter if they may have time to rescue things on your behalf,
- Put a file together in the filing cabinet with insurance paper work, deeds, ID, prescriptions and the other items that are necessary. Put some cash in the file too because if power is down so are automatic teller machines. You may need cash for fuel etc as you are leaving,
- Make sure items are not tucked away where you won't find them in a hurry, and
- Have flat discs of card for sandwiching rare record albums so they aren't heat effected.



Remember the fire season doesn't care about Covid. So a box of Covid supplies is also a good idea. This should include sanitizer, face masks, gloves, and water bottles so you can gather with people in evacuation centers if necessary. Think about your furry friends as well, have pet food and spare collar lead and water in the dog/cat carrier.

The following is a memory jogging list of things we know often are forgotten in an evacuation:

- Photo albums, stamp albums, slides and film reels,
- Hard drives, laptops Jewelry boxes/ Medal sets (medals can be re issued on occasion),
- Special tools from past family professions or from the shed,
- Sheet music and instruments, rare records,
- Recipe books, (hand-written family ones especially) and rare books
- Board games and chess sets, and
- Favorite childhood toys, books, Christmas decorations. favorite vases or ornaments.

VICTORIA PEARCE

Last Post readers can write in with concerns or queries about the artefacts they have in their family collection. Letters will be answered by a qualified conservator from Endangered Heritage Pty Ltd. Endangered Heritage is a conservation business in Canberra, endorsed by the National RSL for conserving our military history. Both Victoria and Andrew Pearce have years of experience at the Australian War Memorial and with other military collections.

Write in to LastPost@endangeredheritage.com to get a response in the following issue.



The Sheean VC will right some of the wrong done to the Navy

When Teddy Sheean receives his Victoria Cross, as the Prime Minister has recommended recently, and as the Queen has confirmed, it will right a wrong which has persisted since World War II.

No member of the Royal Australian Navy has ever received a Victoria Cross.

That of course is not a wrong in itself. Bravery awards should not be given out on a quota system.

But that the Australian Army has received 96, and the Royal Australian Air Force four, suggested that the Navy has never deserved a Cross, the ultimate bravery award. And it has.

Naval actions are often fought out of sight of land. Sometimes an entire ship's company can die fighting, and leave no witnesses. That happened with HMAS Sydney off Western Australia, in 1941, in her fight with the Kormoran. 645 of our finest died.

The cruiser HMAS Perth fought to the end alongside USS Houston, against overwhelming Japanese forces. Most of her ship's company died, and the survivors became POWs, so there were no witnesses to complete any bravery recommendations for years.

Teddy Sheean, an 18 year old Ordinary Seaman from Tasmania, showed outstanding courage and determination when, instead of Abandoning Ship as ordered, he turned back to his 20mm gun to defend his mates against the Japanese aircraft strafing them all. As the corvette HMAS Armidale sank beneath him, he continued firing to the end. "In the Finest Traditions of the Service" is a phrase that has been occasionally used for such actions, and this was just that, but more so – it showed the finest traditions of Aussie mateship.

But Teddy was like that. In the course of researching his biography, I came across descriptions of Teddy Sheean as a mate time and again. One of the Armidale survivors, Rex Pullen, said: "You always liked to have Teddy with you on shore; you'd be safe with him." His mate Jack Bird said Teddy was "the type that let hammocks down", as a joke, but he was also very loyal to his friends, and already noted as full of courage. His secret fiancée, Kathleen Laphorne, wore their engagement ring around her neck for the rest of her life when he did not return from Armidale's last combat action out of Darwin.

So what happened with Sheean and his bravery story, and why was it not rewarded? The Navy's situation in WWII regarding bravery awards was one of manifest injustice. Recommendations had to be made through the Royal Navy, via the Admiralty in London, twenty thousand kilometres away. The Australian Army and the RAAF however, had their processed in Australia. Britain, fighting for its life, could pay only small attention to paperwork from the other side of the world. And RAN

ship commanders were further discriminated against: unlike their RN counterparts they could not recommend the nature of a bravery award. The recommendation for Sheean came back with a commendation, but one that was not even a medal; the Mention In Despatches, a small badge worn on a campaign medal.

So what had Sheean done to deserve the ultimate bravery award. He gave the ultimate: he had sacrificed himself, without orders, to protect his shipmates.

HMAS Armidale, a small warship known as a corvette, had left Darwin to carry out operations south of what is now Indonesia. On 1 December 1942 she was caught by an overwhelming force of Japanese bombers and fighters, and targeted with torpedoes, bombs, cannon and machinegun fire. Fighting back with her anti-aircraft guns, she was caught by a torpedo, and the massive explosion blew a hole in the ship's side. She was sinking quickly, and so the order was given by her captain, Lieutenant Commander David Richards, to Abandon Ship.

According to numerous witnesses, Sheean had obeyed the order, but then, perhaps wounded already, he turned back to his Action Station, a 20mm Oerlikon rapid-fire gun. Putting himself into the leather harness, he began firing at the swarm of Japanese aircraft tormenting the ship. He fired to the last as the ship sank underneath him.

The survivors took to the ship's boats and rafts. There was a long delay in search and rescue operations mainly as it was assumed the sunken Armidale was maintaining radio silence as ordered. A search was commenced two days after the sinking.

On 6 December, 17 naval personnel including the Commanding Officer were rescued in Armidale's motorboat by the corvette HMAS Kalgoorlie. Following air sightings the Armidale's whaler with 29 men on board was rescued two days later.

However, another group of other survivors on a large raft were never seen again after being located by an aircraft. It is probable they died of exposure to the sun and a lack of food and water.

Lieutenant Commander Richards recommended a bravery award, but the result was only the Mention in Despatches. Compared to other VC actions, Sheean had comparably given his all, and so, rightly aggrieved, a campaign began by many which has taken 78 years to put matters right. When Teddy Sheean's family receives his VC, it will be also a journey back of reconciliation.

TOM LEWIS

Dr Tom Lewis OAM served as a lieutenant commander in the Royal Australian Navy where he saw active service in the Middle East. Tom has written nine other Military History books on WWII. In 2003 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to Royal Australian Naval history.

TEDDY SHEEAN VC

A Selfless Act of Valour



TOM LEWIS

No-one will ever know what made him do it.

In 1942, 18-year-old Edward "Teddy" Sheean was one of the youngest and most inexperienced sailors on board the the corvette HMAS Armidale. Whilst on operation in the Timor Sea this warship came under heavy attack by Japanese aircraft. Armidale began sinking while swarmed by Japanese aircraft, strafing and bombing the stricken vessel and the crew who were desperately trying to Abandon Ship. The wounded Ordinary Seaman turned back to his gun, an Oerlikon 20mm anti-aircraft cannon and strapped himself into the harness. He began firing at the attacking Japanese aircraft, a courageous young man, determined to do his best to save his mates. This selfless act of valour helped save the lives of many of the crew, before Teddy himself went down with the Armidale.

No member of the Royal Australian Navy has ever been awarded a Victoria Cross. Teddy's family and many others took up his case and fought for his recognition. It took more than 70 years for Teddy to become the first in Australia's Naval history to receive this highest award – confirming Teddy Sheean is an Australian hero.

Sheean is the 101st VC awarded to an Australian.

Teddy Sheean VC, A Selfless Act of Valour by Tom Lewis. Published by Simon & Schuster.



The search for Digger Bennett's grave

Where lies the body of WWI Aboriginal Digger George Bennett, Australian Imperial Force no. 4243?

Like so many Diggers, George paid a heavy price with bad health after fighting on the Western Front.

He had proudly worn the AIF uniform, yet died ignominiously in a Mungindi police cell on 24 September 1950, a day after being arrested for drunkenness.

In his report of the death, the town's sergeant noted that George had been "badly gassed" in the war and that he had been "spitting phlegm" before dying in the cell. An autopsy found the cause of death was cardiac thrombosis. George was buried in Mungindi cemetery.

He had enlisted at Armidale in April 1916, one of more than 1,000 Aborigines to serve with the AIF during WWI. He saw action in France with the 29th Battalion AIF before being reassigned to the 32nd Battalion, witnessing the horrors of Bullecourt, Ypres and Passchendaele in 1917.

He took part in the advance that followed the battle of Amiens, and was gassed as the Germans fought desperately to hold their positions near Mont Saint-Quentin.

Released from hospital at war's end, George was admonished for being drunk in London. He was not alone. White or black, there were few more egalitarian ways to blur the pain of war memories than getting drunk.

On his return to the Aboriginal reserve, Euraba, near Boomi in northern NSW, George and his mate Charlie Bird were honoured with a Welcome Home ceremony. One of those who sang what a local newspaper described as "a very nice patriotic song" was his daughter, Grace.

Newly married to Don Waters, Grace was the mother of Warrant Officer Len Waters, the first – and only – Aborigine to become a WW2 fighter pilot. Flying the Kittyhawk *Black Magic* in 78 Squadron RAAF, Len flew 41 strike missions against the Japanese.

Len's brother, Kevin Waters, 92 and George Bennett's only surviving grandson who lives in St George, Qld, attended his burial, but can't remember the plot's location.

Kevin Hobday, a retired ambulance officer who has lived in north-west NSW for many years, became involved in the search for George's grave through Mungindi Elder Barney McGrady. Despite extensive searches, no burial record has been found.

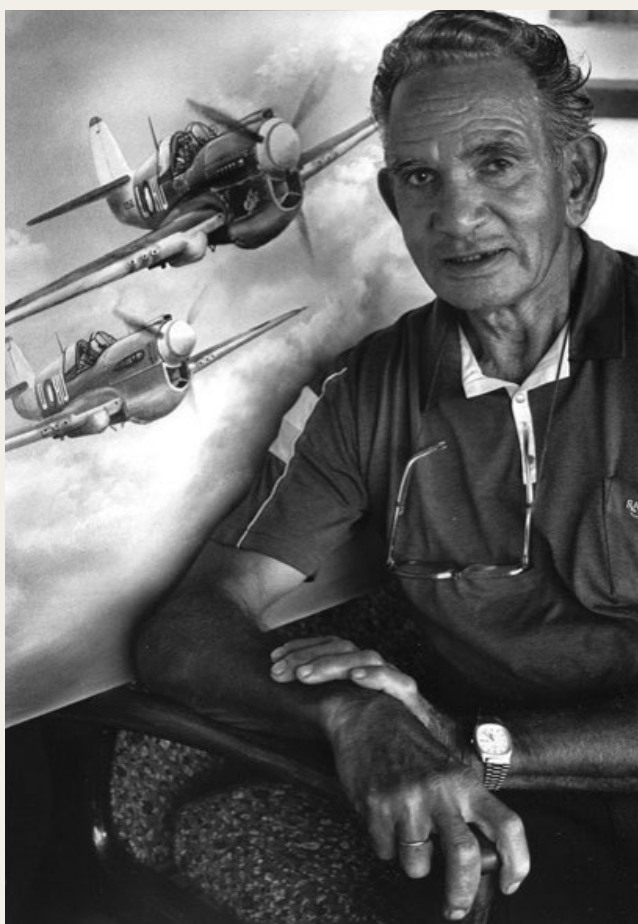
Kevin obtained records showing 12 burials in the cemetery in 1950, with headstones for seven, which means one of the unmarked five must belong to George Bennett.

