

Keeping in Touch

SPRING EDITION 2021

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2021



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CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ADOPTION OF
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN WHITE ENSIGN 1967



Official Newsletter of:
Toronto RSL sub-Branch
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Keeping in Touch

From the president's desk..

Hello everyone.

What a year this has turned out to be. When writing the last report for KIT the thought of another lockdown was not on the agenda, a vaccine was on the way and everything was rosy. This latest strain has certainly been of greater concern than the previous strain and far more contagious within the community. It appears we will just have to live with it and hope the vaccine will lessen the impact.



While we have been hibernating, the war in Afghanistan has come to an abrupt end and all foreign forces have departed that country. Our Australian forces no longer have to put themselves into peril in that part of the world and that can only be a good thing. Departure evolved very quickly and for the main a very smooth and safe withdrawal. I imagine the powers that be will now analyse the war to determine what we did well and that we could have done better. It's very hard to write about the whole event and determine what we achieved. What is very evident is the standard our forces achieved. Those that were in the theatre of that war can hold their heads very high, their performance was excellent and they served this country of ours very proudly. What is not evident is what was achieved. For the families of those who lost their lives and the many more now suffering mentally, it is very hard to put the outcome into perspective. Afghanistan is back to where it was, the difference now is the number of modern weapons at its disposal. Our concern is how they will be used.

Intervention initially was when Russia infiltrated to stabilise its border.

America took the opportunity to arm the Afghanistan resistance, to destabilise Russian forces during their cold war and succeeded in having the Russians withdraw. Afghanistan then turned on the Americans and culminated with the attack in Washington and the World Trade Centre
America retaliated and sent forces into Afghanistan to hunt and destroy Bin Laden.

The founder of the pan-Islamic militant organization al-Qaeda and determined to have organised the attacks and operating out of Afghanistan. The report in this issue of Kit by our Federal member details how Australia became involved.

Reports from Afghanistan indicate reprisals are in progress throughout the country with analysts indicating the country is headed for some very tough and disturbing times. The world now has to decide if it will sit back and watch it happen or intervene again.

While all that was happening, China has started flexing its muscles within the Indo-Pacific area. This has had a large impact on Australia in the way we trade and the security of our and our neighbour's borders. Our current civilian and military leaders have had to rethink our defences to bring them into context with new developments. One part of this was the cancelling of the contract with France to supply us with a submarine fleet and an agreement signed with Britain and the United States take on that role, except this time with nuclear powered submarines. This is a much better outcome. It provides Australia with a modern fleet of submarines well able to compete with the rest of the world and a weapon our service men and women can rely on and will give them the best chance to survive and return to their homes, the best outcome possible. I wish you all the best and hope you remain healthy and safe.

The Price of Liberty is Eternal Vigilance

*Bill NOBLE BEM
President*

RECONVENING OF SUB-BRANCH MEETINGS

As this edition of Keeping in Touch (October) goes to print, your sub-Branch is still in the dark regarding any future monthly meetings due to the current COVID restrictions. However, it is believed that with the lifting of certain restriction as of the 11/10/21, should the vaccination rates keep going up and the infections fall, with the Governments view of completely opening up New South Wales by the 31/12/21 it may not be too far off into the future.

**SHOULD THIS OCCUR MEMBERS WILL BE DULY NOTIFIED
If not before, see you in the New Year ~ED~ RJM**



**REMEMBRANCE
DAY
GOFFET PARK
SERVICE TO
COMMENCE AT
1100hrs
(11.00am)**

~ GOFFET PARK ~

Remembrance Day 2021 will be held in Goffet Park by the staff of the Toronto RSL sub-Branch where a short service will be held along with wreath laying.

Members of the public are not officially invited at this stage, however, if conditions change regarding the COVID restrictions, such as a relaxation or other changes which will allow public anticipation, then signage and other public notices will be suitably spread for the information of the public as soon as it becomes available. However, if the statusquo remains then the original restrictions will apply regarding members of the public.

Once the RSL staff complete their part in the proceedings and leave the park, members of the public can further pay their respects similar to which occurred on ANZAC DAY this year, if they so wish.

We apologise in advance for the shortness of the entire event but due to the restrictions it cannot be helped. However, we thank anyone in attendance for paying their respects to our past fallen.

