



# AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 23 May 2015

*Supporting those who risk their life to save life, property or the environment.*

The official newsletter of the Australian Bravery Association.

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Andrew Kendall



2015 has commenced with a positive feel about it, starting with a successful National Conference and continuing with the development of a number of key initiatives for the year.

### ABA 2015 National Conference - Canberra (13-16 February)

The Australian Bravery Association started the year with a bang, hosting a wonderful Bravery National Conference in Canberra from 13 to 16 February. Being the 40th Anniversary of the creation of the Australian Honours & Awards System the conference was well attended and had many wonderful moments. Some of the highlights are detailed below.

After an interesting tour of the World War I collection at the Australian War Memorial, Jim Runham and myself were very fortunate to be joined by Doug Baird, father of Corporal Cameron Baird VC, MG (whose name sits in a place of honour on the Wall of Remembrance), laying a wreath during the last post ceremony. It was a very moving experience for us all. This was followed by cheerful reception in the Conservatory at Royal Military College Duntroon hosted by Commandant Brigadier Dianne Gallasch AM, CSC.

On the Saturday evening the Association hosted the 40th Anniversary Black Tie Dinner at the Commonwealth Club. We thank our guest speaker Sir David Smith KCVO, AO for his detailed presentation of the



Dignitaries at the Service of Remembrance

history of the Australian Honours and Awards System. We were also fortunate to have Sharon Prendergast, Director Honours and Awards at Government House, and her husband as guests, and it was heartening to have all five Cross of Valour recipients together for the occasion.

## Coming events

**Victoria: Mildura**  
5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015

- Mildura Rural City Council Reception
- Lindeman's Winery Tour
- Paddle steamer Trip
- Association Dinner
- BBQ Lunch
- Mungo National Park Day Tour
- Your RSVPs to Mildura Council and Coralee are required for catering and bus bookings ASAP!
- Book your Accommodation

**Queensland: Surfers Paradise**  
16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2015

See details in Queensland report this edition. Further details to come.

**ABA National Conference: Canberra**  
12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Further details to come.

These are fantastic events to enable you to meet up with old and new friends.

### Editors' Note:

*This newsletter is authorised by Alan & Brenda Cochrane, Australian Bravery Association, PO Box 127, Bundaberg.*

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The other event I would like to mention was the Service of Remembrance at Government House Yarralumla on Sunday morning. It was a beautiful time for prayer and reflection in the Bravery Garden. The service was made more special by the fact that His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) and Her Excellency Lady Cosgrove attended the service and hosted morning tea afterwards. The occasion also served well as an opportunity for the presentation of the Geoff Boyce Brave Youth of the Year Award to Shane Allen BM by Lieutenant General Peter Leahy AC.

Thanks to all involved in organising and running the conference, in particular John Thurgar and Melanie Warburton.



Jim Runham SC AFSM OAM (Deputy National President), Doug Baird and Andrew Kendall (National President)

### Vice Patrons

This year the ABA is pleased to have Doug Baird, father of Corporal Cameron Baird VC, MG, accept Vice-Patronage of the association. He joins Keith Payne VC, OAM and all five Cross of Valour recipients; Darrell Tree CV, Victor Boscoe CV, Allan Sparkes CV, Tim Britten CV and Richard Joyes CV; as our current Vice-Patrons. We thank them for their support.

### Key Initiative for 2015

A key initiative for 2015 is the introduction of The Darrell Tree CV Prize, the Australian Bravery Association National Schools Competition. Targeting Year 7-10 students, the competition aims to bring attention to

the wonderful efforts of Australian Bravery recipients and the Australian Honours & Awards System. We will launch the competition in the coming weeks.