"It's time for greater recognition of these local Indigenous servicemen," Kevin Hobday said, adding that 47 Kamilaroi men are known to have served in both world wars.

Kevin Waters said: "It would be a great relief to me as the eldest left in the family if the grave could be identified and a headstone placed on it, or failing that, a memorial erected there for all the Kamilaroi men who served."

PETER REES

Peter Rees is the author of the book, The Missing Man: From the outback to Tarakan, the powerful story of Len Waters, Australia's first Aboriginal fighter pilot.



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP: Warrant Officer Len Waters, Len Waters in later life in front of a painting of his Kittyhawk, 'Black Magic', Len Waters in his cockpit, Len Waters' Kittyhawk 'Black Magic'.



I can't interview him... he was the enemy!

Many areas of the world were dangerous places from the 1930s to 1940s, and particularly so for men and boys. While many of our children were eager to join up to serve in WW2, in some countries it was a matter of life or death and having to choose which side you would join... which side gave you more chance of survival.

For tiny Latvia, having experienced occupation by the Soviets, their invasion by Germany was a mixed blessing. Andrew Sniedze, now 90 years of age, migrated to Australia in 1962, but at one time he was 'the enemy'. He was only 14 at the time!

Radio Adelaide's *Service Voices*, is inspired by service in all its forms. The weekly radio program is a Voice for the Defence Forces community that additionally recognises other contributions of community service across Australian society, sharing histories, ideas, memories and perspectives that might otherwise be lost forever.

It also allows some of the more difficult stories to be shared. One such example is the story of 90 year old Andrew Sniedze. Andrew's name was put forward by the Merchant Navy Association as interview potential for a project centred around Australia's men and boys who'd served with Small Ships and Merchant Navy during WW2.

Yes... Andrew was keen to do an interview. An Interviewer was appointed... and then the Bombshell. "I can't interview him, he was the enemy" said the appointed interviewer when given the file on Andrew Sniedze. One can perhaps understand this reaction from someone whose family had gone through the horrors of WW11.

How do you tell a 90 year old Australian immigrant his story isn't relevant? Do we lose his story?

Well, the fact is that we didn't. Instead, *Service Voices* went ahead with the interview and strengthened it by weaving it together with the story of a natural born Aussie who went to war at about the same age – Harry Cruger....

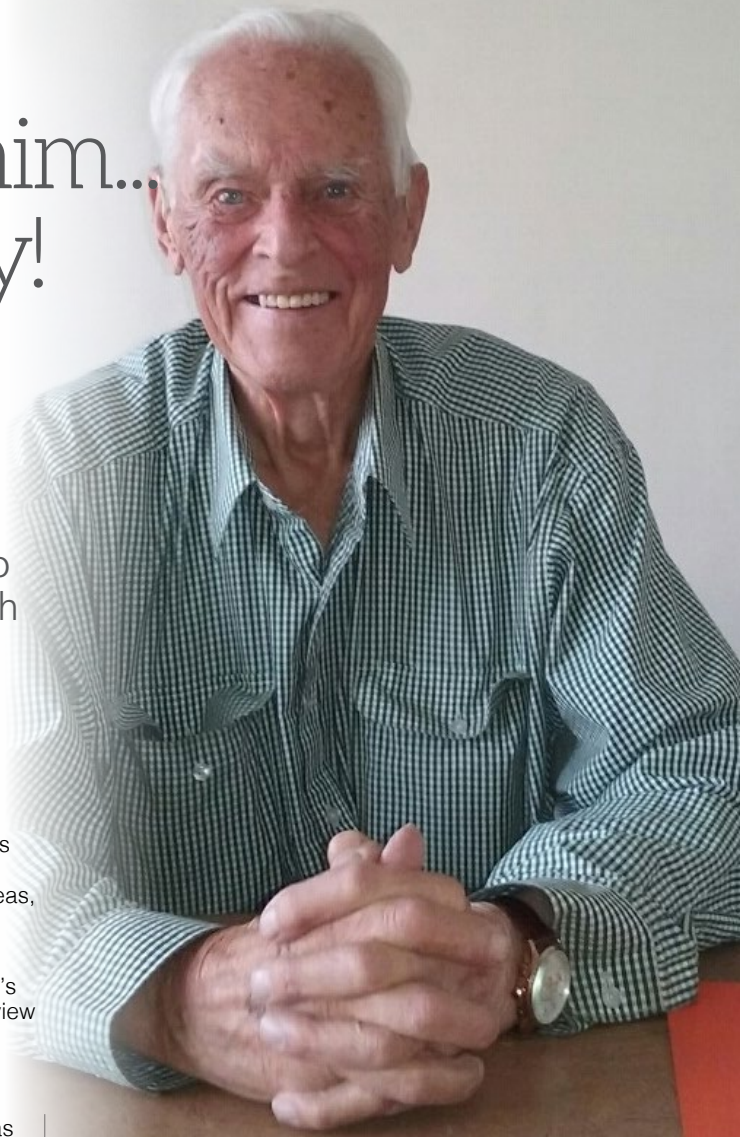
On the 31st of May 1942, 15 year old Harry Cruger sailed out of Sydney Harbour as an Ordinary Seaman aboard the SS Ormiston in convoy with SS Katoomba and SS Canberra, carrying Australian Troops. That same afternoon Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour. Two years later SS Ormiston herself was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine off Coffs Harbour NSW.

The Andrew Sniedze and Harry Cruger interviews went to air on 20th January 2020, and at this grand old age Andrew has now bought himself a Zoom H4N voice recorder, and with a bit of training from Service Voices, has added new impetus to his life, seeking out and conducting interviews for broadcast:

- www.radioadelaide.org.au/2020/01/20/harry-cruger-15yo-in-convoy-with-troops-heading-north-2/
- www.radioadelaide.org.au/2020/07/20/andrew-sniedze-trevor-quick-radio-communications-morse-code/
- www.radioadelaide.org.au/2020/11/16/andrew-sniedze-interviews-greg-hope-national-service-in-32-small-ship-sqn/

During WW11 many Latvians were keen for an opportunity to fight the Soviets with German weapons, repaying a life-saving debt to the Germans. In doing so, they became an enemy of the Allies which included Australia. Listen to Andrew's interview for a fuller explanation:

- www.radioadelaide.org.au/2020/01/20/andrew-sniedze-14-and-serving-in-latvia-with-the-luftwaffe-general-ss/



Andrew Sniedze 2019. Photo by Helen Meyer.

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helen.meyer@radioadelaide.org.au or
phone Radio Adelaide on (08) 7132 5000.

Keeping the peace in the Indo-Pacific

Australian participation in the Boxer Rebellion, 1900-1901

Most people are broadly aware that Australian troops played a role in quelling the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1901, but few are aware of what our troops actually did there, and even fewer realise that Australian servicemen who died of illness during the campaign are still buried somewhere in Beijing and nearby Tianjin to this day.

The Boxer Rebellion tends to be a forgotten and little understood part of our military history, perhaps overshadowed by the Boer War being fought in southern Africa at the time and the magnitude of loss experienced during World War One the following decade. But looking back 120 years later, it was significant for being our first brief foray into keeping the peace in the Indo-Pacific, not dissimilar to the concept of a modern-day stabilisation or peacekeeping operation.

The 'Boxer Rebellion' was an uprising in northern China led by a mysterious martial-arts group nicknamed 'the Boxers' who opposed foreign settlement in China. It started in rural areas of Shandong and Shanxi provinces in the late-1890s and quickly spread across northern China, culminating with a sustained 55-day siege against Peking's foreign diplomat community (known as the Legation Quarter, located just to the east of present-day Tiananmen Square) from June 1900. The legations were eventually rescued by a multinational force that landed at the port city of Tianjin and then covered the 130km distance to inland Peking on foot, arriving on 14 August 1900.

Australia contributed 556 naval personnel as part of the British contingent to the 50,000-strong 'Eight-Nation Alliance'. The contingent, drawn from the Naval Brigades of the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, arrived in Tianjin on 8 September, by which time the rebellion had mostly been quelled. The Victorian contingent remained in Tianjin while the 240-strong New South Wales contingent moved on foot to Peking, arriving on 22 October following a 12-day march. Separately, a South Australian contingent of 96 men, commanded by Captain William Creswell, was sent to Shanghai on the HMCS Protector to operate as part of a British naval task group.

Living and working conditions for the contingents were austere, and morale amongst contingent members was generally low. Not only did they arrive just in time to experience a freezing northern China winter from start to finish, but they also felt they had missed out on all of the action and were instead assigned to more mundane policing and firefighting tasks. The Victorian contingent was sent out to assist with quelling small uprisings in the surrounding countryside on several occasions, but each time arrived too late to participate in fighting. The frustration and disappointment were evident in letters home from contingent members, with one sailor complaining, "We came here to fight Boxers, not to act as fire fighters!".

The NSW contingent in Peking was divided into three detachments to conduct peacekeeping-like activities, with half based at the British Legation, and the remainder operating out of a Lama Temple just inside the Imperial City wall, and an abandoned Prince's palace (Qing Wang Fu) to the northwest of Beihai Park. The Lama Temple at which Australian troops were based for four months is now a well-known fine-dining restaurant in central Beijing, popular with Australian expats.