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Toronto Diggers

DATES TO REMEMBER

**MONDAY ~ 11/10/20 MONTHLY MEETING AT
1000HRS ~ CANCELLED DUE TO COVID**

**MONDAY ~ 08/11/20 MONTHLY MEETING AT
1000HRS ~ TO BE ADVISED**

**WEDNESDAY ~ 11/11/20 REMEMBRANCE DAY
COMMENCING AT 11.00AM IN GOFFET PARK
TORONTO ~ TO BE ADVISED
COVID-9 RESTRICTIONS APPLY**

**MONDAY ~ 13/12/20 MONTHLY MEETING AT
1000HRS ~ TO BE ADVISED**

**THE BLOKE THAT GAVE ME THIS ONE WAS ASKED TO
LEAVE AND CLOSE THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.**

A chicken walks into a library and up to the desk.

“Buk”, says the chicken. So the librarian gives him a book. The chicken leaves with the book and returns five minutes later.

“Buk”, he says. So the librarian gives him another book. This goes on about eight more times, until the librarian leaves the library and goes on a break out the back where there’s a pond.

The librarian observes the chicken standing on the edge of the pond tossing the books to a frog on a lily pad. The chicken says, “Buk” “Buk” and the frog says, “Reddit” “Reddit”.

I SLAMMED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.....ED.

A COUPLE OF QUICK ONES

I am the best man at my mates second wedding.....Is it okay appropriate to open my dinner speech with, “Welcome back everyone”

When you are young you sneak out of the house to go to parties. When you are old, you sneak out of parties to go home.

PENSIONS REPORT

Our Pension Officers/Advocates have during these COVID times remained on call for any Veteran/Service Person who require our help or assistance. Although limited in some cases we are trying to do the best we can under the circumstances. They still have a number of cases in progress at various stages with DVA awaiting results.

Non-liability health care is still available to Veterans under VEA and MRCA for Mental Health and Cancer plus some other conditions.

For a list of any new or amended conditions and those conditions under review can be found on the Repatriation Medical Authority (RMA) Web site www.rma.gov.au then look under “What’s New”

Statements of Principles (SoP) are continually being reviewed by members of the RMA or on request.

Review of conditions can also be requested by those interested in a particular condition

Regards

Pensions

* * * * *

Our Advocate and Pension Officer’s are normally on duty in this sub-Branch office on Wednesdays between the hours of 9.30am and 12 midday.

Other times by appointment only.

Phone 4959 3699

WHICH I MIGHT ADD IS THE CURRENT CASE DUE TO THE COVID19 RESTRICTIONS

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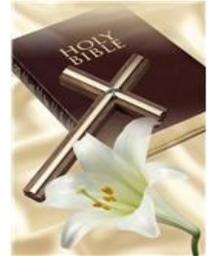
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CHAPLAINS CORNER



It has been a difficult couple of months for Returned Service Personnel. There are many who are deeply impacted by the recent take over of Afghanistan by the Taliban. Undoubtably, this has left many with feeling great frustration and despair at the news. Those who have served in Afghanistan and those who have served in the Middle East.

However, these events impact all Returned Service Personnel and especially Vietnam Vets who have served to fight for a fair and just society where people do not have to live in fear of oppression. We recognise the commitment, courage, and contribution of those who served in conflict.

Added to this is the COVID lockdown and unable to socially gather as we have normally been able to do. Please do not hesitate to reach out for support if you need it.

Remembrance Day will be different from usual years again and we wait with anticipation as to COVID restrictions.

I pray that this Remembrance Day is deeply meaningful as we offer up Remembrance Day and our experience to God.

Our Hope is in the Lord.

Peace be with you,
Reverend Melanie Whalley
Toronto Anglican Church
(02) 4959 8108

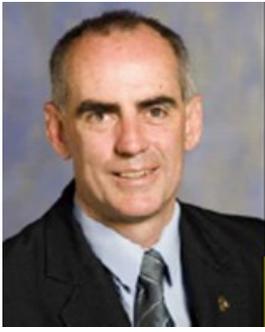
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Greg Piper MP

Member for Lake Macquarie



Here's hoping you're actually reading this column in the RSL club with your families and mates! As I write it, I'm watching the State's Covid vaccination rate climb rapidly towards the 70% double dose target.

If you're not, then we know that having our lives return to some sort of normal is just days away. If you're anything like me, I've missed seeing family, friends and the grand-kids the most. Bloody heartbreaking some days.

