



AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

No. 25 November 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



As Christmas rapidly approaches I am pleased to look back and say that 2015 has been a good year for the Australian Bravery Association.

One special initiative the association has been very happy to announce is the launch of the Official ABA Song, "That Day". Written by ABA Honorary Chaplain, Jim Cosgrove, the song can be heard by accessing it on the ABA website. More details appear later in this newsletter.

Congratulations and thank you to Sally Gregory for conducting another successful and entertaining Queensland Bravery Reunion. Those who attended the various activities and functions had a wonderful time.

Planning has almost been completed for the next ABA National Conference (12-15 February 2016). Highlights will include the special viewing of the ABA sponsored "Known Unto God" documentary. I hope that as many members and friends of the ABA as possible can attend.

Canberra Investitures

On 18 September I was privileged to be invited to a number of investitures at Government House in Canberra. It was particularly pleasing to witness ABA Vice-Patron Keith Payne VC AM receive his Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to veterans and their families as an ambassador, patron and advocate for veterans' health and welfare. Well done Keith.



Keith Payne VC AM, Florence Payne OAM & Andrew Kendall

Coming events

**ABA National Conference:
Canberra
12th – 15th February 2016**

Highlights include:

- Known unto God Documentary Screening
- Wreath laying at the Australian War Memorial
- Reception at RMC Duntroon
- Wellness Workshop
- ABA Annual Dinner at the Commonwealth Club
- Service of Remembrance in the Bravery Garden at Government House

Full details about the weekend will be posted on the ABA website at <http://www.forbravery.org.au>

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. E&OE

Robert Horgan BM was awarded the Bravery Medal and his son, Pilot Officer Kenrick Horgan, the Commendation for Brave Conduct. On the afternoon of 14 June 1997 Robert, with assistance of his then young son, Kenrick, rescued a man from a burning vehicle at Gordon, Victoria. Facing a broken fuel line feeding a fire in the engine bay and a vehicle fast filling with toxic smoke, they were able to pull the driver from the vehicle shortly before it was engulfed in flames. Father and son were both touched to be receiving their honours together.



Pilot Officer Kenrick Horgan & Robert Horgan BM



Andrew O'Brien, Felicity O'Brien, Terry O'Brien OAM RFD & Lucinda Lang

Also invested that day was new ABA member, Terrance O'Brien OAM RFD, who was awarded a Commendation for Brave Conduct. On the afternoon of 18 January 2009, Terrance provided assistance to three people who were trapped following a single vehicle accident at Moss Vale, New South Wales.

The other awardees on the day, Brendan Bilston and Mark Kelly, were awarded a Group Bravery Citation for coming to the assistance of a woman who was being car-jacked at Griffith in the ACT on 12 August 2011.

Congratulations to all awardees.

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THE VICTORIA CROSS AND GEORGE CROSS ASSOCIATION

In this edition of the ABA Newsletter we commence a series of articles examining various associations around the world established for Bravery and Gallantry award recipients. The first association we look at is the The Victoria Cross and George Cross Association founded and based in London.



The Victoria Cross and George Cross Association represents all living holders of the Victoria Cross, the United Kingdom's highest military award for valour in the face of the enemy, and its equivalent, the George Cross, which is awarded to civilians and military personnel who have displayed the greatest heroism or the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger. Upon creation, the founders set out three aims of the Association:

1. To establish a central focus and headquarters in London for Victoria Cross holders from all over the world, and to provide a centre where holders could meet and communicate.
2. To cement the brotherhood of holders of the Victoria Cross throughout the Commonwealth and thereby, through their own unity and strength, make some contribution towards the maintenance of world peace.
3. To give such help and guidance to one another as might be possible from time to time.

The first major gathering of Victoria Cross holders was held on the 26 June 1920 when a Garden Party was held at Buckingham Palace by King George V and attended by 324 recipients of the award. The second took place in 1929 when the British Legion arranged a reunion from 9 to 11 November. A dinner was held on the first evening, 9th November, in the Royal Gallery, The House of Lords. It was attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, later to be HM King Edward VIII, and 321 Victoria Cross holders. On the final day, 11th November, the Victoria Cross holders attended a Service at the Cenotaph and, later that evening, the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert

Hall. From then on there was a desire to form an Association but it was not until the Centenary of the institution of the Victoria Cross, in 1956, that this was achieved when 299 Victoria Cross holders gathered together for the Centenary celebrations which took place over three days beginning on 25th June 1956. During this gathering the 299 holders formed up in Hyde Park to be reviewed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 26 June 1956.

