

FOR BRAVERY



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



Left to right: Her Excellency Mrs Hurley, David Kendall, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd), ABA National President Andrew Kendall OAM, Mrs Kitty Kendall, Sasha Kendall, and Lillian Kendall.

INSIDE features

4

Laurie Sams USA
Hall of Fame

14

Vietnam Veterans'
Vigil by John Thurgar

17

A Cup of Courage
by Niall Warring

PATRON

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd)



I begin my contribution to this edition of *FOR BRAVERY* with a heartfelt message to all recipients of Australian Bravery Decorations: our nation is grateful for what you did. We value and celebrate your bravery and selflessness.

In August, I was delighted to announce the next iteration of Australian Bravery Decorations to recognise the courageous acts of 13 people.

The list included four individuals who received the Bravery Medal, five commendations for Brave Conduct and one Group Bravery Citation (to three individuals).

I often say in speeches that I am optimistic for our nation's future. The 13 individuals recognised in the list provide one of the reasons for my optimism. They are people of character and have a willingness to assist others. I encourage readers of *FOR BRAVERY* to read the citations, which are available on my website.

In the citations we learn about individuals who rescued people from the surf and in the immediate aftermath of a shark attack; from a burning vehicle and during a domestic violence incident.

In those incidents, and in others, the recipients' own lives were at risk. They could not possibly have anticipated the outcome, yet they moved toward the danger. Only recipients of Bravery Awards know what confronted them in the moment they acted. They were brave and courageous; the safety of others mattered more than their own.

We are blessed to live in a society where there are people who are brave. Their actions speak to the content of their character and make for a stronger community. They deserve our recognition for what they did and for the cost their selfless deed exacted.

To all recipients of an Australian Bravery Decoration, I again say thank you. I also want to thank the Australian Bravery Association for its strong advocacy of the recipients of Bravery decorations and their families.

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
 Government House
 Dunrossil Drive, YARRALUMLA ACT 2600

Medal Shop Pty. Ltd.
 One of Australia's leading "licensed"
 manufacturers of locally produced
 Military Medals, Emergency Service
 Medals, and other Insignia.
www.medalshop.com.au



Telephone: 02 9583 1666

AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, HONORARY & EX-OFFICIO MEMBER DETAILS

NAME	POSITION/S	ABA EMAIL
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS		
Andrew Kendall	National President	AustralianBraveryAssociation@gmail.com
Peter White	Deputy National President	ABADeputyNationalPresident@gmail.com
Goch Kot	Australian Capital Territory President	ABAACPPresident@gmail.com
Brian Harland	New South Wales President	ABANSWPresident@gmail.com
Mark Charteris	Northern Territory President	ABANTPresident@gmail.com
Sally Gregory	Queensland President	ABAQLDPresident@gmail.com
Willian Denny	South Australia President	ABASOAPresident@gmail.com
TBA	Tasmania President	ABATASPresident@gmail.com
Coralee Lever	Victoria President	ABAVICPresident@gmail.com
Mark Mackin	Western Australia President	ABAWAPresident@gmail.com
Brenda Cochrane	National Treasurer	ABANationalTreasurer@gmail.com
Mike McMahon	National Secretary	ABANationalSecretary@gmail.com
Melanie Warburton	National Membership Secretary	ABANationalMembership@gmail.com
HONORARY & EX-OFFICIO POSITIONS		
Jim Cosgrove	Honorary Chaplain	ABACHaplain@gmail.com
Pam Davidson	Honorary Psychologist	ABAPsychologist@gmail.com
Peter Kerkenezov	Honorary Veterinarian	ABAVeterinarian@gmail.com
Kay Danes	Newsletter Coordinator	ABANewsEditor@gmail.com
Goch Kot	Information Technology Coordinator	ABAITCoordinator@gmail.com
Wendy Pearson	Merchandising Officer	ABAMerchandise@gmail.com
John Thurgar	National Conference Coordinator	ABANationalConference@gmail.com

PATRONS & VICE-PATRONS

The Australian Bravery Association is proud to have His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, as our Patron. He joins our Vice-Patrons Darrell Tree CV; Victor Boscoe CV; Allan Sparkes CV OAM VA; Tim Britten CV; Richard Joyes CV; Doug Baird OAM, and Richard Rolfe AM.

ABA SOCIALS ARE THE PLACE TO BE

Get to know your fellow ABA members and more recipients of bravery awards.

The ABA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/australianbraveryassociation>

The ABA Awardees Facebook Group is a CLOSED GROUP for Australian bravery award recipients and their next of kin. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AustBraveryAssoc>

FOR BRAVERY, EDITOR
Dr Kay Danes, OAM



Dear ABA members and friends,

Welcome to this edition of **FOR BRAVERY**— produced by a volunteer editorial team comprised of myself (photo right), Melanie Warburton, and Andrew Kendall.

This publication seeks to offer a connection between the ABA, members and supporters, and our social (Facebook) platforms. If you have not yet contributed to **FOR BRAVERY**, then we invite you to do so in the future. If you have writing skills and would like to join our editorial team, then please email us.

FOR BRAVERY, submissions should be commercially neutral and readable to a broad audience.