What an extraordinary battle we've had with Covid-19. Sadly, after holding our own here in the Hunter for so long, our luck ran out in August when outbreaks in the local area were 'seeded' mainly by illegal parties which attracted infected visitors from Sydney.

At the time of writing, we've recorded more than 200 cases in the area over the past week, including 30 in the Morisset and Toronto areas. It's been incredibly frustrating, and I can't tell you the strain this has put on our local health system and frontline health workers. They have done an extraordinary job, day in and day out for 18 months.

Not surprisingly, we've had our share of idiots behaving badly but I don't want to dwell on them when so many people in our community have gone to extraordinary lengths to look after each other over the past few months. It's been a reminder of how lucky we are to live where we do.

So hopefully we're all seeing the light at the end of this very long and dark tunnel and are seeing better days ahead. I've got no doubt that the next few months will still be tough. As we've seen overseas when other countries have reached this point, transmission numbers will still be high, but good vaccination numbers will be keeping most out of hospital. Soon, we'll hopefully be able to treat and live with Covid-19 in the same way we treat other viruses and 'flu.

Enough of that, but I hope you've managed to pull through it all in one piece!

.....

I have mixed feelings about the decision to move the partly-restored Catalina from its intended home at Rathmines to the RAAF Base at Williamstown

As I'm sure you're aware, the Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Association had been trying to gain approval for the historic plane to be displayed at a museum and interpretive centre at Rathmines Park to preserve and promote the historic connections between the town and the role it played as a Catalina base during WWII.

Last month, the association agreed to move the plane to the RAAF base at Williamtown after its long negotiations with Lake Macquarie City Council broke down and the reality of funding shortages hit home.

It's great news that the Catalina will remain in the Hunter Region for display and educational purposes, but a great shame that it won't be at Rathmines. I really feel for Penny and Rob Furner who secured the plane at great personal expense, and for their band of tireless volunteers who have worked on restoring it for many years. Still, I'm glad that none of those efforts have been entirely in vain.

.....

I just wanted to mention quickly that the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide is now inviting submissions from organisations and individuals that will help inform the inquiry.

The inquiry wants to hear stories from veterans so that it can learn about the issues and situations they may have encountered or be aware of. Please don't hold back, as this is an opportunity to actually do something about addressing this extremely important issue and help support those veterans who continue to struggle post-service.

You can make a submission via the commission's website at:
defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au

.....

As always, I hope you're in good health and good spirits. If you require assistance with any State-related issue, don't hesitate to give me a call on 4959-3200.

Best regards, ~~~~~ *LEST WE FORGET*



92 Victory Parade, Toronto NSW 2283

email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au 
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This is a distressing time for many of our Defence personnel and veterans who served our nation in Afghanistan with courage, dignity and honour, and made such a significant contribution to the allied military effort.

We must never forget the 41 Australians who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Australia owes a great debt of gratitude to all our veterans who served with distinction and their families who supported them.

Over the past 20 years our nation has been unwavering in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan.

I understand many of those who served our nation in Afghanistan may feel frustrated, concerned and distressed at what is unfolding there.

My primary concern is the wellbeing of all of our veterans, Defence personnel, here at home and abroad, and their families.

I have asked the Department of Veterans' Affairs to contact the families of ADF members who lost their lives in Afghanistan, as well as any veterans the Department is aware of who could suffer adversely as a result of what is currently happening in Afghanistan.

I encourage anyone who served in Afghanistan to reach out to support services available to them and their families if they need it.

For those who are not currently registered with DVA, please know that help and support is there for you. Please call DVA if you would like to access services or call [Open Arms](#) for counselling support.

ADF personnel, veterans and their families can call Open Arms 24 hours a day on 1800 011 046.

If you need to talk but don't want to disclose your name, please call [Safe Zone Support](#) which offers anonymous counselling service for ADF personnel, veterans and their families. It's free and available 24/7. You can call 1800 142 072.

**The Hon Andrew Gee
Minister for Veteran Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel**

STATEMENT ON NEW SECURITY PARTNERSHIP AND NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES

The announcements of Australia's new security partnership with the United States and United Kingdom, and that we will be working with them to build nuclear-powered (not nuclear armed) submarines in Australia, is the most important defence initiative of our time.

