



Robyn Collins
General Manager



Thank you for your warm welcome at the annual CCWA and RSL NSW State Congresses in May. It was wonderful to meet so many people who join together to support veterans and their families.

Please contact me if you would like me to speak at a meeting – every opportunity to meet sub-Branch and Women's Auxiliary members is valuable and a chance to learn about your concerns and needs.

As highlighted in last month's column, we will now be providing you with statistics in a number of our key areas. We know you understand that we cannot provide detailed information on our clients and can only share the stories of those who feel comfortable for us to tell them.

In April:

- DefenceCare received 264 calls for help, bringing the total to the end of April to 1662;
- Of the calls for assistance, 109 were for help with DVA Entitlements and claims; 34 were calls about appeals to the VRB; 72 were calls for counselling, financial help and other community support; and 49 were for other assistance;
- A total of 15 new claims were submitted to the DVA and 16 claims were finalised;
- At the end of April we had 188 open cases at the Veterans' Review Board;
- Community support active clients totaled 216, increasing by 15%.

As the 100 year anniversary of the start of WWI is upon us, we remember those who fought in such difficult circumstances and the families who remained behind, hoping and waiting.

Many Australian families were impacted by the Great War and sadly, unlike today, there was less help for returning veterans and families in crisis. It is heart-warming to know that support has improved over the years and organisations like DefenceCare have come from the RSL family to support the Defence community in times of need.

PEOPLE WE HAVE HELPED

... a veteran Navy medic

Hannah's career in the Royal Australian Navy has led her on many journeys, including a struggle with generalised anxiety disorder, major depression and PTSD. DefenceCare has been able to assist Hannah along the way with support during treatment, as well as helping with her Entitlements' claim.



Enlisting at the age of 19 to bring together her love of the water and a desire for a medical career, Hannah served for eight years and undertook multiple deployments.

Hannah considers herself fortunate to be posted as a SMNMED on HMAS Sydney. This was an experience of a life time, even though she had to survive on American sweet bread and they ran out of vegemite.

Being deployed for the second and third times, although fulfilling, were less enjoyable. This led to the beginning of Hannah's struggle with anxiety and depression. While serving on various deployments, Hannah left behind both her biological family and navy family, who she grew to love as sisters and brothers.

Transition to civilian life has been very positive for Hannah, which she credits primarily to DefenceCare and her wonderful friends who have supported her.

"At first I had some difficult hurdles. However, once DefenceCare Entitlements Adviser Melissa came into my life, everything just fell into place. She helped me with my DVA claim and with everything I needed to do before my actual discharge date. She constantly checked up on me and gave me supportive and caring advice. I also had a huge roller coaster of emotions while being subject to medication changes; however, Melissa was always there to help me put things in perspective."

... a WWII veteran's family

Clive McCall and his wife Catherine Joy courted for three years after Clive came back from WWII.

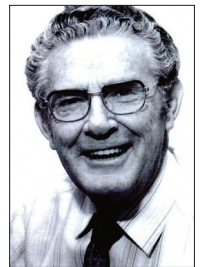
The couple were married for 63 years and had five children, 13 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Sadly, Clive passed away on 3 September 2013. He was 88 years old.

Clive served in the 2/43rd Infantry Battalion 9th Division and was posted to Borneo, but never talked about the Army with his wife. At times Joy knew he was affected.

She recalls once, they went to the movies and there was a big bang; he was shaken and shell-shocked. As a result of his service, Clive suffered tremors when he was standing. Clive hated shaking and the tremors got worse over time. He had to give up lawn bowls and games at the club – he truly missed the men's company.

One day Clive's young grandson Joel asked him what it was like in the Army.

"When I was 18 I joined the Army or AIF, Australian Infantry Forces. I was shipped away to HMS Gorgon and landed in Hollandia, in Dutch New Guinea, which was the headquarters base. I was disappointed to learn that I was only



doing clerical work and requested to be transferred to a combat battalion. I was then transferred to the Allied Military Base in Morotai and again to the 2/43rd Infantry Battalion 9th Division.

“Looking out to the harbour, I could see all types of ships. It was like something out of the movies.