- Your rescue event (max 1 A4 page with photos),
- Investiture related content
- A bravery-related (real-life) encounter
- Something witty to give us a laugh or an inspirational poem.
- Reflections on remembrance, celebration, or festive messages
- Honouring someone in the ABA who has inspired you.
- Something positive and uplifting to encourage others.

Email: ABANewsEditor@gmail.com



Disclaimer: The ABA and Editorial team are not able to guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of its newsletters and expressly disclaim liability for errors and omissions of any material contained herein. We reserve the right to edit the content submitted. Some of the images in this newsletter may be subject to copyright. Please contact us if you wish to reproduce any of the images contained herein.

LAURIE ‘TRUCK’ SAMS SKYDIVING HISTORY



Congratulations ABA member **Laurie ‘Truck’ Sams SC OAM** on being the first Australian ever to be inducted into the 2022 International Skydiving Hall of Fame. This prestigious organisation honours those who, through leadership, innovation and/or accomplishments have defined, promoted, inspired, and advanced skydiving at the highest and sustained levels, such that they have made it possible for generations of skydivers to enjoy the sport. Laurie is a remarkable Australian who is truly deserving of this World Honour of Excellence Award. This award will no doubt hold pride of place in his home, along with his many other notable awards. Laurie also has the rare privilege of being an Australian inductee to the US Army Golden Knights Hall of Fame, as an Honourary Golden Knight. Only the very best skydivers in the world, with exceptional skills are accepted into this elite fraternity. It comes as no surprise that they selected you, Truck!

Watch the 2022 Hall of Fame ceremony on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emxXGnzbe34>

ABA NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Andrew Kendall OAM

The National Conference this year was highly successful with over 100 people attending. We are thankful for the ongoing support of the Royal Australian Mint and their CEO, Leigh Gordon AO, CSM, who hosted the Official Reception, and the attendance of His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd) and Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley at our Black-Tie Dinner, as well as at the Service of Remembrance. Their Excellencies support of the Australian Bravery Association (ABA) during their time in office has been outstanding.



All who attended the conference had a wonderful time and I thank those of you who were able to make it. Personally, this National Conference was the most successful I have experienced.

The Australian Bravery Foundation should also be recognised for its generous contribution of \$4000 sponsorship towards the conference. This made it more affordable for members to attend.

Our relationship with the Royal Australian Mint (RAM) as the “home of the ABA” is ongoing. The RAM have advised that they have finalised their plans for the redevelopment of their display areas and are progressing to the tender stage. As part of that redevelopment, our discussion has been around including an ongoing display of the stories of bravery awardees. We look forward to seeing what the future brings.

Further, support has also come from RAM in the form of the ABA Brave Youth of the Year Medallions presented to awardees at the National Conference. These medallions are beautiful pieces of work and cherished by the youth who received them this year – Jesse Carter from Western Australia (2021) and Reesha Tandan BM from New South Wales (2022). Our thanks to Vice-Patron Richard Rolfe AM for sponsoring the award which provided the opportunity for Jesse and Reesha to attend the National Conference with their family and friends. My congratulations to Richard on his award of the Dennis Lever BM Memorial Award (proudly sponsored by Coralee Lever) for outstanding service to the ABA.



Jesse Carter with Richard Rolfe AM, His Excellency, Sally Gregory and Andrew Kendall OAM.



Reesha Tandan with His Excellency.

On February 11 we held our Annual General Meeting to report back to members and elect the 2023 National Executive. I thank the National Executive members and the honorary and ex-officio members, both past and present, for their contributions to the ABA. I would like to thank outgoing Deputy National President, Michael Pearson BM APM, and state presidents Jim Preston (NSW) and Richard Wells (WA) for their good work over several years. Congratulations to Peter White OAM ML MBE MCS who moves from ACT President to Deputy National President. I am also very pleased to welcome Goch Kot BM (ACT President), Brian Harland (NSW President) and Mark Mackin (WA President) to the National Executive.

On a personal note, on 21 April 2023 I was deeply honoured to receive my Medal of the Order of Australia from *His Excellency* at an investiture ceremony at Government House in Canberra. It was so special to share the occasion with my wonderful wife, Kitty and our three children—Lillian, Sasha, and David. The kids were excited to receive a lovely medallion from the Governor General as a memento of their visit. It was a very special day for my family. It was also really nice to have Sharon Prendergast LVO, Director Honours and Awards Secretariat, and members of her team there on the day. Sharon has been a strong supporter of, and advisor to, the ABA for many years. She and her team do an exceptional job. Similarly, the support of Paul Singer MVO, the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, is much appreciated. I am grateful to all who have shared my journey.



Her Excellency Mrs Hurley, David Kendall, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd), Andrew Kendall OAM, Kitty Kendall, Sasha Kendall, Lillian Kendall

Thanks for your ongoing support of the ABA. I am confident the ABA is in the strongest position it has ever been in since its inception. I am looking forward to seeing the ABA continue to grow.

Till next time.
Andrew.

HONORARY PSYCHOLOGIST

Pam Davidson BM



I came across an article I wrote a while back, titled "Wanting, needing to be exceptional" and it occurred to me that the word exceptional is used in many bravery citations, so I'm attaching it for this newsletter. It may be helpful to some of our ABA members.

