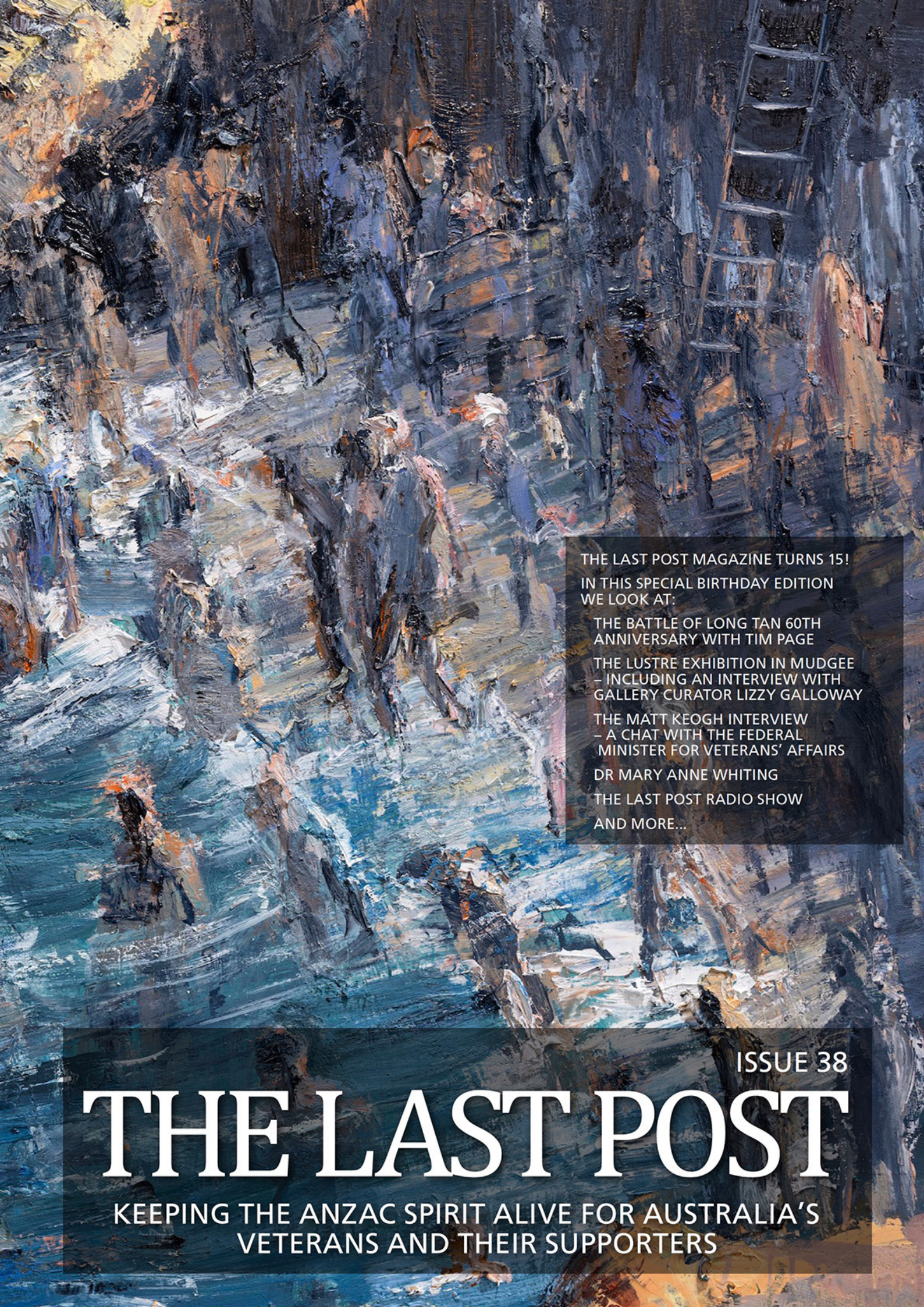




THE LAST POST MAGAZINE TURNS 15!
IN THIS SPECIAL BIRTHDAY EDITION
WE LOOK AT:

THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN 60TH
ANNIVERSARY WITH TIM PAGE

THE LUSTRE EXHIBITION IN MUDGE
- INCLUDING AN INTERVIEW WITH
GALLERY CURATOR LIZZY GALLOWAY

THE MATT KEOGH INTERVIEW
- A CHAT WITH THE FEDERAL
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS

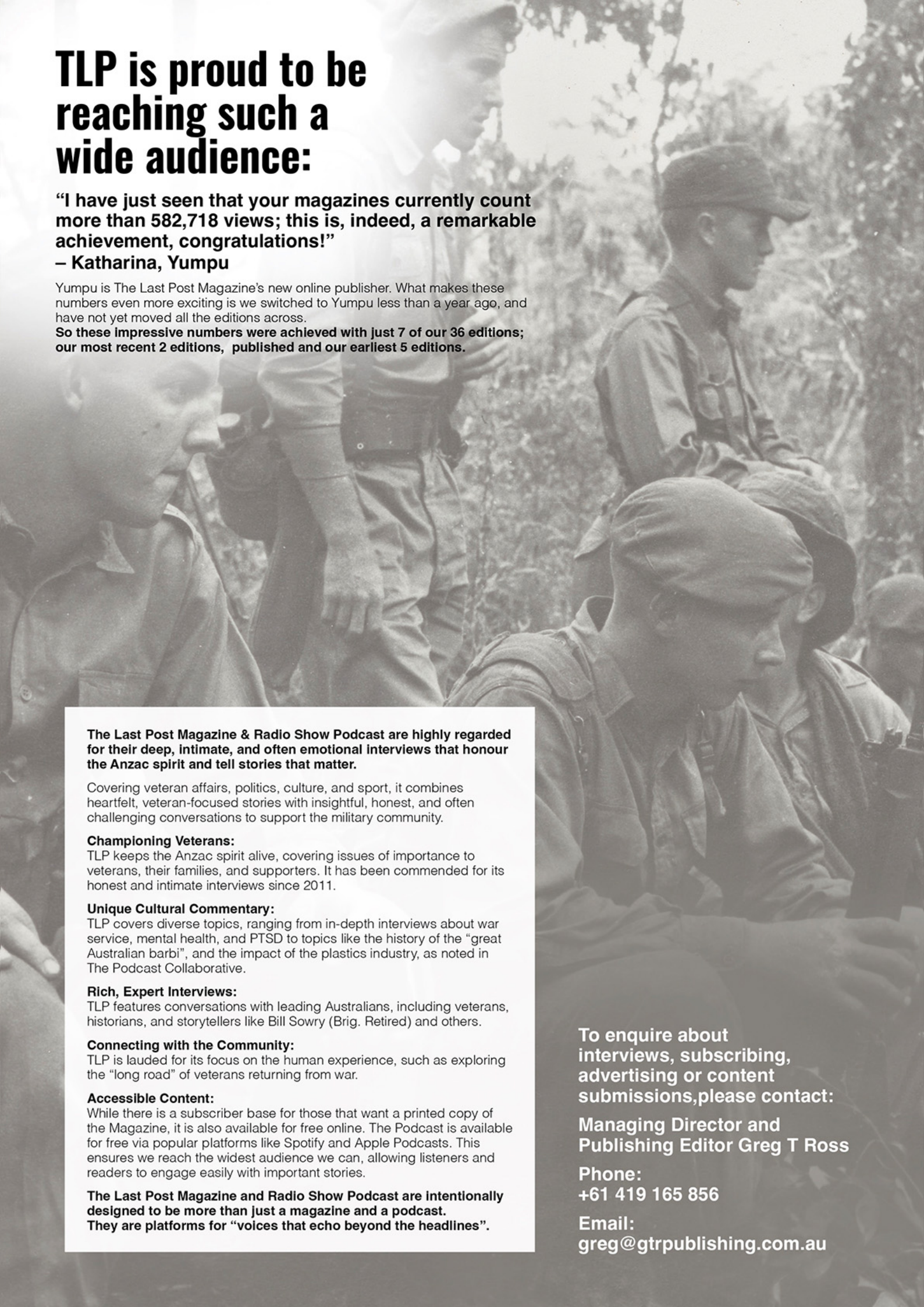
DR MARY ANNE WHITING

THE LAST POST RADIO SHOW
AND MORE...

ISSUE 38

THE LAST POST

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



TLP is proud to be reaching such a wide audience:

“I have just seen that your magazines currently count more than 582,718 views; this is, indeed, a remarkable achievement, congratulations!”

– Katharina, Yumpu

Yumpu is The Last Post Magazine's new online publisher. What makes these numbers even more exciting is we switched to Yumpu less than a year ago, and have not yet moved all the editions across.

So these impressive numbers were achieved with just 7 of our 36 editions; our most recent 2 editions, published and our earliest 5 editions.

The Last Post Magazine & Radio Show Podcast are highly regarded for their deep, intimate, and often emotional interviews that honour the Anzac spirit and tell stories that matter.

Covering veteran affairs, politics, culture, and sport, it combines heartfelt, veteran-focused stories with insightful, honest, and often challenging conversations to support the military community.

Championing Veterans:

TLP keeps the Anzac spirit alive, covering issues of importance to veterans, their families, and supporters. It has been commended for its honest and intimate interviews since 2011.

Unique Cultural Commentary:

TLP covers diverse topics, ranging from in-depth interviews about war service, mental health, and PTSD to topics like the history of the “great Australian barbi”, and the impact of the plastics industry, as noted in The Podcast Collaborative.

Rich, Expert Interviews:

TLP features conversations with leading Australians, including veterans, historians, and storytellers like Bill Sowry (Brig. Retired) and others.

Connecting with the Community:

TLP is lauded for its focus on the human experience, such as exploring the “long road” of veterans returning from war.

Accessible Content:

While there is a subscriber base for those that want a printed copy of the Magazine, it is also available for free online. The Podcast is available for free via popular platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts. This ensures we reach the widest audience we can, allowing listeners and readers to engage easily with important stories.

The Last Post Magazine and Radio Show Podcast are intentionally designed to be more than just a magazine and a podcast. They are platforms for “voices that echo beyond the headlines”.

To enquire about interviews, subscribing, advertising or content submissions, please contact:

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GREG T ROSS

Diary of an independent publisher

If I'd had a child at the time the first edition of The Last Post was released, that child would now be 15 years old.

Although using the word "old" and 15 seems a bit funny. If I'd had a child at the time I first conceived the idea of the magazine, that child would be closer to 16.

So, it all seems to go by so quickly but tangled up in that time frame, as we celebrate 15 years since the first edition, is a meandering path, an up and down and sideways journey that included jubilation and tragedy and rescues and feelings of camaraderie and of loneliness too. There were weeks where I had a lot of money and weeks where I had little.

A bit like observing your child too, I've watched and been part of The Last Post's growth and celebrated with it as milestones were reached. There have been defining years and years so vague that they morph into other years. I remember 2011, living comfortably in Myrtle Bank, SA, when the first edition came out. Interviewing Ron Barassi in St Kilda and half an hour later, Ross Wilson in Albert Park.

I remember 2015, revisiting Western Australia for the first time in a long time, walking around Scarborough and driving to Margaret River with all the memories from my time there as a teenager. I remember 2016 vividly, when my partner Wendy was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I remember 2017, in January, when she died. I remember the rest of that year as initially a time of release and late nights, on my own in the kitchen, playing music to feel something again after the numbness of a loved one's death. Realising too, that I had changed and become a stronger person, through the tragedy, where celebrating in quietness often became a preferred form of communication. Where silence no longer became uncomfortable.

And, of seeing Cold Chisel in the Adelaide Parklands with Kirstie. And, later that year travelling a lot and making new friends that opened me to the joy of being alive. Of Vespa rides to the airport at 5am. Trips to the sanctuary of my brother's place in Mooloolaba.

And of finally getting to see Midnight Oil, with Kirstie on a warm November night, in Adelaide.

All the time, editions of The Last Post kept coming out.

I remember 2018 as the time I left South Australia to return to NSW, to the quiet coastal hamlet of Long Beach. Vespa rides to the beach. Salt covered and blissed out from the ocean and martinis upon returning home and the beauty of relative solitude.

All the time, editions of The Last Post kept coming out.

In 2019 I visited Japan. In 2020, trips north to Fernmount for gonzo love, martini's and late night parties with Tim, Mau and Annette. Whale watching off Coffs. In 2021 I met my current partner. In 2022, a trip to Broome and the pindan of the Dampier Peninsula.

In 2023 I returned to Melbourne and my team Collingwood won the AFL Premiership. Saturday morning trips to the Prahran Market.

All the time, editions of The Last Post kept coming out.

I remember 2023 as the year Gary Mac and I started the podcast series, The Last Post Radio Show. In 2024, Vietnam. Exmouth. The Ningaloo. These are years I remember. And this year, my older brother Roger died. These are years I remember.

And all the time, The Last Post magazine kept coming out.

More interviews, more chats with interesting Australians.

All these memories are worthy of a book or a mini series in the life of an independent publisher and the beauty of making friends along the way.

So, we say happy 15th birthday to the magazine and to the memories included in what has been a loving and sometimes heartbreaking yet wonderful journey.

And it ain't over yet.

Greg T Ross

#thelastpostmagazine

#diaryofanindependentpublisher

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.

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ON THE COVERS:

Front and Back:

Euan Macleod

Final Withdrawal 2026

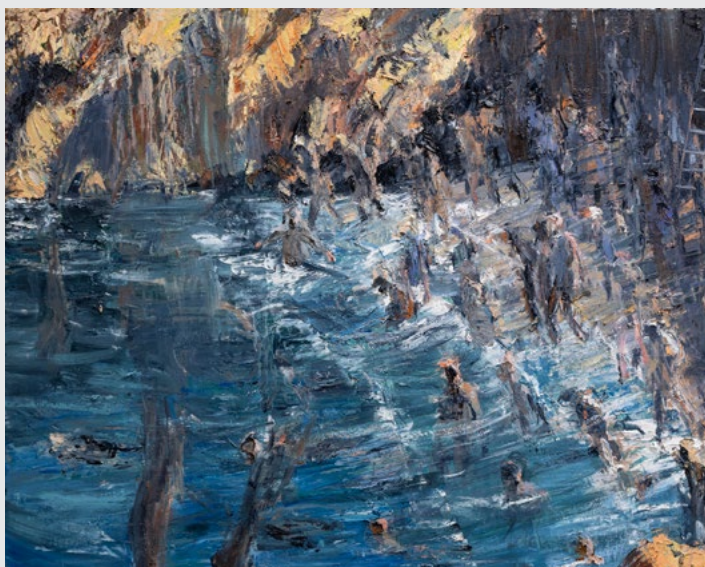
oil on polyester

123 x 160 cm

Image: Michael Bradfield

Gallery: King Street Gallery on William

Euan Macleod's works can be viewed at LUSTRE in the Mudgee Arts Precinct from July 24 to September 20, 2026.



designer / art director KIRSTIE WYATT

The Last Post Magazine has been praised nationally and internationally since it was launched in 2011 and is designed by Kirstie Wyatt from Wyatt Creative. Kirstie is a freelance graphic and web designer and can enhance your marketing to get the results you want in your business.

0419 035 000 wyattcreative.com.au kirstie@wyattcreative.com.au



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foreword

Peter Tinley AM

National President
RSL Australia

Fifteen years ago, a small magazine set out to do something the nation has always needed done well: tell the true stories of those who serve, and those who have served.

Fifteen years and thirty-seven editions later, The Last Post has become part of the fabric of the veteran and defence community it set out to honour. On behalf of the Returned and Services League of Australia, I congratulate Greg Ross and everyone who has carried this publication from a modest idea into a genuine national voice for the Anzac spirit.