There were occasional highlights to help pass the time, such as visiting iconic cultural sites around Peking. With the imperial court still relocated to Xian at the time, many of the contingent members even had the opportunity to participate in personalised tours of the Imperial Palace (Forbidden City) conducted by senior eunuchs, and regular sporting and

social activities were also organised for the multinational troops. In November 1900, an Australian naval officer, Sub-Lieutenant Y.G. Lindeman, won a multinational pony race around the grounds of the iconic Temple of Heaven.

Six Australians died of illness or wounds while serving in northern China – three in Peking, two in Tianjin and one at sea. Those who died in Peking – Petty Officer Arthur Bennett, Able Seaman Eli Rose and Staff-Surgeon John (Jack) Steel – were buried in a British Legation cemetery just outside the southwestern corner of the old city wall. Staff-Surgeon Steel, the contingent's senior medical officer, was instrumental in treating many other contingent members for illness in the harsh operating conditions, and his death in November 1900 was a further blow to their morale. His funeral on 12 December was well attended by colleagues from across the multinational force. Able Seaman J. Hamilton and Private Thomas Rogers were buried in Tianjin, and Albert Gibbs was buried at sea.

While posted to Beijing in 2015, the author sought to confirm where these three Australians are now interred. The former British cemetery was relocated in the mid-1960s to make way for the construction of Beijing's Second Ring Road. Being the height of the Cultural Revolution and an era in which China had cut its diplomatic relations with the West, official records of those previously buried in this cemetery are scant. We do know that the remains of those interred there were exhumed and reinterred in



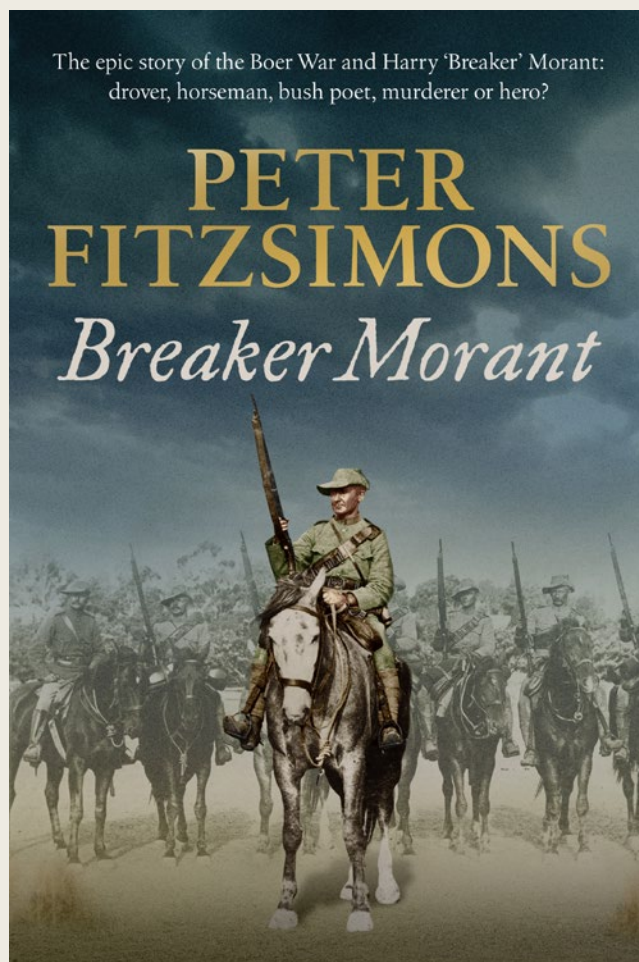
TOP: Members of the Australian contingent in Peking (Photo ID: P00417.001)
www.awm.gov.au/collection/C42269.

BOTTOM: Graves of Australian contingent members at the British Legation Cemetery, Peking (Photo ID: PD00417.033)
www.awm.gov.au/collection/C42300.

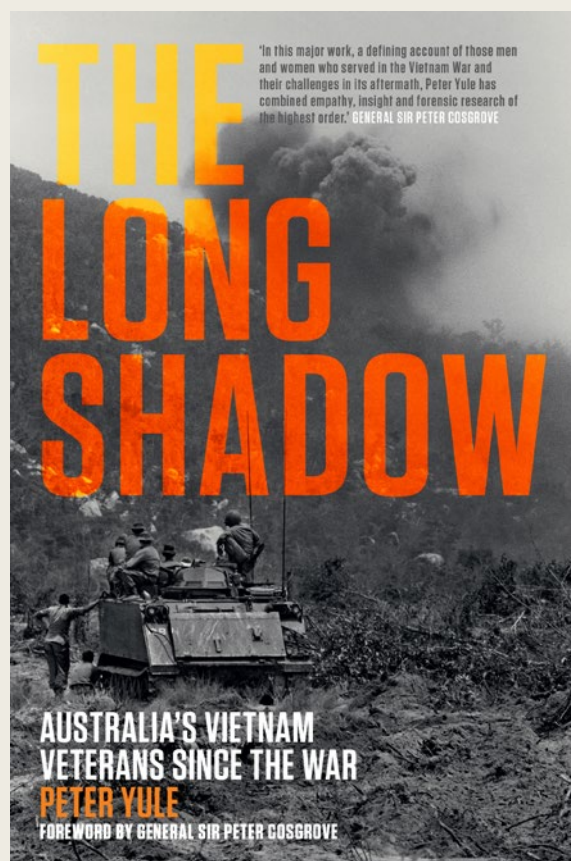
a couple of other cemeteries in northwest Beijing. But most graves were unmarked, hence the final resting place of the three Australians remains unconfirmed. The site of the former British Legation cemetery is not signposted in any way, but is nowadays the site of a small park on the southwestern corner of the busy Second Ring Road / Fuxingmen Street intersection.

The New South Wales contingent left Peking in late-February 1901 after four months on duty there, and together with their Victorian colleagues set sail for Australia in March. They arrived back in Sydney on 25 April, and were required to

quarantine for two weeks at North Head before their nine-month deployment came to an end. The professionalism of their conduct in north China was highly praised by the multinational commanders and colleagues they worked with. And despite their disappointment at arriving too late to participate in fighting against the Boxers, our three Naval Brigade contingents participating in the Boxer Rebellion campaign of 1900-1901 hold the esteemed honour of being the very first on a long list of Australian military contributions to maintaining peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific region during the past 120 years.



Breaker Morant by Peter Fitzsimons.
Published by Hachette Australia.



The Long Shadow, Australia's Vietnam Veterans since the war by Peter Yule.
Published by NewSouth Books.



Veterans' health and welfare: information insights

A collaborative partnership between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) have established a strategic partnership; working together to build a knowledge base that supports the health and wellbeing of Australia's veterans across a range of areas.

Since 2016, the work undertaken by DVA and the AIHW has taken a coordinated, whole-of-population approach to monitoring and reporting on the status and needs of veterans and their families.

During this time, the AIHW has released a number of publications on veterans' health and welfare, including the flagship report Australia's health 2020. This report contains a chapter on the health of serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force personnel (people who are currently serving or have previously served at least 1 day in a regular capacity or as a member of the active or inactive reserves).

The report found, in general, just over half of people who had ever served in the ADF assessed themselves to be in excellent or good health, which is very similar to Australians that did not serve.

Currently, women make up 19% of the ADF workforce. Participation has been increasing, but the relatively low numbers constrain accurate reporting on the health of women who currently or previously served.

DVA and the AIHW continue to increase the range of data available about veterans, and collaborate on how best to describe the information. Targeted research aims to bridge the gaps in knowledge on veterans to better understand current needs, anticipate emerging needs, and improve the services that best support those needs.

Work is also underway to build a more comprehensive profile of the welfare of Australia's veterans, as well as their families. As outlined in the AIHW's A profile of Australia's Veterans 2018 report; previous research efforts have been primarily health focused. With AIHW and DVA broadening its scope on wellbeing, research will also look to address key information gaps in the areas of education, employment, justice, housing, safety, finance and social support.

For more information, visit www.dva.gov.au or www.aihw.gov.au.



Bravery Trust's new Chairman

Bravery Trust is a national military charity that provides financial aid, financial counselling, and education support to injured veterans and their families who are in financial hardship.

Bravery Trust's new Chairman, Garth Callender, a former Army Major, had a distinguished seventeen-year career, during which he served in Iraq and Afghanistan and was badly wounded in a bomb attack in Baghdad in 2004. Garth wrote the award-winning book, *After the Blast*, which chronicles the events of his deployments that make them anything but ordinary. Garth motivates and inspires with tales of surviving a bomb attack, through to chasing insurgent bomb-makers in Afghanistan.

We interview Garth about his aspirations as Chairman of Bravery Trust.

About Bravery Trust:

Since 2012, Bravery Trust have helped over 5,000 veterans and their families, with more than \$5.5M in financial aid. The Bravery Trust team work with the individual, their family and their support networks to find a solution that works, both for the short term and long term – including financial counselling to help veterans and their families with understanding and managing their debt and preventing additional financial distress.

You have an extensive military service background, including in combat, intelligence, training and strategic roles for more than 20 years, what does “service” mean to you?

The concept of ‘service’ is what leads many of us into the military, and it is often what we seek in our careers afterwards. It is about playing a part that's bigger than your individual self. I believe it is an innate drive in us to make the world better in whatever way we can, big or small. It is one of the reasons I am so excited about taking up this new position – I can continue to serve.

After being badly injured in Baghdad, and your mother making the Chief of the Army promise that you would not go back into combat, what drove you to defy your mum's orders?

Occasionally in your life you come to the realisation that, regardless of your personal circumstances, there is a time and place to put your hand up. When questioned as to why I volunteered to return, my answer was always – I was the right person for the job. I had been to the war-torn city before, seen it at its worst, and survived. Who better understood the environment my 110-person combat team was going into; who better understood the risks; who else had intimate experience with the weapons being used against us; and who best understood what we needed to know to survive and thrive in Baghdad?

Every transition is unique, what advice would you give those going through their own transition?

Prepare, plan and get help with your transition – do not leave your career to chance. Gain an understanding of the industry you want to work in and try to envisage where you see yourself in five years. Get upskilled and educated if needed, and use the resources available as part of your transition.

Most importantly, network! Reach out to people you know who have already transitioned. Ask for help and talk to them about their experiences and ask for introductions to others who may assist you in your journey. As veterans, we are on our way to having the strongest alumni in the country – use it to find your career path and then become part of it to assist others do the same.