“With my headquarters knowledge, I knew we were headed for Borneo. From there we landed on Labuan, north of Borneo . . . we were supposed to land on the beach, but the landing officer feared it was being mined. We were let off in waist deep water where we waded to the beach with some difficulty as we had to hold our guns above our heads. We proceeded to secure the airstrip. From there we gradually fought our way to the other side of the island.

“Having completed this mission we travelled by landing craft to British North Borneo and Beaufort. We were not told of our mission but later found out we were heading for Ranau. The Japanese had a prison camp of allied forces including Australian troops. By this time, there were only three survivors....”

DefenceCare helped Catherine in getting a war widow's pension and gold card. “If I did not have a gold card, I could not get Clive into the war graves area at Botany Cemetery. I think Clive earned that privilege. It also means I could be buried next to him when it is my time.” The war widow's pension will also allow Catherine to pay for everyday expenses now that she is living alone.

DEFENCECARE TO BENEFIT FROM DIGGER'S VEST SALES

To commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC, the iconic sheepskin vest first made in 1914 has been reproduced and called the Digger's Vest.

The vest comes in a range of colours and finishes and can be personalised by adding a commemorative patch

WOMEN'S AUXILIARIES' LEST WE FORGET QUILT RAFFLE TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE



Tickets now on sale for the 'Lest We Forget Quilt', a handmade patchwork quilt celebrating 100 years of Australian Defence Forces. The quilt is the loving work of members of the NSW RSL Women's Auxiliaries. Tickets \$2. All proceeds to DefenceCare to help veterans and their families in crisis. Drawn 1/11/2014. Proudly supported by Ingleburn RSL Club. Tickets: Pauline 0416 247 635.



DefenceCare
Always there

www.defencecare.org.au



containing the service details of a much loved soldier. To view more please logon to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Diggers-Vest> or <http://www.mortels.com.au/shop/home.php?cat=37>

HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR NEW DVA CARD?

DVA Australia is issuing new cards to all current card holders during June 2014. Current card holders are asked to contact DVA if they don't receive their new card by mid July 2014. DVA providers will continue to accept old cards until the expiry date shown on the card.

MEDICAL ALARMS REGISTER

The NBN is being currently rolled out across Australia. Not all existing medical alarms are compatible with the NBN,

and some alarm providers have not yet adopted products more suitable for a fully digital environment. As such, there is a risk that medical alarm users will be left with alarms that will not work.

Further information about the medical alarm register can be found at: www.nbnco.com.au/medical-alarm-register-faqs.html.

VETERAN HEALTH CARE SURVEY

A reminder to veterans aged over 55 to complete a survey on their experiences with mainstream health services. You can complete the survey whether or not you receive DVA benefits. The results will help to ensure the best possible health care is available to veterans in the future. The online survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/

DAMIEN THOMLINSON

After losing both his legs in a bomb explosion in Afghanistan in 2009, Special Forces soldier **Damien Thomlinson** was determined not only to survive, but to meet life head on.

By all medical accounts he should have been dead, but he fought back against his injuries with perseverance, strength and a true Aussie larrikin spirit. Within six weeks of his accident, Thomlinson was standing on two new prosthetic legs, and later went on to complete the gruelling Kokoda Track.

Damien's story has been featured on *60 Minutes*, *Sunday Night*, *Sunrise*, *Studio 10* and more, and in 2013 he released his autobiography *Without Warning: A Soldier's Extraordinary Journey*, now a bestseller.

Damien uses his public profile to raise awareness and funds for the families of fallen and injured, and in 2014 became a national ambassador for the RSL and the public face of the Minute of Silence campaign.

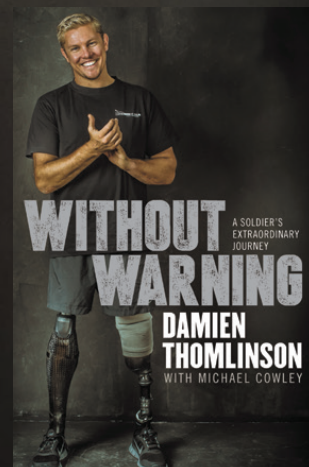
Today Damien is one of Australia's most prolific and inspiring public speakers, with his experiences, irresistibly positive attitude and passion for life inspiring people of all ages.

Learn more about Damien at www.damien-thomlinson.com

'A remarkable young man. Unstoppable.'