### National Executive, Honorary and Ex-officio Positions

Finally, I would like to congratulate all those members of the association who were elected to the various National Executive positions for 2015 and I would like to thank you for your vote of confidence in me as your National President. Thank you and congratulations also to those who have been appointed to and accepted honorary and ex-officio positions. Of note is the appointment of our new Honorary Chaplain, Chaplain Jim Cosgrove. The padre has a genuine interest in all members of the association and supporting their needs. Similarly, the National Executive is committed to working collegially to serve the members well and promote the aims of the association.

We all believe 2015 will be a wonderful year for the association and hope you all get involved.

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### A Bit of Trivia - The Story behind "Tipperary"

(Extract from the *Bundaberg News-Mail*)

Anzac Day has been and gone but one of the songs from the War days stands out. "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" was written by Jack Judge and co-credited to Henry James Williams. So much of the song's fame was due to a 1914 newspaper report that, in today's terminology, "went viral". Daily Mail reporter, George Curnock was in Bolougne and watching the British Expeditionary Force disembark in France. As he stood on the steps of a Bolougne hotel, the passing battalions sang "Soldiers of the Queen", "Dolly Gray" and then "a song that was new and strange to me". As a second company of Connaught Rangers from Ireland passed he heard them sing, "It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go". Curnock's despatch to the Mail with this story was cabled to all parts of the world and people everywhere took the song to their hearts.

When 20 years later, Curnock met a Captain Dryden, he was told the history of the song. "I heard Tipperary played on an accordion by an itinerant musician in the main street of Galway, "Capt Dryden told him. "That was early in 1913 when Florrie Forde was singing it in the music hall. Our Battalion, which was quartered in Tipperary for three years, picked up the chorus and sang it often on route marching in Ireland." The song was quickly picked up by other units of the British Army. It is believed this tune inspired British Expeditionary Forces and the Anzacs to great feats of courage and lifted morale during this terrible war.

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## 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUSTRALIAN HONOURS SYSTEM – SOME FACTS

Saturday, 14 February 2015, marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australian Honours system. The Australian Honours system was established on 14 February 1975 by then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. It was introduced as Australia's own unique and distinctive system of honours and awards, to recognise those who make a significant contribution or provide worthy service to the community. Its structure drew heavily on established international honours systems, in particular Britain and Canada.

The first medals in the Australian Honours system were:

- The National Medal;
- In the Order of Australia: the Companion, Officer and Member levels;
- In the Australian Bravery Decorations: the Cross of Valour, the Star of Courage, the Bravery Award and the Commendation for Brave Conduct.

These days, the Australian Honours system comprises 55 awards across:

- The Order of Australia (30,500)
- Australian Bravery Decorations (4,000)
- Meritorious service awards (5,700)
- Defence, bravery, meritorious and service awards (1,004,000)
- National Emergency Medal (12,000)
- National Police Service Medal (17,500)
- National Medal (206,000)
- Other awards (49,000)

Note that figures are approximate numbers awarded since 1975. The total number of awards issued/approved is more than 1.3 million.

Australian honours can be awarded to both Australian and non-Australian citizens. Since 1975, 449 non-Australian citizens have been recognised by honorary awards in the Order of Australia, including 40 honorary recipients over the past five years.

The Cross of Valour has been awarded five (5) times since 1975. There has been one recipient of the George Cross (the British equivalent of the Cross of Valour) since 1975, Mr Michael Pratt GC. It was awarded in 1978 through the Imperial Honours system before Australians were recognised exclusively through the Australian Honours system in 1992.

Total Bravery Awards as at 30 March 2015:

Cross of Valour:	5
Star of Courage:	145
Bravery Medal:	1193
Commendation for Brave Conduct:	1904
Group Bravery Citation:	151 (involving a total of 880 people)



The medals for the founding awards in the Australian Honours system were designed by Stuart Devlin, a specialist gold and silversmith who was born in Geelong, Victoria in 1931 and whose craft eventually took him to London. Devlin designed the medals for the Order of Australia, the Australian Bravery Decorations and the National Medal in 1975. He also designed Australia's first decimal coins. In 1982, he was granted the Royal Warrant of Appointment as Goldsmith and Jeweller to Her Majesty The Queen.