I have met bravery recipients after their act who feel guilty if they don't go on to rescue others or fear they might not be able to step up again if placed in a similar situation. This article may help to remind those that it's okay to have moments of exception and moments, far greater moments of normal, and hopefully happiness as well. And then there are those members who have led a life of exception, either creatively, professionally, spiritually, or personally and their act of bravery may demand changes to that life, requiring big adjustments including, but not least of all, an emotional readjustment in order to have a different but satisfying and fulfilling life.

So, the following article maybe of some use to the latter group I've described. If this has raised any issues or you see yourself in these situations or are curious to discuss further with me, please reach out. I would be only too happy to discuss these things with you.

Wanting/ needing to be exceptional.

Were you ever treated as though you were exceptional growing up because you probably were. And as a result, were you put up on a pedestal? And then life happens and at some point, you feel disappointed because you haven't achieved what you were supposed to. You're not where you should be.

But the reality is in order to live that exception, there are so many factors beyond your control and some within your control to achieve this. A lot of this comes down to not only having the exceptional skills but also being in the right place at the right time, having the right people around you and finally a big dose of luck. If the last two don't align and you lose the possibility of realising your potential, it's not uncommon for this to be devastating. However, in time it's important to approach this as actually okay, to adjust to being a different you, and to strive for whatever is possible for you, and within reach, rather than expecting to be exceptional, as you learned early in your life.

There may even be moments of exceptionality, and that feels wonderful. But it's not possible to have this all the time. It's important that this is no reflection on your lack of effort or skill. At the end of the day what it comes down to is: - are you happy?

Ask yourself do you want your kids to be exceptional or happy. Great if they're both but if they're not which one is preferable for a good life? Now turn that question to you. Maybe it's time to let up on yourself rather than judging and criticising for not being exceptional because factors outside your control outweighed the possibility of exception.

It's okay to let go of that dream with an attitude of kindness to yourself and to choose the things within your grasp, to bring about the possibility of more happiness now.

Best regards,
Pam

ACT PRESIDENT

Goch Kot BM

Since joining the ABA in 2018, Goch has been instrumental in providing invaluable help and advice to the National Executive. Goch consistently lends a hand with various multimedia requirements during the Service of Remembrance and Black-tie dinner. We welcome Goch to the position of ACT President for 2023. Goch's dedication to community advocacy and supporting others is truly commendable. He has successfully facilitated programs that bridge the gap between minority communities and the Government, in addition to his voluntary work.



Goch is deeply committed to public service and advocacy, all while enjoying sports and hiking. His bravery citation reads:

Mr Goch Isaac KOT, Kaleen ACT 2617

In the late evening of 12 November 2015, Mr Goch Kot restrained and disarmed a machete-wielding man in Belconnen, Australian Capital Territory.

Mr Kot was a passenger in a taxi when the vehicle was stopped by a man standing in the middle of the road. The man, armed with a machete, began to smash the bonnet of the car with the weapon. The attacker then moved around the car towards the driver's door. He opened the door and began shouting and swinging the machete at the taxi driver.

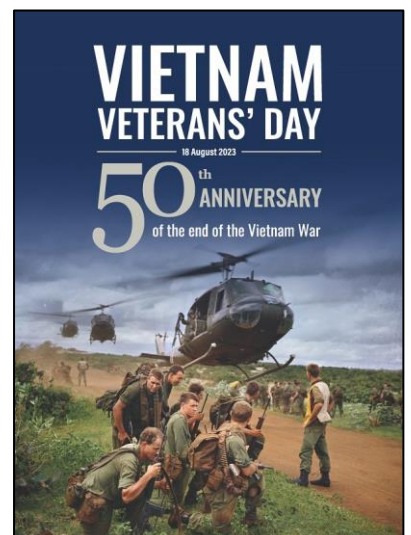
The offender pinned the driver in his seat and struck him with the machete. Mr Kot immediately got out of the vehicle and ran around to the driver's door. Without concern for his safety, Mr Kot grabbed the offender's shoulder, pulled him away from the taxi, removed the machete from his grasp and attempted to subdue him. The offender verbally and physically abused Mr Kot before he was wrestled to the ground and restrained. Other people then approached the scene and assisted Mr Kot and the injured taxi driver until emergency services arrived.

By his actions, Mr Kot displayed considerable bravery.

VIETNAM VETERAN VIGIL (AUSTRALIA)

2023 commemorates 50 years since the end of Australia's commitment to the Vietnam War in 1973. The month of August heralded several auspicious military occasions. Among them, the arrival of the Australian Army Training team (AATTV) in South Vietnam (SVN) on the 3 August 1962, and the Battle of Long Tan fought on the 18th of August 1966. Some 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam which at the time was the longest conflict Australia had been involved in during the 20th Century. More than 3,000 Australians were wounded and 523 lost their lives.