In 1957 the holders of the George Cross were invited to become Associate Members and, in 1962, when the George Cross recipients were welcomed as full members, the Association changed its name to The Victoria Cross and George Cross Association. Her Majesty The Queen graciously consented to be Patron of the Association in 1957, and Sir Winston Churchill became the first President in 1959. After Sir Winston Churchill's death in 1965, Brigadier The Rt. Hon. Sir John Smyth Bt., VC,MC was elected President and continued to hold the office of Chairman as well until 1971 when Rear Admiral B.C.G. Place VC,CB,CVO,DSC was elected to the latter office. Colonel B.S.T. Archer GC,OBE,ERD succeeded Admiral Place as Chairman in 1994 and Mr. Jim Beaton GC CVO JP became Chairman in 2006 and was succeeded in October 2014 by Major Peter Norton GC. On the death of Sir John Smyth in 1983, H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother graciously consented to be President of the Association and was succeeded in February 2003 by HRH The Prince of Wales who kindly agreed to succeed his grandmother after her death the preceding year.

Today the Association's membership comprises only 30 living recipients of the awards. There are 10 living recipients of the Victoria Cross and 20 living recipients of the George Cross. Of these 30 recipients, 6 VC holders and 7 GC holders reside outside the UK. Additionally the 2 collective awards of the GC, one made to the Island of Malta GC and the other to Royal Ulster Constabulary GC have a representative present at the reunions and meetings. The Australian VC and GC holders are members of the association.



Keith Payne VC AM & Florence Payne OAM with Her Majesty The Queen at a VCGCA Reunion Reception at Buckingham Palace on 28 October 2014

In the next ABA Newsletter we examine the Gallantry Medalists League.

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75TH ANNIVERSARY GALLANTRY MEDALS

On 24 September 2015, HRH The Duke of Kent presented a set of 50mm medals to recipients of the George Cross and George Medal to mark the 75th anniversary of the introduction of these medals by His Majesty King George VI.



The medals were presented to each living holder of these awards who attended a special service at Royal Hospital Chelsea. As a tribute to these medal holders the manufacturers were delighted to have been instructed to produce a smaller version in a strictly limited edition for the general public.

Two versions either in metal layered with pure silver or hallmarked sterling silver will be available on a strictly first come basis. Profits from the sale of these sets will be distributed between The Victoria Cross & George Cross Association and The Gallantry Medallists League.

Phil McDermott who manufactured the medals is keen that GM League members get the first opportunity to acquire them as it is a limited edition set. These are 36mm in diameter and identical in all other respects to the one presented on the day.

Any member of the League who wishes to purchase a set should visit the website and enter GCGMGML75. This code will apply a discount on checkout if ordered before 24 November 2015. The medal sets will be boxed and will start shipping at the end of this month. Please get in touch with Worcestershire Medal Service if you have any queries. The website set up to manage these sales is www.gcgm75.co.uk.

POLICE - INTERNAL BRAVERY AWARDS from 1874 -2015

Clive Johnson OAM

Welcome to the latest edition of the Australian Bravery Association's article on medals and awards. One of the most common questions I get is, 'why do organisations have their own awards?' The simple answer is 'they want their own organisational identity,' and often think the national structure of award has in some way, shape or form 'failed to recognise their particular organisations service.'

In the late 1800s, a national award was brought out for recognising rescues in mines, but the representatives of the factories complained. When a medal for rescue at sea was introduced, the question of rescue on land was brought to task. When a medal for bravery for soldiers was introduced, the navy complained, and on it goes. It seems, no matter how good a framework of awards, there is always someone that takes umbrage with it's failing to include a particular group.

This failing has been one where organisations, groups, services, companies etc have decided to introduce their own awards and wear them in 'opposition' to the national form of recognition, wearing them on the opposing side of the relevant uniform. The most historical service for Australia is our state and national police organisations.

Some months ago I wrote about the NSW Bushrangers Medals for recognition of brave deeds. These were the first Australian Police valour awards, but their purpose and use was short lived. The complaint from emergency services throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s was recognition for Police was not available. The services wanted gallantry for Police to be identified and recognised by the public and more so, to be seen as appreciated by their own chain of command.