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## 40TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH RECEPTION

Two knights, four Governor's-General, three Victoria Cross recipients, five Cross of Valour awardees and a George Cross winner were some of the more than 100 recipients of Australian honours and awards who attended a lunchtime reception hosted on Friday 13 February 2015 by the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Ret'd), and Her Excellency Lady Lynne Cosgrove to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australian honours and awards system.

Andrew Kendall and Jim Runham SC AFSM OAM were fortunate enough to represent the ABA at the reception.



Jim Runham SC AFSM OAM (second from left), Tim Britten CV, Andrew Kendall, Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG, Victor Boscoe CV, Daniel Keighran VC and Richard Joyes CV



All five Cross of Valour awardees with Sharon Prendergast, Director, Honours and Awards Secretariat

The Governor-General made the following comments about the Australian honours and awards system at the reception.

*For 40 years these honours have helped to define, encourage and reinforce our national aspirations, ideals and standards by identifying those among us—role models—who make an outstanding contribution to our society. The recipients of Australian honours and awards come from all walks of life, they are all ages—from 15 to 110 years old, and represent all cultures and religions and interests and talents. They are every day people making their mark. And they are as richly diverse and multi-faceted as Australia itself. But what unites each of them, is that we acknowledge them as very special people whose actions have set them apart and enriched our community across a broad range of professional, public and community service sectors. In their daily lives they demonstrate those values that we as Australians hold dear—compassion, civility, dedication, courage, kindness, tolerance, and energetic ambition. They inspire us all to be more enthusiastic and giving, and to uphold the responsibility of being fully engaged citizens.*

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## BRAVERY COIN

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the awards system in February this year members of the ABA and Cross of Valour Association attended many functions. At one of these CV and VC recipients pressed some of the first \$5 gold-plated Australian Bravery Coins at the Royal Australian Mint.



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## AUSTRALIA'S FIRST BRAVERY MEDAL – Clive Johnson OAM

Australia's first medal of bravery was a police civilian issue in 1860.

Awards of recognition are not a new concept. Roman soldiers who fought bravely in battle would receive recognition from their commanders in the form of a large medallionic disc called a *phalera*, often depicting the reigning emperor and worn on their chest harness. Tribal warriors were singled out to wear ornamental objects in recognition of their deeds, including furs or body parts from their vanquished enemies and sea captains rewarded loyal crew with chained medallions of gold or silver coinage.



In Britain during the time of Oliver Cromwell, the first true medal was created and gifted to officers (in gold) and troops (in silver) for the victory over the Scots at Dunbar. This was the first recorded instance where a purpose medal was created and awarded to all who took part. William III and George II both created elaborate awards but these were only gifted to Commanders or elected other ranks for distinguished events or actions. It was not until George the Prince Regent and the battle of Waterloo in 1815 that a dedicated standardized award was created to recognize service in a campaign and awarded to all involved, regardless of position or rank. This medal was also significant because it was officially named to each recipient, making it a personal token of contribution and acknowledgement. From that day forth, a multitude of awards, decorations and medals were introduced for the recognition of bravery, loyal or long service and general

service. The popularity and recognition of these awards formed the beginning of the British Honours and Awards framework. One of the flaws in the structure was the lack of diversity to recognize civilians and other organisations.

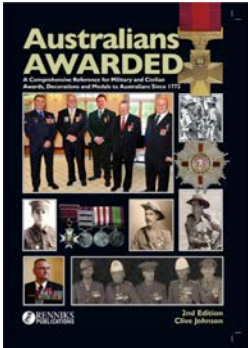
In Australia, the gold rush brought with it some of the iconic connections to the Australian character through the advent of the Bushranger. From Ned Kelly to Ben Hall, Thunderbolt and Mad Morgan, the names are as much a part of our history as the Sydney Opera House and the Eureka stockade. But what is not as well known are the first Australian awards for bravery and service being some of the rarest connections to our past.