You have held numerous leadership roles, including establishing the NSW Veterans Employment Program, which throughout your time, employed over 500 veterans, what leadership qualities are important to you?

Emotional intelligence matched with professional competence. To be a good leader you must be able to understand yourself and empathically influence others, all while having a solid understanding of the role you, your team and your stakeholders play. The great part of this is that these are the skills and attitudes the military builds and values in their leaders.

Working with Bravery Trust for the last few years as an ambassador and now as Chairman, what are you excited about in 2021?

I am excited about being more involved in the discussions around what it is to be a veteran, and the place veterans hold in Australian society. Working to shape how veterans see themselves and working with others to help develop solutions for those who are at risk of slipping through the cracks.

You are known to many in the Defence and Veteran community – what is something that we may not know about you?

I grew up in suburban Sydney, about 30km from the nearest beach. When I met my wife, a Gold Coast girl, she taught me how to surf. Now the ocean and surfing are a constant in our lives. I find the ocean grounding and therapeutic, and surfing challenging and exhilarating. I encourage others to find what it is in life that always makes them smile.

Experiencing financial hardship?

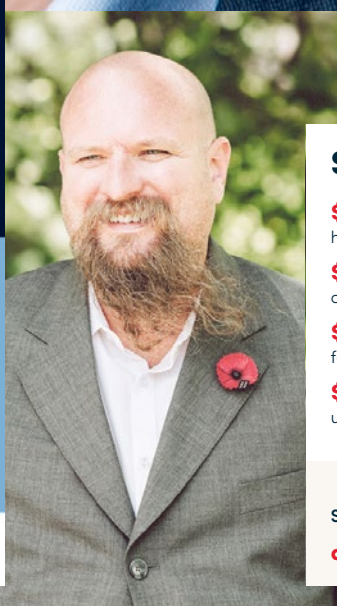
If you are a serving or ex-serving member of the Australian Defence Force and have sustained an injury, illness or mental ill-health due to your service, we are here to help.

1800 BRAVERY
(1800 272 837)



BRAVERY
TRUST.

Veteran & Family
Financial Support



Support a Veteran

\$20 provides phone recharge to help stay connected

\$75 provides fuel vouchers to help attend medical appointments

\$150 fills a fridge with fresh food for a week

\$500 pays for two months of utility bills for a family

Support a veteran or family in need:

[donate.braverytrust.org.au](https://www.donate.braverytrust.org.au)

Bravery Trust is a not-for-profit organisation and relies on the generous donations from supporters. You can donate to Bravery Trust and help veterans in need here: www.donate.braverytrust.org.au.



The St Vincent de Paul Society has been providing a 'hand up' to people in need in Australia for over 150 years, and this last year has been no different.

Despite 2020's incredibly trying circumstances Vinnies has continued to help those in need. Members, volunteers and employees worked tirelessly to ensure that everyone was able to receive the assistance they needed in a year like no other.

Last year began with devastating bushfires blazing through the region, with local Vinnies groups springing into action to assist those forced into chaos. Vinnies Bushfire Appeal funds were provided to individuals to help cover accommodation, food, transport, or rebuilding. Funds continue to be distributed in the form of community grants, ensuring local communities play a role in rebuilding their own region.

As the year progressed, the effects of COVID-19 became apparent as many people already in difficult situations were faced with further job losses, and often a change in service delivery. Despite the challenges the restrictions brought, Vinnies ensured companions were safe and supported. Face to face interactions were reduced as help went to online and over the phone, energy bills were paid digitally, and gift vouchers replaced physical goods.

Although Vinnies resources were stretched, the dedication of volunteer members, and community connections ensured that support continued. When circumstances shift, it disproportionately affects those experiencing hardship. Last year

taught everyone the extent to which times are fragile and why it is crucial to ensure that disadvantaged people are not further separated from society.

Thanks to help from the community, Vinnies will continue to provide invaluable support to those needing it most.

This year, Vinnies is launching a new campaign to further engage the public in the work of the organisation. Run throughout March, Vinnies Knock On Effect will demonstrate the impact volunteers and donors have on improving opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage. To get involved or to learn more, visit www.KnockOnEffect.org.au.

To get involved or donate, or if you need assistance please call 13 18 12.

YOUR IMPACT WILL OPEN DOORS TO HOPE

For those without a safe place to sleep, every donation has a **knock on effect** to help people find shelter and comfort when they need it most.



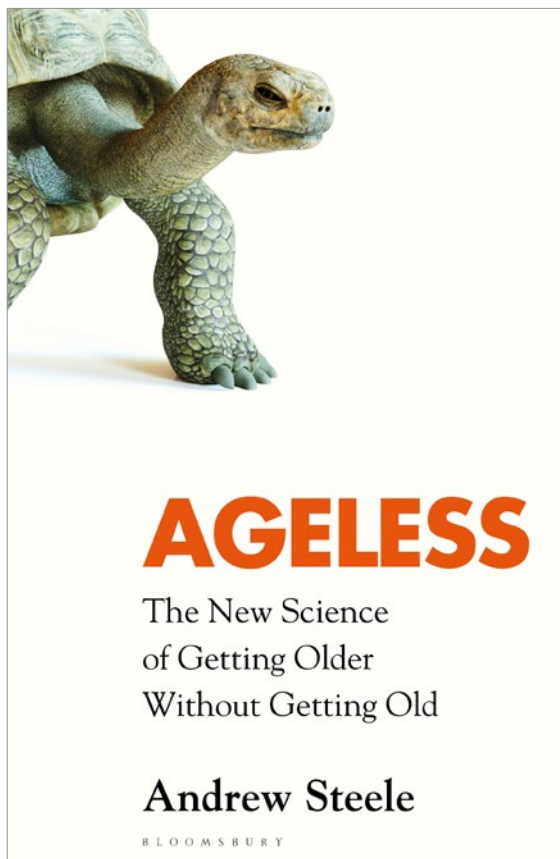
Donate now to unlock his opportunity for a better life



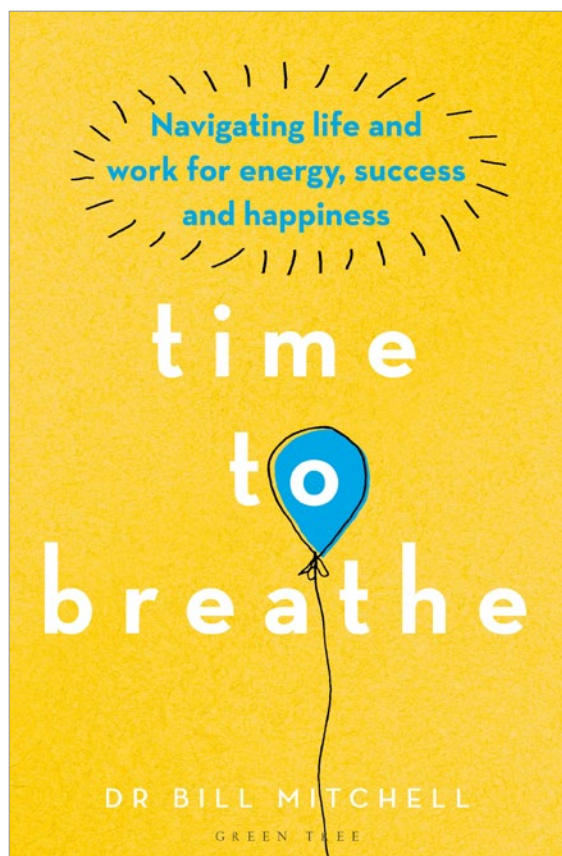
Vinnies
KNOCK ON EFFECT



knockoneffect.org.au



AGELESS, The New Science of Getting Older Without Getting Old by Andrew Steele. Published by Bloomsbury.



Time to Breathe by Dr Bill Mitchell. Published by Green Tree.



Social connectedness and long-term health conditions

We want to hear about your experiences of living with a long-term health condition and feeling socially connected.

We are conducting a project to gain a better understanding of the experiences of feeling socially connected, belonging and loneliness of people living with a long-term health condition (such as asthma, arthritis, obesity, diabetes, chronic pain).

We are interested in speaking to people who are over 18 years of age and have been diagnosed with a long-term physical health condition and who would like to share their story.

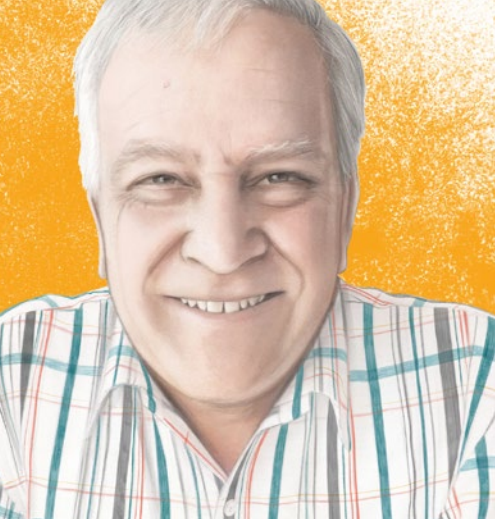
If you are interested in taking part, we would like to interview you for about an hour about your experiences of health, social relationships and supports. We will ask to interview you on another two occasions in the next 6 months. The interviews will take place at a time and place convenient to you, either in person, by telephone or via video (e.g. Zoom).

In recognition of your time, you will receive a \$30 gift voucher for each interview.

If you would like more information or are interested in being part of the study, please contact:

Dr Maja Moensted
m.moensted@unsw.edu.au
0405 976 187
(02) 9385 6946

This study has been funded by the Australian Research Council and approved by the University of New South Wales Human Research Ethics Committee.



Talking about prostate cancer, plumbing and masculinity

Ian Stephens is 62-year-old former nurse, who is married with two adult children. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2013. He talks here about diagnosis, recovery and some of the ongoing challenges he faces.

For over 40 years I worked in general nursing, and then in mental health nursing. I had a strong interest in health promotion and worked with men in various settings to help improve their physical and mental health.

Before my diagnosis, I'd had a 10-year history of benign prostate enlargement. My health background taught me the value of early detection and so I was getting my PSA levels regularly monitored. At some point, there was a significant jump in the levels and the urologist decided to do a biopsy of my prostate. He took ten samples, and one of them showed that there were cancer cells. I was diagnosed with low-grade prostate cancer.