In Victoria in August 1899, after a difficult arrest by Sgt William Robinson that captured the admiration of the public, there was a public outcry for some form of recognition for his actions. The officers of the Victorian Police Force took up a collection and paid to have a gold medal created, which was awarded some weeks later by the Chief Commissioner. The Commissioner was so impressed; he proposed the introduction of a Valour Badge, which received nominations from incidents dated back to 1874.



VICTORIA POLICE VALOUR BADGE (Images 1 and 1 a)

The award was given: *For pre-eminent valour and bravery displayed in the performance of police duty.*

The first award was the Merit Stripe, a simple adaptation of the rank stripe in silver bullion worn on the upper left arm. This was replaced around 1902 by a silver and enamel badge and with the central words, FOR MERIT. It was adapted in 1933 to have a pale blue ribbon to be in keeping with the NSW Bushrangers Medal for bravery, which had used the pale blue ribbon of the police uniform, and so it began.

Queensland followed in 1906 with their Medal for Merit, using red, white and blue (Australian flag) for the ribbon.

Although the national awards at the time did introduce awards for civilian bravery and even a Police Gallantry Medal, Queensland and Victoria continued to retain their own right side worn state bravery medals.

QUEENSLAND POLICE MEDAL FOR MERIT (Image 2)

Instituted in 1906 and awarded: *For an act of courage or conspicuous bravery.*

VICTORIA POLICE VALOUR AWARD GOLD CROSS (Image 3)

Instituted in 1916 and awarded: *For very special bravery.* Only 20 were minted and they ceased at the end of WWI, returning to the Valour Award.

VICTORIA POLICE FORCE VALOUR AWARD (Image 4)

In 1956 the award was redesigned to a cross and this is still in use today. It was awarded: *For an act that displays exceptional bravery in extremely perilous circumstances.*

After 1975, when Australia adopted its own national awards, things changed dramatically. Four years later, the Commissioners of all the state and Territory forces came together for their annual meeting; the concepts of consistent internal awards were discussed. They agreed the Australian Honours system was good, but failed to recognise long service for unsworn members of their organisations. They all agreed to introduce internally (so no problems with awarding or approval) their own long service medals. At the same time they all agreed to introduce a specific police gallantry award, reflective of their relevant state or territory service. Despite the Australian Honours having facility for recognition, the Commissioners all agreed they didn't specifically reflect 'police service.' They needed the public to see that police were appreciated by their own state or territory organisation. So, in keeping with, 'their own organisational identity' the following have been introduced. Although they do have their own long service award, as agreed at the Commissioners Conference, Tasmania Police declined the concept of introducing their own bravery award and elect to defer to the national awards structure for recognition.

NEW SOUTH WALES POLICE VALOUR AWARD (Image 5)

Instituted in 1987 and awarded: *To police officers while on duty, where an act of conspicuous merit involving exceptional bravery, with a risk to life is in evidence.*



SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE BRAVERY MEDAL (Image 6)

Awarded to South Australia Police employees: *Who perform exceptional and outstanding acts of bravery or act courageously and responsibly in the face of potential or actual danger to their life, or in the face of the possibility of serious injury while performing their duty.*

QUEENSLAND POLICE VALOUR AWARD (Image 7)

Instituted in 1993: *To an officer who performs an act of exceptional bravery in hazardous circumstances.*

NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE VALOUR MEDAL (Image 8)

Introduced in 1996 and awarded by the Commissioner of Police to a member for: *Displaying exceptional bravery in extremely perilous circumstances or who acts courageously and responsibly in the face of potential or actual danger to their life.*

CROSS FOR BRAVERY (Image 9)

Instituted in late 1990s and awarded: *To police officers while on duty, where an act of conspicuous merit involving exceptional bravery, with a risk to life is in evidence.*

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN POLICE COMMISSIONER'S CROSS FOR BRAVERY (Image 10)

In early 2012, a new design for: *An act of most conspicuous courage whereby the person placed themselves at peril and risk of significant personal injury or death.*

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE MEDAL FOR BRAVERY (Image 11)

Instituted in 2012 and awarded: *When that member has performed in the discharge of his or her duty an act of bravery of a high order whereby the member placed themselves at substantial risk of personal injury.*

Thanks again to Clive for another interesting article.