The New South Wales Police were having trouble tracking and capturing these bushrangers, so they enlisted help from trackers, businessmen, people of influence and local civilians who had something to gain. The promises of parcels of land, money, or livestock were offered for assistance or apprehension of the outlawed Bushmen. But in 1860, the awards of medals were promised to anyone who deserved the recognition. Premier Sir Charles Cowper finally commissioned these to be made in silver and gold. The first of these was presented as a medallion, not designed for wear, and bearing the words *'Granted for faithful and distinguished service'* and *Colony of New South Wales*. They were presented for recognition of bravery displayed through conflicts with bushrangers. Very few have survived today and the scarcity reflected in the sale of one through auction in 1993 for \$34 500.



The disappointment of not being able to wear the award saw a second modified version, suspended from a ribbon of pale blue being created. These were also struck in gold and silver, with all but one of the gold being awarded to civilians. The exception was Captain McLerie, Inspector General of Police. Each medal was named to the recipient and today we know of eleven issues in gold and seven in silver. All but one of the silver medals were presented to the most meritorious of the constabulary, with the exception being Mr. Beauvais, a local innkeeper who prevented a robbery. It is without doubt these were Australia's first awards, created specifically for Australia because the British Honours system lacked the

relevant form of recognition for civilians and police, especially in the colonies. Today, a number of the State Police jurisdictions continue to use the pale blue ribbon for their valour and bravery awards, in acknowledgement and respect for this first civil award. It is also interesting to note, the absence of national recognition then and now is one of the reasons jurisdictions wear their unofficial awards on the opposing side (right) to national honours and awards.



The first type in silver (first photo above), being unable to be worn proved to be unpopular. The number struck and the number issued is unknown, but they are considered extremely rare.

Redesigned, the medal was issued in gold and silver and suspended from a pale blue ribbon (second photo above). Only 18 issues are known.

Clive Johnson OAM is the author of *Australians Awarded – A Comprehensive Reference for Military and Civilian Awards, Decorations and Medals to Australians Since 1772*. Copies of the book can be ordered at <http://www.australiansawarded.com.au/order/>.

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## **ABA BRAVE YOUTH OF THE YEAR SHANE ALLEN BM**

Each year the ABA awards a young Australian the ABA Brave Youth of the Year Award. This year the award was presented to Shane Allen BM by Lieutenant General Peter Leahy AC following the Service of Remembrance at Government House, Yarralumla.

Shane is an impressive young man who attended a number of the functions at our National Conference with his family and friends.

The citation for Shane's Award reads as follows.

*On the afternoon of 17th September 2013, Shane rescued a boy from a flooded stormwater drain in Tuggeranong, ACT. Shane was cycling along a bike path parallel to a stormwater drain between Isabella Plains and Richardson when he heard screams. A 13 year old boy was being swept along the drain which was flooded with fast running water after extensive rain. Shane jumped off his bike, climbed over a fence and chased the boy. After trying unsuccessfully to use his backpack to reach the boy, he shouted to him to grab a ladder on the side of the drain. The boy was however swept past several ladders without being able to grab hold of*

*any. Shane sprinted some 200 metres ahead to another ladder and climbed down until he was waist deep in the water. He hooked one arm around the ladder and as the boy rushed toward him, he grabbed his wrist and swung him to the edge of the drain. He then assisted the boy out of the water and stayed with him until the arrival of paramedics.*



Photo taken by Jay Cronan – Canberra Times

The ABA congratulates Shane for a wonderful effort.

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## MEETING YOUR MEMBERS

Continuing on with “Meeting your members” in this edition we bring you Lynne Beavis and Darrell Tree. We have included their rescue/citation and their passions – the people behind their medals. If you haven’t met them before make yourself known to them at the next event! We have randomly placed some of our members at play this edition. See more on our [www.forbravery.org.au](http://www.forbravery.org.au) website.

