

Vet News

Vietnam Veterans Day 2022

The annual Austin Health Vietnam Veterans Service was unable to go ahead this year due to the winter surge of COVID-19 cases. However, we had the opportunity to place wreaths and flowers in our Remembrance Garden to mark this significant event. Austin Health CEO Adam Horsburgh met with Veteran Liaison Robert Winther to pay their respects. They were joined by former Ward 17 staff – Andy Black, Kay Jackson and Lesley Crowley. Helen Donaldson, St Johns Ambulance, was also in attendance.



Above: (L-R) Andy Black, Kay Jackson, Adam Horsburgh, Lesley Crowley, Robert Winther and Helen Donaldson at the Vietnam Memorial (pictured right), Remembrance Garden, Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

2/14th Battalion Association



In August each year we have a service to commemorate the 2/14th Battalion and, in particular, Private Bruce Kingsbury, V.C.

Pte Kingsbury was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was the first Victorian to win a V.C. in the Second World War; the first Australian to win the honour in the South-West Pacific area or on Australian Territory. Pte Kingsbury was posthumously awarded this honour following the Battle of Isurava, WWII on 29 August 1942. Kingsbury rushed forward firing his Bren light machine-gun from the hip through terrific machine gun fire, succeeding in clearing a path through the enemy for the platoon; a courageous action which made it possible to recapture the position. He continued on, still sweeping the enemy positions with his Bren light machine-gun and inflicting an extremely high number of casualties on the enemy, but he was killed by a sniper.

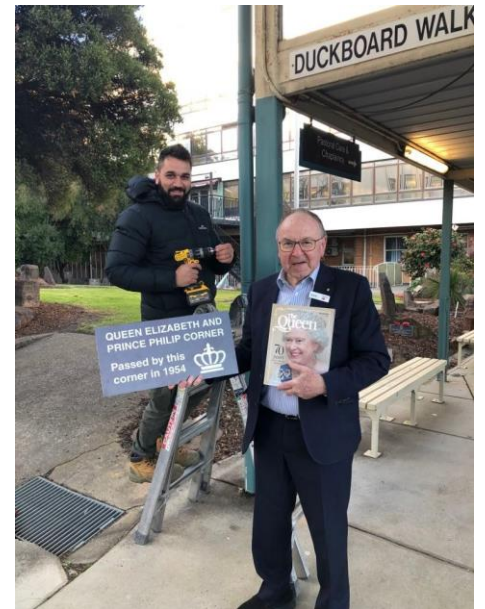
We laid a wreath and poppies (L) in lieu of a Service this year.

Behind the Scenes

We have endured the difficulties of recent years and have had many projects developing in the background which includes the following:

- Upgrade of Duckboard Walk;
- Colour Patch Museum storage re fit;
- Lighting of mosaics and flagpole;
- Shadow artwork;
- Furphy Garden renewal; and
- Installation of Heritage signage.

In the picture (right), Robert Winther is assisting with the installation of the Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip Corner sign - marking the site on which the couple passed by in 1954.



Other significant sites on the Repatriation Campus have been acknowledged with signage.

Pictured left is Murray McCheyne, Security Officer at Austin Health and is located at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, holding the RAN Lane signage that will be a match for the RAAF Lane which was installed a few years ago. The RAN Lane was constructed during the COVID years so that people attending for vaccination could walk in safety from the nearby car park. Murray has a strong interest in the Navy through family connections and he suggested the name.

Remembrance Day Preparation

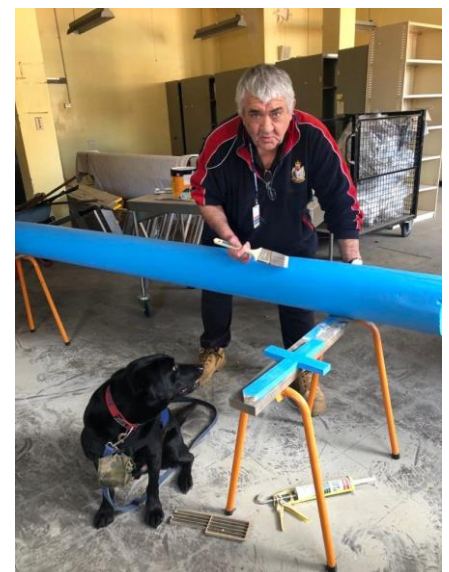
Plans are well underway for the Austin Health Remembrance Day Service which will be held on Friday 11 November in the Remembrance Garden. Don Hughes has been busily preparing a Ribbon Pole which commemorates 75 years of Australian Peacekeeping. This will join other poles already placed in the Garden. Along with the pole, we will also have a plaque unveiling.

More than 66,000 Australian men and women have served in more than 60 international peace keeping operations since 1947, and tragically 16 have lost their lives whilst serving.