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NOTES FROM YOUR EDITORS – Alan Cochrane OAM & Brenda Cochrane OAM

From all accounts the Queensland event last month was another great success. Unfortunately, due to my ongoing surgeries Brenda & I were unable to attend. We're both hoping I will be fit to travel to attend the Canberra event in February and catch up with old and new friends. It is such a renewing experience to enjoy the camaraderie that we share and forget about our problems for a while. The Wellness Workshop was also a rewarding experience for those who attended and gave positive feedback to the facilitator our ABA Honorary Psychologist, Pamela Davidson BM. The Queensland workshop was well supported and here are some comments that followed:

- *"What a fantastic weekend. Thank you so much for the effort in preparing and delivering the workshop! Clearly, everyone got something out of it and the environment that you created was conducive to that outcome".*
- *"I have to say that I really did get quite a bit out of it! I just wish I had known about this a few years ago when I really needed it. I'm glad we have access to someone like yourself and more importantly - you know where we are coming from."*
- *"We both loved your workshop. We would love to catch up with you in the future".*
- *"Thanks Pam I got a lot out of Sundays session...."*

The next workshop to be held in Canberra February 2016 will be based on the requests of participants who made it very clear they would like to learn more about the brain and what happens to it when we have been traumatised and have anxiety.... and most importantly....learn what to do about it. Register your interest on the Event rsvp slip.

In this edition we are privileged to bring you bios on two more members – the people behind their medal. Many of you will recognize **Udo Starkis** – an active member for many years from the NSW coast and newish member **Andrew (Andy Mac) MacDonald**). Both great fellows you must meet. Their stories follow.

You'll need to get your vocal chords going to join in our new ABA song that has been especially written by our Honorary **Chaplain Jim Cosgrove**. It's a moving tribute to our members and all who have performed brave deeds and we are indeed grateful to Jim who has not only written this sensitive arrangement but also gifted us the professional production.

MEETING YOUR MEMBERS

ANDREW MacDONALD SC

Andrew MacDonald SC is an enthusiastic young man and likeable member of the Australian Bravery Association. "Andy Mac", as we all know him, penned a few words to tell us his story.



If someone had told me two years ago I would be awarded one of the highest honours for bravery in our nation I would no doubt have fetched them some water and invited them to a comfortable chair somewhere out of the sun. Born in and raised in the south-west Sydney suburb of Bankstown I came as one of a rather odd set of twins, my brother out eating and growing me from the get-go. I instead, was blessed with rickets, an inherited Vitamin D resistance that left my legs bowed and my stature perfectly suited to a role in any of 'The Hobbit' film franchises.

During my formative and re-formative years (4 surgeries and a myriad of torture devices to correct my legs) I eventually gave up on dreams of joining the army or becoming a swimming star and eventually settled on a life of music and writing. I lost a large part of my teenage years engaged in this pursuit dreaming of nothing more than playing in a band with friends at a dingy pub in the burbs. During high school I secured a work-experience job with a prominent staging company and began working with such names as The Wiggles, Marcia Hines, Mandy Moore and many more at just fifteen.

Finishing school I took up a Diploma of Sound Engineering and used this to secure some odd industry jobs and record two albums for my then bands. Eventually I gave up the life of recording and setting up for bands as the schedule clashed too much with my own band's commitments. Instead, I began taking on more responsibilities at my day job at Bunnings Warehouse. There I completed a second diploma, this time in Management; becoming one of the youngest managers to be appointed my own department (at 24), ahead of many more seasoned individuals.

Since the incident, summed up almost accurately in my citation, which occurred just a few months after my appointment, I found myself unable to continue on the career path I was embarked on, and handed in my resignation three months later. From there I tackled with demons and a brief (and wholly unpaid) writing career where I created articles for a gaming website and completed my first novella, along with a litany of poetry and short stories. It was a tough time though, selling instruments to pay rent, and ultimately moving back home.

Eventually happenstance came to the rescue some six months later when I returned to my old high school to catch up with my once English teacher and still friend. Now Head of the Learning and Support Department I asked her if she would take a look at my novel, and she asked me if I was interested in working as a Teacher's Aide, as they were desperate for males in that position. I had always considered it a matter of course that during my later life (40+) I would like to get involved in teaching high school or TAFE/Uni, so I agreed to give it a try, and that same week signed up for my first online History course. Four years later I am still working at the school mostly as a 'learning support officer' for kids with special needs who are taking on mainstream high school and need that extra help, guidance and patience. It has consistently been the most rewarding choice of my life, and the school itself has seen an exponential growth in enrolments of students with extra needs due to our 'speciality' in the area. My BA in History/English is set to be completed in the next month, with the Masters of Education to follow. It has been a long road but helping others has been its own reward.