We know that the security outlook in our region is changing quickly. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to ensure that the decisions taken today provide them with the highest possible safety and security.

History has taught us that the best way to meet threats is to be prepared.

When World War Two broke out, in almost every respect Britain and Australia were not ready.

However, there was one technical innovation that was to prove critical.

When hostilities commenced Britain had developed the world's best fighter plane in the Spitfire, and it was to prove decisive in the Battle of Britain and in preventing a German invasion.

The French submarine deal has now been scrapped. We shouldn't mourn its loss.

By the time those submarines came into service, they would have been technologically obsolete.

Future generations would not have thanked us for passing them down to them.

With so much coastline to defend, and so much uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific, Australia can't afford to gamble with something as crucial as our national security.

Nuclear-powered submarines are the best technology available.

This is the right decision for Australia, our national security, and for future generations.



Joel Fitzgibbon MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUNTER



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“We Did What We Had To Do”

Back in 2007, my first commitment abroad as Australia's Defence Minister was a meeting in Edinburgh. There, on a cold December day, I attended my first gathering of Ministers representing countries operating in a part of Afghanistan known as Regional Command South.

I felt troubled during the long flight to Scotland.

My recently acquired access to the real Afghanistan war story had left me feeling frustrated and concerned. My lack of confidence in the direction of the Afghanistan campaign had been heavily influenced by a senior Australian intelligence officer. His guidance had not been challenged by senior Defence leadership.

By 2007 our original mission objectives in Afghanistan had been long-ago achieved. Osama bin Laden was gone and al-Qaeda's presence and international reach had disintegrated. Afghanistan had ceased to be a threat to the safety of Australians. Afghanistan's Taliban regime was gone too.

A democratically elected government had been in place for three years. The only thing left to do was to make it hard for the Taliban to return to power and play host to terrorist groups. That meant giving the new Government the capacity to keep the peace, develop an economy and to offer the local population something better than the life they had lived under the Taliban.

In Edinburgh, what I wanted to know was, first, were we clear in our minds about why we still had combat troops in Afghanistan?

Second, what was the benchmark for success? And third, did we have a clear plan to achieve our objectives?

In my short time in the job, I'd come to strongly suspect the answer to the second two questions was "no".

The new Labor Government was not alone in its concerns about the vagueness of NATO's objectives and strategy.

That became clearer to me with each NATO gathering I attended.

My United States and United Kingdom counterparts were frustrated too. Managing such a disparate group of international partners with different views about what success looked like had become a challenge.

But keeping everyone in the tent was crucial to the ability to continue to describe the ongoing presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan as a "multi-national effort".

The new Australian Government was keen to ensure that our objectives in Afghanistan were clear and our troops were being asked to put their lives on the line only for good reason. There can be no endpoint in a war without clear mission objectives.

We were keen not to let our Alliance partners down. But we were right to resist attempts to have us take a lead role in Oruzgan Province after the Dutch withdrew from that role.

We could see no end to the war or what success looked like. We didn't want to be immersed deeper.

We instead focused on a pathway out: building on the capacity and capability of the local Afghan security forces in the expectation they'd become capable of enforcing the rule of law and protecting the interests and authority of the democratically elected government.

Like our ISAF partners, we could not have imagined what a hopeless cause that would become.

We saw that this week, when Kabul became the latest and final city to fall with little resistance.

Tragically, a number of Australian soldiers lost their lives during our attempts to train Afghan troops. Some on the battleground, having been abandoned by the Afghan National Army (ANA) partners they were mentoring. Others were murdered in their own places of refuge by Taliban fighters masquerading as ANA soldiers.

Afghanistan is multi-ethnic, tribal and operates within borders established by outsiders. Years of foreign invasions have hardened the resolve of its original inhabitants and largest ethnic group. It was ambitious to think it could be tamed. We offered the local population something different but it seems their leaders didn't want it badly enough.

Is it a better place for our time there? Only time will tell. Its new generation of Taliban leaders may or may not have learned from the mistakes of those who governed Afghanistan 20 years ago.

Hopefully, they will have at least learned that giving safe haven to terrorist groups will not be tolerated by the international community.

Maybe they'll be conscious, too, that the country's population, having had a taste of democracy, will hold higher expectations.

Taliban leaders will certainly want the international community to recognise the legitimacy of their rule. And they will want foreign aid.

