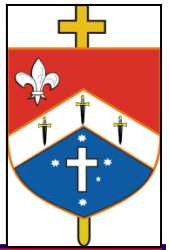


Serving Faithfully

Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services
Published by the Diocesan Curia. Editor: Brigadier Alan Hodges AM, KCSG (Ret'd)

August 2021
Issue #40



Afghanistan



Australian citizens and visa holder evacuees travel to the Australian Defence Force's main operating base in the Middle East region, onboard a Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster III aircraft after leaving Afghanistan.

The vision and reports coming out of Afghanistan are bringing deep distress to many. The implications of the fall of Kabul to the Taliban are socially and politically far reaching and should be the subject of our prayers. Many are experiencing deep frustration, sadness, grief, disillusionment and anger given what is happening in the land where they sacrificed so much.

Reflections

Chaplain Damian Styles:

Service in the Australian Army comes with many layers of commitment. Many Australian Service Men and Woman have served in Afghanistan, including many chaplains who have supported those who serve their nation. The sights that have been seen in Afghanistan in recent weeks may raise many emotions for many people. Not only for those that have served, but also for families, and of course the Afghanistan people.

The news of the fall of Kabul will be taken up differently for all people: opening wounds, concerns and raising questions. This may well leave a painful mark on the hearts of veterans and families who gave so much with the campaign in Afghanistan.

We need to take opportunity to listen to their stories, and recognise the pain, and potentially remember that their service was not in vain. There will be a need to reconcile what the news of the fall of Kabul means to everyone involved.

MAJ Gavin Keating:

I deployed to Afghanistan believing that I was a very modest part of a much larger effort that sought to facilitate lasting peace for the people of Afghanistan.

I worked closely with a senior Afghan National Army officer and came to admire his dedication and commitment to the soldiers he served and his country in general. Lately I have been thinking about his fate, and the fate of his family (of whom he was fiercely protective), given the turmoil in his country.

The world's collective failure to provide lasting peace to

this ravaged country is a reminder that a part of our humanity is inherently flawed and in deep need of the peace and grace that Christians believe can only come from Jesus Christ.

I pray that some of this peace may yet touch the ordinary Afghans who simply want to raise their families and see their children prosper, free from the ravages of war.

LTCOL Stephen Blair:

It is with a degree of melancholy that I watch and read about the scenes currently taking place in Kabul, particularly around the international airport. Thousands of people seeking to flee what is an uncertain, and very likely a very dangerous future for them and their families. A future that might be brutal and repressive, that sweeps away whatever gains might have been made over the past 20 years, particularly for women and girls of Afghanistan.

But it is also a sadness born of the losses of the last 20 years, of Australian servicemen, as well as the loss of life for our Coalition allies. This is not to mention the thousands of Afghans who died as well.

It is not only the loss of life that bears thinking about, but also the thought that, ultimately, it might have been all for nothing. Thousands of dead, trillions of dollars spent, the Taliban are back in control and a new Great Game afoot as Russia and China circle. Time will tell. May God help the people of Afghanistan.

Deacon Gary Stone:

(The editor has abbreviated Padre Stone's text.)

One third of the many veterans involved in Veteran Care Association Inc are Afghan Vets. All of them are experiencing various expressions of grief – sadness, disappointment, withdrawal and anger at the most recent events in Afghanistan. Fascinatingly most thought it was inevitable, even when they were in Afghanistan!

Their consolation is that they did their best to help many people for the time they were there. What they cannot accept is the abandonment of those Afghans who supported them. For many of them this is experienced as betrayal of values and a form of moral injury. This moral injury they carry will not heal until truthfulness prevails and forgiveness is offered.



Evacuees wait to be processed at the evacuee handling centre at Australia's main operating base in the Middle East, following their evacuation from Kabul.



3rd and 17th Brigade members board a RAAF KC-30A Multi-role Tanker aircraft at RAAF Base Townsville on 16 August in support of Australia's evacuation mission in Afghanistan.

Loving God

In this time of despair, as we watch the suffering of the people of Afghanistan, we humbly ask that the efforts of all who worked for peace in this war-ravaged country will not ultimately be in vain.