This anniversary lands at a fitting moment. In 2026, the RSL itself turns 110. We were formed in 1916 by men returning from a war that changed the world, who understood that mateship forged under fire does not end at the wharf. Since then, this League has stood beside every generation of Australians who have worn the uniform: through global wars to the service of peacekeepers and current serving members. Anniversaries like these are not simply occasions for ceremony. They are moments to ask, honestly, whether the institution still deserves the trust it was built on.

My answer is that it does, but only if we keep earning it. Institutions do not survive on legacy alone. They survive because they adapt. We honour our past by modernising our future, and that is as true for a 110-year-old League as it is for a magazine celebrating fifteen. The mission the RSL was founded on in 1916 is as vital today as it ever was, but the veterans we serve are not the veterans of a century ago. Their needs are more complex, more diverse and, in many respects, more urgent; and we owe them relevance, professionalism, compassion and clarity of purpose, not nostalgia.

Part of that adaptation is recognising what our veteran community actually represents to this nation, right now. Australia stands at the beginning of the most significant transformation of its defence posture in generations, as we build the sovereign industrial and technological capability that AUKUS and a more contested region demand. In that context, our roughly 580,000 veterans are not a cost to be managed or a chapter to be closed. They are a sovereign capability in their own right. Their trained judgement, their systems knowledge, their leadership under pressure, is precisely the human element a modern defence workforce cannot manufacture from scratch. As I've said many times, veterans are not a cost, they are a multiplier. A national asset this country would be foolish to let go quiet after service. That is a message I have taken to international conferences this year, and it is one the RSL will keep pressing wherever the nation's defence and industry leaders gather.

This is exactly why a publication like The Last Post matters, and why it will matter more, not less, in the years ahead. Advocacy changes minds in meeting rooms; storytelling changes hearts everywhere else. Every profile of a veteran finding purpose in a new career, every feature on heritage, every honest account of the harder parts of service and transition, builds the public understanding that our advocacy depends on. A modern RSL embraces collaboration, not competition, across the ex-service organisations and media that share this mission, and The Last Post has been a genuine partner in that work for a decade and a half.

So, as we mark fifteen years of The Last Post alongside 110 years of the RSL, my message is the same for both: our founding purpose has not changed, but the way we serve it must. We honour the fallen, and we fiercely advocate for and support the living. We tell the truth about what service costs, and what it gives back. And we keep adapting, together, so that the next fifteen to one hundred years, leaves veterans better served than we found them.

Congratulations to the whole team at The Last Post on this milestone.

Lest We Forget.

RSL ACTIVE

*Recreation, Events and
Activities for Veterans
and their Families*



Take part in programs and events created for the veteran community. Connect with other veterans, improve physical and mental well-being and enhance your support circle.

There are regular RSL Active events held through RSL Sub-branches across Australia.

You do not need to be an RSL member to be a part of RSL Active.



RSL
ACTIVE

Join the fun! rslaustralia.org/rsl-active



RSL
Australia

The Multiplier Effect: Why Australia's Veterans Are a Growth Asset, Not a Legacy Cost

Veterans are not a cost, they are a multiplier. I've said it before and I'll keep saying it, because it is the single biggest mindset shift Australia needs to make about the roughly 580,000 men and women who have worn the uniform.

For too long, the national conversation about veterans has defaulted to what they need from us, including health care, pensions, transition support. All of that matters. But it misses the other half of the picture entirely: what this country gains, in hard economic terms, when it properly backs its veteran community. Get that right, and veterans aren't a line item in a welfare budget. They're one of the most under-used growth levers Australia has.

Start with the numbers we already have. The last Census showed veterans in employment at a higher rate than the general population, and reservists higher again. Veterans work longer hours than their civilian peers (more than twice as likely to be clocking 50-plus hours a week) and they volunteer in their communities at nearly one and a half times the general rate. They are overrepresented in public administration and emergency services, and female veterans are more likely to hold management roles than women in the wider workforce. These are not the numbers of a cohort defined by disadvantage. They are the numbers of a workforce that consistently punches above its weight. And one that most Australian employers still don't know how to find or value properly.

That workforce edge matters more than ever as Australia rebuilds its sovereign industrial and defence base. AUKUS and a more contested strategic environment demand a scaled-up, skilled, security-cleared workforce that cannot be conjured from a training college in a couple of years. It already exists in our veteran community. Systems knowledge, leadership under pressure, the ability to make good decisions with incomplete information: that is precisely the "human infrastructure" our defence strategy needs, and precisely what I've been putting

to industry and government at international forums like Land Forces and the Indian Ocean Defence and Security Conference this year. Framed properly, our veterans are sovereign capability in human form: the human dividend behind every system we build. Treating that workforce as an afterthought to the hardware is a strategic mistake we cannot afford.

The same multiplier effect shows up away from defence, in every corner of the economy. Veteran-owned businesses are growing fast, built on exactly the disciplines the ADF instils: leadership, logistics, project delivery, working to a standard under pressure. Organisations like the Veteran Business Community are now connecting veteran-owned firms directly into corporate and government supply chains, and the results speak for themselves: multi-year, multi-million-dollar contracts landing with businesses that didn't exist five years ago, run by people this country trained to succeed under far harder conditions than a boardroom. The gaps that do exist in sales, marketing, cashflow management, the commercial skills the ADF doesn't teach, are exactly where a coordinated network like ours can add real value, through mentoring veteran founders rather than leaving them to work it out alone. A serious national push to put veteran-owned businesses on the procurement radar, backed by government and corporate Australia alike, is not a favour to veterans. It's smart economics.

Regional Australia feels this multiplier most directly. Veterans return to their communities and become the SES volunteers, the CFA members, the local business owners, the coaches and committee chairs who hold regional economies and social fabric together. A value that rarely shows up in a GDP figure but that every regional

mayor and business chamber would tell you is real. When I talk about veterans as nation-builders beyond service, this is what I mean: disaster response, community resilience, social cohesion, all delivered by people this country already paid to train, at a fraction of what it would cost to build that capability from scratch.

None of this happens automatically, and it would be dishonest to pretend otherwise. Our own study into the veterans and families of veterans who served in the middle east area of operations shows real employment instability and financial stress sitting alongside the strengths; the transition from military structure to civilian opportunity is still where too much of this potential leaks away. That is the challenge in front of government, industry and the ex-service community together: not simply to support veterans doing it tough, which we will always do, but to build the pipelines through corporate, government and small business, that turn military-trained capability into economic output at scale. Employment is the key to dignity for the individual veteran. It is also, in aggregate, a genuine national economic strategy hiding in plain sight.

So here is the shift I want this network, and this country, to make. Stop asking only what we owe veterans and start asking what we're leaving on the table by not backing them properly. A veteran workforce already outperforming national averages. A veteran business community proving its value in supply chains right now. A veteran-strength community backbone holding regional Australia together. Multiply that across defence, industry, small business and community, and you don't get a welfare bill. You get one of the best economic growth stories this country has never properly told. Let's start telling it.

PETER TINLEY AM

National President, RSL Australia

Honouring The Past. Building The Future.

For generations, The Last Post has helped preserve the stories, values and spirit that have shaped Australia.

At Versatile Group, we share a deep respect for legacy, resilience and community while continuing to create places that will serve generations to come.

**Congratulations to The Last Post on
15 remarkable years of keeping
the Anzac spirit alive.**





The History of The Last Post Magazine

Over the years we've gained the recognition as being Australia's most recognised independent veteran publication, functioning on a couple of levels, as a support network and a general-interest lifestyle magazine. As you see, below, there's been two distinct eras in the publications history. And it all started back in 1969, from an office in Pitt Street, Sydney.

An Era of Genesis (Late 1960s – 1980s)

1969:

The concept for the magazine was born out of deep wartime lineage. Veteran Raymond Thorsby Ross (who fought in Papua New Guinea with the 2/10th and was the son of Joseph Thorsby Ross, a Gallipoli veteran) leased a small office on Pitt Street, Sydney.

1970s–1980s:

Operating as a small-scale, black-and-white print directory and almanac, the original publication aimed to assist the Returned and Services League (RSL) and its military members through distribution around Sydney Sub-Branches. Raymond funded the printing and distribution by cold-calling local business owners and sporting clubs from his office daily.

The Era of Modern Revival (2011 – Present)

Spring 2011:

Raymond's son, Greg T. Ross, officially revived and modernised his father's concept. He relaunched The Last Post as a high-quality, full-colour, A4 independent national magazine at the Brighton Yacht Club in Victoria, in August 2011. Kirstie Wyatt joined from the first revived issue as Artistic Director.

2011–2020:

TLP secured its status as a quality bi-annual publication distributed globally and nationwide, releasing its dedicated Anzac Day Edition in autumn and Remembrance Day Edition in spring.

2021:

The publication marked its 10th anniversary of the revival, continuing its content beyond wartime history, documenting broader components of Australian life, including indigenous art, travel, health, finance, and sports.

2023:

In November, TLP published its landmark 31st modern edition. This issue importantly examined modern systemic matters like the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. Concurrently with the magazine, The Last Post Radio Show podcast was introduced to expand its media presence with veteran and lifestyle interviews.

2026:

Celebrating 15 years since its revival, the magazine reached Issue #38 with the special 15th Birthday Edition. The modern iteration continues to serve as an advocate for veterans while profiling everyday Australians and their achievements. Meanwhile, The Last Post Radio Show continues, attracting good audience numbers and closing in on Episode #300.





Keeping History Alive at Fifteen

For fifteen years, The Last Post magazine has stood as a vital bridge between generations of Australians. It connects our rich wartime heritage with the vibrant reality of our modern, democratic society. What began as an independent project inspired by deep family connections to the battlefields of Gallipoli and Kokoda has evolved into a deeply respected national publication. It is highly valued across the country.

Celebrating a 15th birthday in 2026 is a momentous milestone for any independent print media outlet. In an increasingly digital world, The Last Post has not only survived but thrived. It succeeds by offering an alternative to standard military reporting. Rather than focusing solely on the tragedy of conflict, it chooses to highlight great Australians doing great things. Through its high-quality biannual glossy print editions, the magazine covers everything from local veterans' history and Department of Veterans' Affairs updates to profiles in the arts, travel, music, and sport.

This 15-year anniversary is a powerful testament to the magazine's unique philosophy. True to the solemn bugle call from which it takes its name, The Last Post honors the ultimate sacrifices that secured our way of life. Yet, it also embraces a forward-looking curiosity. It remains an open forum for discussing what it truly means to be Australian today. This commitment to a diverse national identity is clearly reflected in its landmark Anzac Day 2026 Indigenous-focused edition. This edition integrated First Nations art and perspectives directly into our shared national story.

The longevity of The Last Post is a direct result of its community. It is driven by the vision of its founder and editor, Greg T. Ross. It is sustained by contributions from exceptional Australian writers and creative icons. Most importantly, it is kept alive by its dedicated readers. For a decade and a half, these readers have turned to these pages for a sense of camaraderie, reflection, and inspiration.

As we look ahead to the next chapter, The Last Post continues to prove that our past always has something valuable to say to our present. We celebrate this 15th milestone with deep gratitude for the path traveled so far. We look forward to many more years of keeping our history alive, strengthening our community ties, and honoring the enduring Australian spirit.





The Last Post Radio Show Podcast

I remember the idea evolving although I can't recall the idea coming to me. I guess it had been brewing for some time. A podcast series? Why not? I'd been in radio so it'd sorta be like that, wouldn't it.

I'd need some help though. Although I'd once been a radio whiz and been able to record and produce my own shows in outback Qld and then Mudgee, that was a long time ago. I'd forgotten most of that stuff.

So I reached out to long-time radio mentor Gary Mac (he'd been the guy that had got me a paying gig on radio after years on Community radio). Over weeks that stretched into months, I'd visit Gary and his wife Joanie down Mornington way. He taught me, all over again. And a lot of it just came back to me. "Ah, yes, of course, now I remember". Throughout the process, Gary stuck with me. After all these years, I'm still knocked out by his patience and kindness.

By this stage, it was in the last quarter of 2023. So, we're ready to go. Almost. What if I asked Gary to co-host it with me? That'd work.

And it did. For the first year, Gary was there with me. And then he suggested I was ready to fly alone.

Since then I've been interviewing, chatting with a multitude of wonderful people, from all walks of life, from here and overseas. On the release of this special birthday edition, The Last Post Radio Show is up to Episode 273. Wow.

GREG T ROSS

And, we're rating well. Very well. On a "bad" day we're rating top 30% of downloads in Australia. On a good day, top 15% and on a very, very good day, top 10%.

What do we do on the Show? We share experiences. That's it, I guess. There's a lot of stuff out there so maybe a bit of a sanctuary too. And, maybe too, where tuning in helps you realise that you're not alone. There's a lot of people going through the same sorta stuff. A connection. For those who have served, a full-on transition aid with the strength of personal stories.

Covering the arts and mental health and sport and life and the interaction of all those things, they can help us all, as well as veterans. The National Film and Sound Archives reckons these Australian stories are worth including in their national collection.

I'd be rapt if you could tune-in, download and maybe talk to others about the Show. In the blink of an eye, we'll have reached 300 episodes.

And, to Gary Mac and to listeners and guests, a huge thank you for making an independent publishers life so lovingly busy.

'Brendan's become a beacon of hope, inspiration and support well beyond Broken Hill.' SABRA LANE

THE *From severe depression on an outback sheep station* DESERT *to swimming the English Channel* SWIMMER



BRENDAN CULLEN
with PAUL MITCHELL

Listen to the interview:
thelastpostmagazine.com/the-last-post-radio-show-podcast

25 Years On: Remembering Service, Supporting Veterans Today



This October marks 25 years since Australia's first deployment to Afghanistan under Operation Slipper. It is a significant milestone for Australia's veteran community and an opportunity to reflect on a chapter of service that shaped a generation of Australian Defence Force personnel.

More than 35,000 Australians served in Afghanistan and the broader Middle East region between 2001 and 2021, contributing across combat, reconstruction, mentoring, training and humanitarian assistance and support operations.

For many veterans and families, the anniversary will be a time to remember mates, reflect on shared experiences and acknowledge the contribution of those who served. It is also a reminder that the impacts of service can continue long after a deployment has ended.

"Twenty-five years on, this anniversary is an opportunity to honour the service of thousands of Australians who answered their nation's call," Bravery Trust CEO Garth Callender said.

"For many veterans, the effects of service don't end when the deployment ends. Some are still managing injuries, navigating the transition to civilian life, supporting their families, or dealing with financial pressures that have built up over time.

"Commemoration is important, but so is making sure veterans and their families have access to practical support when they need it. That's how we can continue to honour their service in a meaningful way."

Bravery Trust sees firsthand the challenges some veterans face after leaving the military. Physical injuries, mental health concerns, changing family circumstances and financial hardship can emerge months or years after a member's service has concluded. Bravery Trusts support contemporary veterans and their families through financial assistance, financial counselling and financial education, helping them overcome financial challenges and build a stronger future beyond service.

Since 2012, Bravery Trust has distributed more than \$8.4 million in direct financial assistance and helped negotiate more than \$1.1 million in debt waivers for veterans and their families. Demand for support continues to grow, with the charity recording a 77% increase in demand for financial support and education services over the past two years and a six-fold increase in veterans seeking financial counselling since 2023.

To mark the anniversary, Bravery Trust is encouraging Australians to take part in Bravery Trek, a national fundraising challenge that honours contemporary veterans while raising funds for veterans and families doing it tough. Whether by walking, running, making a donation or contributing \$25 to mark 25 years since Australian service in Afghanistan began, supporters can help provide practical assistance when it is needed most.

