

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN

October 2019

THE NSAA'S NEW PATRON



Dr. Brendan Nelson AO has accepted the National Servicemen's Association of Australia's invitation to become its new Patron.

He has just retired as the Director of the Australian War Memorial.

Dr. Nelson (born 19 August 1958) is a former Australian politician who served as the federal Leader of the Opposition from 2007 to 2008. He was a member of the House of Representatives from 1996 to 2009, as the Liberal member for the Division of Bradfield in North Sydney.

A medical doctor by profession, he came to public prominence as the Federal President of the Australian Medical Association (1993–95), and served as a Minister in the third and fourth terms of the Howard Government, serving as Minister for Education, Science and Training (2001–06) and Minister for Defence (2006–2007).

Following the 2007 federal election, at which the Howard Government was defeated, Dr. Nelson was elected leader of the Liberal Party in a contest against former Minister for Environment and Water Resources Malcolm Turnbull, and became the Leader of the Opposition on 3 December 2007. On 16 September 2008, in a second contest following a spill motion, Nelson lost the leadership of the Opposition and the Liberal Party to Turnbull.

On 25 August 2009 he announced his forthcoming retirement from politics. In September 2009, the Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced Nelson as the next Ambassador of Australia to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg as well as Australia's Special Representative to NATO. He remained Member for Bradfield until officially resigning on 19 October 2009, sparking the 2009 Bradfield by-election.

On 10 October 2012, Nelson resigned as an ambassador because he had been promoted to succeed Steve Gower as Director of the Australian War Memorial; a position he took up on 17 December 2012.

OFFICIAL CALL ON GOVERNOR-GENERAL



During the National Council meeting in Canberra, the President and members of the National Executive of the NSAA made an official call on Australia's new Governor-General, His Excellency David Hurley AC DSC (Retired) at Government House in Canberra.

David Hurley joined the Australian Army in January 1972, graduating from the Royal Military College, Duntroon into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. In a long and distinguished 42-year military career, his service culminated with his appointment as Chief of the Defence Force.

He commanded the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment during Operation SOLACE in Somalia in 1993, receiving the Distinguished Service Cross. Following promotion to Colonel, he was appointed Chief of Staff, Headquarters 1st Division in June 1994, attending the U.S. Army War College in 1996 and 1997. He commanded the 1st Brigade from 1999-2000 in Darwin, supporting Australian-led operations in East Timor.

He was appointed the inaugural Chief of Capability Development Group from 2003-07, Chief of Joint Operations Command in October 2007, and Vice Chief of the Defence Force in July 2008. Promoted to General, he succeeded Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston as Chief of the Defence Force on 4 July 2011 until his retirement on 30 June 2014. In 2010, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia for eminent service to the Australian Defence Force.

Prior to being sworn in as Governor-General, David Hurley served as the 38th Governor of New South Wales from October 2014 – May 2019.

David Hurley was born in Wollongong, New South Wales on 26 August 1953, the son of Norma and James Hurley. His father was an Illawarra steelworker and his mother worked in a grocery store. He grew up in Port Kembla and attended Port Kembla High School where he completed his Higher School Certificate in 1971. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Diploma in Defence Studies from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1975. He is married to Linda with whom he has three children: Caitlin, Marcus and Amelia.

He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Wollongong in 2013; a Doctor of the University, *honoris causa*, from the University of New South Wales in 2015; made a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering in 2016; and awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Macquarie University in 2017.

The National President raised with the Governor-General whether he would accept an invitation to give the Address on 8 September 2020 marking the 10th anniversary of the Dedication of the National Service Memorial at the Australian War Memorial.

The then Governor General, Dame Quentin Bryce, performed the ceremony on 8 September 2010. His Excellency indicated his interest in being the Guest of Honour.

NATIONAL SERVICE CASUALTIES

Allen Callaghan



How many National Servicemen died on active service in Borneo and Vietnam?

The answer is 212 – two in Borneo and 210 in Vietnam.

However, the question was raised at the National Council whether this was the total number killed on active service. It isn't, for three reasons.

There were three types of

Nashos:

- The largest group were those called up for service in the 1950s, 60s and 70s in the Navy, Army and Air Force with National Service numbers i.e. 4382NS, 2/771128, 1731007 or A111409.
- The second group were voluntary National Servicemen who usually retained any number they already had and served the National Service term of two years.
- The third type were those called up for National Service who enlisted in the Navy, Army or Air Force and usually received new Regular numbers.

No National Servicemen died on active service in the Navy or the RAAF in Borneo or Vietnam. In the case of the Army, those who had joined up after being called up died as Regulars, not National Servicemen. An example is Major Peter Badcoe VC. He served as a National Servicemen in the 16th Battalion in 1952 and then joined up. He died as a Regular with the Service Number 4140. Another example is Pte Norman James Womal. He was called up as a National Serviceman but then joined the Regulars. His Service Number on the Vietnam Nominal Roll is given as 15170.