A commemorative service was held at the Australian Peace Keeping memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra on 14 September 2022. The prepared pole was placed in the garden on 14 September by patients in Ward 17. It now awaits Remembrance Day.

It will be lovely to have this service return to our garden setting this year.

Don Hughes with his trusty service dog Zeus (L), putting an additional coat of paint on the ribbon pole.



30 Years Ago - Repat

A recent discovery of a document dated December 1992, highlights the principal issues of the Repat at that time. In preparation for amalgamation with the Austin Hospital in 1995, these were some of the matters discussed:

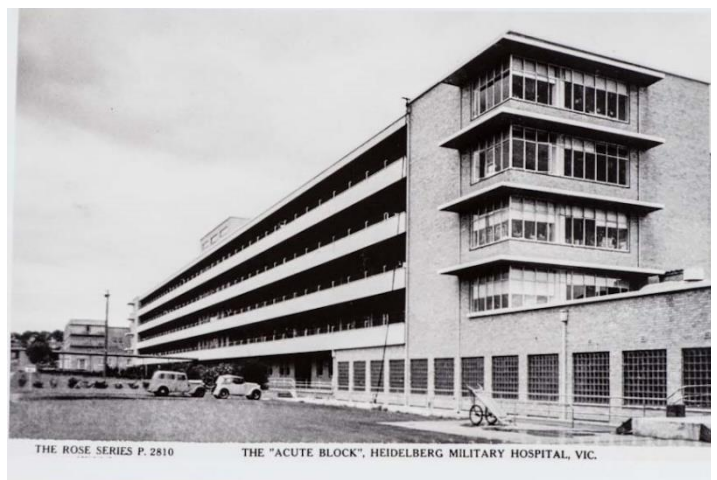
- The new Radiotherapy Centre
- First Veterans' Health Week where a Tea Dance was conducted in the Red Cross Centre
- The renovation of the Emergency Department
- The installation of new telephone switchboard
- Arrangements made for a written history of the hospital to begin
- The construction of a new store
- The expansion of the hospital linen service, including the addition of the Royal Melbourne Hospital as a client
- The 6th Annual Fun Day had raised a combined \$120,000 over the years it was held
- Wards 15 & 16 had been converted to accommodate the transfer of patients from Macleod Repatriation Hospital when it closed
- The Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Hour on Community Radio aired its 100th episode
- A new Metropolitan Fire Brigade Station was commissioned on the corner of Bell & Edwin Streets
- A Metropolitan Ambulance facility commenced on site
- The Post Office on site, now the Repat Café, celebrated its 3rd anniversary of relocation
- There were 491 beds, 2000 staff, a budget of \$115 million and the average length of stay for a patient was 6.6 days.

80 Years Ago - Repat

Around this time, in 1942, Centaur Wing was in the final phases of construction. The hospital had opened in 1941, in the Duckboard single storey wards. The brick Nurses Homes had also been completed as, in that era, many staff lived on site. This then left the larger ward block to be completed. Initially it was referred to as the Glass House due to its appearance on its north side. Also referred to as the Acute Block and, eventually, was officially named Centaur Wing after the Hospital Ship that was sunk in 1943.

Over the years the building has had many eras of renovation. In particular, during the 1980's there were many ward updates valued at \$1 million each. There was a period where the First Floor became Darley House Nursing Home and, in more recent times, the Fourth Floor on the east side has been converted to Specialist Clinics. A number of years ago The Surgery Centre was established in the building with a direct link to the Operating Theatres. Currently Level 1 West is being outfitted for general office space. What will the Master Plan bring to the Centaur Wing in the years to come?

Pictured below are military patients outside the soon to be completed Centaur Wing c. 1942, with the completed building pictured right.



Vale

Dr Ron Benson

Former Chief Executive Officer of Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Dr Benson recently passed away, aged 99 years. Ron served in the Air Force as a fighter pilot in World War II and had worked at the hospital for many years.

Joe Shuttleworth

Former Director of Administrative Services and long-time employee of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Joe passed away at the age of 97. Joe served in the RAAF in World War II. He was also part of Bomber Command based in the UK and participated in many bombing raids over Berlin. He was a tail gunner and lost an eye in active service. A book detailing his war experiences "Best of Times, Worst of Times" was launched during the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Olivia Newton-John

Dame Olivia Newton-John holds a special place in our hearts at Austin Health. Her support through the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness and Research Centre has been unwavering since its opening in 2012. Her passing will be widely felt but her life will continue to be celebrated each year with the annual 'Walk for Wellness' held to support the Centre named in her honour.

Queen Elizabeth II



A display has been placed in the Duckboard Function Centre with a range of portraits of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. They visited the hospital in 1954.

**Her Majesty, The Queen
21 April 1926 ~ 8 September 2022**



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