For more information, visit www.braverytrek.com.au

BRAVERY TREK

SUPPORTING VETERANS

1 - 31 October 2026

Take on the challenge

How it works

1 Sign up at braverytrek.com.au

2 Choose your Challenge

Virtual - walk or run 120km across the month of October. It's flexible and free.

Dusk till Dawn - 12-hour overnight team event at the Australian War Memorial from 16-17 October.

3 Set-up your fundraising page

4 Take on the Trek

Follow their path - Understand their journey - Support our veterans

BRAVERY TRUST

leidos

Defence Health

Wilson Security

Defence Bank

Birdon



The Battle of Long Tan was one of the most significant battles fought by Australians during the Vietnam War.

On 18 August 1966, Delta (D) Company, The Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), defeated North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops during an 'encounter' battle in the Long Tan rubber plantation.

The plantation was close to the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat. D Company suffered 42 casualties, including 18 dead – more than one-third of its strength. D Company's 105 men and 3 New Zealanders from 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, fought for almost 4 hours against soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army, who outnumbered them by 10 to one. Some 245 North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops were killed. Australians observe Vietnam Veterans' Day on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

How it happened

In May 1966, the first Australian soldiers of 6RAR arrived in South Vietnam; the rest followed in June. Within 2 months, elements of the battalion found themselves engaged in one of the largest battles fought by Australians in the Vietnam War.

By August 1966, the Australian base at Nui Dat was only 3 months old. The Australians had relocated the villagers of Long Tan and Long Phuoc to secure the new base. The recovery of these villages motivated the enemy's attack on the 1st Australian Task Force.

Expecting an attack

In the days before the battle, radio signals indicated the presence of strong North Vietnamese forces within 5 km of the base, but patrols found nothing.

On the night of 16 and 17 August, the Nui Dat base came under fire from mortars and recoilless rifles. The Australian defenders stood to, expecting the barrage to be followed by an assault. None came. Searches of the area the next day located some of the sites from which mortars had been fired, but nothing else.

Patrols continued the following day, 18 August. D Company left the Nui Dat base at 11:15 am, bound for the Long Tan rubber plantation only a few kilometres away. As they left, the sounds of a concert by Australian entertainer Little Pattie reached their ears.

Attacking in force

They entered the Long Tan plantation at 3:15 pm that day. Less than 1 hour later, the North Vietnamese attacked in force, firing on the Australians at Long Tan with mortars, machine guns and small arms. D Company made desperate calls for support. The quick response of a New Zealand artillery battery saved the Australians from



annihilation. Almost as soon as the battle began, a torrential downpour of rain added to the gloom in the rubber plantation. The Australians were surrounded, short of ammunition and fighting an enemy whose strength they could only guess at.

Calling for support

The Australians called for helicopters to drop ammunition to them. Flying at tree-top height, braving the terrible weather and heavy Vietcong fire, 2 RAAF helicopters located the beleaguered Australians.

The choppers dropped boxes of ammunition, and blankets for the wounded men.

The survivors of D Company fought alongside New Zealand's 161 Field Battery, the Australian 103rd and 105th Field Batteries, and a United States battery. Their accurate artillery fire inflicted heavy losses on the North Vietnamese.

As the fighting continued, Australian reinforcements were committed to the battle. B Company was on the



THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

way. A Company was loaded into the armoured personnel carriers (APCs) of 3 Troop, 1 Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron. They moved into the area to support D Company just before 7 pm, as daylight was fading.

Forcing a retreat

The North Vietnamese broke off the battle and surviving troops withdrew, taking their wounded with them. They had suffered terrible casualties.

The Australians did not realise the extent of their victory until they returned to the scene of battle the next morning. They counted 245 enemy dead still in the plantation and surrounding jungle, with some unidentifiable remains and evidence that bodies had been removed from the battlefield.

Captured documents and information from prisoners suggested that D Company had faced some 2,500 North

Vietnamese troops. These were the Vietcong 275th Main Force Regiment, at least one North Vietnamese Army battalion and a local force unit, D445 Battalion. At least 1,000 North Vietnamese troops came into direct contact with D Company.

In the Battle of Long Tan, 18 Australians were killed and 24 wounded. All but one of the dead were from D Company.

anzacportal.dva.gov.au



— INTERVIEW —

The Honourable
MATT KEOGH
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
and Defence Personnel

Greg T Ross: Today we welcome the Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Matt Keogh. Matt has been Minister since 2022. He holds the seat of Burt in WA. Welcome to the Last Post Radio Show, Minister Keogh. It's good to have you here for a chat.

Minister Matt Keogh: Great to be with you, Greg.

GTR: Our talk today centres around Vietnam Veterans' Day, which is coming up soon, and of course its attachment to a very important part of Australia's military history, the Battle of Long Tan. When is Vietnam's Veterans' Day for listeners that don't know, and what do we have planned?

MK: So Vietnam Veterans' Day is the 18th of August, which is also the same day as the Battle of Long Tan. And for a long time, the 18th of August was referred to as Long Tan Day, especially through the Vietnam veteran community. But over time, it has been adopted by the broader Australian community of that great day of commemoration of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. And then in the late '80s, the Hawke government officially designated the

day as Vietnam Veterans' Day as a day of commemoration of all of those that were involved in the Vietnam War.

GTR: And we welcome that too. That has been a great achievement to have a day set aside in remembrance and thankfulness too. Look, we'll get onto the Battle of Long Tan in just a moment, Minister, but the historical significance of Vietnam Veterans' Day, what does it mean to Australia's veterans?

MK: Well, I think one of the interesting things about Vietnam Veterans' Day, as I said, it started as Long Tan Day. It was the day that became the day of commemoration for our Vietnam veterans from our Vietnam veterans. So it sort of grew more organically than we've seen with say days for other conflicts where, for example, victory in the Pacific Day became the obvious day where we commemorate around the end of the Second World War. And this was a day that didn't mark the commencement of Australia's engagement. It wasn't about the end of Australia's engagement. It was because it was one of our most significant battles in the battle in which we lost most Australian lives during

the war. So it was something of great importance to our Vietnam veteran community themselves. And so it does have that, if you like, organic authenticity of being selected by the Vietnam veteran community and then being acknowledged by government and adopted as the National Day of Commemoration for those that were involved in the Vietnam conflict.

So it's particularly important for our Vietnam veteran cohort. And I think it's even more important because it was a conflict that at the time, particularly towards the end of Australia's engagement in Vietnam, brought with it a higher degree of political controversy. And so there was a period with which the Vietnam veteran community were not particularly, I guess, engaged in the broader community around how they were commemorating their service in Vietnam. And that came along later. And of course I mentioned the Hawke government's acknowledgement of Long Tan Day then becoming Vietnam Veterans' Day as a way of government and a nation trying to heal those wounds of political controversy with the Vietnam veteran class and to properly recognize their service and sacrifice, regardless of what may have been at play in the '60s and '70s, that any puts on the Australian uniform and fights for our country deserves our respect and honor and to have their service commemorated properly.

GTR: We know that there are a lot of Australians that served during this period. I've been given the number of around 60,000. You can talk about that with me in a moment, Minister, but it was a long tenure of war. I mean, it ran from 62 to 75. Australia's involvement is certainly not quite that long, but perhaps give us a rundown of our involvement and the years involved there too, Minister.

MK: Well, certainly if you look at that near decade and especially Australia's involvement through, the bulk of Australians came out right at the end of 1972, and that was something that the Australian community voted for in that December 72 election, the election of the Whitlam government committing to remove the withdrawal from Vietnam. And in the 20th century, it was our longest engagement in a conflict like that. Of course, it's subsequently been eclipsed by 20 years of engagement in Afghanistan. But to put that in context, we had about 30,000 Australians that served over the course of 20 years in Afghanistan, whereas more than 60,000 Australians served as part of that less than a decade in Vietnam.

GTR: I suppose we speak of Vietnam Veterans' Day, a very important significant date coming up on the 18th of August by the way. And of course the question is, I mean, family is a very important role in any veteran's lives in the recovery from, I guess, returning home and starting life again. Are families of veterans recognised in Vietnam Veterans' Day, Minister?

MK: Well, certainly one of the things that we as the Australian government always seek to do is to recognise primarily the service and sacrifice of the milk form in these conflicts, but to also remember and recognise the sacrifice and support that comes from their families. Of course, their families that are left at home, whether it's bringing up children without usually a father while they're away, but also then having to be the primary carer or responder to a veteran that's returned with physical and/or mental injuries. So those injuries that are invisible are born by the veteran, but also by the family as well. And certainly we know from our Vietnam veteran cohort, and no doubt from cohorts involved in conflict before Vietnam, but really our Vietnam veteran cohort was the first time we've done any degree of thinking and research about the intergenerational impact of conflict on families. And so we see that reverberate through. And I know from talking to mental health practitioners that work with veterans, that they've certainly seen that in the work that they've done with Vietnam veterans, but also the children of Vietnam veterans. And again, partly that's got to do with the political environment that was going along, was around at the time and subsequently. But also I think what made it particularly difficult for the Vietnam veteran cohort was the degree, and this wasn't universal, but it was certainly there.

The degree to which the Second World War cohort, many of which were the fathers of Vietnam veterans, didn't accept that the war in Vietnam was a proper war. And so you had this intergenerational element between those involved in the Second World War, and then those that went to Vietnam. And of course, you put that against the other community environment where there was quite a negative view about Australia's engagement in Vietnam. And you can't help but understand and expect that that's going to have some real consequences in terms of the family engagement and the need to support a veteran.

GTR: It must have been a shocking experience in regards to that. And I know it was a controversial war, particularly from the late '60s onwards, and affected a lot of veterans on their return home. Look, I suppose strongly attached to this, very, very strongly attached to this is the remembrance, and it's the anniversary, the 60-year anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which has taken place also on the 18th of August, because that's when it took place in 1966. Minister, it was one of Australia's earliest large engagements. Can you tell listeners what actually happened on that day?

MK: Well, the Battle of Long Tan was a battle that effectively involved the ambushing of over a hundred men in

the Sixth Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, six RAR, plus three New Zealanders that were with them in a plantation, a rubber plantation. In fact, not very far from their base. And they were really pinned down. They were pinned down in circumstances where there was torrential rain. And so they came under fire. They were rapidly running out of ammunition. They were surrounded, pinned down to the ground, and really then had to start trying to call in fires from the base as well as get resupply from the air via helicopter. And if you think of the numbers, they were outnumbered 10 to one. The chances of survival here, when you look at the statistics and the circumstances and the terrain, you think no one's going to walk out of there alive. And so it's a real story of ingenuity and perseverance by the Australian and New Zealand soldiers that are involved in this battle. And whilst it took heavy casualties, 18 people died, 24 were wounded. And any wounding, any death is an absolute tragedy.

But when you think about how they were so outnumbered to have been able to have any of those people come out of there alive and then to be able to go back and to recover two people that were actually still alive, presumed dead, but still alive when they found them the following day and to also recover the bodies of their colleagues, that was a huge achievement really in terrible circumstances. And I think that's why the day has taken on such significance. And as you say, it was pretty early on in Australia's engagement in Vietnam. And I think from that point of view, it really lives into that concept of the Anzac spirit in Arab that against the odds, we can succeed. And we've seen that in the First World War. We saw it on the Western front. We saw it in so many different battles and conflicts, both in the European and Pacific theaters in the Second World War. And so this was a sort of confirmation of that same endeavor in Vietnam as well. And so it became that battle where, as I said, we lost the most people in a single engagement early in the war and became a story of Australia being able to perform on the world stage again and yet another conflict. And that's why it became such an apt date, if you like, to become the focus of commemoration of Australia's engagement in the entire Vietnam War.

GTR: Yes. I mean, as you say, it was very close to the First Australia Task Force based there at Nui Dat, and it was an ambush. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think 18 Australians lost their lives with what, about 24 wounded. There are 105 men and three New Zealanders. And as you say too, Minister, that is an achievement in itself when you consider the numbers of North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong that were involved in this. They just kept coming. It must have

been an horrendous affair, but also it will live on for many, many years because of the folklore status that it's gained. It's been subject to movies and books obviously, and well worth remembering on the 18th of August, not only Vietnam Veterans' Day, but the Battle of Long Tan, an important mark in Australia's military history. Minister, the Department of Veterans' Affairs has released, well, it's a kit bag, isn't it, to support organisations and schools and community groups across the country to commemorate August the 18th, obviously in Australia's service in the Vietnam War. What can you tell us about that?

MK: So I think when we think about these kit bags that DVA released, the real starting point from my point of view are the words lest we forget. And it's an important part of the role that the department plays for the government in making sure that through our system, we're able to make sure that we can tell the story of Australia's engagement in war and conflict and have the resources available for the teachers in those schools and for students to be able to learn. And so through our ANZAC portal, through the DVA website, which is anzacportal.dva.gov.au, for anyone looking at it, in addition to what resources have existed there for some time to support ANZAC Day Services and Remembrance Day services in schools, we now also have the Vietnam War kit bag.

That includes information sheets, posters, information on how to conduct a service to really make sure that within our school system, or frankly anywhere else in Australia, are able to easily access those resources to support engagement and to make sure the next generation understands, is able to learn about Australian engagement in these conflicts, which let's face it, if we think about the battle of Long Tan 60 years ago this year, we commemorated Australia's engagement in Vietnam ending 50 years ago, only a couple of years ago. Now that's sort of two generations. That was my dad's generation that were engaged in the Vietnam War, and my kids are in school now. We need to make sure that we continue to pass those stories forward to understand Australia's history, to understand our military history. But importantly, that people made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and that we need to continue to encourage people to stand up and to put on Australia's uniform today.

GTR: Yes, that's true too. And I guess the question for those that are interested in doing something on the 18th of August of significance, how can people observe Vietnam Veterans' Day? Well,

MK: There will be a service in the nation's capital as you would expect, and you'll find there'll be services

in most state capitals as well, either being run via RSLs or by the Vietnam Veterans' Association. They'll have that information on their websites about those so that people can participate in them. And I know from various RSLs and VVA that groups that I've spoken to around the country, many of those clubs are running their own services on the day as well. There are services in many locations across Australia.

And so people will be able to find a service if they wish to participate in one close to them. We're really lucky in Australia that we have such active ex-service organisations providing support and comradeship to our veterans, but also running these services in a way that allows all Australians to come along to commemorate that service and sacrifice by our Vietnam veteran community as well as in so many other conflicts as well. And so people should have a look for those, but there will be an official commemoration happening, of course, in Canberra, in the nation's capital, as you would expect. Yes,

GTR: And it's good news for a lot of Australians too. Minister, there's a lot on, and I mean, you can wear a Long Tan cross. You can attend a service and look to the RSL DVA or Vietnam veterans for that. You can even reach out and contact a Vietnam veteran in your community or maybe in your own family there too, to get some feeling of the significance and historical importance of this day on the 18th of

August. Minister, you've been in the job now for what, four years. What's your feelings? This is an important part of your year, I guess.

MK: Well, it is. And I think when we think about our Vietnam veteran cohort and we think about how we're also supporting our more contemporary veterans today, one of the really, I think, great stories about how the Vietnam veteran community has come together to support themselves, but also pay it forward and support those future generations is the history of the establishment of what we now call open arms.

Now, open arms is the veteran and family counseling service, and it's available 24 hours a day, but it started its life as a Vietnam veteran counseling service being run by Vietnam veterans themselves as volunteers looking to support each other. And that service grew and grew, and then was eventually taken on by government, recognising the importance and significance of providing that support and is now open to access through to all of our serving personnel, to all of our veterans and their families to be able to get that mental health support that they may need when they need it. And that is an example of where a veteran cohort, the Vietnam veteran cohort recognised the significance of an issue, which is the mental health of their comrades and colleagues, and that led to a service being available to all of our veteran community going forward.