The Nominal Roll, which lists all those who died in that war, includes the question National Service? The given answer on the Certificates of Service for Major Badcoe and Pte Womal is No. In the case of 2781465 Lt.Gordon Sharp, killed at Long Tan, the answer is Yes.

To complicate it further, there were voluntary National Servicemen such as 2412362 Peter McGarry, 2141115 Raymond Patten and 217961 Leslie Pettit. Had they lived, they would have served the same two years as other Nashos, not the three of Regular Army volunteers.

The National Service Honour Roll I compiled includes seven 1950s National Servicemen killed on active service in Borneo and Vietnam. All had been called up and subsequently enlisted and all had regular Army numbers i.e. 14172 Lt.Kenneth Ambrose. They were intended to be representative because it would be necessary to examine all 287,000 National Service records to ascertain who had joined up. All National Servicemen nominally served for five years – completing their service in the CMF or the Army as Reservists - but this ended with the repeal of the two National Service schemes in 1959 and 1975.

THE CHIEF CENTURION

The Chief Centurion of a Roman Legion had to be an outstanding man.



He would have made his way up from the ranks through a strong right arm in battle; overall ability including courage and leadership and an eye for strategy plus administrative ability in tandem with the Legate – usually a political appointment - who was the Commanding Officer. Centurions were distinguished by the sideways crest on their helmets.

Their equivalents today are the Colonel and the Regimental Sergeant-Major. So what more is required to be the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Australian Army? The NSAA's National Council met one at its meeting who is now the Repatriation Commissioner dealing with the needs of all those who have defended our nation in peace and war.



Don Spinks AO outlined to the Council the work of the Commission for present and past servicemen and women, including National Servicemen. That service becomes more important each year as more and more of us reach our 70s and 80s.

His career illustrates how the Australian Defence Forces have always recognised and

utilised ability on merit from the Boer War to the Middle East.

Warrant Officer Don Spinks was born, raised and educated in New South Wales. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army in January 1979 and on completion of Basic Recruit Training he was assigned to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps. On completion of Initial Employment Training he was posted to 4th Cavalry Regiment, during this posting he was promoted to Lance Corporal in 1982 and Corporal in 1985.

In 1987, he was posted to the Armoured Centre as an Instructor at Corps Training Wing. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1989 and was posted to 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Sydney where he served as a Troop Sergeant in A Squadron and Regimental Headquarters. In 1991, he was posted to the School of Armour as an Instructor Tactics and Gunnery.

He was promoted to Warrant Officer Class Two in 1992 and was posted to the Royal Military College Duntroon to educate and train officer cadets. In 1996 he was posted to 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Darwin as a Squadron Sergeant Major and Regimental Training Warrant Officer.

Warrant Officer Spinks was promoted to Warrant Officer Class One in January 1999. His Regimental Sergeant Major appointments include the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Multi National Force and Observers – Sinai Egypt in 2004, Royal Australian Armoured Corps, 1st Brigade in 2008-2009, and Joint Task Force 633 on Operation Slipper in 2010. In 2011, he was appointed Command Sergeant Major Forces Command – Army.

In January 2007, he was awarded the Medal for the Order of Australia for meritorious service to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps and to the Multi-National Force and Observers – Sinai.

In March 2015, he was appointed as the 10th Regimental Sergeant Major of the Australian Army and commenced his appointment on 9 July 2015.

Warrant Officer Spinks is a graduate of Class 50 of the Sergeants Major Course. He was appointed to the Repatriation Commission on 1 July this year.

He told the Council that the needs of modern warfare had increased the demand on the nation for services to those who had been wounded both physically and mentally. Any war without a front line where the enemy could hide in the general populace plus the physical demands of harsh climates and terrains put additional strains on servicemen and women. The Repatriation Commission had widened the scope of its services to meet these needs.

The Council raised the question of those Nashos who did not have active service but had lived with the knowledge that in the event of a wider conflict they would be amongst the first to be mobilised. He replied that the Commission had been and was aware of this and had included it in its forward planning as National Servicemen of both eras aged. Those with active service had priority but all servicemen and women were entitled to appropriate services.

A good comment about Commissioner Spinks would be the traditional salute to the Chief Centurion – “Ave, Primus Pilus”.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

The best insurance for a nation is preparedness.

Or, as President Teddy Roosevelt put it, quoting an old African proverb – “Speak softly but carry a big stick. You will go far”.



Professor John Blaxland, Professor of International Security and Intelligence Studies at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University, put it another way to the National Council meeting in Canberra: “Australia lives in an unstable part of the world and should plan its defence forces accordingly”.

Prof. Blaxland showed a compelling Powerpoint presentation with considerable details relating to a geostrategic SWOT analysis of Australia’s current situation - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

These were graphically displayed and explained and covered both internal and external challengers. The outcome of the analysis and challenges creates some concern for Australia’s security. He pointed out how deficient and vulnerable we are in some areas.