Creatively I have been in three bands over the years, one of which, KANG will be celebrating its tenth birthday next year. Our success has been a slow-burn, but we continue to be one of the mainstays of the Sydney music scene with regular (and occasionally sold-out) shows. Our songs have also featured on radio here and in the



States, as well as Australian TV and Cinema. In my 'spare' time I have also co-created my own regular Podcast show downloaded by over five thousand listeners since its first episode two years ago. In 2013 I received an Australian Songwriters Award for Acoustic Song of the Year, and this has prompted the recording of my first ever solo album to be released later this year. Of all of my current activities; study, work, band, solo album, podcasts and writing, I hope to add some role in the ABA where I can help those in need and/or generally aid in the recognition of the association and its amazing members.

Andy Mac was awarded a Star of Courage on 24 March 2014. His citation reads:

Mr Andrew MacDONALD, Padstow NSW 2211

On the morning of 5 August 2010, Mr Andrew MacDonald rescued a work colleague from an armed offender at Bonnyrigg, New South Wales.

Mr MacDonald was working as a department manager at a major retail store in Bonnyrigg when three men entered the store and requested to speak to the store loss prevention officer. He was unaware that they were unhappy with the officer following a minor altercation earlier in the morning. As he was speaking with them the undercover loss prevention officer approached and identified himself. The men requested him to go outside with them, before an argument ensued and they began to assault him. Mr MacDonald was pushed aside by one of the men as another man grabbed his colleague by the shirt. As the men wrestled, a handgun was produced and aimed at the victim's stomach. As Mr MacDonald called for help, he pushed one of the offenders away and managed to keep the two other men on the ground which allowed the victim to run away and hide elsewhere inside the store. After the offenders got up, Mr MacDonald warned other staff and customers to stay back as he followed the men and ordered them outside despite them threatening to shoot him. When the offenders departed through the back exit and headed to their trucks Mr MacDonald prevented staff and customers from leaving the store for their own safety. When Mr MacDonald attempted to get a vehicle description one of the men fired two shots towards where he and others were standing. Later as two other men followed the offenders in their vehicle to a residence in a nearby suburb, they called 000 and gave location updates of the offenders to the police.

By his actions, Mr MacDonald displayed conspicuous courage.

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UDO STARKIS

At most ABA functions you will find Udo who has been a valued ABA member since 2007 and has generously supported the ABA events that have been held in Mildura, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast as well as all the annual Canberra gatherings. His unassuming and quiet demeanour belies his sense of fun and good humour.



Udo came to Australia from Germany as a baby in 1949. He grew up in Sydney and left school after completing the Leaving Certificate and started work the following Monday as a Clerk in an insurance office. During these years Udo was a champion swimmer and water polo player. He also enjoyed basketball, volleyball and rifle shooting.

His working life spans 49 years in law enforcement, serving with the NSW Police Force for 14 years whilst also serving in the Military Police in the Australian Army Reserve for 17 years.

His career as a private investigator then led to a position with Social Security as a Fraud Investigator. For the past 15 years he has worked as a Sheriff's Officer.

His years as a law enforcement officer have not been without risk and he once had bullets shot at his front door. Some people just took exception to being investigated for fraud!

There were many other occasions that were fraught with danger but one in particular was officially recognised. In 1976 a call out at 10.30 one evening involved a former patient of a Parramatta psychiatric centre who had returned with the intention of shooting his doctor and another patient. Udo disarmed the offender and was awarded a Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct. The other medals Udo wears are the:

- Reserve Forces Medal – Army (service '66 -'83)
- National Medal with clasp
- Australian Defence Medal
- National Police Medal (yet to be presented)
- Police Commissioner's Commendation for Courage (for the 1976 disarming incident)
- Police Service Medal
- Sheriff's Service Medal

He has been single for the past 16 years and has enjoyed travels to Europe and Bali. Most of his spare time is taken up promoting Lyones - showing people how to convert their everyday shopping expenses into income and assets. He also encourages Small and Medium Enterprises to get involved by showing them all the advantages of this venture. The car number plate says it all!