GTR: Yes. Well, there's a lot of organisations out there offering and providing help for veterans of all ages, of course, and open arms is a strong part of that too. I guess veterans, those interested, you can go to dva.gov.au or give them a call on **1800 838 372** for more information. And we wish everybody involved around the country a successful and rewarding Vietnam Veterans' Day coming up soon on the 18th of August. Minister, thank you very much for your time and we appreciate, may we talk again.

MK: Well, thanks, Greg. And can I just put in a bit of a plug quickly for our new Veteran and Families Wellbeing Agency as well, which is about connecting our veterans, their families to the broader set of wellbeing services, whether they're provided through DVA or Open Arms or through various ex-service organisations in the general community, providing that broader suite of wellbeing supports that a veteran or their family may need access to. There's a capacity to search for those services close to where people are through the Veteran and Family Wellbeing Agency website. People just need to go to veteranwellbeing.gov.au and they can search there.

GTR: Veteran Wellbeing is a great initiative, and we thank you for mentioning that too. And once again, Minister, thank you so much for your time on the last Post Radio Show.

MK: Thanks for having me.

On 18 August 2026, Vietnam Veterans' Day, the Australian Government honours the service and sacrifices of all veterans of the Vietnam War. We also remember the support provided by their families.

We recognise more than 60,000 Australians who served between 1962 and 1975, and those who lost their lives. We acknowledge all those who returned home injured, ill or wounded, those who have passed in the years since, and those who continue to carry with them the physical and emotional scars of their service.

This year will mark 60 years since the Battle of Long Tan, which was one of Australia's earliest large engagements during the Vietnam War.

On 18 August 1966, Delta (D) Company, 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), fought against a large North Vietnamese and Viet Cong force in the Long Tan rubber plantation. The plantation was only a few kilometres from the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat.

D Company's 105 men and 3 New Zealanders from 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, fought for almost 4 hours against soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army, who outnumbered them by 10 to 1. Sadly 18 Australians

lost their lives and 24 more were wounded.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has released a commemorative Kitbag to support organisations, schools and community groups across Australia to commemorate Australian service in the Vietnam War.

The Kitbag contains resources to help you commemorate this anniversary in your own way including a suggested order of service with flag protocols, posters, music, sample speeches, and craft activities. The Kitbag can be downloaded from the Anzac Portal: **Vietnam War Kitbag - Anzac Portal.**

DVA have just released a new poster on the Anzac Portal to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan **Commemorating service in the Battle of Long Tan poster - Anzac Portal**

Commemorative services will be held across the country on 18 August to remember all who served in the Vietnam War as well as the men from



6RAR who served in the Battle of Long Tan. DVA encourages all Australians to join local services in their community.

More information about the Battle of Long Tan can be found on the Anzac Portal **Battle of Long Tan 1966 - Anzac Portal.**

Additional information can be found on the **Anzac Portal page about Vietnam Veterans Day** as well as the **Minister's Vietnam 50th commemoration speech.**

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS



COMMEMORATING SERVICE IN

The Battle of Long Tan

The Battle of Long Tan was fought on 18 August 1966 when soldiers of Delta (D) Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) faced a major concentration of opposing forces in a rubber plantation near the village of Long Tan.

Despite being heavily outnumbered and fighting in intense monsoonal rain, the Australians held their ground with determined resistance and artillery support.

The battle is one of Australia's most significant actions of the Vietnam War and is remembered for the resolve, bravery and sacrifice of those that served. In this photo, men who served in 6RAR's first tour and fought in the battle, gather for a commemorative service 3 years later at the Long Tan Cross memorial. AWM EKN/69/0085/VN



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Anzac Portal
anzacportal.dva.gov.au

To discover a range of commemorative resources scan the QR code or visit the anzacportal.dva.gov.au





THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

TWO-COIN SET



**OFFICIALLY
MINTED ON
THE DAY
18TH AUGUST 2026**

Exclusive to The Bradford Mint, this superb pair of pure silver coins pays tribute to the legendary 'Great One Hundred and Eight' of Long Tan. Minted to the highest Proof standard in the UK, each coin measures 38.6mm and honours the courage, endurance and mateship displayed by D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, during the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. On that fateful afternoon near Nui Dat, 108 heroes faced a vastly superior enemy force in one of the defining battles of Australian and New Zealand forces involvement in the Vietnam war. Many were little more than teenagers, yet they stood firm against relentless attacks, refusing to abandon their mates or their position.

The designs commemorate both the heroic stand of the 'Great One Hundred and Eight' in the Long Tan rubber plantation and the iconic Long Tan Cross, erected to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Together, these coins capture the courage, resilience and sacrifice that define the Anzac Spirit. The significance of Long Tan and the enduring respect afforded to all D Company veterans ensure this meticulously crafted release will attract strong collector interest. There is no doubt that the '60th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan Two-Coin Set' belongs in your collection.

SPECIFICATIONS	COIN 1	COIN 2
TITLE	Courage, Mateship & Sacrifice	Remembrance
WEIGHT	One Ounce	One Ounce
DIAMETER	38.6mm	38.6mm
MINTAGE LIMIT	799 worldwide	799 worldwide
ALLOY	.999 Silver, 24-carat gold plated accent	
QUALITY	Proof - the highest quality possible	
OBVERSE	Features a finely etched, raised-relief portrait of His Majesty King Charles III	
REVERSE	Features a finely etched raised relief depicting soldiers in action during the Battle of Long Tan, a gold-accented cross, and a rubber plantation in the background.	Features a finely etched, raised relief image of the gold-accented Long Tan cross with a Great 108 plaque, rubber plantation on the background and the date of the battle - 18 August 1966.

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Danger Close

In 2019, with the help of publicist Di Campisi, we were invited to a preview screening of the Kriv Stenders film, *Danger Close*, the story of the Battle of Long Tan. This feature first appeared in *The Last Post* Special Edition, that year.

Travis Fimmel in 'Danger Close:
The Battle of Long Tan'.
Photo: Jasin Boland

In it, we feature the words of friend and famed Vietnam War photojournalist Tim Page, who was invited on-set to advise.

Tim spoke about the flashback experience he felt and also, of the strict military discipline that helped Australian soldiers during the war and during this battle.

Onset, Tim brought with him, the same Leica M2 camera he had used in the Vietnam War.

As Tim so poignantly observed, "War is hard to grasp when you are in the middle of it and it takes the rest of a lifetime to understand".

'Danger Close' is the new Australian made movie about the Battle of Long Tan. Going down to the set, an open piece of reclaimed swamp now home to a Tiger Moth aero club, was like going back to the 'Nam; no not to today's Viet Nam but the 'Nam of yesteryear with all it's fears, fancies and follies. It was both fearsome and awesome, technicolour surreal, which you only get to see as a microcosm to record frame by frame.

I missed the Battle of Long Tan in '66; I was on R&R in Singapore recovering from wounds received from a friendly fire incident on a U.S. Coast Guard cutter. The invite to revisit the battlefield, to come and take photos on the set, came about in that mysterious Aussie way of half a degree of separation, a mate filmmaker, a backer and producer and then the man directing Kriv Stenders, a dead ringer for my old boss – at GIZ German Aid in Cambodia, Volker. I did my homework and watched his movie 'RED DOG' three nights before heading to Pimpama. Loved it. An open arm greeting by one and all from the C.O. down to folk serving out the tasty tucker in an old hangar. I decided that to do it justice I had to shoot it on the 1965 Leica M2 that I had used in Viet Nam and shoot it in B&W.

The cast of young actors that made up the ground troops was alarmingly young, and then you realize that we were all young back then. 'Vikings' star Travis Fimmel plays Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith, Luke Bracey plays Sgt. Bob Buick, Daniel Webber as Pte. Paul Large and Richard Roxburgh as Brigadier David Jackson – recent army veterans from both the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts filled out the ranks of extras; a 'D' Company worth, passing on the advice that makes you act like a Digger in the field. And then there were the uniforms / costumes and the weapon craft. The attention to detail, the small visual effects are the key to a reality check. They serve as tripwires to flashbacks and all their attendant emotions.

There was a bustle to the high tech set; it felt like the intent of war, unsaid discipline, the military blending into civilian life, hard to discern who was army, who was crew. And then the drone men, fresh from David Attenborough's 'Life On Earth', swooping over APC's and artillery and shooting right down the barrel. One of these super toys, set to replace helicopter camera work cost the same as a Huey B model back in the day in '66 – \$250 - \$300k depending on the extras.

This was a set with a passion to make it good, to tell the story of a heroic action by a Band of ANZAC Brothers who against all odds came out on top. The passion to tell this story originated with Martin Walsh 14 years ago and with his co-producers John and Michael Schwarz they got the movie over the line. Soon it will be on the big screen, which is the place to immerse yourself in this story.

The sound of a Huey has a signature like no other and to stand in front of one as it idles, spins me to my last ride on one after a 105mm mine blew up 3 meters away from me, leaving me DOA. It was a heavy flashback. Later I froze over the poncho wrapped mannequin bodies of the 18 dead cinematically lined up for their hot ride. All that waste and your own fragility exposed raw and naked. Yeah, you reiterate 'its only a movie' but it still trips the mind back to those days when anything could and did come down on you like you could never imagine.

The set had a historical look. It was a jolt to reload film in the field again as rain both real and effect showered in the long, unforgiving, tufty grass. The reality is that war is fought by the young, ordered by the old and that the young are sacrificed for gains of which they are never fully aware. War is hard to grasp when you are in the middle of it and it takes the rest of a lifetime to understand. You surfed an incredibly pumped, adrenalin high and hoped you were not hit. You tried to dispel the worst thinking, only a cold one and a grateful smoko and for it all to go away. War is beyond strange yet it attracts us like 'junkie moths to a flame' as Mike Herr wrote in 'Dispatches'.

The weird thing about shooting stills on a war movie is that you can rerun the whole thing, even the dead bits. The reality of war is of course far more brutal, there is no moment to stop action and reshoot. You have to get the frame in the first shot, look up while others hunker down and pray that you won't cop it. All control of your situation is lost in war, fates decided by split seconds or millimeters.

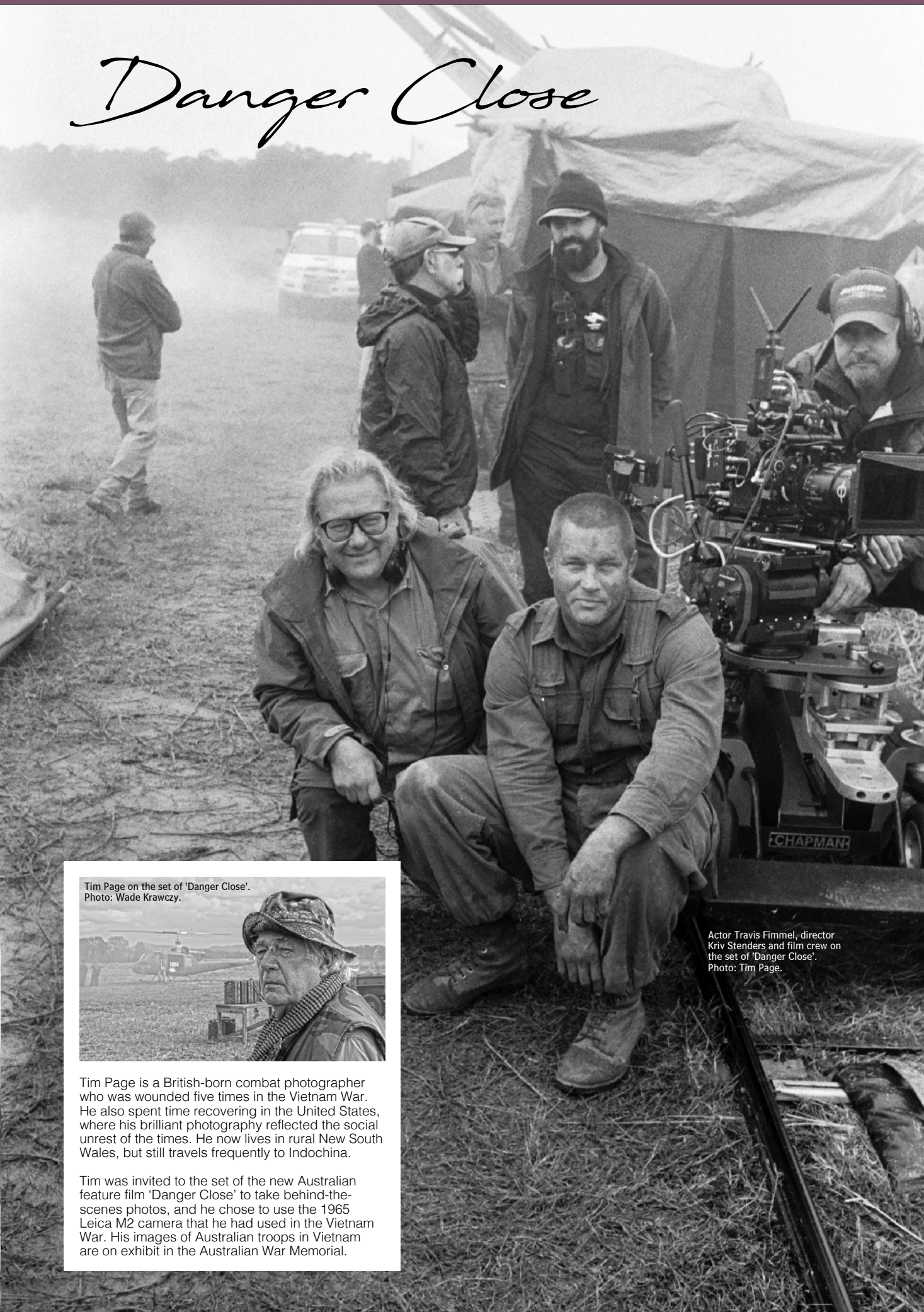
Maybe it can only be retold in a movie, in all its surrealism, in frozen vignettes of pain and ecstasy, in moments that are almost beauteous. This is the case with 'Danger Close'. It will look the part.

TIM PAGE

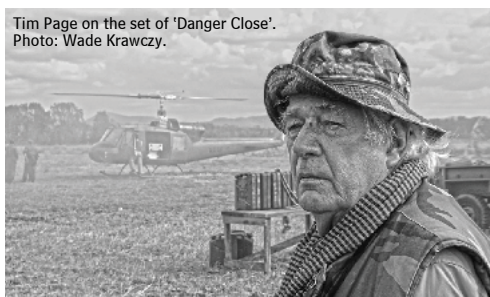
RIGHT & ABOVE RIGHT:
On the set of 'Danger Close'. Photos: Tim Page.



Danger Close



Tim Page on the set of 'Danger Close'.
Photo: Wade Krawczy.



Tim Page is a British-born combat photographer who was wounded five times in the Vietnam War. He also spent time recovering in the United States, where his brilliant photography reflected the social unrest of the times. He now lives in rural New South Wales, but still travels frequently to Indochina.

Tim was invited to the set of the new Australian feature film 'Danger Close' to take behind-the-scenes photos, and he chose to use the 1965 Leica M2 camera that he had used in the Vietnam War. His images of Australian troops in Vietnam are on exhibit in the Australian War Memorial.

Actor Travis Fimmel, director Kriv Stenders and film crew on the set of 'Danger Close'.
Photo: Tim Page.

The Battle of Long Tan

There were very few battles during the Viet Nam War that did not include massive civilian casualties. It was usually the wars bystanders that suffered.

During WWI 95% of the casualties were military, today that figure is reversed with 97% of the civilian populations bearing the brunt of the so-called 'collateral damage'.