We implore you to provide your comfort to our countrymen and women who served in Afghanistan, and the families and friends of those who did not return, as they struggle to reconcile their service and sacrifices with the current chaos in the country. Grant your protection to those Afghans who supported our troops and officials as they seek asylum and to those tasked to assist them in doing so.

We pray especially for those Afghans who will remain behind and whose fate remains so uncertain at this time. May your mercy be upon them.

We ask these things in Christ's name.

Amen.



Australian citizens and visa holders prepare to board the Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster III aircraft, as Australian Army infantry personnel provide security and assist with cargo at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul.

Intercessions

LORD, we pray for:

The people of Afghanistan – those fleeing in fear, for women and families, for those who have assisted Western forces, and the minority tribes.

The 36,000 veterans who have deployed to Afghanistan over the last 20 years and for those family members who have lost loved ones or who have had loved ones wounded or emotionally affected in some way. Despite what occurs in Afghanistan now, pray that they may know we are thankful for their service and sacrifice.

The safety of our ADF members currently deployed/deploying to evacuate Australian and Afghan citizens.

Wisdom for the Government and Defence leaders as they determine what to do about evacuating Australians and those who helped Australia out of the country.



A child evacuee from Kabul, Afghanistan transits to her room at a temporary camp in Australia's main operating base in the Middle East. (This image has been digitally altered - privacy)

Page 1 & 2 images from Department of Defence

Serving Faithfully

is a newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services.

It is published quarterly by the Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia.

The Diocese comprises members of the Australian Defence Force and their families, wherever they may be serving.

Its people are scattered widely across Australia and overseas.

Serving Faithfully aims to be a means of sharing events and experiences from across the whole Diocese.

Articles are welcome to be submitted for publication to The Chancery, Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia

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Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Catholic Ordinariate of the Australian Military Services

Pope Francis on War

On the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Pope Francis said to thousands of pilgrims in St Peter's Square, 'I join in the unanimous worry about the situation in Afghanistan. I ask you to pray along with me to the God of peace so that the clamour of weapons ends and that solutions can be found around a table of dialogue. He also said that only this way can the 'battered population of that country – men, women, elderly and children' be able to 'return to their own homes, and live in peace and security, in total mutual respect'.

Modern popes have been clear voices for peace, but Pope Francis is moving closer to a broad embrace of nonviolence and a declaration that modern warfare is so deadly and sophisticated that the traditional 'just war' theories cannot apply.

In a new book, he has urged each and every person to recognise that there is, in fact, something they can do to promote peace.

'Indifference is an accomplice of war,' Francis wrote.

The Vatican publishing house June 28 released *Peace on Earth: Fraternity is Possible*, a collection of Pope Francis' words and speeches on the importance of praying and working for peace.

The volume closes with a chapter he wrote specifically for the book, highlighting the role each person can play in promoting peace, but also moving closer to adopting a stance of total nonviolence.

Already in *Fratelli Tutti*, on Fraternity and Social Friendship, he questioned whether in modern warfare any conflict could be judged a 'just war' because proportionality and the protection of civilians seem to be difficult if not impossible to guarantee.

'We can no longer think of war as a solution because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits,' one of the main criteria of just-war theory, he wrote in the document. 'In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a just war. Never again war!'

In the new book, Francis said nations and groups too easily turn to war, using 'any kind of excuse,' including claiming they are attacking another as a humanitarian, defensive or preventative measure, 'even resorting to the manipulation of information' to support their argument.

On the issue of nonviolence, Francis noted that when Jesus was about to be arrested, he did not claim a right to self-defence and even told the disciple who drew a sword to defend him, 'Put your sword back into its sheath.'

'The words of Jesus resound clearly today, too,' he wrote. 'Life and goodness cannot be defended with the 'sword.''

In the Gospel of Luke's version of the story, Jesus tells his disciples, 'Stop, no more of this!'

'Jesus' sorrowful and strong, 'No more,' goes beyond the centuries and reaches us. It is a commandment we cannot avoid,' Francis wrote. 'No more' swords, weapons, violence, war. In that 'No more' there is an echo of the ancient commandment, 'Thou shall not kill.'

'How can there be Christians with a sword in their hand?' he asked. 'How can there be Christians who manufacture 'swords' that others will use to kill?'