On hearing the news, I did my best to wear my professional hat. I knew my diagnosis posed no immediate risk to my health. Statistically speaking, I knew that there was a lot of men out there with prostate cancer. I knew that if they were monitored, looked after themselves and went into the active surveillance group, they could go on for many years without needing a prostatectomy. My hope was that I would be in that group.

But personally, it was pretty hard news to take. I'd always assumed I would have a healthy road in front of me and that everything would be bright for the future. When something like this happens, suddenly you think maybe it won't be quite as bright as you thought.

I was lucky my partner Marg was very supportive. She's also from a nursing background and we were able to share our knowledge and the language of health to get us through. Being told you have cancer isn't an easy thing to hear but we were positive about the future. My two adult children have also been great. I've always talked honestly with them and they are aware of the challenges I've faced, particularly around recovery.

I remember drawing on lots of good information. I found the Prostate Cancer Foundation booklets and videos helpful. I think men are not always good at seeking out information. Often we're stoic, we don't want to be seen as not on top of our game.

I was in the active surveillance group for two years. During that time, I was having regular PSA tests. I also had three biopsies to monitor the cancer. After two years, my PSA doubled to a score of over 10 and the latest biopsy showed that there had been an increase in prostate cancer cell activity. The urologist said, 'There's something more going on here. I don't want you to suffer the long-term consequences of prostate cancer that gets out of control. I want you to consider having a prostatectomy'. I had surgery soon after. I was 57 at the time.

I recovered well from the surgery. I'd been doing pelvic floor exercises beforehand because I knew that urinary incontinence could be an ongoing issue for some men. When the catheter was removed after eight days, I had good bladder function. I continued to do the exercises fairly rigorously afterwards. I got off the pain killers after three or four days. I was in reasonably good form.

I expected there would be erectile dysfunction as part of the early recovery phase, as the surgeon spoke about it in the lead up to the operation. At around the four-month mark, I told my surgeon that things were still not working in that department. He suggested Viagra. When that didn't help, I tried injections. After trying a couple of different types I found one that worked. That gave me a sense of hope that I was on the road to recovery.

When I look back, it was lifesaving, because at that point I was pretty low. It was hard to be in a loving relationship and not be able to express myself spontaneously and creatively in the way that I had in the past. The injection gave me the opportunity to do that and it made a big difference. I'm glad I agreed to give it a go.

I started to get a sense of normality back and hoped that my erections would return naturally. There can be improvements over time, but at some point, I realised it was unlikely I would get back my erectile function back.

I really started to question my masculinity and place in the world. I

would do things like watch a movie with an intimate scene and it would remind me of the person I wasn't any more. Even at work, I felt less assertive, less able to express myself. I did a bit of reading on this and realised that I wasn't the only one. One study showed that patients with prostate cancer report that their loss of sexual capacity makes them feel unmanly, invisible and worthless.

What I was going through did strain my relationship with Marg. This was a difficult phase for us as a couple as it took something away from us. We shut us down a little with each other as it wasn't easy to talk about. Marg was always very supportive, even during the times when I imagine when she felt sad about the changes. We remained hopeful that there were still steps in the recovery process and that our relationship would blossom again. We've done pretty well. We are still very solid and have found some sort of balance. Personally, I've come realise that my sense of sexual energy does not hinge on my erectile function and that's helped.

I've since realised these feelings and experiences are common problem for men undertaking prostatectomy. I think many of us feel embarrassed to admit we're not the men we used to be. Recently I did a presentation to my prostate cancer support group about the issue of prostate cancer, sexual function and masculinity. Afterwards men and their wives came up to me and told me how important it was to talk about these issues, and how they could relate to what I was saying. My experience is that men are more willing to discuss the mechanics of how to fix the plumbing but find it much harder to express unhelpful thoughts or low mood. I know that anxiety and depression after prostate cancer diagnosis and beyond is unfortunately all too common.

I think as men we need to be able to express and deal with our grief around the loss of our former sex life. I believe this is a healthy part of the sexual recovery process.



HEALTHY MALE
ANDROLOGY AUSTRALIA

pain in their bladder, urethra, scrotum, perineum, or pelvis.

About half of all men and women over 40 years of age report at least one lower urinary tract symptom. In Australian men, about 1 in 14 in their 40s, and 1 in 3 in their 70s, report their symptoms as being moderate to severe.

In many men, lower urinary tract symptoms can develop because of prostate enlargement. The location of the prostate gland, below the bladder and surrounding the urethra, means that as it enlarges it can constrict the urethra and restrict urine flow. Therefore, prostate enlargement resulting from benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a common cause of lower urinary tract symptoms, and emptying problems.

Prostate enlargement can be a sign of prostate disease, like benign prostatic hyperplasia (sometimes referred to as BPH), so it's important to talk to your doctor if you have any lower urinary tract symptoms.

There are a variety of other causes of lower urinary tract symptoms, some of them health related (for example, neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis) and some of them lifestyle related (for example, occupations or recreational activities that involve heavy lifting).

Our behavior can contribute to the development of lower urinary tract symptoms and to managing them. Simple things like reducing the amount you drink in the evening can help to avoid needing to get up during the night. Drinks like alcohol and caffeinated beverages can also make symptoms worse, so it's best to avoid them if they cause problems for you.

It's easy to slip into the habit of going to the toilet 'just in case' if you're worried about urinary incontinence but this strategy can backfire. Your bladder can effectively get used to holding low volumes, so going to the toilet before your bladder is full can gradually reduce its capacity to hold urine.

Bladder training can help you to gain control. To learn how to retrain your bladder visit [\[link\]](#). After a while, urgency symptoms should let up.

Pelvic floor exercises can help to control your bladder and bowel, which can be important for people who have urinary incontinence associated with constipation. Other things that help with bowel function, like a diet rich in fibre can also be useful in these cases. Controlling your weight can help too, because of the extra load on the pelvic floor if you're overweight or obese.

Behavioral and lifestyle interventions are the first step in managing lower urinary tract symptoms. About half of the people with symptoms benefit from medication.

Even if lower urinary tract symptoms are not caused by a serious underlying health issue, the problems with bladder emptying can themselves lead to significant concerns.

Incomplete emptying of the bladder can lead to urinary tract infections, bladder stones, kidney problems and even acute urinary retention (a sudden onset need to pass urine but the inability to do so). Acute urinary retention is a medical emergency.

Lower urinary tract symptoms reduce people's quality of life and contribute to depression and anxiety as a consequence of the inconvenience of frequent trips to the toilet and possibility of embarrassment from urinary incontinence.

Acting early to get help with lower urinary tract symptoms is the best way take control rather than letting the symptoms control you.



Don't let a wee problem turn into a big deal

Leaky pipes and blocked drains aren't just a concern of plumbers. Lots of men develop problems with the waterworks as they get older, but these are not an inevitable consequence of ageing. There are lots of signs that things aren't working quite right. Knowing what these symptoms are, what they mean and how to deal with them can help keep everything under control.

Lower urinary tract symptoms (sometimes referred to as LUTS), and the terminology that goes along with them can be confusing. They can be classified into problems with the storing of urine or problems with passing urine (emptying problems).

Lower urinary tract symptoms include:

Storage problems:

- Increased frequency (needing to go too often during the day or getting up too many times overnight)
- Urgency (suddenly needing to pass urine and it's difficult to hang on)
- Urinary incontinence (leaking urine), which can be classified as urge incontinence (leakage after a feeling of urgency), stress incontinence (leakage due to increased pressure on the bladder e.g. when jumping, running, lifting, etc.) or a mixture of both urge and stress incontinence.

Emptying problems:

- A slow stream of urine
- Spraying of the urine stream
- Intermittency (urine flow that stops and starts)
- Hesitancy (difficulty starting to urinate)
- Straining (muscular effort needed to start or maintain urination)
- Terminal dribble (flow slows to a trickle or dribble for a while before finishing).

Other symptoms can occur straight after urinating, like dribbling after you think you've finished or feeling like your bladder is not actually empty when you've passed as much urine as you can. Men may also report

For more information on prostate disease and other male health conditions, as well as new real stories, please visit www.healthymale.org.au.

DVA's official partner for veteran benefits

APOD (Australian Partners of Defence) is an Australian owned and operated organisation created by veteran families, for veteran families.

Since 2012, APOD has been working to connect the defence community with businesses of all sizes who recognise their service and want to say 'thank you' by offering a discount.

We understand the sacrifices made in the name of service and our team of veteran and defence spouses are committed to creating a secure platform which supports the recognition of veterans and defence families across Australia.

Current and ex-service ADF personnel, spouses and widows, allied forces and

immediate family members are all welcome to join the APOD community and access discounts from over **20,000** business outlets ranging from fuel to groceries, tech, auto, accommodation and lots more!

APOD's purpose is for benefits and recognition to be simple, accessible and rewarding. This is why we have map search functions and offer categories like *everyday*, *veteran owned* and *gift cards* to help our **72,000+** members find discounts that suit their lifestyle.

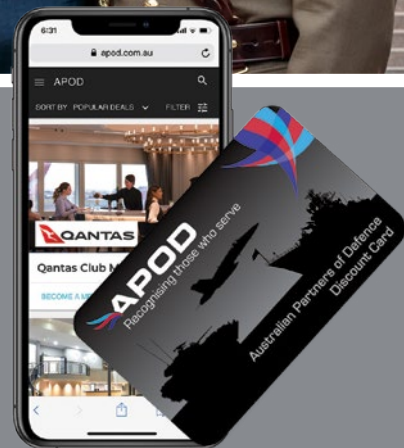
Why join:

- ✓ *Save money*
- ✓ *Be uniquely recognised for your service*
- ✓ *Support veteran-owned businesses*
- ✓ *Belong to a growing discount community*

APOD is free for:

- ✓ *All veterans, spouses and/or widows**
- ✓ *All business partners including veteran-owned and spouse-owned businesses*

*For all DVA Veteran Card holders and spouses (white, gold, orange)



Who can join?



Serving Defence Members

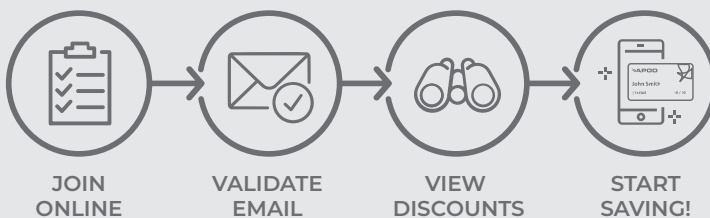


Veterans & Former Defence



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Phone 1300 00 APOD (2763)



A Smart Invention

In the early 2000's the most experience we'd had with bidets was when we were staying at an International Hotel.

