



# THE NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

ABN 67 616 946 831

Patron: Mr. Earle Jennings AM RFD ED

Office of the National Secretary

1 Deborah Street, Kilsyth, Vic, 3137

Tel. (03) 9728 1690 Mob: 0458 646 594

Email: [pdnorman1945@gmail.com](mailto:pdnorman1945@gmail.com)

## **NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S BULLETIN: JUNE – NOVEMBER 2023**

### **Greetings to all National Servicemen, families, and friends.**

Sadly, we have lost three significant members and contributors to the NSAA over the last year. Past NSAA National President, SA State President, NSAA National Public Officer, Barry Presgrave AM, NSAA Mornington President, NSAA Victorian Branch Vice President, Bernie Connelly, and past NSAA National, NSAA Victoria, Monash, and Mornington Treasurer, and Barry Vicary Award recipient, Carl Adams.

All three men have been stalwart members of the association at all levels, members of the National Council, and or National Executive, their respective State Councils and Sub-Branch members, fine Australians, and proud National Servicemen. Lest we Forget.

Again, to all addresses and recipients of this bulletin, please pass this document down the line to your Branches, Sub-Branched, and members in order that they can be aware of what is occurring at the National Level on their behalf.

Feel free to copy the document into your newsletters.

### **Sustaining a NSAA National Presence**

You will be aware that collectively, the National Executive and the National Council, have been actively involved in the subject of our future as an association for some time. Without dwelling on the obvious and well documented reasons, the association is collectively doing its best to support NSAA State/Territory Branches who are struggling to maintain active and viable management committees that can maintain the administrative governance requirements necessary for the sound and accountable management of their respective branches.

Regrettably, there are Branches struggling with these constitutionally driven administrative requirements and have made the difficult but practical decision to cease operations and revert to a social group or unincorporated entity.

President: Ron Brandy  
(03) 5222 4438 0415 256 167  
[r.brandy@bigpond.net.au](mailto:r.brandy@bigpond.net.au)

Secretary: Peter Norman  
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[pdnorman1945@gmail.com](mailto:pdnorman1945@gmail.com)

***National Service Honour Roll: 287,000 served; 212 died on active service***

It was put to council as a simple a scenario, as a concerned member put the case - *'What or who will represent us (Nashos) once general contraction has occurred within the Association on or around the date of 31 December 2026. Will members be set adrift? We really want to have someone/something in place to keep us informed and connected as Nasho and a loose social grouping will not give us the structure to remain connected. Many of us crave for the continued camaraderie afforded through membership of the NSAA and be recognised and have representation Nationally'*.

Acknowledging the reality of change and concern outlined above, the eventual contraction of some, and eventually all elements of the association, the NSAA National Council debated the merits of offering members of who have become 'unattached' as a result of the contraction and formal registered association status, the opportunity to transfer their membership to the NSAA National Body.

This situation came into sharp focus with advice from the NSAA Northern Territory Branch confirming that it would cease formal operations as an incorporated entity by 31 December 2022, with a transitional period up to 31 December 2023.

The council considered all aspects of the circumstances and, without the formality of a Motion for action, tasked the NSAA National Executive to formulate a formal solution for the management and possible retention of disenfranchised members that have become 'unattached', in order that they be able to, at their request and or approval, to formally transfer to the NSAA National body.

As this proposed change has constitutional implications (Rules and By-Laws), the NSAA National Executive was tasked to prepare recommended changes to the NSAA Rules and By-Laws that will facilitate the necessary changes.

This work is progressing well with the proposed changes to the Rules and By-Laws being presented to the NSAA National Council delegates for local consideration prior to the March 2024 General Meeting. Once council has approved the changes, our NSAA Public Officer, South Australian State President John Thorne, will process the documented changes through the South Australian Consumer Affairs Department.

Importantly, by achieving the proposed outcome we will ensure that, for the foreseeable future, NSAA members who become 'unattached' will not be lost to the Association. That they can maintain the camaraderie of the association, remain connected, and receive ongoing communications and information provided to them, thus retaining a positive membership with Nashos across Australia.

In the near future you will see a first run example of the communications publication, prepared by NSAA National Secretary Peter Norman which is proposed to connect with and inform 'unattached' members who have chosen to transfer to the NSAA National body.

### **Archives Project**

As planned, National Vice Noel Moulder and I have met at the NSAA NSW joint storage facility in August, September, and November 2023 to cull and collate the NSAA National Records in preparation for they are deposited at the National Library of Australia (NLA).

Progress is good, the work laborious, but we are satisfied that the effort is justified.