### LYNNE BEAVIS BM

#### Citation

On Sunday 28 April 1996 35 persons were murdered and 21 injured in a shooting incident at and near the historic penal settlement of Port Arthur in Tasmania. Mrs Beavis and her sister were near the Penitentiary when they heard gunfire and saw customers and staff run from the Broad Arrow cafe towards them. When Mrs Beavis was advised that a man was shooting at random she took cover behind a wall and warned other tourists to do the same.

The gunman continued to fire, and bullets were ricocheting off the walls and buildings around her. Mrs Beavis was later told that the gunman had left in a car and although she could still hear gunfire she left the safety of the wall and ran to assist the wounded and dying in the cafe, the car park and the tourist buses. Mrs Beavis, a nurse, administered first aid and assisted the traumatised tourists and relatives of the dead even though she could still hear a gun discharging and did not know if the gunman would return. When doctors and ambulance officers arrived she continued to assist them with the injured.

By her actions Mrs Beavis displayed considerable bravery.

#### My Passion - Lynne

I became involved with Samaritans Purse in October 2000. I had not been working due to my injuries from a car accident I had suffered in 1995 (The year before Port Arthur). I offered a couple of hours to help process the shoe boxes for the annual shoe box appeal\* which numbered around the 15,000 then. I am still there 15 years on as a volunteer and in the busy times Oct-Dec it is full time. I love it so much and travelled to volunteer in Thailand in 1996 and Fiji 2014. In 2014 Victoria processed 56,751 shoe boxes and Australia and New Zealand’s total was 321,526 shoe boxes. They have many other great projects including International and domestic disaster relief, clean water for life, sanitation and hygiene, education and many more wonderful projects. More information can be found at [samaritanspurse.org.au](http://samaritanspurse.org.au) .

I feel blessed with more than one family. I have my own wonderful family 2 children and 3 granddaughters, my ABA family, those of you who understand me beyond and above all others and my global family of Samaritans Purse.

*Samaritan’s Purse is a non-profit, Christian organisation providing emergency relief and development assistance to suffering people around the world. Samaritan’s Purse is meeting the physical needs of victims of war, famine, natural disaster, poverty and disease with the aim of demonstrating God’s love and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. The aid and assistance are given without regard to the race, creed, gender, religion, or ethnicity of the beneficiaries*  
*\* a gift giving project for children in need. Items include things like a toothbrush, soap, small toys, pencils, clothing and books. These boxes make such a huge difference in the lives of the recipients and in some instances the first gifts they have ever received.*



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## DARRELL TREE CV

**Darrell Tree CV** was born at Elliston S.A. on 20-4-1949 to Oscar and Ivy Tree. Attending Port Kenny special rural school until 15 years old then helped his father on the farm where he grew up at Talia with an older brother and four sisters. He joined the CFS in 1977 completing 10 certificates of training, First Aid and St John Ambulance courses. He and Josie married on 14 July 1979 and in 1980 purchased a portion of the farm from Oscar. After Darrell was electrocuted, Josie and sons Kym and Liam worked the farm work with the boys helping before and after school. Darrell and Josie have now semi-retired to Cowell, and Darrell drives a Toyota to Iron Duke Mine chauffeuring workers to and from the mine. Cowell has some of the nicest swimming beaches in this area and they enjoy fishing for the excellent seafood the area has to offer. The sons now work the farm.