We were sceptical when we first contacted The Bidet Shop to discuss the range of bidets available in the Australian market. Having limited experience with the product and barely any one in Australia having heard of, let alone use these machines, we were not sure what to expect in comparison.

But the bidet has been everything we were told it would be and more...

The fully integrated bidet, which fitted directly on to my toilet, seemed like a great idea and very civilised. We have enjoyed our bidet experience so much, that we have purchased an additional retro fitting seat for our guest bathroom and have even had the great opportunity of trading in our old bidet for a newer model.

Now we are in 2020 and how times have changed. Bidets still aren't the most common toileting accessory but when there was the toilet paper crisis, we didn't even feel the shortage. Being so accustomed to our bidet use, toilet paper is obsolete in our house hold. We were the envy to all of our friends who were stuck in cues attempting to get the last few rolls of toilet paper.

At first we sat and had a little giggle, but then decided to share one of the best inventions ever and our greatest bathroom secret, the bidet. If you haven't looked in to it already, we recommended you do today!

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02 9191 9320 to find out more!

Turn any Toilet into a **BIDET** ...Simply by Changing the Seat!

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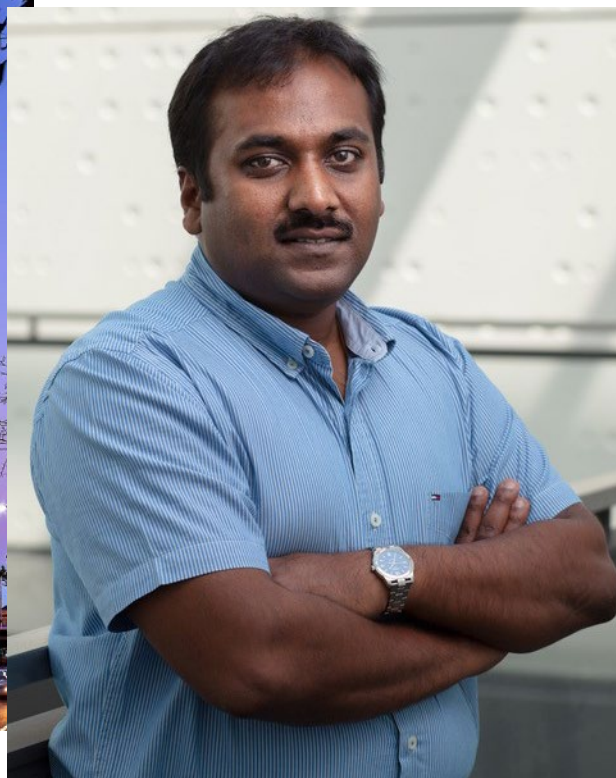
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University of South Australia Cancer Research Institute.



Dr Nirmal Robinson.

Cancer treatment could be replicated for COVID-19

Beta-blockers could potentially be used to treat COVID-19, according to a new international study by Italian and Australian scientists.

University of South Australia cancer researcher, Dr Nirmal Robinson, working with a team in Naples, has found evidence in animal models that the beta-blocker Propranolol helps suppress the spread of cancer in the lung which has an inflammatory profile very similar to COVID-19.

The scientists have presented their findings in a paper published in *Frontiers in Immunology*, calling for clinical trials to support their research.

Dr Robinson, Head of the Cellular-Stress and Immune Response Laboratory at the Centre for Cancer Biology, says Propranolol is commonly used to treat heart conditions, anxiety and migraine. Recent clinical trials have shown its effectiveness for other conditions, including cancer.

"Patients with COVID-19 suffer from many abnormalities, including inflammation, because the SARS-CoV-2 virus disrupts the body's immune system. Beta-2 blockers could potentially reduce this inflammation and help rebalance the immune system," Dr Robinson says.

Beta-blockers including Propranolol are medicines that work by temporarily stopping or reducing the body's natural 'fight-or-flight' response. In return, they reduce stress on certain parts of the body, such as the heart and blood vessels in the brain.

They have also been suggested as a treatment option for autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

"SARS-Cov-2 enters the human cells through the protein ACE2, infecting the lower respiratory tract, causing profound inflammation and multi-organ failure.

Patients with comorbidities, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease, are at much higher risk," he says.

Other inflammation suppressors, including Tocilizumab (an immunosuppressive drug prescribed for arthritis) and Ruxolitinib (a drug used to treat the rare bone marrow blood cancer, myelofibrosis) have already been used to treat the more serious COVID-19 cases, the researchers say.

"We believe the beta-2-adrenergic pathway should be more deeply investigated as a possible target to reduce the inflammatory symptoms related to COVID-19. The next step is to perform clinical trials to explore an alternative therapy to treat COVID-19, based on the lessons we have learned from cancer," Dr Robinson says.

The study was led by Dr Antonio Barbieri from the Istituto Nazionale Tumori IRCCS "Fondazione Pascale" and Dr Vincenzo Desiderio, Department of Experimental Medicine, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli" in Naples along with Dr Robinson who is second author of the paper.

University of South Australia.

Monash researchers reveal COVID immunity lasts up to eight months, giving hope for long-term protection by vaccines

Monash researchers have revealed – for the first time – that people who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus have sustained protection against reinfection for at least eight months.

The research is the strongest evidence for the likelihood that vaccines against the virus, SARS-CoV-2, will work for long periods. Previously, many studies have shown that the first wave of antibodies to coronavirus wane after the first few months, raising concerns that people may lose immunity quickly. This new work allays these concerns.

The study is the result of a multi-centre collaboration led by Associate Professor Menno van Zelm, from the Monash University Department of Immunology and Pathology, with the Alfred Research Alliance between Monash University, The Alfred hospital and the Burnet Institute, and published today (TBC) in the preprint server, MedRxiv. The publication reveals the discovery of a specific cell within the immune system called the memory B cell, which “remembers” infection by the virus, and if challenged again, through re-exposure to the virus, triggers a protective immune response through rapid production of protective antibodies.

The researchers recruited a cohort of 25 COVID-19 patients and took 36 blood samples from them from Day 4 post infection to Day 242 post infection.

As with other studies – looking only at the antibody response – the researchers found that antibodies against the virus started to drop off after 20 days post infection.

However – importantly – all patients continued to have memory B cells that recognised one of two components of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the spike and nucleocapsid proteins. These virus-specific memory B cells were stably present as far as eight months after infection.

According to Associate Professor van Zelm, the results give hope to the efficacy of any vaccine against the virus and also explains why there have been so few examples of genuine reinfection across the millions of those who have tested positive for the virus globally.

“These results are important because they show, definitively, that patients infected with the COVID-19 virus do in fact retain immunity against the virus and the disease,” he said.

“This has been a black cloud hanging over the potential protection that could be provided by any COVID-19 vaccine and gives real hope that, once a vaccine or vaccines are developed, they will provide long-term protection.”

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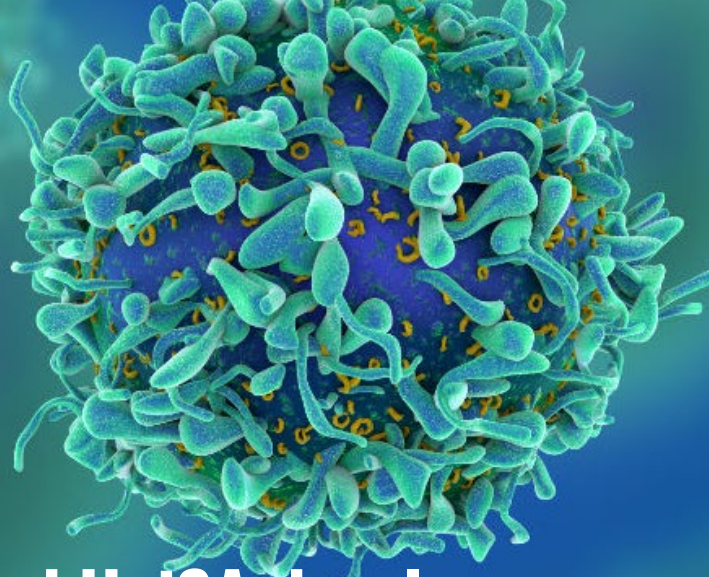
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Carina Biotech and UniSA develop new device to improve cancer immunotherapies

CAR-T biotherapeutics company Carina Biotech and researchers at the University of South Australia have developed a novel approach based on microfluidic technology to “purify” the immune cells of patients in the fight against cancer.

UniSA's Future Industries Institute PhD student Mona Elsemary has developed a microfluidic approach to purify chimeric antigen receptor (CAR-T) cells, the bioengineered immune cells that are the basis of groundbreaking cellular immunotherapy – a transformative cancer therapy that harnesses the power of a patient's immune system to fight their cancer.

Ms Elsemary's work is part of Carina Biotech's CAR-T development platform, which aims to produce effective treatments for solid cancers. Ms Elsemary will present her work tomorrow at the American Association for Cancer Research Conference on Tumor Immunology and Immunotherapy.

“CAR-T therapy has produced some remarkable results against blood cancers and there is a huge international research effort underway to transform this success into producing CAR-T treatments for solid cancers,” Ms Elsemary says.

“However, the CAR-T manufacturing process continues to be hindered by significant barriers and high costs – preventing the full potential of this life-saving therapy being reached.”

Such problems include the presence of non-viable cells and debris in the formulation and the presence of cryoprotectants (e.g., dimethyl sulfoxide or DMSO), typically used for the freezing and storage of CAR-T cell products.

The presence of dead cells can cause potentially severe side effects in recipients, and the US Federal and

Drug Administration (FDA) has set strict viability specifications for CAR-T products, with approximately 10% of patients not receiving their treatment due to failure in meeting them.

The presence of cryoprotectants in final CAR-T products can also cause severe allergic reactions and toxic side effects in some patients.

“Current commercial CAR-T cell products still contain significant amounts of DMSO,” Ms Elsemary says. “Therefore, there is a significant need for a method that effectively purifies CAR T cells prior to infusion to patients.”