LEST WE FORGET



NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT

Brian Harland

Brian Harland has once again joined the National Executive as NSW President after Jim Preston stood down at the 2023 AGM. Brian joined the ABA in 2003, as an Ordinary Member next of kin. Brian's brother was posthumously awarded the Star of Courage. Brian was with Patrick at the Greystanes Inn during the hold up and was very involved in the numerous court cases over many years following. Patrick's citation reads:



Mr Patrick Harland (Posthumous Award)

At about 12.30am on Sunday, 9 November 1980, two armed men forced their way into the Greystanes Inn Hotel, Merrylands, New South Wales and, after menacing the proprietor and staff, which included Patrick Harland, with a sawn-off shotgun and another weapon, and forcing them into a room in the hotel, escaped in a car with a large sum of money. Patrick Harland, aged 21, a casual employee in the hotel then immediately ran outside, jumped into his car, and, with a friend as a passenger, drove off to locate the robbers. After a considerable search he located the other car and gave chase, during which a number of shots were fired, several hitting the front of Mr Harland's car. The two cars collided, and Mr Harland told his friend to leave his car and advise the police. The robbers then drove off again at high speed with Mr Harland still in pursuit notwithstanding further shots being fired, he eventually caught up with the robbers' car. At this point the driver of the other vehicle pulled into the wrong side of the road and, as Mr Harland came alongside, one of them fired a blast from the shotgun fatally wounding him in the head. Mr Harland displayed conspicuous courage in such circumstances in giving chase to two armed and dangerous men and persisting in the pursuit of them notwithstanding the fact that he continuously in great peril.

Since retiring, Brian and Pam have lived on a bit of acreage in Brookfield near Dungog in the Hunter region of NSW. After many years of water skiing, involvement in the local community hall and local issues take precedence. Brian and Pam spent two days recently in Sydney attending the Investitures at Government House meeting potential and current members. Some of the Newcastle and Central Coast members decided on a get together lunch at Warners Bay recently and it turned out to be a very enjoyable day.



Photo: Alan and Paulina Playford (front) Tim Brown, Garry Booth, Udo Starkis and Brian and Pam Harland

"It has been an honour and a pleasure to be elected to the National Executive again. I hope to be able to contact and meet in person with as many NSW ABA members as possible. Should anyone wish to talk with me, my number is 0417 280 965."

Yours in ABA service,

Brian Harland

QUEENSLAND PRESIDENT Dr Sally Gregory



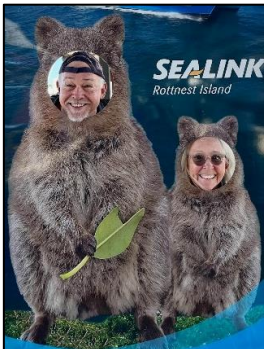
Hi everyone.

Greetings from sunny Queensland! This year started with some wonderful celebratory moments for our ABA members, families, and friends.

Our first investiture for 2023 was held in Townsville where Navy Veteran and ABA member Kirsty-Lee Brown attended the ceremony on behalf of the ABA and expressed our collective respect to all the incredibly brave recipients of those awards. Some of you may recall, Kirsty-Lee received her bravery award for her actions in the tragic SIEV 36 incident in 2009, where an illegal entry vessel exploded and killed five Afghan nationals while injuring more than 50 others. Kirsty-Lee helped rescue 56 people and was awarded a group bravery citation and gold commendation. Being no stranger to dramatic rescues, Kirsty-Lee was also previously involved in a search and rescue in heavy seas off the coast of Indonesia in 2012. On this occasion, Kirsty-Lee and her colleagues pulled 100 people out of the water! This amazing woman was also the first gold medallist at the inaugural Invictus Games in London where she won the Javelin competition.

In Cairns, ABA member Sergeant David Raymond BM APM was one of seven Queensland police officers awarded the Australian Police Medal (APM) in 2023. These Awards are announced twice a year, on Australia Day and the King's Birthday. The APM is awarded to the most dedicated and accomplished police officers in the country.

QLD Police News: <https://mypolice.qld.gov.au/news/2023/06/12/seven-officers-awarded-australian-police-medal-for-exemplary-service/>



Brisbane investitures were held in May and were attended by myself, Andrew Kendall OAM and Pam Davidson BM. In total, 19 bravery awards were invested in Queensland; that's 19 families who now know about the ABA and its good work.

In February, I travelled to Tasmania to attend the ABA Tas reunion in Hobart. In March, I went over to Western Australia where I joined the fun team at the WA reunion-- WA Past-President Vic Boreham OAM and incoming WA President and Police diver Mark Mackin (seen on the left) undercover, disguised as a quokka. That's the thing about our ABA family, there is always someone around ready for

a coffee, chat, and a good time wherever you travel.

This year also saw the book launch of Natalie Stockdale's second publication: *Campfire for a Woman's Heart*. In it, she shares stories of courage and resilience from many brave individuals, including our ABA members Coralee Lever and Dr Kay Danes OAM. The book launch was hosted at the Gold Coast Ranch of Mike and Lovey Pearson. It was well attended by ABA members, including Peter Kerkenezov BM and Coralee Lever. It was a great weekend had by all. Coralee stayed on for a few days with me at Burleigh Heads to soak up our glorious Qld sun. While ABA Vice-Patron, Doug Baird OAM, joined us for coffee and free hugs. Natalie's Book Link: https://youtu.be/8KL_U13LGXE Natalie and her partner Steve were also my guests at the Canberra ABA reunion where they were inspired by more stories of our brave members. They really are an exceptional couple.



QLD CAMPOUT COMING SOON!