Darrell and Josie Tree

## The Rescue

On 14 August 1988, Darrell Tree, accompanied by his nephew, went to assist a crane-operator removing wooden telephone poles running beside his property near Talia. When Darrell went to put a chain around a pole, he saw sparks jumping from the crane's tyres. The jib of the crane was in contact with the 19KV power line. Joe, the driver, jumped clear and went to remove his son, who at the time was in a boxed section on the back of the crane and not coming into contact with electricity. Sparks were arcing beneath the crane to the ground and repeatedly Darrell stopped Joe from going to the crane to rescue his son Ryan fearing he would be electrocuted. While Darrell went to get a rope to remove Ryan, Joe did attempt to rescue Ryan, and electricity arced through his body. Darrell rushed in and pushed him clear with his shoulder and fell to the ground unconscious having himself been electrocuted. Then Darrell struggled with Joe again to stop him from touching Ryan and was pushed onto the crane and electrocuted the second time. Joe had reached Ryan and pulled him over the side of the crane, both were electrocuted again.



While Darrell was unconscious he saw a vivid white light. Standing above in the sky were three priests in ancient type robes surrounded by about twenty other people. Saying " GOD I can't die here I have a wife and 4 children to look after", then everything went black again. On regaining consciousness Darrell saw Ryan standing against the mudguard with electricity entering near his right ear, passing through his body and coming out his foot with smoke coming off his sand shoe. Knowing that Ryan was being fatally electrocuted Darrell went in a backward crouch to pull him clear and again lost consciousness having being electrocuted once more. When Darrell regained consciousness again he found that neither Joe or Ryan were breathing and gave mouth to mouth resuscitation

to them. Ryan responded, but in spite of Darrell's further attempts to give Joe cardiopulmonary resuscitation, he died before medical assistance arrived. Darrell comforted Ryan and drove Ryan to meet the ambulance. Darrell drove to the Elliston hospital and was later flown to Royal Adelaide hospital for treatment. In saving Ryan's life Darrell had 96 stitches, the small toe on his left foot amputated, three fractured vertebrae, and incapacitated three months.

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## VALE

We respectfully and with deep regret acknowledge the passing of the following members who were known and loved by many and will be sadly missed.

- Mr Bede Tongs MM from ACT
- Mr Jeff Brackenrig SC from Queensland
- Mr Bernie Lawton BM from South Australia



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## NEW SOUTH WALES REPORT – Udo Starkis & Brian Harland

*Our National Secretary, Brian Harland, has been our representative at Government House Investitures in his former position as National Vice President - NSW. On April 29<sup>th</sup> he accompanied incoming National Vice President – NSW, Udo Starkis, to his first Investiture as our Bravery Association representation. Brian provided the following report.*



CBC recipients with the Governor and Brian Harland

It is a real privilege to be part of these investitures and meet special people and their families. Udo and I were very well received by all the recipients and their families (1 posthumous BM, 5 CBC, and 1 Group. Our new Governor in NSW, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) put extra effort into speaking to all the bravery people and their families and also made the time to speak to us about the ABA and have photos taken with us.



He was also very well received when he visited us here in Dungog last week during our tragedy with the floods and we are looking forward to a good relationship with him in the future.

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## VICTORIA & TASMANIA REPORT – Coralee Lever

I am so blessed and overwhelmed to have the wonderful support of the Mildura/Red Cliffs community for the Australian Bravery Association.

At our recent market day in Red Cliffs the Salvation Army Captain held a small service to observe the Port Arthur massacre and a minute silence was observed for my husband, Dennis Lever BM and Vera's husband Ron Jary BM.

The Bendigo Bank here in Red Cliffs is also fully supportive of my ABA reunion weekend and I am grateful for the ongoing fantastic work of John Burfitt who fundraises on our behalf. I was recently a guest of the Red Cliffs Lions Club and they have agreed for the ABA to benefit from their Charity Fund Day bar-b-q on the June long week. Local shops are also donating the food which is absolutely marvellous.

All that is left is for you to come on down to Red Cliffs for my annual ABA reunion and I can guarantee you a wonderful time of fun and friendship. Accommodation at this time is premium so make sure you book early and get your RSVPs into me and the Mildura Council. I look forward to seeing you.

Best Wishes - Coralee.