The approach was developed by the University of South Australia team led by Prof Benjamin Thierry in collaboration with Assoc Prof Majid Warkiani at the University Technology Sydney, and could achieve, within 30 minutes, depletion of over 70% of dead cells in the CAR T products, leading to an average of 20% increase in cell viability.

In addition, over 90% of the cryoprotectant DMSO is removed – all with no detrimental effect on the quality and functionality of the cells.

This microfluidic technology used in the method could easily be integrated within an automated closed-cell processing system and used in non-clean room facilities, researchers say.

Ms Elsemary's research could greatly benefit patients by reducing both manufacturing cost and side-effects commonly associated to CAR T cell therapy.

About Carina Biotech

Carina Biotech is an Australian pre-clinical immunotherapy company affiliated with the University of South Australia which researches and develops chimeric antigen receptor T cell (CAR-T) therapies to treat solid cancers. Carina was spun out of the CRC for Cell Manufacturing, of which UniSA is a major participant. Carina are working towards producing broad-spectrum CAR-T therapies that can be used to treat multiple solid cancers yet are patient-specific and result in little, if any, off-cancer damage. Using its proprietary platforms, Carina is also developing technologies to improve access to, and infiltration of, solid cancers, and to enhance CAR-T cell manufacturing.

About CAR-T therapy

Two CAR-T therapies have been approved for use in the United States (Kymriah and Yescarta), one of them here in Australia (Kymriah) – both against blood cancers. So far, scientists haven't been able to produce a CAR-T that is effective against solid tumours, which represent the majority of cancers worldwide. Around the world, there are currently 500+ CAR-T clinical trials underway targeting various cancers. Currently, CAR-T therapy is an option for cancer patients who have exhausted all other avenues such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery and other immunotherapies.

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The key challenge faced by Australia's mental health system in dealing with the shocking levels of mental illness amongst ADF veterans and First Responders is the absence of substantive treatment innovation in the sector for decades. Instead we have just seen variations on the same treatment themes that help some people but don't help the majority of those who are suffering.

Only an estimated 40% to 60% of depressed individuals in the general population have some response to current pharmacotherapies or psychotherapies, with the majority experiencing ongoing symptoms and between 50% to 80% relapsing after treatments stop. Simply doing more of the same or making only incremental changes to the current system is not going to solve this problem and relieve the suffering of so many Veterans and First Responders.

To create positive change and healing, we have to be innovative to broaden the tools available to our medical practitioners and qualified therapists working in this area.

The Last Post is proud to be a Partner for Mind Medicine Australia's International Summit on Psychedelic Therapies for Mental Illness, taking place in Melbourne from 19-20

November 2021 at the Sofitel Melbourne On Collins. Come join us to explore the way forward for Australia.

The two-day International Summit on Psychedelic Therapies for Mental Illness will bring together clinicians, scientists, academics, mental and public health professionals, philanthropists, Government, law and policy makers, business, industry, investors, consumers and other interested stakeholders. The event will be preceded by a two-day workshop program for therapists and health professionals with leading international facilitators.

The Summit will feature a mixture of international and national keynotes, master classes, hot spots, panel conversations and a gala dinner Q & A.

Medicine-assisted therapies have been granted Breakthrough Therapy

status by the FDA in the USA due to current promising research in the treatment of depression and PTSD. We look forward to collaborating with you to explore treatment options to help address the mental health crisis we currently face, and offer treatments to those who need it most.

Together we can change the paradigm for mental health. Please join us – we hope to see you there!

As a partner for this event, we are delighted to extend an invitation to you and your colleagues and networks to gather in Melbourne in November 2021. Please use and share the password MMA2021 to redeem a 10% discount on ticket bookings.

For more details and to register for tickets, please visit: www.summit.mindmedicineaustralia.org.

A voice for Veterans in aged care:

Protecting your rights and getting the service you deserve

There's no doubt the aged care sector needs major reform. Aged care has been dominating the headlines, with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting existing issues and creating some new ones.

It's unacceptable and exceedingly difficult for those who are suffering, have loved ones who have suffered and for those who have lost loved ones.

While the 2020-21 Budget provided a small amount of additional government investment for key areas such as more home care packages, building the workforce, additional dementia services and training programs and helping young people in aged care, there is much more to be done.

As aged care advocates we are eagerly anticipating the government response to the release of the Aged Care Royal Commission's final report expected shortly. We hope that we will see real change to the aged care system to make it one which meets the needs and legitimate expectations of older Australians and their families.

But I expect all of this is cold comfort for those currently in positions where they are experiencing neglect or abuse or are simply not getting the support they want to maintain their independence and to live the life they want.

That's where advocacy can help. Whether you are receiving support at home or in an aged care home, advocacy services are available right now to help Veterans make sure their rights are upheld.

Advocacy is not something we talk about often and not everyone

understands what advocacy really means. On a practical level, an advocate is someone who works alongside you to give you a voice and help you navigate and resolve a range of issues impacting your rights in aged care.

This can range from concerns or problems with the organisation who is providing your care to issues with other services or decision-makers.

For example, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen some unnecessary visitor restrictions imposed by aged care facilities that have encroached on the rights of aged care residents. We understand that this has been done from a place of well-meaning for the safety of residents, but while safety is important, it is also your right to make choices about your care, individual preferences and social life, including where those choices involve personal risk.

Social contact and activity are vitally important for maintaining both mental and physical wellbeing, and advocates have been able to facilitate discussions with services to consider alternative and better options for visitors, which were allowable within the Health Directions at the time.

Working with an advocate can also help you navigate difficult government systems and sometimes find alternative solutions. It's what they do, and chances are they have dealt with the issue before.

Take the example of John. John had a home care package which allowed a support worker to visit his home once a week to help with some domestic tasks but following some health issues

How do I contact an advocate?

The Australian Government has funded the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to deliver a national network of aged care advocates to support older people and their families. OPAN delivers these services through nine service delivery organisations across Australia.

Phone OPAN on 1800 700 600 to be connected with an advocate in your state or territory.

needed to increase these visits. In what is an all too common story, John had been approved for a higher-level home care package but was on the waitlist for the funding to be assigned. In the meantime, advocates were able to find John an alternative funding program for the additional services and apply for a partial waiver of fees.

There are many examples where an advocate can just give you that extra support or inside knowledge to help you raise an issue or find a solution.

GEOFF ROWE

Geoff Rowe is the CEO for Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, the Queensland aged care advocacy provider. Geoff's career in the human services sector spans more than 30 years, including fifteen years in senior and executive positions in the Queensland Government, and over 20 years in the not-for-profit sector. Geoff is an OPAN representative on the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) and has a strong interest in social justice, human rights and inclusion.





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JAMES NESTOR

*Breath*The New Science
of a Lost Art

'A transformative book that changes how you think about your body and mind' Joshua Foer, author of *Moonwalking with Einstein*

No matter what you eat, how much you exercise, how skinny or young or wise you are, none of it matters if you're not breathing properly.

There is nothing more essential to our health and wellbeing than breathing: take air in, let it out, repeat 25,000 times a day. Yet, as a species, humans have lost the ability to breathe correctly, with grave consequences. Journalist James Nestor travels the world to figure out what went wrong and how to fix it.

The answers aren't found in pulmonology labs, as we might expect, but in the muddy digs of ancient burial sites, secret Soviet facilities, New Jersey choir schools, and the smoggy streets of São Paulo, Brazil. Nestor tracks down men and women exploring the hidden science behind ancient breathing practices like Pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya and Tummo and teams up with pulmonary tinkerers to scientifically test longheld beliefs about how we breathe.

Modern research is showing us that making even slight adjustments to the way we inhale and exhale can jump-start athletic performance, rejuvenate internal organs, halt snoring, allergies, asthma and autoimmune disease, and even straighten scoliotic spines. None of this should be possible, and yet it is.

Drawing on thousands of years of medical texts and recent cutting-edge studies in pulmonology, psychology, biochemistry and human physiology, *Breath* turns the conventional wisdom of what we thought we knew about our most basic biological function on its head.

You will never breathe the same again.

Breath, The New Science of a Lost Art by James Nestor. Published by Penguin Books Australia.



One of Australia's most iconic institutions, Legacy Australia, is excited to announce a new partnership with Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC).

In the trenches of WWI, a promise was made between a soldier and his dying mate. No matter what happens, he said he would "look after the missus and kids."

Almost a century later, Legacy continues to honour that promise for past, present and future veterans' families.

Legacy is an iconic Australian institution that supports the families of retired Australian Defence Force personnel. Legacy's mission is simple – ensuring that partners and children of veterans who gave their lives, or health, in service to our nation can fully realise their potential.

Today across Australia, Legacy cares for 48,000 veterans' families, including widows in their senior years, younger widows with children, and veterans' dependents with a disability.

Legacy helps provide financial, emotional and social support for the families in their care and supports families in times of hardship and grief. We help those they serve to meet their educational, personal and developmental goals, and to help them grow and thrive despite adversity.

Legacy has 45 dedicated Clubs located across Australia, who provide personalised, local support to the veterans' families in their community. These Clubs work tirelessly to ensure that no family member of a veteran suffers financial and social disadvantage because of a loved one's service.

There are also over 4,000 volunteers around Australia who act as mentors to the widows and their families, and who ensure Legacy's promise to care for the families of deceased veterans is kept. Volunteers who work directly with Legacy families are called Legatees and they, in part, provide support and friendship to those who have been the most affected by military service.

Legacy Australia's CEO, Scott Warr, says that Legacy and CSC will be a great partnership, with both working to provide support services for veterans and their families.

"Through working with CSC, we hope to make things easier and simpler for our veterans' families dealing with grief, loss and hardship," Mr Warr said.

"Legacy is always working hard to deliver more practical support for our veterans' families by partnering with similar organisations across Australia. By working with CSC, we can expand upon the opportunities already available to our beneficiaries and provide wider ranging support."