In 2015 Udo has held the position of ABA National Vice President - NSW and with support looks forward to renominating in 2016. Circumstances this year have not resulted in a NSW state gathering but Udo has started plans for an event in 2016. For those of us who have enjoyed a past event he hosted we look forward to relaxed company and more fine dining complete with a view!

Udo is a humble, down to earth man with a friendly, smiling face. He has lots of interesting stories so say "g'day" at the next ABA function.

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THE HUMBLE POPPY

I am not a badge of honour,
I am not a racist smear,
I am not a fashion statement,
To be worn but once a year,

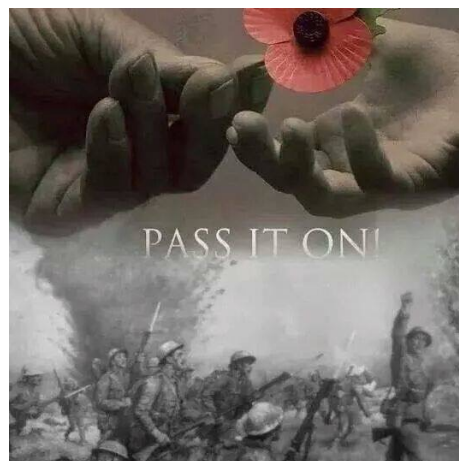
I am not glorification
Of conflict or of war.
I am not a paper ornament
A token, I am more.

I am a loving memory,
Of a father or a son,
A permanent reminder
Of each and every one.

I'm paper or enamel
I'm old or shining new,
I'm a way of saying thank you,
To every one of you.

I am a simple poppy
A Reminder to you all,
That courage faith and honour,
Will stand where heroes fall.

Paul Hunter 2014



As we remember those who have fallen, especially this month.

ABA SONG – “THAT DAY”

The ABA is proud to launch “*That Day*” the official song of the Australian Bravery Association. Written by ABA Hon. Chaplain, Jim Cosgrove. It’s both moving and rousing, and captures the spirit and message of what we are about. You can listen to a professional recording of the song on the ABA website at <http://www.forbravery.org.au/aba-song/> .

That day was just another day
It started off the same
I guess my life changed
When that fateful moment came
I know I could have walked away
Don't you understand
You can't just walk away
There is someone who needs a hand.

They say my act showed bravery
And showed great courage too
For me I thought I only did
What anyone would do.
There was someone who needed help
I happened to be there
I did not think my act was brave
I just showed that I cared.

*So sing a song of Bravery
Sing a song with friends
Sing Loud, Sing with passion
Resolve that never ends
Rejoicing in our unity
No one can take away
We sing with pride because we cared
And gave a hand that day!*

These acts are dangerous
But still you give a hand
It's only afterwards
You start to understand
Unwelcome memories can knock
Relentless at your door
And sometimes sleep evades you
And you can't take any more

Thank God there's other folk out there
Who truly understand
Other folk who struggle
Cause they also gave a hand
When we get together well
I don't feel quite so blue
We share a special unity
They have all been there too

*So sing a song of Bravery
Sing a song with friends
Sing Loud, Sing with passion
Resolve that never ends
Rejoicing in our unity
No one can take away*

*We sing with pride because we cared
And gave a hand that day!*

We saved a life
Yes that feels real good inside
Sometimes despite our best attempts
The other person died
Sometimes one of our number
Gave their own life to the cause
Just like those Anzac heroes
We remember from the wars.

There are some people out there
Whose brave acts are never known
Some who never get the praise
For bravery they've shown
We thank them for their selflessness
Quiet humility
With a simple prayer Lord
We commend their hearts to thee

*So sing a song of Bravery
Sing a song with friends
Sing Loud, Sing with passion
Resolve that never ends
Rejoicing in our unity
No one can take away
We sing with pride because we cared
And gave a hand that day!*

Thank you God for giving me
The strength to lend a hand
All those people out there
May they come to understand
We are just normal folk
Who helped a person in their need
Let's all join together
For a better world indeed

*So sing a song of Bravery
Sing a song with friends
Sing Loud, Sing with passion
Resolve that never ends
Rejoicing in our unity
No one can take away
We sing with pride because we cared
And gave a hand that day!*

*We sing with pride because we cared
And gave a hand that day!*

QUEENSLAND REPORT – Sally Gregory

The ABA family and friends. This month finds us still smiling from the fun weekend we had at the Queensland Bravery Reunion last month. The event started off with the customary pre dinner drinks and yarn telling session (some of them true!) and led onto the all you could eat buffet where most of the blokes did just that. I performed a personal best by mistakenly eating one of the display desserts, and of course, it didn't go unnoticed as someone very kindly bought over the sign which read "please admire but do not eat" – well – I am blonde and someone had to get the party started.....