Of course, modern, wealthy western countries like Australia and the United Kingdom are not the benchmark for assessing whether Afghanistan becomes a better place. Better than two decades ago is a more realistic hope for the Afghan people.

Whatever the result, our troops achieved a lot. They did everything we asked of them with great skill, courage and commitment.

We will continue to honour them and remain eternally grateful to the 41 heroes who gave their lives in our name. Lest we Forget.

**David Bullock – Media Advisor for and on behalf of the
Office of the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP | Shadow Minister for
Agriculture and Resources | Federal Member for Hunter**

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M 0405 408 871 : E david.bullock@aph.gov.au

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Nasho's News

Westlake Macquarie
National Servicemen's Association



This will be a short report as we have had only a few activities since the previous KIT.

We have not been able to meet since our June meeting and I eventually managed to do the minutes and email them out. With nothing to do these days it's strange how long it takes to do some things.

We were lucky to be able together for our bimonthly luncheon in July before everything began closing down. The luncheon was at The Cardiff RSL where a good number of members and wives joined up for a fine lunch and get together. It may be possible to re-convene for a meeting in October if we come out of lockdown, I will email notification if this occurs.

The NRMA contacted me to advise that they had made an error re our trailer insurance and that they owed us a refund for 5 years no claim bonus plus interest which has now been deposited in our account.

I now live next to Goffet Park and get a first hand view of anything that occurs there. Recently the council arrived, mowed the lawn and cleaned around both Memorials, however, within days strong winds covered the memorial areas again with numerous leaves from the surrounding bush and trees.

I have made several calls re welfare and unfortunately several our members or wives are not experiencing the best of health at the moment, and we do hope things will improve for them soon.

I received a call from Captain Evonne Fuller of the 217 Army cadets who informed me that they have been advised by The Christian College, where they currently meet that they will soon have to vacate as the College needs the space for future development. Yvonne was seeking any information from any of our members if they new of anywhere they may be able to re locate to for future meetings, etc.

We do hope that those who wish to be vaccinated have been able to do so and have had both doses. Being vaccinated can only give you a better feeling of safety in these times considering nobody would ever have imagined what we have experienced, not just in Australia but world wide

Best Wishes to all.
Bruce Robberds.
Honorary Secretary

LAST POST

The following members and comrades
have passed away since our last issue

*David Gordon McDONALD ~ 01/08/2021 ~ ARMY
(Member of Ashfield RSL sub-Branch)*

Lest we forget



RSL FUNERAL SERVICES

Since the lockdown because of COVID we have undertaken funerals for members of our neighbouring LGA's as their sub-Branches were in lockdown and could not travel to undertake the service of their member/s if the member was in a nursing home or the like in a different LGA. Such was the case with Mr. McDONALD. We considered it an honour to be able to assist in this way.

**HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED MAKING A
BEQUEST OR
INCLUDING THIS SUB BRANCH IN YOUR WILL**

May we encourage you to think of us when making a bequest or when you are making your will. Your memorial gift will help us towards our goal; to look after the welfare needs of veterans, their widows and their dependents on a continuing basis at no cost to them.

EXHAUSTED

A nurse walks into a bank totally exhausted after working an 18 hour shift. She grabs a deposit slip, pulls a rectal thermometer out of her purse, and tries to write with it. When she realises her mistake she looks at the flabbergasted teller and, without missing a beat, says, "Well that's just great.....some asshole has got my pen."

+++++

A FEW QUICK ONES

Paddy caught his wife having an affair,, so, he decided to kill her and himself. He put the gun to his head, looked at his wife and said, "Don't laugh, you're bloody next."

+++++

BEER doesn't make you Fat, it makes you LEAN.....Against bars, tables, chairs, walls.

+++++

No matter how big a hammer you use, you can't pound common sense into some people.

+++++

Theirs is no such thing as growing old gracefully, the truth is that once you get old, you stop being polite and just start telling the truth.

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217Army Cadet Unit (ACU)



1. Hello Readers!

2. The Winter season certainly knows how to throw us curve balls and this year was no different. In late July the Commander of NSW AAC Brigade ordered all units within NSW to cease face-to-face training due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Sydney. This was a wise decision as we are still currently facing lockdowns within NSW.