The second Queensland event for the year is the Campout weekend again at Mike and Lovey's Gold Coast Ranch on October 21st. This is a free event where we invite all ABA members to pitch a tent in the backyard. It's a fun overnighter, full of good food, great company, singing, a warm bonfire, and loads of camping frivolity. The Qld Campout is a family-friendly adventure and a great opportunity for everyone to enjoy the bush without having to drive too far. Email Mike on mikepearson1@bigpond.com. If coming to Queensland from interstate, please let us now early so we can collect you from the Gold Coast Airport or the Ormeau train station – easy peasy!

Have you heard about **The Brave Podcast by Ben Beed**? Episode one features Chris Wilkinson BM DSM BHSc, Special Casualty Access Team Paramedic, and reveals the challenges faced by the rescuers of Stuart Diver at the Thredbo Landslide disaster in 1997. Episode two features the remarkable rescue story of my old ABA mate, Col Brooks, whose plane crashed into the sea off Cairns in 1996. You can listen to these amazing stories at this link: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/2084232>



As I was making my way round the country to support some of our exciting ABA functions, I caught up in Sydney with our past NSW President—Andy Mac SC and his lovely fiancé, Valerie. We had a happy time checking out the Vivid Sydney Festival and playing games as games are one of Andy Mac's favourite things to do. Here we are (left) sharing a Cup of Courage to promote the camaraderie that is the ABA. Read more about this concept on page 14 of this newsletter. It's a beauty!

As the sub-committee Chair of the Brave Youth of the Year award, I have to say that we are very thankful for the support of Richard Rolfe AM and Debbie Rolfe AM which Andrew Kendall OAM mentioned in his remarks on Page 5 of this newsletter. The Rolfe's are incredibly generous. As are the Rotary Action Group that promote the Youth Wellness Scheme chaired by Norman Taralrud-Bay that provided the ABA \$2000 in professional psychology services to support a brave youth recipient. The main challenge appears to be identifying a youth recipient who would benefit from this service, which is made difficult by the need for that recipient to reach out and ask for assistance. So, if you know any youth bravery recipients who would like to access professional trauma counselling but can't afford it, please let me know.

Finally, the Australian Bravery Awardees Facebook group is administered by the Qld branch and gets a lot of interest from members and visitors. As of 2023, we have 280 FB Group members. The majority of which are in Sydney and Brisbane, with the Gold Coast following closely behind. The most popular posts this month were those that showcased our ABA members sharing a Cup of Courage posts, appearing in a new TV series (Keith Banks BM VA and Bar) and the Vietnam Veteran Vigil promoted by John Thurgar SC MBE OAM RFD. Melanie was on the ball inviting new members to join the ABA, and conversations ranged from book reviews, inspirational quotes, videos of resilience, podcast recommendations and happy snaps of ABA socials.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the conversation and camaraderie of the group. Thanks also to my esteemed National Executive (NX) members who donate their time to improving the lives of our brave Aussies. I am honoured to serve on the NX and thank you for the privilege. To our Queensland families, drop me a line anytime you need to chat.

Yours truly - Chief Hugger Sal.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT

Mark Mackin



Introducing Mark Mackin ABA WA President 2023

Mark is a police officer with the Western Australia Police Force and is looking forward to imminent retirement after almost 44 years of serving the community in specialist, metropolitan and regional postings. Mark is heavily involved with his local RSL Sub-Branch and is into boating, camping, and motorcycling. Mark is a long-standing member of the ABA, joining in 2005.

Mark recently hosted a successful social event for WA members, a dinner at the Fremantle Sailing Club and a Lunch Cruise on the Swan River, which was enjoyed by all attendees. Mark would like to thank outgoing WA ABA President Richard Wells and past WA ABA President Victor Boreham OAM for their outstanding service to the ABA and hopes he can carry on their good work and support to our brave WA community.

Mark received a Commendation for Brave Conduct, his citation reads:

ACTING SERGEANT MARK ALLAN MACKIN, Western Australia Police Service

On the night of 26 January 1996 Acting Sergeant Mackin participated in the rescue of a young child trapped in the forward cabin of a capsized cabin cruiser on the Swan River off Royal Perth Yacht Club.

In conditions aggravated by darkness and heavy river traffic, Acting Sergeant Mackin made repeated free dives until improvised breathing apparatus became available for his use. Using this equipment, and with the assistance of a fellow Police Officer, Acting Sergeant Mackin was able to bring the child to safety.

For his actions Acting Sergeant Mackin is commended for brave conduct.



www.forbravery.org.au

ABA COIN

Supporting those who suffer hardship for their bravery.

The ABA has produced an ABA Coin which is now available for purchase by members. The coin is symbolic of the aims and purposes of the ABA, and particularly the connection between members, their families and the broader community.

Similar to a "challenge coin", the ABA Coin is a bronze, 45mm diameter, double sided, enamelled coin with the ABA logo on one side and the words, "*Supporting those who suffer hardship for their bravery*" on the reverse side. Members can purchase the coin as a keepsake, to promote the association to others and as a thank you for those who contribute to the ABA.

Coins will cost \$14 per coin (includes postage and handling) and can be ordered through the MERCHANDISE page on the ABA website.