The next morning we headed to our riverside picnic park at beautiful Budds Beach where a barby breakfast was cooked up and eaten with gusto – fresh eggs and avocados supplied by Wendy Pearson. Light entertainment was supplied by Andy Mac and yours truly who gave a "how to play ukulele whilst eating breakfast" demonstration which received sympathetic applause – thanks guys... Once breakfast was digested we headed to the Cavill Avenue wharf and boarded our canal cruise vessel, upon which we proceeded to eat seafood, drink cool bevies and talk and talk and talk. I think some of us saw the passing scenery, but not many, as few took the time to come up for air.



Warren McErlean BM, Damien Hall BM & Trevor Burns SC



Sally Gregory & Andrew MacDonald SC

Later that night (after a nanna nap) we headed to the Surfers Paradise RSL where our dinner venue awaited. The only husband and wife bravery recipient team – Joan and Greg Darlington were in charge of meet, greet and crowd control and did a fine job too. Dangerous Deidre came up from Melbourne to take care of the auction and raffle ticket selling and Padre Jim led us in the debut of his poignant song "That Day" which is now available on our webpage. So many misted up as the words unfolded – confirming the feelings we've all been through – he penned it for us and it shows. It's our stories brought to life through music. A unique gift to the ABA – that's our Padre Jim. Our guest speaker Dave Pearson held us in the palm of his hand as he shared his experience in being bitten by a shark, and the inspiration that the event gave him – his mission to care for other shark attack rescuees and rescuers by starting the Bite Club, a support group similar to ours. Like many of us, Dave's life was changed when adversity came his way, and he too was able to turn his lemons into lemonade and dedicate his life to helping others. What do we think of Dave? He's Alright !!



Kay Baird, Joan and Greg Darlington, Ross and Andrew Kendall and Doug Baird

Doug (our Vice Patron) and Kay Baird (parents of CPL Cameron Baird VC MG) joined in the fun of the night and it was great to see them smiling too. I cannot imagine the pain of losing a child and going on without them. Another family we were delighted to host was the Hoad family. Young Calyn recently received the BM at Government House in recognition of his self-sacrifice in protecting his little brother from an oncoming car. Calyn took the brunt of the collision and suffered severe brain damage. We were delighted to have Calyn and family join us and it was an

extra thrill to see him stand up from his wheel chair and walk to the front of the room to join in the recipient's photo opportunity. Special thanks go out to our fund raising superstars – Coralee Lever, Victor Ronque, Warren McErlean, Mike Pearson and Mares Dive Company who donated excellent fund raising goodies.

Another wonderful expression of kindness that happened on the night was the generosity of members - Mike Pearson and Padre Jim who chose the best kiddies prizes from the raffles and gave them to Calyn, his brother and sister. Such kindness makes my eyes puddle. Andy Mac did a great job of post proceedings party music making and I tooted a bit with him. The dodgy doo wop girls backed us with a stirring rendition of "Stand by Me" much to the amusement of the guests and would certainly have won 1st prize if there had been a "no talent time" competition – myself included – Andy Mac excluded as he definitely has a whole lot of talent.



Pam Davidson

Sunday morning was the Wellness Workshop led by our Honorary Psychologist Pam Davidson BM, and it was well attended. For many attendees, it was the first time they had experienced a session with a psychologist, and you'll see by Pam's comments that they wished they had fronted their worries earlier. One attendee, who will remain nameless, did not participate in the final segment – the meditation/relaxation as she was worried that if she fell asleep, she would start dribbling – I kid you not! Proof that there is always something to laugh about 😊.

The program finished with a special screening of "Known unto God" for which we had the pleasure of the company of its director and producer John Schindler and contributor John Thurgar SC OAM RFD and co-founder of our ABA. This stirring documentary contained amazing authentic wartime footage of the training of Task Force Z at Fraser Island and was lovingly researched and produced. I encourage members to attend the next screening at the National Rally in Canberra in February – you won't be disappointed.