'Listening to the passionate plea of the Lord means to stop selling weapons and considering only one's own economic interests,' the pope said. 'There are no justifications for this, even if jobs will be lost with the end of arms sales.'

Another major obstacle on the road to peace, he wrote, is living 'with wars as if they were inevitable.'

Especially in countries that are not at war, people's awareness of armed conflict and its brutality can grow dim, he said. The only time they seem to notice is with the arrival of refugees, who he called 'witnesses of war, painful "ambassadors" of the unheard demand for peace.'

Limiting the suffering caused by war, he wrote, means welcoming refugees and listening to their pain-filled stories.

Francis recalled how, when India was facing widespread famine in 1966, St Paul VI said, 'No one today can say, I didn't know.'

And while most people are not government leaders or diplomats with the power to stop a war, neither can they just act as if they did not know something horrible was going on, he said. They must exert pressure on their governments to intervene, to stop arms sales and 'demand a policy of peace.'

On a smaller, but more concrete level, Francis said, 'conflicts are prevented with the daily search for fraternity,' which everyone can and should be involved in forging.

Such kinship is not simply a feeling, he wrote, but a practice, one that works to make sure that everyone in a community, city, region, nation and continent feels welcomed, valued and involved in building society.

'Peace starts with not hating, not excluding, not discriminating against, not leaving anyone on their own,' he said.

But prayer also is essential, he wrote. 'To pray is to protest war in front of God. Never stop asking the Lord with faith and insistence for the end of conflict. Our prayer gives voice to the lament of the people impacted by every war.'

'We cannot accept resignation to wars being a daily companion of humanity,' he said. 'We cannot accept that so many children grow up under the shadow of conflict. We must say 'No more' to war.'

Based on 'No More War: Pope continues his teaching on Gospel nonviolence' by Cindy Wooden, National Catholic Reporter, 29 June 2021.



Pope Francis releases a dove as a sign of peace outside the Basilica of St. Nicholas after meeting with the leaders of Christian churches in Bari, Italy, 7 July 2018.

Donations

The sources of income for the Military Diocese are very limited, and have reduced significantly during the past year:

- ♦ All dioceses and parishes have been affected by the closure of churches as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, some generous donations previously received from other dioceses have not been possible.
- ♦ The Knights of the Southern Cross undertake annual fundraising to support the education and continuing development of Chaplains and Deacons at their annual conference, but that was cancelled last year.
- ♦ Our chaplains continue to donate selflessly a proportion of their salary.
- ♦ We have received continuing donations from supporters, but these are about half of normal expectations.

If you would like to support the Military Diocese with tax-deductable donations you can make a direct bank transfer to the Armed Services Catholic Diocese BSB: 062 786 ACCOUNT No: 18662.

Would you please contact the Chancery on 02 6248 0511 or email sec@cmoa.org.au so that a receipt can be provided.



UPDATE ON THE PLENARY COUNCIL: The Line of Departure has been Crossed!

Between 17-19 June the four members of the Catholic Military Ordinariate called to the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia (Monsignor Peter O'Keefe, Monsignor Stuart Hall, Monsignor Glynn Murphy and Major Gavin Keating) completed online formation (training in military speak) in preparation for the First Assembly in October.

A particularly important development during this first formation period was the release of the Council's agenda grouped under the six themes of **Conversion, Prayer, Formation, Structures, Governance and Institutions**. The themes have been prefixed by what could be called the Plenary Council's 'mission statement':

As children of God, disciples of Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Members of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia are called to develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia at this time.

COVID19 has seriously impacted the format for the upcoming first session of the Plenary Council, which will take place 3-10 October this year. A key change in the delivery of the First General Assembly is that it will now be totally online with one person on one device at their home.

The ACBC confirmed its decision in early August after the recommendation was raised by the Steering Team due to the growing State and Territory closures and restrictions due to COVID-19. Each bishop has been given the option to host a gathering of local members at a meeting point in their diocese if this is possible.

At the time of *Serving Faithfully* going to press, COVID permitting, Archbishop Christopher as Apostolic Administrator of the Ordinariate is proposing that all local members (formerly known as 'delegates') gather daily at 0800 in St Christopher's Cathedral Canberra for Mass and prayers. Hopefully others too can attend by then. These events will be live streamed for the Archdiocese and the Ordinariate. At approximately 1000 the local members will return to their homes and then participate in each session on their devices.