3. The order however did not stop 217 ACU from continuing our training to the best of our ability. We are currently working under a revised training program where the Cadets meet on the online platform – Discord. This platform allows any cadet to discuss topics and meet during our parade times but also share their experiences outside training hours to stay connected during the lockdown period.

4. Due to the lockdowns, all planned activities for 2021 have been postponed until 2022. On the other hand, 217ACU was able to send 3 CDT CPL's to the online Promotion Courses to learn how to become SGT's over the Spring break. They have all done well and are planned to attend the face-to-face assessment in January 2022.

In my last report, I advised that NSW AAC BDE is coming to the party to support the replacement of our deteriorating Storage Containers. These containers were due to arrive in early September however we have received notice from the Business Manager of Charlton College. The need to build new classrooms for the expanding school has hit a critical point and the site that 217ACU currently occupies is of need by the school. The relationship with Charlton College has been long and good natured by all parties but it is time to say our farewells. We are currently looking for new locations around West Lake Macquarie to call our new home.

Thank you for your continued support and patience.

Kind regards

Yvonne Fuller

CAPT (AAC)

217 Army Cadet Unit (ACU)

Officer Commanding (OC)

Mobile: 0409 310 713

Unit email: 217acu@armycadets.gov.au

Kookies Morsels Cont....

COCONUT AND LIME SALMON

4 Salmon fillets
4 Kaffir lime leaves
165ml can of coconut milk
1 large mango or half a can of mango slices
1 or 2 long red chillies, deseeded, finely chopped (your choice of the amount regarding heat)
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 bunch of coriander
2 Lebanese cucumbers

Remove spines from lime leaves and shred finely. Wash and finely chop coriander stems. Reserve coriander sprigs. Combine lime leaves, coriander stems and coconut milk in a dish. Add salmon fillets and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to marinate.

Halve cucumbers lengthways. Using a teaspoon, remove seeds. Roughly chop cucumber and place in a bowl. Remove cheeks from mango, scoop out flesh and roughly chop, or roughly chop slices. Add mango to bowl with cucumber. Chop half the reserved coriander sprigs, add to the mango and cucumber mixture.

Preheat BBQ plate on medium to high heat, brush with oil. Remove salmon from marinate and cook, skin side up for 2-3 minutes or until golden (BBQ with care as salmon is delicate. It's better to slightly undercook the fish as it will retain heat and continue cooking after being removed). Turn and cook for a further 2-3 minutes or to your liking.

Serve with steamed rice, cucumber salad and lime wedges.

Serves 4

Bon appetit

TWELVE COMMANDMENTS FOR SENIORS

??# 1 - Talk to yourself. There are times you need expert advice

2 - In Style are the clothes that still fit.

3 - You don't need anger management. You need people to stop making you mad.

4 - Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

5 - The biggest lie you tell yourself is, I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it. "

6 -On time is when you get there.

7 - Even duct tape can't fix stupid - but it sure does muffle the sound.

8 - It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?

9 - Lately, You've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

10 - Growing old should have taken longer.

11 - Aging has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.

12 - You still haven't learned to act your age, and hope you never will??

And one more:

"One for the road" means going to the bathroom before you leave the house.



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY WHITE ENSIGN (1967)

Circumstances Surrounding the Adoption of the Flag

From its inception in 1911 the Royal Australian Navy flew as its distinguishing flag the White Ensign featuring the red cross of St. George handed down to it by the Royal Navy where it had been flown since 1864. There had been proposals at the time that a distinctively Australian flag should be adopted but these were overruled by the Admiralty who considered it more appropriate that all Commonwealth navies should continue to fly a common ensign. In this regard it must be remembered that at its birth the RAN was realistically an offshoot of the RN, comprised of ships and equipment of exclusively British origin and with all senior positions filled by British officers on loan; indeed it was not until 1948 that the position of Chief of Naval Staff was filled by an Australian. This flag arrangement was accepted for many years; our Navy had been founded upon the traditions, regulations, laws and procedures of the Royal Navy, our officers underwent much of their training in the UK and most RAN ships, aircraft and material continued to be of British origin or design.