The Battle of Long Tan was among those rare engagements where few civilians were present and the battle took place more like a Medieval contest on a small battleground, almost set piece like. Virtually the whole action took place in a rubber plantation a mere few kilometers from the newly established Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat, near the coastal resort of Vung Tau at the mouth of the Saigon River.

The battle had all the elements of modern warfare – helicopters, artillery, armour and it pitted a small unit of a company of 108 men against a local hard-core battalion and a newly arrived PAVN regiment (Peoples Army of Viet Nam). Most of it was fought in the attending downpour of the August '66 monsoons. The battlefield was close enough to the base that a concert featuring Australia's pop stars of the day, Little Patti and Col Joye & the Joye Boys, could by moments be heard by the flattened diggers fighting for their lives deep in the rubber plantation.

The previous day the local main force V.C. (Viet Cong) battalion had lobbed mortars into the task force, which was still busy digging itself in to its expanded perimeter. Fortuitously, the artillery pits had been the first units up and running – Kiwi and Aussie gunners already responding to the incoming mortars probing the newly established task force.

Finally, the ANZAC contingent had it's own TAOR (Tactical Area of Responsibility), port, airfield and permanent base near

a rubber plantation at Nui Dat. They could still call on American support for air cover and logistical. Initially the Aussies had been twinned with the 173rd Airborne out of Bien Hoa, though it was always destined for the Task Force to be under it's own command and zone. The Kiwis were mostly in the artillery pits and an SAS squad. The gunners were the lynchpin of the battle, firing at rates seen on the Somme or Tobruk.

Through the tactics that saw success during the Malayan Campaign, the TAOR of the Task Force was well pacified; you could drive around without ambush and travel between outposts at night. Farmers farmed and the markets were open, yet the enemy, the NLF (National Liberation Front) or Viet Cong looked at the Australian digger as 'green death'.

The Aussie tactics honed from their own bush craft excelled. There were no inflated body counts, no computer statistic fudging, down in Phouc Thuy the war was generally quiet. I could ride my Honda 90 from Tu Do Street in Saigon to Vung Tau back beach in 2 ½ hours and not meet a single V.C. and that was just after the '68 offensives.

I had been with the Aussies on Day One on May 6th 1965 outside of Bien Hoa, the only day we wore helmets. I was given the assignment as I was the only Brit and my boss thought I would get on with the Aussies.

It helped being a Pom, it broke the ice and I went back to Saigon with my Aussie bush hat and set a certain style. ■

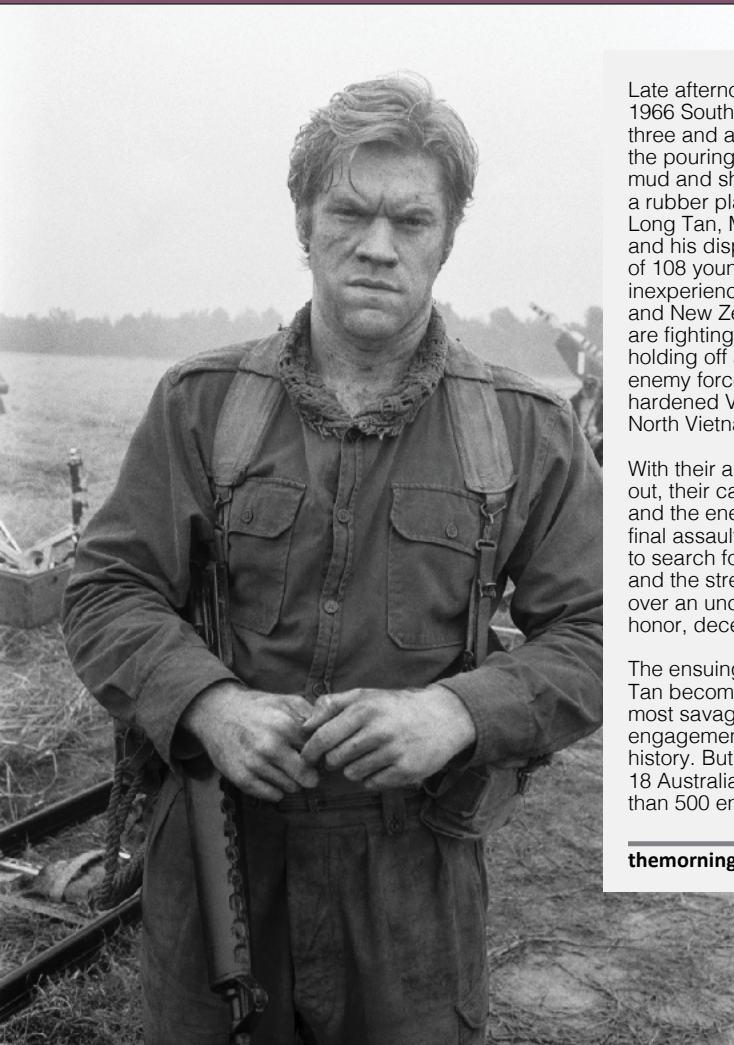
TIM PAGE



When the war ended, the victors removed all the memorials erected by the Americans but they left the cross that the Aussies had erected at Long Tan in place as a mark of respect to the Australian troops who never desecrated their graves.

In 2017 the Vietnamese government permanently gifted the Long Tan cross to Australia and it now sits at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

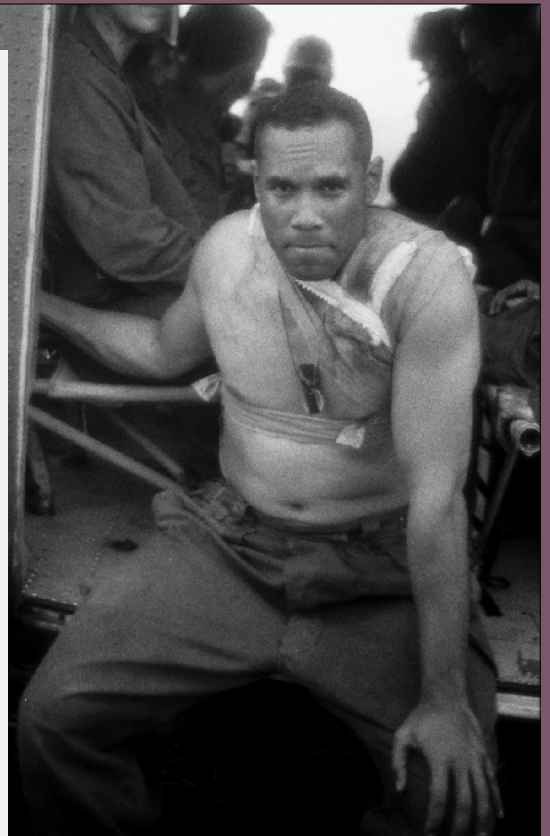


Late afternoon August 18, 1966 South Vietnam for three and a half hours, in the pouring rain, amid the mud and shattered trees of a rubber plantation called Long Tan, Major Harry Smith and his dispersed company of 108 young and mostly inexperienced Australian and New Zealand soldiers are fighting for their lives, holding off an overwhelming enemy force of 2,500 battle hardened Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers.

With their ammunition running out, their casualties mounting and the enemy massing for a final assault each man begins to search for his own answer and the strength to triumph over an uncertain future with honor, decency and courage.

The ensuing Battle of Long Tan becomes one of the most savage and decisive engagements in ANZAC history. But sadly not before 18 Australians and more than 500 enemy are killed.

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THIS PAGE & OPPOSITE PAGE:
On the set of 'Danger Close'. Photos: Tim Page.





Frances Andrijich Photography.

Discover the National Anzac Centre

Perched high above the waters of King George Sound, the National Anzac Centre offers visitors an opportunity to experience the story of the First World War through the people who lived it.

Located on Mount Clarence in Albany, Western Australia, the Centre stands in a place of profound national significance. Albany was the last Australian port of departure for the first convoy carrying Australian and New Zealand troops to the First World War, making the city an important part of the Anzac story.

Today, the National Anzac Centre brings that history to life by placing personal stories at the heart of the visitor experience.

The Centre explores the First World War through the experiences of individual servicemen and women. Every visitor assumes the identity of an actual person who served and follows their journey through the war.

Their story begins with recruitment and continues through training, embarkation, life aboard the convoys and the conflicts of the First World War. As visitors progress through the Centre, they discover the experiences of the person they have been given, before ultimately learning their fate.

It is this personal approach that makes the National Anzac Centre such a distinctive experience.

Through immersive multimedia and individual narratives, history becomes more than something to observe from a distance. The people behind the uniforms become the focus, each with their own experiences and their own story to tell.

For some visitors, the experience offers an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Australia's military history. For others, it can be a chance to honour family members, connect with military heritage or reflect on the experiences of an earlier generation.

The Centre welcomes a diverse audience, from veterans and current service personnel to history enthusiasts, schools, tertiary students and travellers from across Australia and around the world. Visitors are drawn by many

different motivations, whether undertaking an educational excursion, exploring Albany as a holiday destination or making an Anzac Day pilgrimage.

The Centre's location adds another dimension to the experience.

From Mount Clarence, visitors can look across the same waters associated with the departure of the first convoy; King George Sound. The surrounding landscape provides a powerful setting for contemplation, connecting the stories presented inside the Centre with the place from which so many departed.

This connection between people, place and history is central to the National Anzac Centre.

Every serviceman and woman had a unique experience, and by presenting history through their personal narratives, the Centre encourages visitors to consider the human experience of war. The anticipation of departure, the uncertainty of what lay ahead and the individual journeys that followed.

It is an approach that makes the National Anzac Centre much more than a traditional museum experience. It is a place for remembrance, but equally a place for learning and reflection.

More than a century after the first convoy departed Albany, the stories of those who served continue to resonate.

For visitors to Albany and the Great Southern, the National Anzac Centre provides an opportunity to discover those stories in the place where an important chapter of Australia's First World War history unfolded.

Against the backdrop of King George Sound, visitors are invited not simply to learn about history, but to experience it through the eyes of an individual who was there – ensuring their story continues to be remembered.

EXPERIENCE THE LEGEND.



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We discussed the stars...

I just need some quiet time.
He would call me Grasshopper.

My first memory of him was when he and his friend Zig, took my twin brother and I for a ride on their motorbikes. Craig and I were five, maybe six at the max. I was on the back of Roger's bike and I remember him saying triumphantly, "We've won", as we overtook

Zig and my twin brother somewhere on the streets near Dover Gardens in Adelaide.

We lived together, my brothers and I and Mum and Dad, in Scarborough Terrace.

He played the drums. He'd practice, sometimes late at night, when he wasn't doing work or riding his 250cc. It irritated my father and Roger was encouraged to leave.

Years later, when I was 10 or 11, Roger would drop in to take my brothers and I to the football. Back then we all barracked for Port Adelaide and each time we went to watch our team face their nemesis, Sturt, we would ask Roger how he thought we'd fare against the team also known as the Double Blues. He would respond, "We will be demoralised". And too often, that was the truth.

Around that time, Roger was playing ruck for the Reynella Football Club. He was a good player and in 1969 they won the district premiership. Saturday afternoon winters during the late sixties were often spent going to watch him and Reynella playing. He played so well that he was asked to train with SANFL side Glenelg. Maybe it was his sus knee or whatever but he never quite made the cut.

Xmas was often spent at his and his then-wife's house in Reynella. He would take us fishing too, leaving in the early morning dark to his small boat to fetch what we could in the Gulf.

When I had an accident in 1973, it was Roger who picked me up and took me home after a two week stay in hospital.

When the family relocated to Melbourne in 1975, Craig and I drove with Roger across the border.

From his and his families new address in Wheelers Hill, we would often gather on Sunday mornings for a drive to and through the Dandenongs. Often too, games of backyard cricket.

Roger had been state manager of Sharp Electronics. The youngest they'd ever had. But he left, and started his own business. I caught him

on the TV one night, after midnight, flogging his stuff with Hal Todd. I saw him once on World of Sport, sponsoring a prize that was awarded to Leigh Matthews.

In 1980, after Craig, David and I were in a head on car accident outside of Horsham, after two weeks in the local hospital, we were flown back to Melbourne to the RMH. Roger and his mate Bernie were there to greet us.

In the early 80's, Roger left his wife and relocated to Sydney. He bought a yacht. He sailed.

We kept in touch throughout this period. When our mother died in 2012, Roger came back and when my wife Wendy died, he came too. Only eight months earlier we had met in Adelaide to go and watch his former team Reynella play in the Anzac Day match.

After Wendy's death, Roger invited me up to spend time with him at his Mooloolaba unit, as a healing. We did that for two years. We would go driving and discuss stuff and open the bar at 5 with wine and biscuits and I remember it as a loving time. We visited our dying cousin and, when Kelvin's time came, Roger represented our side of the family at the service.

We met whenever he was in town or wherever I headed north. We did lunch. We drove as an excuse to chit-chat.

We disagreed with each other on politics but little else. We discussed the stars and the possibility of an after life. He was the most spiritual right-wing person I'd ever known.

Sometimes, when I was up there, I'd go to watch him play Bowls. He was pretty good at that. He won stuff.

Sometimes we'd go to the beach together and he'd head off on a swim of a kilometre or two. I could never do that.

In later years we would use football as a way of keeping in contact. We would comment on games and he would wish my team the best, as I would with his. It was a lot of fun.

A few weeks before his death, Roger sailed his latest yacht down the Queensland coast. He still swam impressively and visited the gym regularly.

He called me Grasshopper and I called him Dodge.

I've lost a brother but remain with a head full of loving memories.

GREG T ROSS







Club
maroochy

ROGER Manning

MEMORIAL AFTERNOON

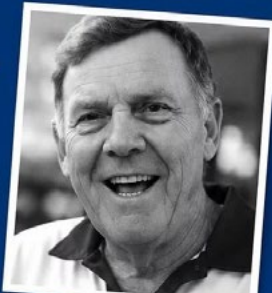
Please join us at Club Maroochy
on **Sunday, 16 August 2026**,
at **2:00pm**
as we remember and celebrate
the life of our beautiful mate,
Roger Manning, who passed
away on 27 July 2026.

- 

Come along to pay your respects, share your favourite stories and enjoy some laughs as we remember the wonderful man Roger was.
- 

Roger left us far too soon, but the memories, friendship and laughter he gave us will remain forever.
- 

Thank you from Roger's loving family and his Club Maroochy family.



Rest in peace, Roger. 

Gone, but never forgotten.

The Boy Who Walked To Canberra.



Blake was seventeen and had spent most of his life in foster care when he heard about the Unknown Veteran – a marcher in full WWI uniform and kit, carrying the memory of every unidentified Australian veteran on foot, from Holsworthy Barracks in Sydney to the Australian War Memorial. He asked his foster Mum if he could walk a 30km leg.

But he didn't want to stop. Blake walked the final three legs of the march – 90 kms – arriving in Canberra on ANZAC Eve, where he laid a wreath at the Last Post Service beside veterans, advocates, RSL sub branches and the Diggers Motorcycle Club who had escorted the march the entire way.

"I didn't have anywhere I was supposed to be. Then I found somewhere I was supposed to be. Best thing I have ever done."

Blake

The March Continues



27.7M

MEDIA REACH

60K

RAISED FOR
THE SALLYMAN

300KM

HOLSWORTHY – CANBERRA

Along the route, children from a local kindergarten lined up in hi-vis vests and hopped on a bus to find the Unknown Veteran to hand him hand-drawn cards.

None of it was scripted.
None of it needed to be.

The March ran without a single corporate sponsor and still had a media reach of **27.7M Australians nationwide** – and raised real, committed support for the Salvation Army's Sallyman program and our Anzac legacy.