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An application to the NLA for a seed funding grant to fund travel and accommodation, collection, storage, sorting, culling, and cataloguing costs, and related administrative expenditure, was rejected as NLA guidelines require the NSAA to carry out this first stage within our Budget. Accordingly, the treasurer has, with council approval, added an additional line item into the NSAA National Budget to address these actual and planned costs.

### **Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Service**

It was my privilege to have laid a wreath in memory of those National Servicemen who lost their lives in the Vietnam conflict and to commemorate the withdrawal of all troops from the war zone in 1973. I was also privileged to have contributed to the planning of the commemorative service as a member of the DVA consultative committee. I was ably supported by NSAA National President Noel Moulder in my absence.

### **Supporting The Military Shop and Corporate Roses Enterprises.**

The National body is very grateful to both these organisations for their ongoing support and generous donations. In order to show our collective thanks, I would encourage all Branches, Sub-Branches, and individual members to utilise these businesses whenever possible when looking to purchase NSAA or general Military memorabilia and considering planting or gifting an NSAA National Rose.

### **NSAA National Executive Research Capability.**

The NSAA National Executives capacity to undertake research for the purposes of seeking to address members issues and make representation to Government is limited in time available and skills set available.

With the passing of the late Allan Callaghan the executive, and the Association, has lost a giant intellect that served us so well in the pursuit of in depth knowledge and material necessary to support submissions to Government and other bodies.

Should we reform as alluded to above, the National body in whatever form, will need to seek out and engage with a person or persons with the level of skills and knowledge that Allan possessed.

Season's Greetings Christmas 2023 and 2024 New Year.

### **REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CAMPAIGN MEDAL (RVCM)**

This matter has been the subject of much debate and endeavour by advocate Richard Barry OAM to have the RVCM awarded to veterans who had less than the requisite 181 days of service during the Vietnam War. On 29/11/2023 Mr. Barry wrote to Vice President Noel Moulder and myself to disappointedly advise the following:

*"On the 18 October 2023 the Minister for Defence Personnel the Hon Matt Keogh MP claimed it was unlawful of him to make a decision regarding the award of the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal to these men. This is most disappointing to say the least.*

*I wrote to the Minister pointing out that I have been bombarded by very distressed NS Vietnam veterans and families of the deceased. Their conscripted service in support of the South Vietnamese Government was equally as 'meritorious' as that of others who might have served there a little longer period.*

*These same men have never been 'thanked' by the South Vietnamese Government for being prepared to die on foreign soil alongside local forces fighting against oppression at the behest of the Australian Government. They completed their lawful service and were sent home for civilian reinstatement under the*

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*Act. It was not their fault they could not serve the mandatory 181 days and they were under no obligation to extend their service. Such extension would have negated specific benefits under the National Service Act 1964 as amended.*

*The Minister still has the mandate to fix this as per the original Vietnamese Directive.*

*Over recent months I have successfully assisted several NS to appeal the RVCM to Defence Honours and Awards. It seems they are taking a more conciliatory approach in this bipartisan matter. Mr. Ron Brandy has been a brilliant ongoing supporter for this campaign.*

*Obviously, I do not have the contact details for the 916 so I was wondering if space permits, could you insert the following in the next issue of NSW Nasho News please:*

"The Minister for Defence Personnel has declined to make a decision for some 2,500 National Servicemen from across the nation, who served less than 181 days in South Vietnam, to be awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM).

In recent months Defence Honours & Awards has revealed an amended interpretation regarding the eligibility criteria for the RVCM.

If you have been refused the RVCM (or not yet applied) and have been officially diagnosed with war caused PTSD it might be worthwhile if you submit an application attaching any previous documentation including all medical reports. Without guarantee, cases will be considered individually on their merits."

By extension, I am also bringing these matters to the attention of NSAA states/territories/affiliated entities, for information and dissemination to NSAA members Australia-wide. I also advise that I have written to Minister Keogh to suggest perhaps a more conciliatory approach that affords these men a more personal level of compassion, genuinely crafted and communicated. Such empathy will be received with a reciprocal appreciation of the position which the Minister and the government finds itself in, having been compelled by extant legal, regulation, and geopolitical circumstance which has caused against the award of the RVCM for veterans with less than 181 days of service during the Vietnam War

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This year's festive season and the 2024 New Year fast approaches. On behalf of the NSAA National Executive members, I offer you and yours a happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and enjoyable New Year.

Best wishes and kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light pink background. The signature is cursive and reads "Brandy".

Ron Brandy

**National President**  
**National Servicemen's Association of Australia**

**30/11/2023**

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