Plenary sessions will commence daily at 1100, allowing Western Australia to connect, and they will be live streamed to the 280 members across Australia. The Steering Team is currently organising these finer details.

So local parishes can share and support the Plenary process. Liturgical resources will be distributed to all dioceses in due course. In the Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese it has also been suggested that a Novena be offered in the nine days leading up to the start of the Plenary Assembly. The Ordinariate could also take this opportunity to participate.

The language of the Plenary Assembly and its agenda reflects Pope Francis' strong emphasis on discernment and synodality that is, 'walking together' and walking with the Holy Spirit while exercising 'communal listening and discerning'. It would be helpful for people to read the Holy Father's most recent publication 'Let Us Dream'. In this short (149 pages) and very-readable literary offering, the Pope says: 'To enter into discernment is to resist the urge to seek the apparent relief of an immediate decision, and instead be willing to hold different options before the Lord...' (p. 21).

The 'So What?' for the Military Ordinariate

A favourite question posed by military instructors teaching students about planning is: '**So What?**'

This is a pertinent question when it comes to the Plenary Council's relevance to the Military Ordinariate. The opening section of the Plenary Council's working document, *Instrumentum Laboris*, provides a useful snapshot of the situation facing the Catholic Church in contemporary Australia. Among many issues are the facts that our society is growing increasingly secular and multicultural and that trust in the institutional Church has been severely undermined by the revelations of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse.

Despite these challenges the Church continues to play an important role in many parts of our national life, including in the provision of education, health and social services. The Church in Australia, like the Universal Church, is also remarkably diverse.

Vatican Council II was based on Catholicism's ongoing need to 'read the signs of the times' and the Plenary Council's focus on discernment very much operates within this tradition.

The national situation outlined in *Instrumentum Laboris* is broadly applicable to the Military Ordinariate's own situation. The Ordinariate is, however, a particularly specialised entity within the wider Church in Australia. In fulfilling its role of providing Catholic chaplaincy support to the Australian Defence Force it exists as a geographically-dispersed organisation whose chaplains work with a degree of independence unusual for their civilian counterparts.

The Ordinariate's future, as it awaits the appointment of a new bishop and responds to the changing chaplaincy requirements of the ADF, makes 'listening to what the Spirit is saying' very pertinent to its current situation. Its unique existence also means that the Military Ordinariate can provide some special perspectives on how a more missionary, Christ-centred Church can be created in Australia at this time. A few issues worthy of further consideration include:

Conversion:

How can the presence and experience of Catholic chaplains within the ADF help the Church become more missionary and further its work of evangelisation? Can the multi-denominational and multi-faith environment in which they work assist the Church in reaching out to other parts of society to assist those who have been left behind or who are marginalised?

Formation:

The military provides Catholic chaplains with exposure to a robust command, leadership and management culture. How can this experience aid in the formation of the wider Church's

leaders?

The Ordinariate is making increasing use of deacons and lay pastoral associates (including women) as chaplains. Can this experience be useful to the Church in Australia as it faces declining vocations to the priesthood?

National Catholic Structures:

How can the Ordinariate work more effectively with the parishes located in garrison towns which have a large percentage of military personnel and their families? Can better cooperation assist in further enabling the faith of serving members?

Inter-diocesan Support:

How can the national resources of the Catholic Church best support the work of the Military Ordinariate across Australia? The Ordinariate is particularly reliant on civilian dioceses for the provision of priests to serve as chaplains. Can the wider Church support the Ordinariate in other ways? How?

If you have any thoughts about these issues, or would like to add to them, please email plenary.council@cmoa.org.au. Your ideas would be very welcome.

Plenary Council: Detailed Agenda

CONVERSION

- ◆ How might we better accompany one another on the journey of personal and communal conversion which mission in Australia requires?
- ◆ How might we heal the wounds of abuse, coming to see through the eyes of those who have been abused?
- ◆ How might the Church in Australia open in new ways to Indigenous ways of being Christian in spirituality, theology, liturgy, and missionary discipleship? How might we learn from the First Nations peoples?
- ◆ How might the Church in Australia meet the needs of the most vulnerable, go to the peripheries, be missionary in places that may be overlooked or left behind in contemporary Australia? How might we partner with others (Christians, people of other faiths, neighbourhood community groups, governments) to do this?
- ◆ How might the Church in Australia respond to the call to 'ecological conversion'? How can we express and promote a commitment to an 'integral ecology of life' in all its dimensions, with particular attention to the more vulnerable people and environments in our country and region?