As a consequence of this he has developed a recommended scheme known as the “Australian Universal Scheme for National and Community Service”. It was briefly explained as a call-up programme to include military service, emergency service and community service of choice. He proposed our Association to engage with communities and politicians and by giving them a convincing reason to pass the message on. In an extensive and precise address he outlined the threats Australia faces and analysed the outlook for those nations in our area including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, China and Japan. He also outlined a proposal for a modern form of National Service to meet Australia’s increasing defence needs.

He told the Council that as other observers had also noted, Indonesia, our near neighbour with a population of 200million, was a case in point facing a rise in fundamental Islam and internal political and economic instability including uprisings in West Papua and demands in Aceh for more independence

The official view of Australia appeared to range from ignorance and indifference to resentment of past events including the liberation of East Timor and the Australian-Indonesia conflict in Borneo in the 1960s.

Professor Blaxland said Australian governments needed to be aware of regional sensitivities but also the need for increased self-reliance including not taking the alliance with the United States for granted.

The substance of his address can be found at “A Geostrategic SWOT Analysis for Australia” which explains the rationale for the proposal for an Australian Universal Scheme for National and Community Service (AUSNACS).

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/overnights/time-to-introduce-a-new-national-service/11237410> and here https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/south-queensland-drive/national-service/11196538http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2019-06/cog_49_swot_analysis_web.pdf

FAR EAST STRATEGIC WAR MEMORIAL

Moves are underway to build a Far East Strategic War Memorial at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

This would honour all who served in the Malayan Emergency in the 1950s and Confrontation with Indonesia in Borneo in the 1960s.

The Chairman introduced Mr Ian Davenport, Secretary of the Far East Strategic War Memorial Foundation.



Ian outlined the background to the Malayan Emergency against the Communist insurgency and Indonesian confrontation in Borneo during the 1950's and 1960's in which 66 Australians, including two Nashos, lost their lives and several hundred National Servicemen participated. 3787078 Sapper John Blacket was the first National Serviceman to serve in a combat zone with 21 Construction Squadron in Borneo in 1965. The following year more National Servicemen were posted to Borneo and to Vietnam.

He gave details of a proposal to build a memorial to recognise the men and women who served in this emergency and Confrontation. He sought and received support from the National Servicemen's Association and its National Council .

National Service Memorials.

The Secretary advised a simplified form of Register is being compiled and when completed will be forwarded to the National Register of Memorials.

SPEAKING OF MEMORIALS

10th Anniversary 8 September 2020.

The Secretary reported on his meeting with the Australian War Memorial's Events department about the 10th Anniversary Memorial Reunion planned for 8 September 2020. The proposal to the AWM is to have a short march within the grounds of the AWM followed by a high profile commemorative and wreath laying ceremony.



We have requested a catafalque party and military band. The Events department has no problem with our proposal and the date has been reserved. The formal request and brief are to be submitted. A guest list is to be prepared to include all those special guests who attended the original ceremony in 2010. Every Sub-Branch nationally will receive an invitation.

Other activities proposed are for a dinner the evening before to include all those persons involved in the planning and development of the memorial. Also, following the ceremony, it is proposed to have a major barbeque lunch for all attendees. It is anticipated possible 300-400 persons will attend.

A lunch programme will be developed with promotional material issues approximately around February 2020. Given the popularity of Canberra with tourists, it would be wise to decide early whether you are going to attend so you can make travel and accommodation bookings.

THE NATIONAL SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

Status Report by NSAA National Vice-President, Ron Brandy.

The Foundation has been established to undertake research and seek remedies for physical and mental disabilities arising from National Service. It awards Scholarships in a wide field of research.

i. Continue to research fundraising including grants and exposure to gatherings and individuals; ii. Work with Barwon Health Medical Research to identify projects; iii. Foundation funded a partnership grant to “Impact” a Centre for Innovation in Mental and Physical Health project “Depression Assist”; iv. The Depression Assist project fits perfectly within the scope to fund assist research and development; v. The Foundation’s contribution feeds into “Impact’s” ability to seek and secure further funding; vi. The NSSF Audit report of August 2019 confirms the Foundation is well managed; vii. Request for Branches and Sub-Branches to assist the NSSF; viii. Initiative of the NSSA Brisbane North resulted in a considerable donation; and ix. Coupled with the Status report the following initiative to merge websites.

A Proposed Strategy for a Stronger and Assured Future was outlined. A Powerpoint presentation included a proposal to combine all NSAA and NSSF websites to position all organisations for a stronger future.

A purpose and method were explained for a modern consolidated website with NSAA as a lead front page with public access to all NSAA website levels – National / NSFF / State / Territory / Sub-Branches. Proposed funding from FVA grants and other sponsor support was suggested. Estimated time frame 12 months from NSAA approval and funding.

Matters and items displayed in the presentation were discussed at length with the result being a request for a motion: That this Council endorses the proposal as presented to proceed with the next development stage of the website merger project.

NEXT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of the National Council of the National Servicemen’s Association of Australia will be in Sydney on Wednesday 18TH March 2020