Following World War II however the RAN in line with the rest of the Australian community began to develop more independent attitudes and a growing feeling that our policies, our ships and our personnel should be more readily identifiable as Australian. Recognising this, in 1965 the First Naval Member, Vice Admiral Sir Alan McNicoll initiated action for change by soliciting views on the desirability of adopting a distinctively Australian White Ensign. He made the points that in overseas waters our ships needed to be readily identifiable if the national policy of projecting Australia as an independent nation was to be furthered and that in home ports our Navy needed to be seen as an Australian service totally independent of any form of overseas control. The involvement of RAN ships in the Vietnam War where they were flying a distinguishing ensign identical with that of another country not engaged in the war lent logic and urgency to his argument.

With Australia's entry into the Vietnam War in 1962, discussion once more turned to the RAN having its own white ensign rather than flying the British White Ensign – which was argued as flying the ensign of another country. During WW2, the RAN was under the command of the RN but from the 1950s had increasingly sought independence from the RN and was allying itself more closely with the USA.

Such a seemingly simple task as changing a flag took a year of discussion until all parties agreed and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II granted royal assent on 7 November 1966. The introduction of the new Australian White Ensign was slated for 1 March 1967 when all ships and shore establishments of the RAN – no matter where they were in the world – would lower the British White Ensign and raise the Australian White Ensign.

Vice Admiral McNicoll's proposal for change was warmly accepted throughout the Navy and proposed designs for an Australian White Ensign were called for. Several designs eventuated and on 21st January 1966 the Naval Board recommended to the Government that:-

- The RAN should have a distinctive Australian White Ensign.
- The Ensign should be a white flag with the Union Flag in the upper canton at the hoist with six blue stars positioned as in the Australian flag.

The design had been initially submitted by then Commander G.J.H. Woolrych RAN.

Following Government approval and that of Her Majesty the Queen, the introduction of the Australian White Ensign was promulgated on 23rd December 1966 by signal from the Naval Board stating inter alia:

“this change has been made on the recommendation of the Naval Board which is confident that the new ensign will be welcomed by the majority of officers and sailors. We are all proud to have served under the White Ensign but it is now appropriate that an unmistakable indication of the RAN's position as an independent service of an independent nation of the British Commonwealth should be displayed in Her Majesty's Australian ships and establishments.

...In deciding on the design of the new ensign the Naval Board was influenced by it's desire to preserve traditional links with the Royal Navy which helped to found, foster and develop our service...”

Who flew the Australian White Ensign first? That honour went to the Australian National Line's cargo vessel MV *Boonaroo*. But that's not a naval ship, I hear you say.

During the Vietnam War the *Boonaroo* was chartered to transport supplies to our troops in Vietnam. In 1967 the Seaman's Union refused to sail the cargo ship as it had ordnance for the RAAF aboard and so, in order to continue the sailing schedule, the *Boonaroo* was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy, a naval complement was put aboard and she sailed with her cargo. This all occurred on 1 March 1967 and the newly-commissioned HMAS *Boonaroo* was the first Royal Australian Navy vessel to fly the Australian White Ensign. The ship was in the right place, at the right time.



HMAS BOONAROO



There was another cargo ship that flew the White Ensign as well for the same reason during the Vietnam War and that was the MV Jeparit. It was used between 1966 and 1972 to transport Military supplies to Vietnam under the name of HMAS Jeparit and ran 43 voyages to Vietnam

The Australian White Ensign was introduced into service on 1st March 1967, was popularly received within the RAN and the Australian community and has been flown proudly since that time.

Defence Force chief admits ADF was caught off guard by rapid Taliban takeover

By foreign affairs reporter [Stephen Dzedzic](#)

Posted Mon 6 Sep 2021 at 1:19pm Monday 6 September 2021 at 1:19pm updated Monday 6 September 2021 at 4:14pm

'Interesting' deployment choices and bribery blamed for rapid collapse

General Campbell said the collapse was accelerated by the departure of Afghanistan's former president, Ashraf Ghani, [who fled the country](#) as Taliban fighters approached the capital, and some "interesting" force deployment choices.

The Chief of the Defence Force, Angus Campbell, has conceded he was surprised by the speed of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan last month.

Key points:

- **The Chief of the Defence Force has admitted his prediction that the Taliban would take months to capture Afghanistan was wrong**
- **Unusual strategic decisions and bribery have been blamed in part for the quicker-than-expected collapse**

General Campbell said Australia should be proud of its successful evacuation mission from Kabul

The militant group swept into Kabul almost two weeks before the US military's set withdrawal date of August 31, shocking intelligence analysts who had predicted the Afghan national army would hold them off for several months at least.