PRAYER

- ◆ How might we become a more contemplative people, committing more deeply to prayer as a way of life, and celebrating the liturgy of the Church as an encounter with Christ who sends us out to "make disciples of all the nations"?
- ◆ How might we better embrace the diverse liturgical traditions of the Churches which make up the Catholic Church and the cultural gifts of immigrant communities to enrich the spirituality and worship of the Church in Australia?

FORMATION

- ◆ How might we better form leaders for mission – adults, children and families, couples and single people?
- ◆ How might we better equip ordained ministers to be enablers of missionary discipleship: the Church becoming more a 'priestly people' served by the ordained ministry?
- ◆ How might formation, both pre- and post-ordination, better foster the development of bishops, priests and deacons as enablers of the universal Christian vocation to holiness lived in missionary discipleship?



STRUCTURES

- ◆ How might parishes better become local centres for the formation and animation of missionary disciples?
- ◆ How might the Church in Australia be better structured for mission, considering the parish, the diocese, religious orders, the PJPs and new communities?

GOVERNANCE

- ◆ How might the People of God, lay and ordained, women and men, approach governance in the spirit of synodality and co-responsibility for more effective proclamation of the Gospel?
- ◆ How might we recast governance at every level of the Church in Australia in a more missionary key?

INSTITUTIONS

- ◆ How might we better see the future of Catholic education (primary, secondary and tertiary) through a missionary lens?
- ◆ How might we better see the future of Catholic social services, agencies and health and aged care ministries as key missionary and evangelising agencies?

For further information see the Plenary Council website:

<https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>

You can subscribe to the **Plenary Post** by providing contact details at the bottom of the Council web pages and so receive a regular update email on the Council.



I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.'

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 27

A Commanding Officer's view of a new Padre

LTCOL Steve Young

Whenever one of your key staff changes in a Battalion, you have feelings of trepidation and optimism. When I was told in late 2020 that Army would provide me with a Catholic priest (I was raised a Methodist), of Chinese origins, freshly transferred from the Army reserve, the scales were tipped in favour of trepidation.

My nerves were ill placed.

Chaplain Feng has come to the 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion and immediately endeared himself to us all.

A padre's key challenge is to be known and trusted. On our recent field exercise Chaplain Feng cemented his presence in the Battalion with his curiosity and enthusiasm. He dug with my soldiers, put up camouflage netting with my soldiers, and played cards with my soldiers. In this way they saw him and got to know him as man and trust him as a confidant and guide. Even my somewhat gnarled warrant officers have warmed to him. Chaplain Feng's love of people is demonstrable and authentic.



Fr Xiang - Field Chapel Service



Fr Xiang - CO's tent become a chapel

When tragedy struck one of our soldier's families he was right with me as I delivered devastating news, providing comfort with words and with silence. He also had the presence of mind to recognise that the delivery of bad news is difficult and checked in on both myself and my Regimental Sergeant Major. There was significant wisdom in his words and his sharing of personal experience.

On Sunday in the field, he ran a lovely service, turning my CO's tent into his chapel complete with his hand-made cross. There was an excellent turnout of both the devout and those simply wanting to show him their respect and support.

Chaplain Feng is a great shepherd and his flock, the Battalion I command, is better for him being here. I am a better commanding officer for having him at my side.

LTCOL Young is Commanding Officer of the 3rd Combat Service Support Battalion.

My Vietnam Protest

Annals Issue 5 had a short article about the Vietnamese Government confiscating the parish church of Thanh Quang to convert it into a museum.



This sad story starting me reflecting on my involvement in Vietnam.

As a youngster, I wanted to be a pilot. Probably like most would-be pilots, I wanted to fly for an airline. An airline captain seemed, in my mind, pretty close to God. My dream was not based on financial reward but on a boy's hero perceptions.