VICTORIA PRESIDENT
Coralee Lever



Dear ABA members and friends,

It was an honour to host the Mildura reunion from the 9th to the 11th of June 2023. I appreciate everyone who came along. For those who couldn't make it, we started out with a Civic reception to honour our ABA members in recognition of their bravery. This followed with a two-hour cruise along the Mighty Murray River. Such a wonderful way to connect with members, and for some, being their very first time to Mildura. Fine food and plenty of wine made for a good time had by all and topped off by a Silent Auction and raffles. The next day we enjoyed a luncheon at my home where more fine food and wines were sampled, including two slabs of my son's East Bendigo Brewing Company Award winning beers. The luncheon turned into a 'stay on for dinner' feast and it was a most enjoyable evening!

Cheers
Coralee Lever

Brave souls who made a difference

By Wade Stephens
wstephens@sunraysiadaily.com.au

SOME of Australia's bravest people came together in Mildura recently to celebrate the differences they've made in the lives of others. A civic reception was held for 29 members of the Australian Bravery Association, who had risked their lives to save others, property and the environment.

Mildura Mayor Liam Wood said it was a privilege to be surrounded by selfless individuals. "Knowing some of the amazing acts of bravery by those in attendance, it was an honour just being in the same room with them, let alone hosting a civic reception to welcome and acknowledge these very special people, which is something our council has done since 2006," Cr Wood said.

Port Arthur massacre survivor Coralee Lever joined the ABA when it formed in 2000. "I was one of those needing support, being in a pretty isolated area, so I joined," Mrs Lever said.

"It's a wonderful organisation where you are amongst people who understand you."

Mrs Lever is now the president of the ABA's Victorian branch and organised the three-day reunion.

"We all understand one another, we know the pain and suffering we've all been through," Mrs Lever said.

"I do it for our members and it is a joy to see them turn their life around."

Cr Wood said Mrs Lever's efforts to host a bravery association reunion in Mildura each year were commendable.

"Coralee Lever does a brilliant job, as she has done for many years, ensuring those who place themselves in jeopardy to bravely save others are acknowledged," he said.

"I can't overstate how important her work is as we need to continue honouring and highlighting those who display such acts of bravery."

"Not only should these amazing people be acknowledged and never forgotten, but they also serve as mentors or heroes in our community who may inspire people to step up and take action when required for the benefit of others in the future."

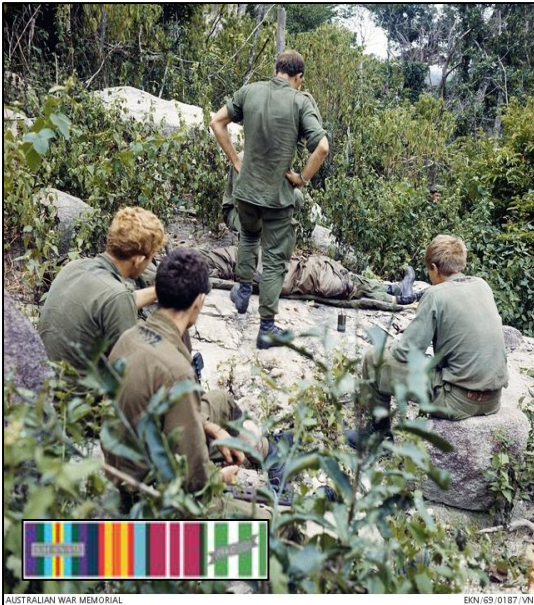
"I'd like to thank Coralee for the hundreds, if not thousands of hours she has dedicated to the association, organising annual reunions in Mildura for association members, among a whole host of activities for more than 15 years."



Australian Bravery Association members Michael Pearson and Niall Waring.



Original article: <https://www.sunraysiadaily.com.au/news/6181771/brave-souls-make-a-difference>



VIETNAM VETERANS' VIGIL (VVV) John Thurgar SC MBE OAM RFD

2023 marks 60 years since the arrival of the Australian Army Training team (AATTV) in South Vietnam (SVN) on the 3 August 1962 and 50 years since the withdrawal of combat troops in 1972. The Australian Government marked the occasion with a national Commemorative Service, televised by the ABC on the 18 August 2023, from the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial (AVFNM) in Canberra.

Many Vietnam Veterans and NOK of those KIA were too old or too frail to attend the Canberra ceremony. The Vietnam Veterans' Vigil provided surviving Vietnam Veterans and the Australian people, a unique opportunity to pay their respects in recognising the national loss of those Killed-In-Action (KIA), those who died during or as a result of their service in the Vietnam War, and to show solidarity with their loved ones for their loss. Personalised 'Services of Remembrance' were held at individual gravesites and commemorative sites across Australia and overseas, on 3 August 2023. A low-key, Dawn Service was held at the AVFNM in Canberra. Other Services followed at 1100 hrs across Australia, Malaysia, and the UK. The last Service was at Dusk in Scotland where, Robbie, aged just 22, and the only son of Robert and Jane Buchan, was laid to rest with his Mum and Dad. LCPL Robert Buchan of the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, was Killed-In-Action on 11 December 1969 during the Vietnam War. His personal sacrifice is representative of a generation of families left to grieve for loved ones who paid the ultimate price for Australia and its people.

The ABA and its members played an important role in the VVV. It sourced external funds, conducted services in several locations, and provided suggested templates for the various types of Commemorative Services. In the main, wattle flowers or rosemary were laid on each headstone and a photograph taken to ensure those lives are remembered and remain forever in our hearts and minds. I personally want to thank everyone who 'lent a hand' where and when it was needed. I also want to thank the good people at the **Virtual War Memorial of Australia** that collated hundreds of photographs, videos, and data on their website and on social media (vwma.org.au) to ensure an enduring legacy of this auspicious occasion. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.