Australian Government

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

CSC is proudly partnering with Legacy Australia

**Coming
together to
serve those
who serve
our country**

CSC is honoured to partner with Legacy Australia. It's a privilege to work with this iconic Australian organisation to provide financial, emotional and social support to the families of veterans in times of loss, hardship and grief. We continue to take pride in caring for those who serve Australia and their families.

csc.gov.au



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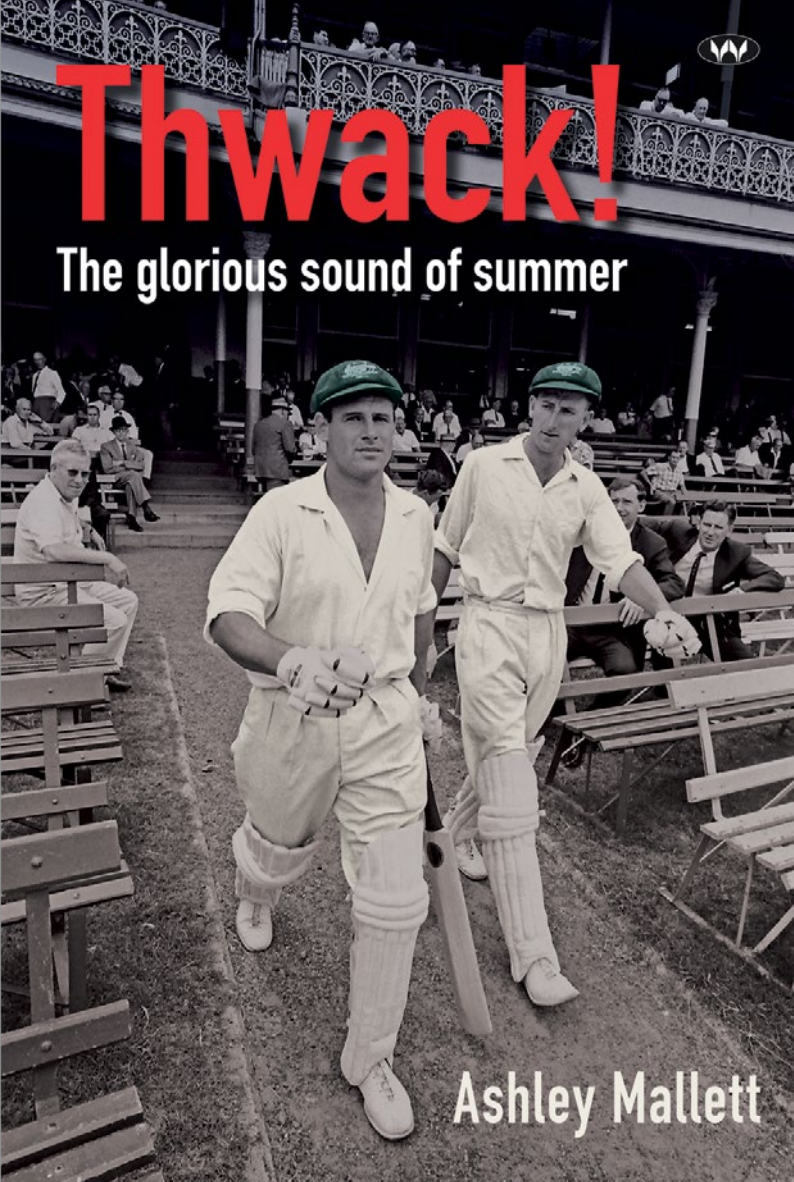
The sport of Lawn Bowls has many advantages. There are the obvious physical benefits, however there is also the social aspect and the sense of community spirit. New skills & techniques can be learned, and games can be played as full length competitions or on social occasions. Bowls really is a sport for life and that's why the love of the game has endured. City Club shares that same passion and it is showcased within the consistency and quality of each garment.

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Thwack!

The glorious sound of summer



On a typically hot Adelaide January day in 1971, Dennis Lillee burst on to the international cricket scene with one hell of a bang. Despite England scoring a first innings 470 on a pitch as flat as a pancake, the young firebrand bowled with amazing speed and accuracy to pick up 5/84 off 28.3 overs.

Thanks to a fighting 202-run second-wicket stand by Keith Stackpole (136) and Ian Chappell (104), Australia managed to draw the match. While the game marked Lillee's entry into big cricket, it proved to be captain Bill Lawry's final Test match. He was immediately replaced by Ian Chappell, whose captaincy was destined to mould a tremendous team in the 1970s, one to compare with any in the modern era.

Born on 28 July 1949 (and sharing his birthdate with other famous folk including Nelson Mandela, Richard Branson and cricket's legendary W.G. Grace) in the Perth suburb of Subiaco to Keith and Shirley Lillee, Dennis developed a keen sense of loyalty and determination early in his life. A truck driver, Keith Lillee was often home late of an evening and although dog-tired he was always keen to bowl a few down in the backyard to his boys, Dennis and his younger brother Trevor. After a brilliant tour of England in 1972, where Lillee took 31 wickets (eclipsing Clarrie Grimmett's longstanding record of 29 wickets for an Australian in an Ashes series) signs of back trouble began to emerge. Team masseur Dave 'Doc' McLane worked on Lillee's back for days on end during that long tour. The back strain – as he thought it was – became a major concern for him when Pakistan toured Australia in 1972–73.

Lillee toured West Indies late in that summer, but broke down after one Test match. Many believed Lillee's career was all but over when he sustained multiple stress fractures of his back. He underwent a long regime of intensive physiotherapy under the direction of Dr Frank Pyke, a Perth club cricketer, baseballer and footballer. Frank's son, Don Pyke, later coached the Adelaide Crows in the Australian Football League.

Lillee's determination became legend, when he returned to big cricket in 1974–75 – perfect timing to partner Jeff Thomson against England Down Under when the speed pair destroyed the visiting team; Australia winning 4–1. Lillee and Thomson were magnificent that summer. Thommo with his hurricane pace and Lillee with the guile of a good spinner at high speed had England on toast in this fiery Ashes summer. Cartoonist Paul Rigby summed it up best with this award-winning cartoon, which appeared in all News Ltd newspapers across the land.

Good judges describe Dennis Lillee as the 'complete bowler', a cricketer who always kept one step ahead of the pack. On the Test arena, Lillee was never beaten. West Indian champion Viv Richards took the sword to all the international bowlers of his era. And from the time Richards first came up against Lillee, it was like two irresistible forces meeting toe-to-toe; a heavyweight fight between two unrelenting combatants. Their contests were always take-no-prisoners affairs. Lillee's well-documented battle to overcome near-crippling back injury and return from relative obscurity to dominate the Test arena provides adequate proof of the calibre of his fighting qualities. He did what it took to take you out, sometimes roughing you up along the way.

The young Lillee was once castigated by WA captain Tony Lock, who told him bluntly, 'Dennis, you are bowling like a Fucking Old Tart.' Teammate and later WA captain John Inverarity grabbed hold of Lock's description and coined Lillee's nickname, FOT.

In December 1971, Lillee blitzed a strong World XI batting line-up in Perth, taking 8/29, polishing off the Garry Sobers' led side with 6/0. He played World Series Cricket for a couple of years and during that time he worked 74 THWACK! diligently on his approach to the wicket and his delivery. If it were possible, he became an even better bowler in the technical sense. The famous 'caught Marsh bowled Lillee' dismissal appears on Test match scorecards 95 times. At the WACA Ground in Perth the Lillee-Marsh Stand was named in their honour. In 70 Tests, Lillee took 355 wickets at 23.92 with 23 hauls of five wickets. Lillee's best Test figures were 7/83 against the West Indies at the MCG in 1981.

But figures cannot tell of a bowler's strategy, the way a victim is stalked and finally put to the sword. Struggling with his body out there, as he often did over his stellar career, Lillee called upon all his inner reserves and often drove himself upward and onward by sheer willpower. He was instrumental in helping establish World Series Cricket and when he hung up his boots he became a splendid fast bowling coach, mentoring, among many others, Jason Gillespie, Brett Lee and Mitchell Johnson. For years Dennis ran the MRF Pace Foundation in Chennai, India, and was president of the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA) for 11 years.

As the cricket gods blessed the game with the likes of Trumper, Bradman, Viv Richards, Wasim Akram, Keith Miller and Shane Warne, so too they have done the game proud by bringing D.K. Lillee onto the big stage for all to enjoy and admire. There was a poetry in his approach to the wicket, a perfect symmetry in his action and never-ending fire in his belly. Lillee had the heart of a lion and an inexhaustible will to succeed.

Edited extract from *Thwack! The glorious sound of summer* by Ashley Mallett. Published by Wakefield Press.

'O'Reilly has a great eye for the comically absurd,
and he's got a ready-rolled gallery of rogues,
lunatics and crims to draw on.' THE AGE

TITUS O'REILLY



CHEAT

NOT-SO
THE SUBTLE ART OF
CONNING YOUR WAY
TO SPORTING GLORY.



A hilarious trip through the history of cheating sport.
Mastering the not-so-subtle art of cheating in sport.

Where there's sport, there's cheating. No sport is immune; athletics, swimming, rugby, American Football, cricket, baseball, badminton, motorsports, tennis and curling. Yes, even that sport on the ice with brooms.

Almost as soon as humans started playing sport competitively, they started to cheat. They cheated to win, for the fame, for the money and sometimes for reasons that are hard to understand.

From the fiendishly clever to the outright hare brained, the borderline to the blatant, Titus O'Reilly takes us through the many and varied ways athletes and countries have tried to cheat over the years.

There's the winner of the New York marathon who was driven in a car part of the way, the male basketball

whose drug test revealed he was pregnant, the Tour De France where many of the riders took the train, the Spanish Paralympic basketball team who faked being intellectually disabled to win gold at the 2000 Paralympics.

As well as sharing an alarming amount of tales involving swapping bodily fluids, Titus takes you through doping, illegal equipment, bribes, playing dirty, faking injuries, wearing disguises, dodgy referees, ball tampering, eye gouging, itching powder, licking an opponent to distract them and sending a dwarf out to bat to shrink the strike zone.

Just as sport has become more sophisticated, so has cheating in sport, from state backed doping programs to tiny motors in Tour De France bikes.

What does this say about us, that we cheat with such regularity and creativity? Will technology help stop cheating or will it only make it worse?

Mastering the not-so-subtle art of cheating is a hilarious trip through the history of cheating in sport, and a handy how-to-guide for the professional athlete in your family.

CHEAT, The not-so subtle art of conning your way to sporting glory
by Titus O'Reilly. Published by Penguin Books Australia.

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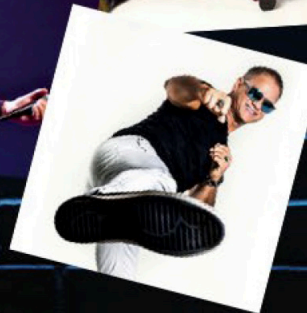
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