14 – 24 April 2027

The same 300km route, arriving at the Australian War Memorial on ANZAC eve. Walk the last kilometre, volunteer or partner alongside the march.

Be a part of the Unknown Veteran March 2027
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MUDGEE ARTS PRECINCT HOSTS LUSTRE

The Mudgee Arts Precinct is hosting LUSTRE:
Contemporary Artists in Greece & Crete
from July 24 to September 20, 2026

Amongst the beauty of Mudgee, in the Central West region of NSW, this free exhibition features contemporary Australian and New Zealand artists responding to the WWII ANZAC campaigns and retracing the footsteps of official war artist William Dargie.

The LUSTRE exhibition is deeply rooted in Operation Lustre, a pivotal yet devastating Allied military campaign during World War II.

In October 2025, the 12 contemporary artists featured in this exhibition embarked on a two-week research tour through Greece and Crete. They literally retraced Dargie's footsteps and visited key battlefields, mountain passes, and Commonwealth war cemeteries. The resulting paintings, photography, and short films do not just replicate historical scenes; they are emotional and contemporary responses to landscapes scarred by war, honoring shared histories of ANZAC sacrifice and Greek community endurance.

The Last Post's Editor, Greg T Ross joined Mudgee Arts Precinct Gallery Curator Lizzy Galloway for a chat about the significance of the exhibition.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Dates:

July 24 – September 20, 2026

Location:

Mudgee Arts Precinct,
90 Market Street,
Mudgee NSW 2850

Cost:

Free

Hours:

Open daily from 9:00am – 5:00pm



LUSTRE: Contemporary Artists in Greece and Crete

War has been one of the great and enduring preoccupations of art and literature. The oldest epic we have, and the foundation of western literature, is Homer's Iliad; war is also the subject of the greatest of Indian epics, the Mahabharata, and the poignant background of the spiritual teaching in its most famous section, the Bhagavad Gita.

In modern literature, war is the setting of plays and novels, from Shakespeare to Tolstoy. Wars and battles appear in carved friezes, in paintings, in mosaics like the celebrated Battle of Alexander in Naples. But none of these is a celebration of war; the Iliad and the Bhagavad Gita alike are full of eloquent denunciations of the horror of conflicts in which men kill other men who have personally done them no wrong, or even worse, find themselves slaughtering their own kin.

But war is part of the human condition. Animals hunt and kill other species and occasionally their own, alone or in packs; human societies presuppose an internal order of justice that precludes casual violence, but then find themselves in conflict with other communities. Hesiod's epyramic poem The Shield, composed a little after the Iliad, presents a double picture of human life, with its juxtaposition of a city at peace and a city at war. One is happy and prosperous, the other an image of misery, suffering and terror. There is no question about which is preferable, and there could not be a more effective piece of anti-war literature.

And yet it is clear that when war comes, the members of a community have no choice but to defend themselves; it is their duty, but also the only way to self-preservation, for the physical survival of the community, and also its moral survival as an entity worthy of dignity and self-respect.

Hence the interest of war for poets, playwrights, novelists, painters and sculptors, and today filmmakers. For as Heraclitus said two and a half thousand years ago – living in the midst of power struggles between the Greek cities of the Anatolian coast and the Persian empire –

War is the father of all things and the king of all; and it reveals some to be gods and some men, it makes some slaves and others free.

This passage can be found in different translations, often simply implying that war 'makes' gods and men, free men and slaves; but while the second verb means to make, the first one is to show or reveal. And that is really the thing that fascinates us all, and artists and writers in particular, about war: that it reveals who men and women really

are. It is impossible to read about the two World Wars of the last century, for example, without asking ourselves whether those of our own generation would be capable of facing the same ordeals; whether we personally would rise to the occasion. And yet, as the case of Ukraine suggests, even people who were not known for their warlike nature or patriotic fervour can prove themselves extraordinarily brave and determined when attacked. Putin's war has revealed the Ukrainians to be free, not the slaves he expected.

The Germans and perhaps especially the Italians fatally underestimated the will of the British people and the citizens of the Commonwealth during the Second World War, but Mussolini also disastrously underestimated the fighting spirit of the Greeks when he launched his invasion through Albania on the 28th of October 1940. After a terrible winter of fierce battles in the mountainous northwest of Greece, the Germans joined the invasion in April 1941 to save their ally from humiliation. Greece was the last part of western Europe that was still free of Nazi and Fascist domination, the last foothold the British had on the European



Euan Macleod Seawall - Heraklion 2026, oil on polyester, 150x180 cm
 Gallery: King Street Gallery on William. Image: Michael Bradfield.

mainland, and a potential threat to the German oilfields in Rumania that Hitler needed for his planned assault on Russia.

Australia has for over a century sent artists to commemorate the experience of our troops abroad, beginning with men like Arthur Streeton and George Lambert in the Great War. It was a happy accident that because avant-garde modernism had barely reached Australia at the time, we still had painters who were equipped with the landscape and narrative skills required to do justice to these subjects, though of course Lambert is more concerned with figure painting and Streeton with landscape. Later Evelyn Chapman too painted memorable images of nature beginning to regenerate among the ruins of the Western Front.

All war painting is of necessity retrospective and reflective, like Lambert's reconstructions of the battles of Gallipoli and the campaigns of the Australian Light Horse, especially in *The Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba* (1920). Even

Streeton's great picture of Mont Saint-Quentin (1919), though executed at the scene of this decisive battle, was painted a couple of months after the assault itself. Over a century has now passed since these events, and even the battles of the Second World War are now eight decades old. Commemoration takes on a different character at such a distance in time, when the damage of war has been repaired, nature has regrown over mud and trenches, and when few if any of those present are still alive to recount their memories.

This exhibition represents the third project organised by King Street Gallery, taking a group of artists – slightly different each time – to re-visit great Australian battlefields of the past. The first two trips were to Gallipoli in 2014, resulting in the exhibition *Your friend, the enemy* (2015-16) and to the Western Front in 2017, followed by another exhibition, *Salient*, which toured around Australia from 2018 to 2020. In both of these projects, the artists were visiting places that had been painted by notable official war artists of an

earlier generation and, in the case of the Western Front, dramatically documented by the photographer Frank Hurley. With the Greek campaign, however, they were in effect exploring the sites of a short but extremely fierce campaign that has received little attention from official war artists, with the exception of a couple of important pictures by Sir William Dargie.

The Greek campaign is, in fact, so little-known that Peter Ewer's recent book on the subject was titled *Forgotten Anzacs* (2008). And yet the land on which the battles of this campaign were fought are rich in historical associations. Just as many young men going to Gallipoli in 1915 would have been aware that they were very close to the site of the legendary city of Troy, many of those fighting in Greece would have known they were following some of the very roads by which the Persian army under Xerxes had invaded Greece in 480 BC, and passing through Thermopylae itself, where the three hundred Spartan heroes died in a holding action to allow the main Greek army to retreat

in good order. But not far from Athens was the site of the Battle of Marathon (490 BC); in the northeast of Greece was Philippi (42 BC), where Brutus and Cassius, Caesar's assassins, were defeated by Mark Antony and Octavian. Even closer to their own path was Pharsalus, where Caesar had defeated Pompey in 48 BC.

In fact the course of the Greek campaign of 1941 had an uncanny similarity to the Persian invasion of 480, when the Greeks were also initially forced into a series of holding actions in a fighting retreat. It was significant that one of the first things this group did in Salonica was to visit the tomb of Philip of Macedon, Alexander's father, for the journey that followed was to be charged with historical memories.

The German invasion of Greece was hardly a surprise. The Italians had suffered one disaster after another in the first year of the war, so that by late in 1940, when it was clear that the Greek invasion was also bogged down, Hitler had little choice but to support his ally or face the prospect of the fall of Mussolini's regime and the withdrawal of Italy from the war. Plans for the invasion of Greece had been going on for months, and so had British and Greek discussions about what help could be provided. But in the event, the Germans had already sent troops to Libya to prop up the collapsing Italian front there in February 1941, and this limited the forces that could be sent from Alexandria to resist the German invasion of Greece in April.

Thus it was that a force consisting mainly of the Australian 6th Division and the New Zealand 2nd Division, with terribly inadequate armour and artillery and hardly any air cover, landed in Athens and enjoyed a brief period of leave visiting the Acropolis and other sites before making its way up to the border of Greece and Yugoslavia, where the first encounter with the invading Germans, under the command of General Iven Mackay, was at Vevi Pass, on the border with Yugoslavia, on the 11th and 12th of April 1941.

This was followed by the Battle of Tempe Gorge on the 18th of April, where our troops – Anzac Force, consisting mainly of two battalions from 16th Brigade and a New Zealand battalion – were commanded by my grandfather Brigadier Arthur Samuel Allen. The next line of defence was at Brallos Pass, where Brigadier George Vasey commanded 19th Brigade on the 24th of April. Each of these rear-guard actions seemed to take place about a week apart. The evacuation of the mainland started on the same day as the fighting at Brallos, and lasted until the end of the month; about half of those evacuated went to Crete, where they took part in the desperate defence of the island against the German airborne invasion a few weeks later; the survivors of this second part of the campaign were finally evacuated to Alexandria at the

end of May, unfortunately leaving a considerable number of men behind.

Retracing the path of the Allied forces during a mild Greek autumn eighty-five years after the campaign, we travelled through remote areas barely changed since the war, and others that have been transformed almost out of recognition by tourism and development. The site of Vevi, for example, was eerily empty and seemingly unpeopled, although barns and haybales were evidence of farming activity. Near the spot we stopped to paint was a derelict train stop whose rusted signs seemed to date back to the War. At Pinios Gorge, most of the landscape before us in the river valley was not only unchanged since the time of the battle in 1941, but cannot have looked much different in the time of the Persian Wars.

Some places still retained structures from the time of the War: at the Corinth Canal we discovered a group of Italian concrete bunkers now precariously balanced on residual hills among the excavations of a landfill site. Other locations were radically changed, like the port of Heraklion, crowded with traffic on land and sailing boats in the harbour itself, new concrete buildings jostling with the old Venetian galley-hangars; or the little bay of Chora Sfakion, the scene of the evacuation from Crete, now entirely encrusted with tourist restaurants.

It was interesting to watch how the artists on the tour coped with these very different conditions. At each place we stopped there was a bustling of activity as everyone tumbled out of the bus and scattered around the site. The painters quickly sought out a promising view or motif and – knowing that time was always limited – set to work: some sketched in dry media, others in wet; some put up tables or easels and started immediately on large colour studies; a few carefully drew smaller details of architecture or natural history, and one even made coloured monoprints. The photographers too worked in different ways: Michael would jump off the bus first to document the group on video as they alighted and went in various directions; then he would follow particular members and interview them as they sketched. Riste would alternate between taking black and white stills of individuals at work and shooting footage on his vintage 16-mm Bolex, a model first produced in 1935, some of which he has since edited together with period newsreels taken with the same kind of camera. Robert would walk around enigmatically and occasionally take stills on his Leica.

Even when working from a specific view, the artist always faces questions about what to include and what to leave out, and such decisions become even more important when looking at a location that may have been built over and sometimes rendered almost unrecognisable. Of everyone in the group, Euan was perhaps the boldest and most fearless in simultaneously

capturing the essentials of a site, stripping out what he considered irrelevant, and characteristically adding in the kind of ghostly figures that have long animated his landscapes.

Steve also uses figures in his gestural landscape compositions, although in his case they are added later, as though emerging from a process of reflection on the original sketches. Rodney too painted landscape studies on the tour but has added figures to finished compositions, like one in which he recalls the mythical history of Crete with an image of the Minotaur riding between a British and a German officer. Alan does not use figures in his landscapes but has in several cases superimposed touching words from the gravestones of unidentified young soldiers in the Commonwealth cemeteries at Phaleron and Suda Bay. Amanda's landscapes are for the most part intense and moody responses to actual places, but in a couple of compositions she has introduced a glider or a parachute assault, recalling the German airborne invasion of Crete in late May 1941. Michelle's attentively poetic images are an attempt to see through the noise and clutter of the sites today and meditate on the long-past events that once animated them.

Natalie has produced a series of luminous paintings that vividly evoke the natural life of the Greek landscape while indirectly alluding to the drama and solemnity of their history. Joanna too seeks a balance between visual drama and an almost dreamlike distance, particularly through the medium of monoprint. Angeliki conjures up the drama of conflict through angular abstract painted compositions in which we may recognise the sails of boats or the crenellations of the Castello a Mare in Heraklion. In contrast to those artists who have sought distance, Deirdre, who did some beautiful natural history drawings on the tour, has concentrated for her main work on the stone carved memorial to the Unknown Warrior in Athens.

The Greek word for truth, ἀλήθεια (aletheia) etymologically means unforgetting; in one of its earliest attested usages, in Iliad 24.407, Priam asks the disguised Hermes to tell him 'the whole truth': has the body of his dead son Hector been cut up and thrown to the dogs? Hermes replies that on the contrary, it is safe and miraculously intact in the tent of Achilles, where the old king is to go to retrieve it, under the protection of the gods. The origin of the word is mysterious, but the idea that truth is the opposite of oblivion, rather than merely of deception, is philosophically suggestive. Here too, reflecting on another war over three millennia later, the quest of these contemporary Australian artists, each in their own way, has been for moral and aesthetic truth discovered through a process of unforgetting.

BRAD MANERA

Euan Macleod, Steve Lopes, Rodney Pople, Deirdre Bean, Amanda Penrose Hart, Joanna Logue, Michelle Hiscock, Riste Andrievski, Michael Bradfield, Alan Daniel Jones, Natalie Leontaris O'Connor and Angeliki Androutsopoulos



LUSTRE: CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS IN GREECE & CRETE

24 JULY – 20 SEPTEMBER 2026

FREE ENTRY

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Image: Euan Macleod *Final Withdrawal (detail)* 2025 – 26
123 x 160cm, oil on polyester. © the artist.



LIZZY GALLOWAY

Gallery Curator,
Mudgee Arts Precinct.

Interview recorded early July 2026.



Greg T Ross: It's my great pleasure to introduce Lizzy Galloway, gallery curator at Mudgee Arts Precinct and through the Midwestern Regional Council there in 90 Market Street. Welcome to The Last Post Magazine. Lizzy, how are you?

Lizzy Galloway: I am very well, thank you, Greg.

GTR: It's a pleasure to speak with you. Always good to touch on things that are artistically inclined, and certainly you've got a couple of exhibitions that we're going to talk about today. I thought we'd start off with the current one. And geez, you actually created this and good on you for that. But tell us a little bit about the Golden Highway. I know it's Reg Mombassa but how did this come about and why the name?

LG: We had an exhibition at the same time by Clarice Beckett from the National Gallery of Australia. And when I was looking at one of her works at the art gallery in South Australia, I noticed this beautiful way that she had rendered reflection on road surfaces. And in a second, it reminded me of works by Chris O'Doughty or Reg Mombassa is more commonly known, who also had done very similar sketches of cars and reflections in rainy roads. So we thought about, because we had this shared exhibition space, that we might offer him an exhibition. And one of my colleagues shares a gallery with Chris Reg, a rug pop-up in Sydney. So we approached the gallery and we approached Reg, and he said he would be delighted

to collaborate and do an exhibition alongside Clarice Beckett as he'd been a big admirer of hers for a long time.

GTR: Yes. Well, I mean, you're doing some good things there at Mudgee too, Lizzy and anyone that wants to pop out there for a lovely weekend, go to Mudgee and see these exhibitions that we're talking about today. First of all, obviously up the Golden Highway, which is the Reg Mombassa exhibition there at Mudgee Arts Precinct. Yeah, he's an inclusive fellow is Reg, he's very helpful in so many ways.