Lest We Forget.



Photo 1: ABA National Conference Coordinator John Thurgar SC MBE OAM RFD.

Photo 2: Members of the *Keith Payne VC Veterans Benefit Group* with Keith Payne VC AM (middle).

VIETNAM VETERANS' VIGIL



A KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOUR

Congratulations to Sergeant David Raymond BM APM on being awarded the Australian Police Medal (APM) in the King's Birthday 2023 Honours List! The APM is awarded for distinguished service by a member of an Australian police agency. Only 1 per 1000 police are honoured in such a way.

Sergeant Raymond commenced with QPS on 29 May 1989 and was sworn in as a police officer on 8 December 1989. He has served his whole career in Far North Queensland, including service as a general duties officer in Smithfield and Cairns Police Station, Officer in Charge of the Cairns Police-Citizens Youth Club where he was instrumental in its establishment. He is currently the Officer in Charge of the Far North District Dog Squad. In his role, he routinely attends urgent incidents as a first responder and assumes the role of the Police Forward Commander at complex high-risk incidents.



Sergeant Raymond's professionalism, calmness under pressure and energetic leadership ensure that all officers are aware of operational objectives and are motivated to confidently pursue successful outcomes. He is renowned for his exemplary leadership and operational capability in the most demanding of circumstances. His outstanding reputation has emerged from an ability to apply critical expertise in extremely challenging policing environments and demonstrate extraordinary, unwavering dedication to the safety of the Far North community. His pursuit of excellence influences police officers at all levels and positions him as a constant driving force behind successful, urgent policing responses and enhancement of frontline service delivery.

During his operational career, Sergeant Raymond has been the recipient of several awards including the Bravery Medal and Commendation for Brave Conduct. Sergeant Raymond is a trusted mentor who has a genuine interest in the wellbeing of his fellow frontline officers. This is perfectly evidenced by his extraordinary, independent efforts to ensure their work is appreciated and recognised.

END OF WATCH FOR RETIRED POLICE DOG AXEL



Nine-year-old PD Axel commenced his working life in Cairns after graduating from the academy in 2015. Partnered with Officer in Charge and 25-year veteran within the Cairns Dog Squad, PD Axel was the fourth police dog for handler Sergeant Dave Raymond BM APM. PD Axel retired in November 2022. Then sadly after a short battle with cancer, PD Axel passed away on 3 August 2023. Long will he be remembered as a loyal, hard-working member of the Far Northern police, best friend to Sergeant Raymond, and a beloved member of the Raymond family. Our deepest sympathies are with Sergeant Dave Raymond and his family.

End of watch PD Axel. Thank you for your service.

THE CUP OF COURAGE

Niall Waring BM VA AFPBM



Photo: Mike Pearson (Left), Keith Banks (Middle) and Niall Waring (Right)

The Cup of Courage is a coffee, tea, hot chocolate, or any other beverage sipped over a conversation with fellow ABA members. It's a moment where you can talk honestly about life and how you are genuinely feeling—good, bad, or indifferent. What the Cup of Courage is not is a cup of “harden up.” Those days are hopefully behind us. Everyone is an individual and while there may be similarities in our motivations to become rescuers, some of us may not be coping as well as we appear to be. The antithesis for the idea behind the Cup of Courage was a collision of things happening in my world that got me thinking about how I respond to the question “How are you?”

Recently, I was dealing with a bout of bronchitis and while getting a script filled at my local Chemist, the customer service assistant asked, “How are you?” It was a simple enough question, to which I responded automatically with “I’m good thanks.” But I wasn’t good. I was struggling to breathe, had a raging headache, fever and sweats and felt like death was right at my door. So why didn’t I just admit it? When I got home with my meds, I was still thinking about why I couldn’t be honest with my feelings. Did I say I was okay knowing I wasn’t because I didn’t trust the person asking the question? Did I not want to burden them with my problems? Was I short of time and just wanted to get my meds and get back to bed? So many possibilities. I guess after being a Police Officer for so many years, I had become used to saying I was fine when I wasn’t. Most people in this line of work don’t talk about their feelings for fear of being perceived as inadequate. There’s always been a perception in the public that we must be bullet proof, physically (with the Kevlar vest) and emotionally. That bravery for a police officer means you don’t have the same human emotions of fear and anxiety that others have when faced with a life-threatening situation. You are somehow immune and go through life with a mindset that “I survived this and that... now, I just have to suck it up if I am not feeling okay.” Sound familiar? Without really knowing, I slipped into that mindset after I was involved in a shooting incident in 2014. I was awarded service medals recognising my strength of character during that incident. In my mind, I put on a brave face and denied the truth whenever anyone asked, “How are you?”

Sitting in my bed sipping a cup of hot lemon juice and hoping that feeling that I was swallowing a dozen razor blades would stop, I thought more deeply about the Cup of Courage concept— sitting with a mate and actually sharing things that I really needed to get off my chest—things that were stopping me from being truly engaged in life. I thought about ‘who’ that person might be and ‘where’ I could allow myself to feel vulnerable enough to discuss my wellbeing. And so, the Cup of Courage concept was formed. I realised I had to look no further than my ABA fraternity—my trusted tribe!