The air force taught how to fly and paid well at the same time. This seem the best way to an airline career. I didn't realise then that the flying the air force offered was so much more professionally rewarding that I would never again consider the airlines.

I joined the air force to learn to fly, to eventually become an airline pilot, not to fight in Vietnam, a country I had heard little about. However, with no choice, I was posted to Iroquois helicopters as part of the first group of four pilots posted directly from pilot's course to helicopters.

When I joined 9 Squadron on helicopters in Vietnam in March 1967, I was like most other 20-year-olds: keen, excited and eager to get on with it. But my eagerness changed direction. From eager to prove myself as a pilot I became eager to defend a beautiful people from unspeakable horrors.

I saw the results of those nights of torture inflicted on the

men, women (particularly) and children who had fled North Vietnam, often as whole Catholic communities, so they could continue to practice their faith in the south.

And we allowed this to happen. We allowed the so-called Vietnam protestors to lose the war and condemn these people to often lifelong misery. These protestors saw nothing of the sufferings of the simple Vietnamese. Not a word of apology have I heard from any of the protestors to the Vietnamese people who fled at the fall of Saigon. Many Catholic Vietnamese in Australia today fled the north for their faith and then fled their country for freedom while suffering awful horrors on the way.

One of the most satisfying missions we used to fly in Vietnam was market day. With the countryside impassable, we would load our helicopters with many more people than seats plus an assortment of pigs, chickens and vegetables and take them to the district market, returning later in the day. Usually we flew with doors open in Vietnam, but with such a diverse cargo we had to close the doors. The smell was something else! It was so bad, one of our otherwise good, Catholic young crewmen was so distressed he threatened mutiny and refused to fly with such a cargo again.

Typical of Australians, soldiers and airmen alike seemed to adopt the Vietnamese people in the same way our soldiers in more recent conflicts do today. As an open, trusting people, we always assumed the best of the Vietnamese, never thinking that any could be so underhand as to carry a concealed grenade or to wish ill of us. And the Vietnamese people responded in kind to this treatment. We all felt as if it were family when news of atrocities meted out to these people started coming in during the 1968 Tet offensive.

By Alastair Bridges, reproduced in Catholic Voice, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 17 August 2021.

To read more about Alastair Bridges and see short videos he recorded on the Anzac Portal go to tinyurl.com/alastairbridges

Onward Christian soldiers and their prayer book



The prayer book Ray Taylor took to World War I

The amazing journey of a prayer book that journeyed to World War I's Western Front; two decades later it comforted a prisoner of the Japanese and ended up in the hand of a soldier bound for Vietnam.

Pint-sized and perforated by bullets, one family's little prayer book was carried into combat by three generations of soldiers across three

theatres of war over half a century.

No bigger than a cigarette packet, the combined Church of England prayer book and hymnal was carried to the front by 20-year-old Raymond Nelson Taylor, a cheesemaker from Bega, shipped off to World War I.

Kept inside a leather Kiwi shoe-shine case, the prayer book was treasured through Tay's service with the 54th Australian Infantry Battalion.

Amid the horrors of the trenches on the Western Front in France and Belgium, Ray's prayer book remained tucked inside the left breast pocket of his uniform.

A gift from his mother upon sailing to Egypt in 1916, she hoped it would keep him safe. It did.

Ray survived the war, along with the prayer book which is now the prized possession of Ray's son, Warren Taylor, of Richardson (ACT).

Warren, 75, is a bookbinder by trade and has made repairs to it over the years.

'It was in a bad way,' Warren said, showing how spent bullets left marks on the front of the thick volume, but didn't penetrate it.

'It's very precious.'

Thumbing through the book's fine pages, which were said to have made 'good cigarette paper', Warren explained that after returning to Australia, his father moved to Queanbeyan NSW, married Amy Daniel in 1932 and raised a family of seven in Hirst Avenue.

'But dad never spoke about the war,' Warren said. 'He would have gone through hell and back, but he never said anything; they didn't back then.'

Two decades later, the prayer book went back into action with Ray's nephew Gordon 'Gus' Henry Bell, a builder from Queanbeyan, who survived with the 2nd AIF during World War II.