I'll finish up now by inviting you to join in the conversation on our Facebook page and to share the messages of courage and inspiration that our members share – and a funny or two of course. Be sure to tell your rich friends that they can donate to the ABA by using the Donate Planet (>\$2 is tax deductible) link on our web site. You can check out the reunion photos there too – thanks to Megan Burns & Karen McDonald for the fab pics. See you in Feb at Canberra if we're lucky.

Warmest wishes – Sally G (Chief Hugger – Qld).



Back row, left to right – Tom Voigt, Victor Ronque, Garry Hayes, Doug Baird, Frank Martin, Damian Hall BM, Trevor Burns SC, Justin Martin, Shane Dagge, Mike Pearson, Pam Davidson BM

Front row, left to right – Warren McErlean BM, Andrew Kendall, Calyn Hoad BM, Sally Gregory, Joan Darlington, Greg Darlington, Andy McDonald SC.

WEST AUSTRALIA REPORT – Vic Boreham

Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visit to Western Australia 2015

I was recently advised that two of our ABA Vice Patrons, Tim Britten CV and Victor Boscoe CV, having been nominated by the Australian Bravery Association, would be representing the Association at an important event on the 14 November.

The WA Premier, The Hon Colin Barnett MLA and his wife, Mrs. Lyn Barnett were to host a gathering to be held at the Cottesloe Civic Centre Gardens to celebrate Prince Charles' 67th birthday.



Tim Britten CV

The day arrived and Tim, a WA resident, was accompanied by wife Shannon. Victor has recently commenced work with Greyhound as a coach driver on the Wheatstone Project at Onslow. He was extremely grateful to Greyhound for assisting him to be able to attend this function. As a new employee he is appreciative that they organised shift changes and travel arrangements for this to happen.



Victor Boscoe CV

Victor asked me to accompany him which I was thrilled to do and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Prince Charles stopped to engage both Victor and myself in conversation. He took a genuine interest in our personal history and made a point of thrusting his hand forwards in order to shake our hands. What a privilege!

* * * * *

NEWS FROM CANBERRA



The Australian Federal Police Sergeants Mess is the oldest Police Sergeants Mess in Australia. The founding President of the Mess Committee, (PMC) Station Sergeant John Thurgar SC OAM RFD (Retd), is seen here receiving his National Police Long Service Medal from HE The Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) at the October 2015 Mess Dinner.

John Thurgar is a past National President and co-founder of the Australia Bravery Association.

Congratulations John.

* * * * *

FRIENDSHIP

Here's to you, my friend, and to friendship
For the only way to have a friend is to be one.
Let's not fret about the future;
Let's not grieve about the past;
But instead, let's toast the present,
And the friendship that will last.



CAM'S CAUSE CURRUMBIM EVENT

On 7 November 2015, upon invitation of ABA Vice-Patron Doug Baird, ABA members Andrew Kendall, John Thurgar SC OAM RFD and Trevor Burns SC attended a moving Cam's Cause Fundraising Event at Currumbin. Hosted by Rupert McCall OAM, and with special guests including Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO and Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG, the dinner raised money for the Commando Welfare Trust and a number of community initiatives.

Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG was an outstanding Special Forces soldier who was killed in Afghanistan in 2013. For his actions on that day he was awarded Australia's 100th The Victoria Cross. Cam's Cause's long-term objective is to 'aspire to inspire' the generations to come with Cam's story and his remarkable life.



More information about Cam's Cause can be found at <http://www.camscause.org>.

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REFLECTIONS

In closing the newsletter and having the last say I was thinking over our time in the ABA. The Friendship poem and our new ABA Song mirror our experiences in so many ways. We are ordinary everyday folk and have profited immensely from our involvement with so many wonderful people who have become good friends. We have gained insight into others' experiences that have been so generously shared with us. We too have shared our "ups and downs" and in the sharing we have felt supported and healed.

There are some who for whatever reason are unable to attend state or national functions. We hope and pray that through this medium that brings news in general and profiles of our members that you too will find some connection. If you have news to share for future editions or just wish to make contact please email or post to us.

If you have put off attending a function for fear of 'not knowing anyone there' – fear not. You will be made most welcome and I guarantee you will have great time. To all, Bren and I wish you richest blessings and an early Happy Christmas. – Alan

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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: Brenda Cochrane, ABA National Treasurer, 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

PHOTO GALLERY
QUEENSLAND ABA REUNION 2015



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Keith Payne VC AM, Darrell Tree CV, Victor Boscoe CV, Allan Sparkes CV, Tim Britten CV,
Richard Joyes CV, and Doug Baird

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