LG: He's a really lovely human, not only agreeing to do the exhibition, but he had a longstanding affinity for our region. The exhibition we talked about was really on the back of the works he'd done around Cassilis which is about 45 minutes, hour, depending on how quickly you drive, north of Mudgee. And he'd been visiting that area for years and years. His gallerist, Frank Waters, had a property in Cassilis. So he and his wife used to jump on the road and head up the Golden Highway. And so we've got some of the works that he did from around Frank's place. You can see that very, it's very easy to identify as that area. It's suddenly you get this really very different colours from our region that goes into this more golden or red hues in the earth. And the fires of course went through there in 2018. So some of these works are showing the burnt scars, I guess, left behind. But he does actually make them look very beautiful in his own way.

GTR: Yeah. I mean, there's so many textures and colors to deal with in that

lovely part of New South Wales, that lovely part of Australia. And I know well the road between Sydney and Mudgee as I'd traveled many times when I was working in Mudgee and certainly is a beautiful area given to art. And of course with Reg. I mean, what's included in the exhibition? I know there's some beautiful landscapes there of which you were just alluding to, but can you fill us in, I mean, there's some other things there too, isn't there?

LG: Well, that's right. Yes. We got not only his landscapes, which I think he's incredibly underrated as a sketcher. In fact, he was telling me that he got in the habit of drawing sketches when he was on the road with Mental As Anything. So he'd spend a lot of time on the bus and he became very good at sketching really, really quickly just from that really fleeting glimpse outside of the bus window. So he's very, very good at being quick and very detailed in his sketches. And then he turns them into these beautiful drawings. So we have a cross section, not only of the landscapes from around Mudgee and the Blue Mountains and Cassilis, but one of the teachers reached out when she heard that we had the exhibition coming up and said that the kids in her art class were actually studying the art of Reg Mombassa and looking particularly in terms of buffoonery and art. So I asked Reg if he might have some works from his Mambo era that the kids have been looking at specifically, and he was very happy to help out. He asked around to some people who collected his works and we managed



Euan Macleod, Hill 107 German Cemetery, Chania 2025, acrylic on paper, 38x58cm.
Gallery: King Street Gallery on William. Image: Michael Bradfield.

to get some of his really iconic series that includes things like Australian Jesus who was at the MCG crowd and magically turned a pie and beer into 45,000 pies and beers. And the beers were cold and very good.

GTR: Well, that's certainly an achievement well worth noting, particularly in Australia. That would make anyone very popular. Actually, we do know him, that's as you say, through the Mentals and through his work with Mambo. And I guess we were talking about Frank Waters before, I suppose, in Cassilis there too. It all came about quite beautifully. So how appropriate actually for you to be having this exhibition in Mudgee?

LG: Yeah, absolutely. And we were lucky enough to have Reg come up for the opening and he's such a wonderful talker. So we did an interview with him in front of quite a big crowd and talked about his achievements. And somebody asked him what was the biggest thing that he'd ever done, and he sort of racked his brains in, and he'd had so many achievements. I think he sort of forgot that he actually had been involved in the Sydney Olympics. So if that's something you forget about, then your career has been very good. But he was really interesting. He was talking about when they got the record onto Crocodile Dundee, and they were just on the precipice of blowing up in the United States. And he said he was actually grateful that they didn't become huge in the USA because he didn't think he'd still be alive if that had been the case.



Euan Macleod, Cemetery Athens 2025, acrylic on paper, 38x58cm.
Gallery: King Street Gallery on William. Image: Michael Bradfield.

GTR: Well, what unbridled honesty too. And I do remember that period. They stretched on for so long, Mental as Anything, Of course, they've completed or completing a tour now. But through that in Dog Trumpet and his artistic work, Reg Mombassa is certainly an Australian artist to be admired. And get up there to Mudgee or go online and have a look at what's to offer to, because it's a beautiful exhibition and well worth the trip up to that beautiful part of Australia

with suburban art landscapes and a whole mixture of stuff because he's done politics, he's done the absurd, he's done so many wonderful things. Congratulations too on getting that all together, Lizzie.

LG: Yeah, thank you. And I also just should add that of all the artists I've ever dealt with, I think he'd been pretty much the most relaxed. He was happy for us to curate his artwork as we though appropriate. And it's actually

really nice that somebody who is that iconic is also a really lovely human being. Some of the artists I'm dealing with in our next exhibition, Luster, knew him from back in these art school days and they're all friends still now, and they came up to see the exhibition as well. So it's all lovely when that happens to a nice human being.

Yeah, so he was very relaxed in terms of how we curated his show. He was happy just to turn up on the night. So he's really one of the more relaxed artists and a very, very nice human being. So we're always happy when somebody you admire that much turns out to be a very lovely person too.

GTR: Yeah. Well, we're blessed to have the talent of Reg, also his brother Peter, of course, in so many things musically and artistically. And running until, what is it? July - 19th. 19th, that's right there at the Mudgee Arts Precinct is up the Golden Highway, which is created by Liz Galloway there with Reg Mombassa's art, which is well worth a visit up to that lovely part of the country. Now, of course, also, Lizzie, you've got something very interesting coming up, which is currently on show at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney. The Lustre Exhibition, which is basically exploring the Allied campaign there in Greece and Crete in 1941, I think it was, through the works of contemporary artists. How did you get this about, and what's this mean to you and Mudgee in the region? Very, very impressive.

LG: I had an exhibition that I'd curated about women and birds in contemporary art, and one of the artists that was involved in that exhibition was Lucy Culliton. She is represented by King Street Gallery on William. And I was in the gallery looking at the art and choosing which works that we were to take as part of the exhibition and got chatting to Amanda Penrose Hart, one of the artists there, and she and Rob from King Street were telling me about this campaign that they were taking to go over and retrace the footsteps of war artist William Dargie. And he'd been across actually after the war, but he'd gone through and documented scenes from the war in Greece and Crete and those works which then went into the collection of the War Memorial in Canberra. Part of this campaign was to really raise the profile of this particular operation Lustre, which as opposed to the other allied campaigns, it's really become quite unknown in terms of its recognition. So they were sort of trying to redress this and really bring more awareness, I guess, to the campaign and look at its effects and its place within World War

GTR: Yeah, well, they've done a good job because some of the works there are quite brilliant. You spoke of Amanda too, of course, and we have interviewed Amanda and also Brad, of course, Brad Manera the curator there at Anzac Memorial. They are

brilliant works. And there must have been, I guess that's reflected in the works too. You get a feeling of being there in the sense of an atmospheric, which is quite brilliant really. I mean, it was, as you say, a failed campaign, and because of that, probably not as well traversed or at least covered in schools and history. But if we can, I guess, and if you through your exhibition here can help address that, then all the good for the Australian community in history.

LG: Yeah, absolutely. Our exhibition is quite different to the first one, which is actually now on now, as you said, at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney and Hyde Park there. Brad had a smaller space and has selected a lot of the works that were actually done when they were there, the on-plane air works, as we would call them. So they're more of a series of smaller studies. We're actually really lucky we're going to have the completed works that the artists have done in their studios. Here, back here at home.

So some of them are like the works by Euan Macleod are these enormous two-meter canvases that we'll be putting up. And as you said, and big large works by Amanda Penrose Hart. So we're sort of showing the opposite end, the really finished products. But yeah, the artists have really were very, I was speaking to them quite recently about their experiences. They were very moved by what they saw. And they were, as you said, were accompanied by Brad being a really remarkable war historian who had stories of wars and took them into squares in these towns where there had literally been blood flowing down the streets. So you really do get that quite a profound emotion in these works. They are really, really quite extraordinary in terms of that sort of side, that only really art can really bring that kind of passion out in visually. So yeah, I'm really, really excited about this show. It does show some of Australia's 12 best contemporary, some of the best contemporary artists, I think, at the moment.

GTR: Yeah. Well, I mean, I would have to agree. I've been contemplating actually including one of those works on the cover of the next edition of The Last Post Magazine because they're so striking. And for me, to evolve, there's a lot of, it's a combination, I guess, too of history and contemporary art reflecting what was actually going on 85, 86 years ago. And so I mean, it's quite brilliant in itself there. So that's running from July the 24th there in Mudgee at the Mudgee Arts until September the 20th there at the Mudgee Arts Precinct. We're speaking to Lizzy Galloway, who is the gallery curator there at Mudgee, about the two exhibitions we were previously speaking about, the Reg Mombassa exhibition Up the Golden Highway. You've certainly attracted a lot of attention through being able to stage these exhibitions. What's next for the arts precinct?

LG: We will continue to really follow what we first really wanted to do, which is to bring the best in contemporary art, but also provide a platform for the many wonderful contemporary artists we have living in our region. So coming up in September, we have Sam Paine, who's a local artist, and he's doing a year of paintings, looking at the scenery around Mudgee and how it changes across a year. So really looking forward to that one too. Yeah. So the building itself really was the product of many, many, many years of campaigning by locals wanting to have a regional gallery somewhere that they could highlight such talent in our region. So we only really opened up in 2021, right in the middle of COVID, if you can remember that long ago, but only five years ago. It

GTR: Seems like a lifetime, doesn't it?

LG: Does, yes.

GTR: Having lived in Mudgee for over a year, I was in the lucky position of being able to see the change of seasons. And you're right, quite a beautiful scene and setting. And what a better way to attract people to the area through the wonders of art and through these exhibitions that you've got on now that you're having and we'll have in the future and the new year obviously too. It's just a wonderful thing. So many lovely wineries up there too and restaurants, so it'd be perfect for people to get up there.

LG: Yeah, that's right. And Mudgee really has been known as a food and wine destination for a long time. But we've been working very closely with Mudgee Region Tourism to show that we also can punch above our weight in terms of what we do with our art. So we have the three exhibitions, so we've mentioned Reg's but we also have Clarice Beckett's works at the moment, and also an exhibition of the renowned British artist, David Hockney, who passed away just in the last couple of weeks. That's right. So we've been getting a lot of attention about that exhibition too. So people coming up to pay their respects to the brilliant artist. So yeah, I think we really are trying to market ourselves for our art, wine and food and really show that we're a trifecta in those areas.

GTR: Lizzy Galloway, gallery curator at Mudgee Arts Precinct, talking about Up the Golden Highway there, the Reg Mombassa exhibition on until July 19. And of course, following on from that shortly after, starting on July 24th until September 20th, the Lustre Exhibition, Contemporary Artists following the footsteps of the allied soldiers there as they withdrew from the oncoming Nazis there in 1941. So much history and so much to offer for the future too, Lizzie. We're so happy to have you in The Last Post Magazine to speak about this wonderful forum of art mixing and meshing and everything else with history.

LG: Yeah, it's been a pleasure to talk with you too, Greg

MUDGEE

In a country that loves to go big, the Mudgee Region is unapologetically small. The region's size is its superpower, and the perfect antidote to the big city rush. Travel here feels intimate, unhurried and genuinely personal. The Mudgee Region is proof that you don't need a big destination to have a big experience.

The beauty of the Mudgee Region lies in its diversity. Four towns, each with their own distinct personality, sit within an easy drive of one another, making it just as rewarding to wander beyond Mudgee as it is to linger a little longer. In Mudgee, world-class food, wine and a thriving arts scene come together with effortless country hospitality. Gulgong invites you to step back in time, where beautifully preserved streets, fascinating museums and stories from the gold rush era bring history to life. Rylstone rewards those who slow down, with heritage streetscapes, boutique shopping, artisan makers and country cafés that encourage you to stay awhile. Kandos continues to reinvent itself, pairing its proud industrial heritage with a vibrant creative community, galleries and cultural events.

Wine might steal the spotlight, with most cellar doors just a swirl away from Mudgee, but the real adventure is in the variety. A boutique industry fuelled by big passion, local winemakers love sharing a glass inspired by flavours from across the globe. And just when you think you've seen it all, breweries and distilleries tempt you to explore a whole different side of the region.

Foodies, consider yourselves spoilt. Wake up to bustling cafés, graze your way through paddock-to-plate produce, or settle in for a feast that will have you happily rolling home. Vineyards, pubs and restaurants set the scene for every kind of occasion, from long lunches to memorable celebrations.

Creativity is woven through it all. Discover local artists at the Mudgee Arts Precinct, follow the Sculpture Walk as it winds through the landscape and into neighbouring towns, browse galleries and studios, or simply stumble across art in the places you least expect - on a café wall, inside a cellar door or tucked within a boutique. It's these authentic encounters, shared across four distinctive towns, that make this small region big in all the ways that matter.

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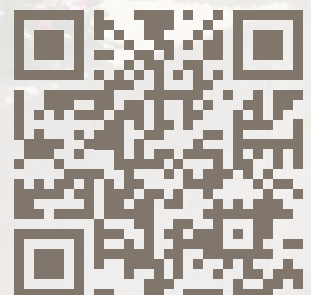
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The Power of Advocacy: A voice for veterans in aged care.

Issues with Australia's aged care system continue to remain in the headlines. It was a huge win for older Australians to have their human rights enshrined in the Aged Care Act 2025, but the challenges now come with turning those promises into reality.

The latest *Presenting Issues Report from the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)* (www.opan.org.au) shows that day-to-day breaches of older people's human rights exist across their aged care journey, and that ageist and ableist attitudes persist throughout the system. Poor communication, complexity of accessing the system including access to assistive technology and home modifications, and financial issues – applying for hardship or understanding statements of fees and services, continue to be the main concerns for older Australians accessing the aged care system.

That's why advocacy services exist. To help older Australians uphold their rights in aged care and to keep the aged care system accountable.

So, what does advocacy really mean?

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.

It can also help you navigate different government service systems to find the best support solutions for you. This can be particularly important for veterans who are often coordinating veteran supports and entitlements, alongside government aged care services.

Take the example of John. John is an 87-year-old Vietnam Veteran who is legally blind and also has diabetes. John is a proud veteran who has a range of veteran's services in place but currently relies on neighbours to assist with preparing meals and managing around the house. John received a letter from My Aged Care to advise that he had

been approved for a Support at Home package. However, John was not sure how it might impact his current services, and where to ask questions.

John called the Older Person's Advocacy Network and was connected to an advocate who worked with John to:

- Understand his current situation and identify all of his care needs
- Explain how Support at Home funding works and how he can still access veterans' services to help manage his health
- Identify all current services, and make sure they are aware of each other and not working in isolation
- Locate and assess suitable services to deliver meals and assistance at home under Support at Home.

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. It's what we do.

Aged care advocacy services are independent, free of charge and available across Australia. Call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600 to talk to an advocate in your area.

ADA Australia would like to congratulate the Last Post on its 15th birthday edition. The Last Post is unique in combining important information for veterans about their rights, health, mental health and other social issues, along with the things that simply make it a good read – interesting insights from interesting people. We continue to be proud supporters.

GEOFF ROWE



Geoff Rowe is CEO of ADA Australia, the Queensland member of the Older Persons Advocacy Network. Geoff's career in the human services sector spans 40 years, including senior and executive positions in the Queensland Government, and in the not-for-profit sector. Geoff has a strong interest in social justice, human rights and inclusion.



Your side, your say

Free, confidential, independent support to help you access and get the most from aged care services

Aged Care Advocacy Line
1800 700 600
www.adaaustralia.com.au



Your parents deserve care now, not when the waitlist clears.

Waitlists for government-funded home care can stretch months. At Vasey RSL Care we can start supporting your loved one today, with the warmth, respect and dignity they deserve.

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homecare@vaseyrslcare.org.au

vaseyrslcare.org.au




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What I wish I'd known

Top super tips and common myths for serving ADF members, veterans and families.