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## ACT REPORT - Merrenda (Mindy) Sutherland & Melanie Warburton

Their Excellencies General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) and Lady Cosgrove were both in attendance at the Investitures on Friday 17th April 2015 at Government House Canberra.

### Report on the 10.45am session attended by Melanie Warburton

36 recipients were invested, two of whom were awarded Bravery Medals – Mr James Bodsworth BM and Mr Colin O'Hare BM. Their citation reads:

*On the evening of 13th March 2013, James and Colin intervened when an armed man attacked another man in Gilmore, ACT. Alerted by a woman's screams for help, James and Colin found two men fighting outside a neighbouring house. One of the men knocked the other to the ground, kicked him several times and then stabbed him with a pocket knife. James and Colin seized the offender by the arm and wrestled with him. Although Colin incurred a deep laceration to his arm, they managed to disarm and restrain him until police arrived.*



Photo – Canberra Times

I congratulated James and Colin and explained what the ABA is about and invited them to become members of our Association.



Also invested were Air Chief Marshal Sir Angus Houston AK, AFC (Ret'd) (pictured) who was appointed a Knight in the General Division, which was a wonderful moment, he is such a gentle and humble man.

Mr Jon Stanhope AO was appointed an Officer in the General Division for distinguished service to the community of the ACT through leadership roles, to the advancement of human rights and social justice, and to economic development. Jon is an honorary member of the ABA since his days as the ACT Chief Minister.

Mr Clive Johnson OAM, whom some of you may know, is the author of *Australian's Awarded*. Clive was awarded a Medal in the General Division for service to military history and to education.

### Report on the 2.30 pm session attended by Mindy Sutherland

37 recipients were invested, three of whom were Bravery Awards.

I spoke to young 17 year old Shane Allen BM, many of whom may have met him and his parents at our February Conference, where he was awarded the 2014 ABA Brave Youth of the Year Award.

Ms Sandra Riemer, a school teacher, received a Commendation for Brave Conduct for confronting an armed student in 2012 and prevented him from carrying out a threat to harm other students. Mr Malcolm Peden of Goulburn was awarded a Group Bravery Citation for rescuing 2 people from a burning vehicle in 2011 after it hit a culvert, struck a tree and rolled several times before landing on its roof.

All three were congratulated and provided an invitation to join the ABA afterwards at afternoon tea.

## QUEENSLAND REPORT - Sally Gregory

Hi everyone, greetings from the Qld branch where planning is underway for the 2015 Bravery Weekend at Surfers Paradise on October 16 to 18<sup>th</sup>. Suggest you pencil it into your diary now and keep an eye out for some cheap airfares to the Gold Coast. Venue details are nearly finalised and I can promise you a great location with discounted accommodation on site to eliminate the need for rental cars and taxis. This year's event will include a family picnic and a cruise to South Stradbroke Island for the first 20 people to book and pay. Details to follow.



This year's annual rally at Canberra was a huge success. We were warmly welcomed by our new Governor General who was keen to meet our members and hosted us a lovely morning tea by the lake. We had the pleasure of presenting the winner of the Geoff Boyce Brave Youth of the year award – Shane Allen BM who earned his place in history by repeatedly attempting and finally succeeding to save a lad who was caught in a flood water drain. Shane is seen here with his proud parents alongside the Governor General and a photo bomber on the left.

We also had the pleasure of meeting new Qld members (and their partners), Victor Ronque, Mick Conrad, Warren McErlean and Jamie Ferguson – stout lads, full of fun, friendship and tall stories – just how we like it! Another new member who we have the pleasure of welcoming into the fold is Doug Baird who is the proud father of Cameron Baird, recipient of the 100<sup>th</sup> VC (awarded posthumously), who gave his life to save many in Afghanistan. Doug is a keen supporter of the ABA, a former Carlton Football Club player and lives on the Gold Coast.