“The aim of the ABA is to maximise the support available to those members in our community who conduct themselves bravely to save life, property or the environment, and thereby experience physical, emotional or other personal hardship.” Australian Bravery Association.

When I consider this in the context of a wellbeing conversation, I can think of the “who”—several in fact. The calibre of ABA members, associates, partners, and supporters that I’ve met and spent time with at various ABA events across the country. Those connections have become invaluable to my wellbeing and while many of the ABA members may have experienced life quite differently to me, I guarantee they’ve all felt vulnerable at some point when asked “How are you?”

For me, having trust and respect for someone is the perfect combination of “who” I can feel comfortable discussing the topic of wellbeing. I know amongst our ABA Association there is no judgement, rather, there’s empathy and an unspoken understanding that sometimes you just need a hug or a handshake. The “where” aspect of the Cup of Challenge comes down to finding a place where you can feel relaxed. It might be at home or close to home, a Café or on a park bench. Wherever the “where” is, it must be a place where you can meet the “who” and share a Cup of Courage. So, I decided to put this theory to the test as soon as I recovered from my bout of bronchitis.

Phase One of the Cup of Courage was trialled in May 2023 in Camberwell (Victoria) with myself and two members of the ABA who I greatly admire greatly—Michael Pearson BM APM and Keith Banks BM VA and Bar. As we sat and sipped our drinks, we discussed our health, the highs, lows of our lives and everything else in between. The conversation was comfortable, non-judgemental, and collaborative. What became obvious was that we had all walked similar journeys at different stages of our careers and personal lives, and it is *that* very conversation that tapped into a newfound wisdom, source of encouragement and care. You will see at the beginning of this article a photo of the three of us that was posted on the Australian Bravery Awardees Facebook page. Since then, the Cup of Courage has gone viral as other ABA members embrace the initiative (below). So, I encourage you all to take a Cup of Courage and build on what’s been happening informally for many years.



Phase Two of the Cup of Courage is for us to identify locations where our ABA members can meet up for a Cup of Courage, the likes of Cafés nationally, and create a strategy to see if those businesses would consider providing ABA members with Cup of Courage vouchers. This would keep the conversations going so that all our ABA members will truly feel part of an organisation that genuinely supports one another.

Niall Waring, BM VA AFPBM

ABA NEWS



ABA Member pays tribute to the fallen.

In a quiet cemetery on the NSW north coast, Australian Army Major (Retd) John Thurgar SC MBE OAM RFD places flowers on a grave, bows, then salutes. He is paying tribute to Private Geoffrey O'Shea, one of the 523 Australians who died during the Vietnam War, at Mullumbimby Cemetery. Private O'Shea served with 1 Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment.

Photo: Retired Major John Thurgar says it's important to remember the "individual losses" of the Vietnam War. (ABC North Coast: Emma Rennie)

Story: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-02/vietnam-war-veterans-graveside-vigil-commemorate-anniversary/102669896?fbclid=IwAR2SMa9twbCcCgpOFuy4Kuw3uES69rkS5uFPZvjKklmDC-PUwzXoWByvn04>



ABA National President Honoured

Australian Bravery Association National President, Mr Andrew Kendall OAM, was honoured to receive his Medal of the Order of Australia from His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC FTSE (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, at an investiture ceremony at Government House in Canberra.



ABA member Keith Banks BM - on the Traitor TV series (Ch.10).

[https://thetraitors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Traitors_\(Australia\)/Season_2](https://thetraitors.fandom.com/wiki/The_Traitors_(Australia)/Season_2)

aspenmedical
www.aspenmedical.com

WYNDHAM CRUISES
www.wyndhamcruises.com.au



Australian Government
 Royal Australian Mint
www.ramint.gov.au

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT TO THE AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY ASSOCIATION

The Australian Bravery Association Incorporated (ABN 69 283 023 920) is a Registered Charity and Donations over \$2 are Tax Deductible.



Direct Debit

Donations to the Australian Bravery Association can be made via direct debit to the account below.

Bank: Westpac
Account Name: Australian Bravery Association
BSB: 034122
Account Number: 688064
Reference: Reason for donation
 (e.g., ABA Brave Youth of the Year) and your name/details.

PayPal or Secure Credit Card through PayPal

Donations to the Australian Bravery Association can be made via Paypal. Please leave a note with a donation if it is for a particular cause.

Cheque

Cheques should be made out to the **Australian Bravery Association** and posted to the National Treasurer. Please include a covering letter with your name and the reason for the donation.

Postage details are:

Brenda Cochrane
 National Treasurer
 Australian Bravery Association
 PO Box 127, Bundaberg QLD 4670
 Email: ABANationalTreasurer@gmail.com

ABA BENEVOLENT FUND

The purpose of the Benevolent Fund is to assist ABA members who are experiencing financial hardship to attend one of the ABA events held around Australia.

A volunteer sub-committee has been selected and endeavours to identify recipients, a process is then followed to work out with the recipient what may be required. Recipients of the fund remain anonymous.

Members are encouraged to get in touch with the Committee Chair Jim Preston if they become aware of one our members who are doing it tough and could use a bit of help.

Email: ABANewsEditor@gmail.com