If there's one thing I hear repeatedly from veterans, it's this: "I wish I'd known more about super before leaving the ADF." This realisation can come as a surprise, especially if you're still early in your career, but understanding super now can make all the difference for your financial future.

My top three super tips for veterans

Getting informed on super doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here are three quick tips that can set you on the right path:

1. Start early: Even small additional contributions now can make a huge difference over time.
2. Review regularly: Major life events, like promotions or postings, are good opportunities to review your super.
3. Ask for help: Resources like Vets Hub are there to guide you – don't wait if you're unsure about your options. Talk to someone who can break it down for you and make it simpler.



BY DAVID WILTON

CSC Head of Defence & Veterans Liason

Myth vs. reality: superannuation edition

Let's break down some common misconceptions about super:

- Myth: Super is only for retirement.
- Reality: Decisions you make about super now can impact your financial freedom long before retirement.
- Myth: You don't need to think about super until later.
- Reality: Starting early allows compound growth to work in your favour, maximising future benefits.

Make super part of your career journey

Why focus on super early in your career? Promotions, relocations, buying a home, or starting a family are all great times to revisit your super. Early education and regular check-ins with your super can make a huge difference, helping you avoid last-minute stress.

Whether you're just starting your ADF career or preparing for life after service, taking the time to understand your super today could open more opportunities for you tomorrow.

Vets Hub: Your go-to resource

Vets Hub offers a wealth of resources to support ADF members and their families. With options like on-base education, individual consultations, group sessions, and online resources, Vets Hub is dedicated to helping you navigate your super with confidence.

CSC: Your partner, your guide

When you think about super, think of Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation (CSC) as your long-term partner. CSC isn't just your pension administrator – they're in it for the long haul, committed to guiding you through your financial journey every step of the way.



Australian Government

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

Your future,
Your financial wellbeing,
Your Vets Hub.

Become a part of Australia's leading
financial wellbeing program for
Veterans and their families.



csc.gov.au/vets-hub





Berber rug makers. Photo: Mary Anne Whiting.

The Adventure of Travelling

As a child, I used to pour over my parents National Geographic Atlas and plan imaginary adventures across vast areas of the world – across Europe, Africa, Asia and then home – not before a quick divert to New Zealand, because my Mum was born there.



Camel ride across the dunes. Photo: Mary Anne Whiting.

I had in mind to travel first to London, somehow get hold of a double decker bus and do it up with a kitchen and living area downstairs and a bathroom and bedroom on the upper deck. I can't remember why I dismissed the idea of getting hold of a Sydney double decker bus and then go in the reverse direction towards London. Anyway, after leaving London, I planned to then drive it across Europe, including Russia (then the USSR) Africa, and Asia, meeting people and having adventures everywhere I went - a very 'hippy' concept (it was the 60s afterall). Just how I was going to manage getting hold of a bus, and doing the fit-out, to say nothing of the logistics of transporting it across several oceans, filling it with petrol along the way, keeping up the maintenance and driving it, was just details.

I was Inspired by the adventures of my maternal Grandfather, Richard Waugh – born in Greenock, Scotland, he ran away from home at the age of 16 hoping to sail on one of the tall-mastered sailing ships which sailed out on the mighty Clyde River towards the world. His father found him, bought him back to Greenock, and he learnt to be a pastry chef. When he ran away again – his father let him go this time.

Richard, or Dick as he was always known to us, rounded the Capt of Good Hope on several occasions, worked as a slack-rope walker in a circus, and on at least one occasion captured some monkeys which he sold a zoo. Having captured the monkeys, he bought them aboard his ship, however, some escaped and were running up and down the ship's masks. The captain threatened Dick if he didn't catch them, he would be thrown over-board along with his monkeys. He did catch them apparently and all the monkeys arrived safely at a zoo. For some reason, it appeared he had a naturally immunity to a form of the plague and it was he who would be sent ashore by the captain to get supplies whenever they were in a port which had warning flags signalling infectious diseases.

His adventures also took him to the USA where he became the Head Chef at the original Waldorf Astoria in New York. When he landed in New Zealand, pre-World War I, he met my Grandmother, Bertha, another adventurer, who as a young women left Germany to travel the world. Dick fell in love with her, jumped ship and worked for while in his original trade as a pastry chef. They eventually moved to Sydney with my Mother and my Aunt, also called Bertha, where they set up a restaurant. Dick was later appointed to prepare meals for Qantas first class passengers. He was also an artist, and I have several of his paintings. I have no idea how or where he learnt his skills as a chef or an artist other than surmising he must have had some terrific adventures along the way meeting some interesting people while travelling the world.

At some point I scrapped the idea of a double-decker bus adventure preferring to travel by air courtesy of when I served in the Royal Australian Air Force (Malaysia, USA, UK, and once into Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshal Islands) or via commercial airlines. Over the years I have travelled several times to the USA, including once when I was in New York I had lunch at the current Waldorf Astoria. I have also travelled to many parts of Europe and Asia (so far not including Russia). During the early-80s, I did a big solo trip over several weeks through Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines where I travelled from Baguio City down to Zamboanga, then home from Manila – without much internal planning about where I was going to stay or how I was going to travel between cities. I often look back on that adventure and think crikey how did I do that (I expect my Grandparents would approve).

My late sister, Elizabeth, herself a great traveller, used to say her idea of hell on earth was an organised tour. While I agree with her to some extent, nowadays the means of travel are much more sophisticated and

comfortable compared to some the transport I have used. Spending hours in a RAAF C130 can be fun, while not always comfortable, especially if the heating system is not working properly, and providing the Loadmaster knows how to make a good brew. One of the best organised tours I completed was in 2024 – a train journey across Canada, followed by a 29-day cruise to Greenland (although we were unable to enter port due to a massive ice flow), Iceland and Norway, followed by several city hops including Paris, and Cologne. While I enjoy my travel comforts these days, I still love to get off the beaten track and explore new cities and towns on my own.

Just recently, I had my first step into Morocco located in the northwestern corner of the continent in the region known as North Africa or the Maghreb. This time travelling in a small 20-seater (single-level not double-decker) with our wonderful Tour Guide Soufian (or Souf as he liked to be called) and driver, Mostapha.

Our first stop was Casablanca – Morocco's largest and most modern city made famous by the 1942 move of the same name (my very favourite move) starring Humphrey Bogart as Rick, and Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa Lund. Located on the shores of the Atlantic coast, Casablanca's French colonial past can be seen in the gorgeous Mauresque architecture, mixed beautifully with modern Morocco. We began our first day visiting the magnificent Hassan II Mosque, the largest in Morocco and second largest in the world. There is a Rick's Café in Casablanca, however, much to my disappointment it was closed for renovations during our visit.

Marrakesh, home to our guide Souf, is one of the four Imperial Cities of Morocco and was founded in the 11th century by the Berber dynasty Almoravid, soon becoming the capital of the Islamic Empire that stretched as far as Spain and Western Africa and which was conquered by the French in



Our Moroccan Guide Soufian. Photo: Mary Anne Whiting.

the 20th Century. A visit to the Jardin (Garden) Majorelle provided a cool relief to the hot and humid weather. Succulents and cactus thrive in this type of environment and there was a marvellous collection in the gardens. There was also a monument to Yves Saint Laurent who had a house in Marrakesh where he designed many of his iconic haute couture collections.

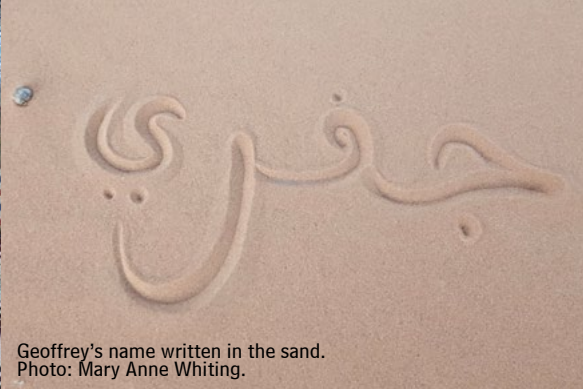
Our morning also included a visit to the Saadian Tombs. Discovered in 1917 by the Department of Fine Arts and Historical Monuments who are responsible for its restoration and access. We then ventured into the Berber town of Boumaine site of the Muslim cemetery with its doomed shine of Sidi Daoud who is commemorated in an annual festival where bread is baked from flour left at his grave and then fed to husbands to ensure their fertility.

We then made our way to Ouarzazate, the 'door of the desert', site of the location of films such as Lawrence of Arabia and Gladiator. En route we stopped at the fortified Berber village or 'ksar' of Ait Ben Haddou, a mudbrick city which is on the UNESCO World Heritage list as a striking example of the architecture of southern Morocco.

A four-wheel drive across the sand dunes took us to a beautiful lake

where we saw white flamingos, before travelling to Khamlia, a small desert village where we enjoyed a cup of Moroccan tea while listening to the local Gnaoua music – a combination of Berber, Sufi, and sub-Saharan African religious songs and rhythms. We then visited the camp sites of some traditional Moroccan nomads who live a simple life as camel or goat herders. As education is compulsory in Morocco, a bus collects the children each day for school. Medical support is provided free at a local hospital or by mobile health clinics. We sat underneath a typical tent and shared flat bread with chicken and vegetable filling and plain flat breads which we dipped into some very tasty date molasses.

One of my most memorable experiences was a visit to the town of Merzouga. Often referred to as the 'Jewell of the Sahara' it is the gateway to the Erg Chebbi dunes. The dunes are among the largest in Morocco and measure up to 160 meters in height. Together with some of my fellow travellers, I went on a camel ride across the dunes, stopping after about 30 minutes to rest on one of the dunes to watch the magnificent sunset cast a golden shadow over the dunes. Youseff, one of our Guides wrote my name and the names of my late partner Geoffrey and my Nephew Mark who passed away recently, in Arabic, right to left, in the sand.



Geoffrey's name written in the sand. Photo: Mary Anne Whiting.

We visited a Berber rug making co-op where we learnt how rugs are made using camel, goat or sheep wool or a combination, as well as from the argemone plant. I could not resist and purchased a beautiful rug. On our night in Marrakesh, we had a splendid dinner at a lovely local restaurant where we were entertained by some very glamorous and beautiful belly-dancers. The next day we travelled across the Atlas Mountains to Boumalne where we had a cooking lesson – chicken and with lemons and spices cooked in a traditional tagine, which we then ate for our lunch. We then walked around several bazaars selling a vast variety of products, including perfumes, spices, embroidered material, dresses and shirts.

Every mosque or ancient palace we visited in Morocco had the most extraordinarily beautiful tile and wood carving designs including the Bahia Palace. Within the Palace are the small and petit Riad – traditional types of housing that first appeared in Marrakech nine centuries ago and which were adopted afterwards in other cities such as Fez, and Rabat. The rooms are richly decorated with floral, geometric and epigraphic motifs. At the centre of an open courtyard was a beautiful white marble fountain.

During a day spent in Fez, we visited the famous medina which was added to the UNESCO World Heritage listing in 1981 – the narrow streets and lovely trading areas or souks have a vast variety of stalls and shops where merchants sell spices, rugs, lanterns, leather goods and clothes, and where local artisans make and sell their work including jewellery and fabulous leather bags and coats.

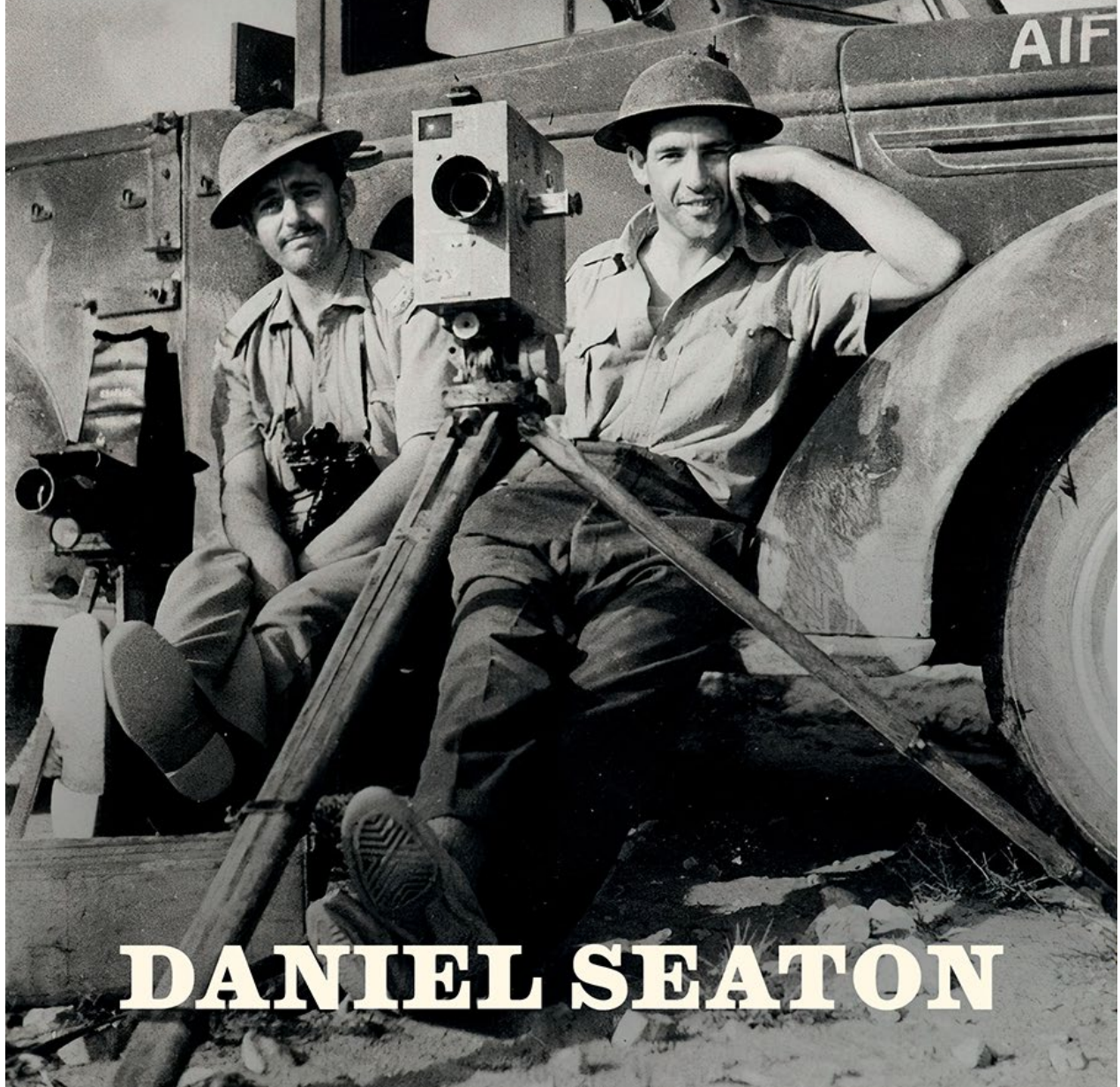
On our last day in Morocco, we visited the town of Chefchaouen – undoubtedly one of the loveliest towns in Morocco. The buildings are awash with hundreds of shades of blue and the different wares and shops are full of variety and colour. That evening we had a dinner and said farewell and thank to our wonderful guide Soufian and driver Mustapha; we shall never forget them nor the beautiful country Morocco with its bustling markets, historical imperial cities, and dramatic mountain and desert landscapes – a journey of over 1700 kilometres.

The next day we crossed the Strait of Gibraltar by ferry into Spain arriving at the vibrant city of Seville to begin another adventure – and that's another story!

MARY ANNE WHITING

TRUTH UNDER FIRE

AUSTRALIA'S SECOND WORLD WAR
CORRESPONDENTS



DANIEL SEATON

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