I'll finish up this report with a quote that gave me great comfort in the time after my rescue – I'm sure it will strike a chord with you too. *"Life is full of froth and bubble, yet two things stand like stone – Kindness in another's trouble and courage in your own"* (Adam Lindsay Gordon). For those of you travelling to enjoy the Mildura Reunion (June 5-8), I wish you safe travels. Coralee always puts on a great weekend. I'm sure you'll have a ball and meet fine new friends.

Warmest wishes - Sally G. - Don't forget to check us out on Facebook.

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## MERCHANDISE

Don't forget we have a large range of merchandise for purchase and further advertise the ABA. We have recently received fresh stocks of ties to go with the fine quality shirts. Full colour photos and merchandise order forms are on our web site.

**All Orders to: National Treasurer, Brenda Cochrane, PO Box 127, Bundaberg Qld 4670**

Tie Bars/lapel pins/brooches	\$10	Cuff links	\$20	Association neck ties	\$27
Men's embroidered shirts	\$50	Ladies embroidered shirts	\$50	Book donation kits	\$8
Embroidered baseball style caps	\$20	Name badges	\$20		

**+ \$5 postage for above mail orders**

Mark Whittaker's book - **BRAVE**: \$35.00 + 10.00 postage

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## ABA HONORARY PSYCHOLOGIST REPORT - Pamela Davidson BM

It was wonderful to see so many people attend the 2015 Canberra weekend. The committee did a great job to welcome new and “old” members at all events and I’m sure that new members will continue to enjoy these gatherings. The time spent in casual conversations helps us to get to know each other and to forge deeper relationships with those we have met at past events.

Recently I have been speaking with a number of people experiencing the death of a loved one and thought I might share some thoughts with you on this. Initial reactions when it is unexpected are often shock and utter disbelief, numbness. I read somewhere that when unprepared for this news it is like trying to imagine a camel passing through the eye of a needle. Impossible to comprehend.



Pamela Davidson BM

This is a normal reaction and after time this passes and is commonly replaced with strong emotions such as anger, despair, and hopelessness. These feelings may be so extreme that they are accompanied with excessive sleeping or wakefulness, over or under eating, excessive smoking and/or alcohol or illicit drug use. These are ways of coping and depend on past ways of managing distress. Usually this passes within weeks.

Again these can be seen as normal responses but obviously need intervention if it lasts or crosses reasonable bounds where the bereaved person is unable to function. If this occurs then help starting with a GP would be appropriate.

The next stage following strong emotional response is bargaining. This is when the person runs scenarios through their mind such as “If only I .....” or “if this had happened then .....” This thinking is usually followed by a return to strong emotions as above or followed with sadness or depression, flatness. Again this is normal and passes within a few weeks. If this flatness persists then again discussion with a GP or a grief counsellor are options to consider.

Idealizing the loved one who has died can follow this stage. This can take many forms and sometimes people make monuments to the person in some meaningful and personal way. This is normal and should not be discouraged.

After time moving through these phases the bereaved are able to see a sense of hope for their own future once again and while they may carry their sadness, are able to focus on other aspects of their life. If anyone gets stuck in these phases then they may need help to move them through the process.

There are many ways of experiencing grief and loss and this is a basic model of the stages most people go through, however, it is not exhaustive of all the reactions possible. If helping a person who is going through this then just be with them at whatever phase they are in, and try to avoid rescuing or trying to make them feel better. That is impossible. But just knowing you care enough to be there with them in that moment can give comfort and help the bereaved get through another day when it is really tough.

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### NOTES FROM YOUR EDITORS - Alan & Brenda Cochrane

Our National gathering in February was a huge success and great to meet up with old friends and welcome a host of new members. All events were well attended and feedback indicated all had a great time! Upcoming events are eagerly awaited. Member contributions to newsletters are always welcome!

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**PHOTO GALLERY**  
**NATIONAL CONFERENCE CANBERRA 2015**



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