It forced a chaotic evacuation mission from Kabul by allied forces, [leaving some unable to be rescued](#).

In early June, General Campbell also dismissed the prospect of a rapid Taliban takeover, telling a Senate estimates hearing: "I do not think that the situation is at all assured in terms of the Taliban's claimed ascendance."

"I think this is very much going to be a negotiated settlement," he said.

Continued on Page 30/.....

Continued from Page 30/.....But this morning, General Campbell admitted his prediction was wrong and said he was surprised by the speed of the "cascade collapse" in Afghanistan.

"I wasn't anticipating ... that the collapse would be so immediate," he said.

"Collapse, [Taliban] accommodation or Afghan government success were all possibilities, but by the momentum of the Taliban effort the accommodation or cascade collapse were more likely.

"But I don't know of anyone who predicted — other than in the glory of 20/20 hindsight — how quickly it would occur."

'Interesting' deployment choices and bribery blamed for rapid collapse

General Campbell said the collapse was accelerated by the departure of Afghanistan's former president, Ashraf Ghani, [who fled the country](#) as Taliban fighters approached the capital, and some "interesting" force deployment choices.

It's not clear exactly what deployment "choices" General Campbell was referring to.

But yesterday the head of the Chief of the Defence Staff in the United Kingdom, General Sir Nick Carter, said that the Taliban likely bribed some Afghan soldiers not to fight them.

"It was the pace of [the collapse] that surprised us, and I don't think we realised quite what the Taliban were up to," he told the BBC.

"They weren't really fighting for the cities they eventually captured, they were negotiating for them. And I think you'll find a lot of money changed hands as they managed to buy off those who might have fought."

WHAT NOW, ANOTHER INQUIRY?

EX-VETERANS VIEW

The withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan after approximately 20 years of fighting trying to right the situation for the citizens of Afghanistan, which resulted in the loss of 41 Australians lives and a reported 261 wounded, seems to have been a waste of time, loss of life, pain and agony. Not only for the troops that served but also for the civilians of Afghanistan, who during the occupation of the Military Forces from the United States, Australian and others, were able to lead a rather normal life. However, with the drawdown of troops by all western nations one can only witness the immediate transition that has come over Afghanistan in that short time.

The withdrawal has occurred that fast it has stranded a number of citizens from other parts of the world still stranded there.

Throws of Vietnam, fighting in Afghanistan for twenty years, then pulling out and leaving the civilians to their own devices and plight after having protection and a normal life during that period.

Comparison, Vietnam; fighting for approximately 10 years, 521 killed, over 3000 wounded fighting to protect the South from the North only to have the last Australian Troops withdrawn out in December 1972 and the Americans left in 1975.

As a result approximately within a period of two years after the withdrawal the Troops, the North of Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong had overrun the South and taken complete control.

The question is why; these two wars? They were not as previous wars such as WW1 or WW2, even Korea have a demarcation line, but from what I understand both Vietnam and Afghanistan were started for a purpose, which to my way of thinking was the belief of the troops involved. However, when the powers to be believed in their eyes that it was over, all were withdrawn and the civilians of each country left to their own devices.

It's no wonder the Veterans are having a hard time adversely dealing with certain situations concerning their service, physically and mentally, not withstanding the current High Suicide Rate.

The Hon Andrew Gee MP on behalf of the government has placed a couple of support options in his Media Release Page 14 of this KIT.

However, the belief of many a veteran is not only medical help assists in dealings with these problems, but good advice that you can adhere to is talking to your Veteran mates.

Notice has come to hand that the Royal Commission into Suicides is set to release an interim report into their investigations around the 11 August 2022 and the final report to be released by the 15 June 2023.

~HOW'S THAT FOR A QUICK FIX? ~ VIETNAM VETERAN~



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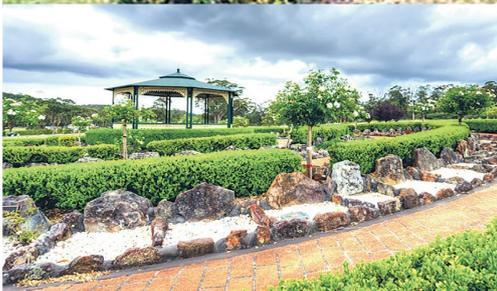


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