Ray Martin

• **CHANGE** • **DETERMINATION**
• **ADVERSITY** • **LEADERSHIP**



Damien is available for public speaking, with a special speaking rate for RSL sub-branches. This includes March-April 2015 for Anzac Day Centenary commemorations. To discuss this opportunity please contact David Wolf on 0411 111 787 or david.wolf@closercommunications.com.au

Damien is a proud national ambassador for RSL and DefenceCare

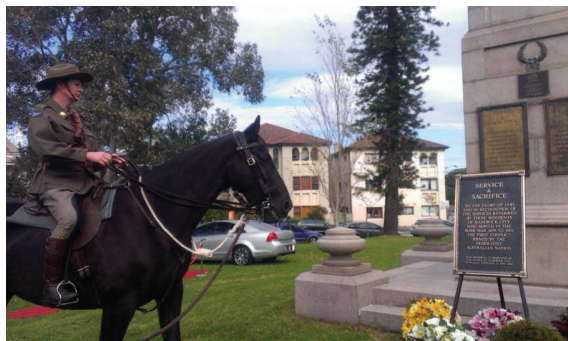


VeteranHealthCare

If you know someone who is not online but would like to complete the survey, please call or email Frances Russell 02 8978 4376 or frances.russell@acu.edu.au for a paper version.

OUT AND ABOUT WITH DEFENCECARE

NSW RSL State congress - attending the 98th Annual State Congress of The RSL NSW from May 26-28, in



Coffs Harbour NSW, on the Monday we presented the annual Health and Wellbeing Seminar.

The 8th Annual Commemoration Service -

DefenceCare attended this service honoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Servicemen and Servicewomen at the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney on May 30, also providing an information stall.

Coming events - All things military 2014; Veterans' Ex-Service and Services Expo – October 18, Singleton Centenary Celebration World War One – November 8, Ingleburn RSL

CONTACT US

DefenceCare. Always there.

DefenceCare is a charity helping current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in times of injury, illness and crisis. DefenceCare is part of RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution and is a Tier 1 RSL NSW recognised charity. ABN: 61 603 206 488.

DGR: 752 766 491. CFN: 12317.

If you would like to discuss how DefenceCare can assist you and your family, please contact us.

ANZAC House, 245 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 8088 0388 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm). Fax: 9261 4558

Email: defencecare@rslnsw.org.au

Website: www.defencecare.org.au

Facebook: DefenceCare

Twitter: DefenceCare

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

WOOLGOOLGA

On Saturday April 12, Josephine Marie Macqueen (Jo) was awarded Life Honorary Membership of the NSW Women's Auxiliary. Jo has been a member of the Woolgoolga RSL Women's Auxiliary since 1986. She has put every spare moment into an organisation close to her heart, as her husband Lochie is a returned serviceman.

Jo held the position of Secretary from 1998 to 2009 and has been the Treasurer of the North Coast District Welfare Group, a position she held for five years.

Jo continues to support the Women's Auxiliary with her crafty handiwork and the sale of raffle tickets, poppies and ANZAC day merchandise. She is tireless in her passion to assist the veteran community but is concerned that the organisation may fold due to a lack of members. Any member of the



Treasurer Joy Hussey (right) presenting Jo Macqueen with her Life Honorary Membership Badge

Woolgoolga Returned Services Club Ltd may join the Women's Auxiliary. The organisation meets every second Saturday of the month at 10:30am. After the meeting the women join the men of the sub-Branch for a BBQ and drinks. Anyone interested in joining should contact the current Secretary (Lyn) on 6649 2739 or 0418 324 778.

TAMWORTH

After 78 years service to the Tamworth ex-service community, the Tamworth RSL Women's Auxiliary has been

wound up. In recent years the group has struggled to attract new members and the last few survivors voted to call it a day. Begun in 1936, the Auxiliary has provided invaluable financial and volunteer support to the sub-Branch for over three quarters of a century and their contribution will be sorely missed. On Sunday 27th May the Sub-Branch hosted a special luncheon for the remaining members and President Bob Chapman thanked them all for their selfless years of service. The longest serving member present was Mrs. Elizabeth Michell who served continuously from 1955. Each of the ladies was presented with a bouquet of flowers as a small token of gratitude and all have been accepted as Affiliate members of the sub-Branch. Photo courtesy of The Northern Daily Leader.

Sandra Lambkin
Publicity Officer