When the Japanese army invaded Timor in 1942, Gus and a small band of Australians known as the 'Sparrow Force' took to the hills to fight a guerrilla war.



The prayer book's first owner Ray Taylor with son Warren pictured on Anzac Day 1970 ... a gift from his mother given with the hope of keeping him safe on the Western Front.

Eventually, with little ammunition, the exhaustion of the men and the growing number of casualties, the force was captured and Gus spent the remainder of the war a prisoner.

On arrival at the POW camp, the Australian prisoners were ordered to strip off and throw their belongings into a pile, Warren said.

Fearing the cherished prayer book would be lost forever, Gus pleaded with the Japanese soldier to let him keep the prayer book saying: 'Christian, Christian.'

Expecting to feel the brunt of the rifle, the guard pulled out a crucifix and replied: 'Me Christian too'.

'He let him keep the book,' Warren said. 'Incredible. What are the chances of that happening?'

After some years in a POW camp in Timor and then Java, Gus returned to Queanbeyan 'Stick thin.'

'It must have been a terrible ordeal. He was listed as missing for two years. It wasn't until the prisoners were freed from the camp, once the war was finished, that his family received information that he was alive,' Warren said.

'Despite all the trauma, he was the happiest, funniest and most lively fella. He had an MG sport car but died suddenly in the 2000s.'

The prayer book made its way from father to son.

In 1967, Ray handed the prayer book to Warren who was 21 at the time and conscripted for the Vietnam War.

'On the day I was leaving to go, dad gave me the book,' Warren said.

'It was a lovely gesture and I kept it close to me.'

Well-known in Queanbeyan as a sportsman, Warren served at Nui Dat, Vung Tau and Bein Hoa with the 2nd Battalion reinforcements between 1967 and 1968.

Returning to Queanbeyan, Warren resumed his work as a bookbinder.

But the full impact of his Vietnam war experience was not felt until many years later, when he found himself suffering mental health issues that required hospitalisation.

'I was going to the pub at 10am and I had bad anxiety,' Warren said.

'I kept having really bad dreams; it all got too much.'

Having made peace with his past, Warren went on to march in every Anzac Day service alongside his father until his death in 1985 at age 89.

'We were great mates,' Warren said.

Warren still finds it amazing that something as seemingly insignificant as a small prayer book, survived three wars, and has linked generations of his family.

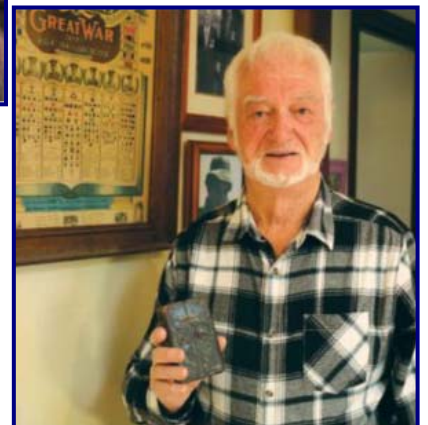
'I used to carry it in the glove box of my car, but not anymore, it's too precious', Warren said. 'It will be loved and cherished forever.'

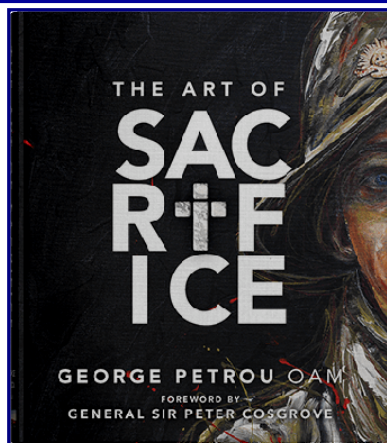
Published with permission from CBR City News, 29 July 2021. Reporter Belinda Strahorn



Gordon 'Gus' Bell of Queanbeyan (Ray Taylor's nephew) who carried the prayer book with him during World War II.

Bookbinder Warren Taylor with the prayer book, which he took to fight in Vietnam.





The *Art of Sacrifice* is a haunting and poignant book by Melbourne artist, George Petrou with a foreword by General Sir Peter John Cosgrove AK, CVO, MC.

Petrou, whose portraits are represented in museums in France, Government House Canberra and a range of military institutions across Australia, said that 'The portraits have some abstraction to free up the subject from total reality'.

The book explores humanity within exceptional

moments in time, complemented by moving words and careful brushwork.

He is a patron for Totally and the Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen & Women's Association of Victoria and he assists in supporting the interests and welfare of ex-servicemen and women, their families and dependants. In June 2020 he was awarded an OAM for 'Services to the Visual Arts and to Veterans'.

The coffee-table book of 425 pages has 70 portraits and 63 stories exploring the idea of valour, of courage, of bravery, and of sacrifice. Each of the portraits is accompanied by story telling, which in many cases required interviewing descendants to provide behind-the-scenes stories for the first time. In this way images of the past and stories of today connect the past with our present. The book covers four areas: Lost Diggers of Vignacourt, The Victoria Cross, Great Australian Stories, and From All Walks of Life.

The first section, *Lost Diggers of Vignacourt*, is based on selected images from 800 photos captured on glass of diggers moving up to and then back from the battlefields on the Somme. For much of the First World War the small French village of Vignacourt was a staging point, casualty clearing station and recreation area.

In the village, Louis Thuillier and his wife Antoinette established a successful business using their attic to take high-quality portraits of diggers. These were captured on glass and printed as postcards using an oil-and-water technique to be sent home for diggers to maintain a fragile link with loved ones in Australia.

The photographs cover many of the significant aspects of Australian involvement on the Western Front, from military life to the

friendships and bonds formed between the soldiers and civilians. These photographs showcase the larrikin in the young Aussie diggers.

The photographs were discovered in 2010. For more information, go to: www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/remember-me

In the second section, *The Victoria Cross*, portraits depict recipients of Australia's highest award for acts of bravery in wartime. Stories are brought to life to celebrate the spirit of our country. Petrou includes Australia's first VC recipient Sir Neville Howse, a man who showed incredible bravery during his service. Australia's greatest frontline soldier, Captain Albert Jacka VC, MC and Bar, is featured, as well as other Australians who similarly embarked on incredible journeys displaying mateship, resilience and a devotion to duty.

The third section, *Great Australian Stories*, includes icons like Charles Kingsford Smith, Nancy Wake, Banjo Paterson and Sir Hubert Wilkins. Petrou captures their self-reliance, their essence and their steel.

The final section, *From All Walks of Life*, includes commissioned portraits and well-known Australians from all walks of life who have served our nation with gallantry and sacrifice.

For more details and to purchase the book go to: georgepetrou.com.au/artofsacrifice



Portrait from *The Art of Sacrifice* of Brigadier General Neville Howse VC, MC and Bar.



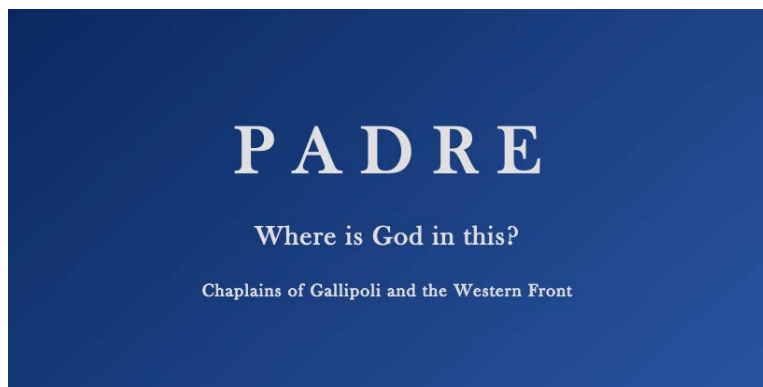
Author and artist George Petrou OAM.

The Chaplains College at the Australian Defence Force Academy has produced a very moving 33-minute documentary

Padre – Where is God in This?

This honours Australian chaplains who served at Gallipoli and the Western Front. To see the video go to:

tinyurl.com/ww1chaplains



A Gift in Your Will

Making a gift to the Catholic Military Ordinariate is a meaningful way to fund the education of future priests and deacons and to support our clergy in providing spiritual guidance to our service men and women and their families.

To make a bequest, you should consult your solicitor or trustee company. It may be sufficient to make an addition or amendment to an existing will by adding a codicil.

A useful website for more information is: includeacharity.com.au