



eNews November 2025

Remembrance and Sacrifice by Chaplain Chris



Chaplain Dexter at Gallipoli

Chaplain Walter Ernest Dexter MC DSO DCM was a volunteer trooper, Anglican minister, and later an enlisted chaplain in the AIF. Having experienced conflict during the South African War (1900–1901), he enlisted in the AIF on 8 September 1914 as a chaplain with the 5th Battalion (later 2nd Brigade, then 1st Division). A colourful character, Dexter loved being among soldiers—remaining close and positioned to serve however he could.

After landing on the Gallipoli peninsula on 17 May 1915, he stayed in the thick of the action—often downplaying the cost of such service. On the sixth occasion he was wounded, he wrote:

“I got a shrapnel bullet on my left elbow. I sat... to get over the pain and then went to my own camp and dressed it there. I don’t want my name to go down as wounded.”

Dexter’s deep love for serving soldiers led him to write later:

“How can I go back to parish work after all this amongst men?”

He felt called by God to be a warm, enthusiastic, and constant presence for those in deep pain and anguish as they faced death daily. In such moments, Simon Peter’s response to Jesus in John’s Gospel likely resonated deeply with him:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68–69)

Knowing Jesus as the Holy One of God—the only real hope he could offer—Dexter bore the weight of sacrificial service by simply being present with the men. It was Christ’s redemptive message that inspired Dexter to live with an embodied hope. He never promised an end to war after the next ceasefire or volley—but he could promise that the Lord was with them in the danger.

As David Gibson reminds us in The Lord of Psalm 23, referencing Psalm 23:4:

“The comfort is the presence of the shepherd in the midst of the danger, rather than the comfort of the removal of danger.”

Dexter’s sacrificial service continues to inspire ministry today - but not just for chaplains but also for the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2.4-9). His embodied hope challenges all of us not to remain in the comfort of the offices or homes but to go—regardless of season, weather, or terrain—and share the good news wherever we can. So whenever any of us are sent anywhere we go as this embodied hope and such hope might be found as unbelievers look to troopers, seamen, aviators, officers and ORs - all of us. His faithful presence reminds us not to give up meeting regularly. Our on-base Bible study averages five attendees weekly, with a wider group of 15–20. Running a simple ‘Swedish method approach’ the group continues to attract members and subsequent prayer groups and ‘discover’ groups remain on offer.

Rooted in the Word, we’re driven to pray—for peace, repentance, trust, comfort, and with longing: “Come, Lord Jesus.” What we encourage soldiers to do today hasn’t changed—simple Christian disciplines. But these simple disciples remind us of a profound God and an amazing gospel, calling us to be “living sacrifices.”

You can read more on Dexter here: [Trooper Walter Dexter](#)

Recent HMAS Stirling event



It was great to see an MCF-A stand at the start of the HMAS Stirling 'walk to work' event recently. Some new contacts were made and info, Christian material and MCF-A merchandise handed out.

If you'd like to host an MCF-A stand at your workplace, church, local school event, please contact mcf.office@defence.gov.au for assistance and material.

Thanks to all our Reps, Chaplains, members and supporters who host stands to spread God's Word, and also info on MCF-A, across Defence and beyond.

MCF-A Dinners/Events

VICTORIA: Due to unforeseen circumstances the MCF-A Victorian Dinner has been postponed until Feb 2026. Further details in future newsletters as they come to hand.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: MCF Christian Dinner - Friday 5th December Hutt St Adelaide – pay for own food and drinks from bar menu.

Everyone is most welcome! You don't need to be in MCF, Defence or live in the State to attend. Contractors, APS, uniformed, retired, parents of ADF, family and friends are all welcome. Awesome guest speaker!

Please register for the Sth Aust Dinner (table seating and entry purposes): <https://www.trybooking.com/DFZAD> (the link has all the Dinner info)

*There is also going to be a **bush-mountain-prayer walk** on the outskirts of Adelaide on **Saturday 8th Nov**. Please email mcf.office@defence.gov.au for more info. Everyone welcome!*

RAAF Williamtown/Newcastle Area: Friday 28th Nov – FREE event! Everyone Welcome!

An end of year Reflection and Wellness activity is being planned for Friday 28th November for anyone interested in a fun day of networking, finding mutual support to navigate difficult situations, meeting like-minded people and strengthening your faith or learn more about Christianity while having a leisurely walk along the waterfront.

It's open to everyone, ADF, Veterans, APS, Contractors, family members and supporters. Those who are not regular MCF attendees, who practice other religions/faiths, or who are not Christian are also warmly invited and encouraged to attend, so bring your workmates. It is hoped those working at RAAF Base Williamtown will be approved to attend this event whilst considered on-duty, as was granted last year.

The event will spend some time at the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral where attendees will be given the opportunity to climb the historically significant spiral tower of the Cathedral and will be able to explore the historical connection of the Cathedral to Defence.

Morning coffee and lunch will be included free of charge, with thanks to DVA Veteran's Health Week for funding this event.

To register your interest in attending or if you have questions please email: wlm.mcf@defence.gov.au

Praise and Prayer Point



On a cool but sunny Canberra day in September, in a river on the outskirts of town, one of the members of a local MCF-A Small Group was baptised into God's family. Please remember Michelle in your prayers, along her 3 children who are to be baptised in a local church in November. Welcome to God's family Michelle!

If you have an exciting story about your MCF-A Small Group or one of its participants please send the info into mcf.office@defence.gov.au

ACCTS Pacific visit – reflection by Jamie Van Heel



The Association for Christian Conferences, Teaching and Service (ACCTS) Executive Director Terry Wichert (former Navy Captain submariner) made a visit to the Pacific from the USA and was hosted by Jamie van Heel (AMCF VP Pacific) from Wed 17 Sep until Tues 22 Sep 25.

On Wednesday afternoon Terry and Jamie met with LTCOL Phil McMaster to discuss exciting opportunities with the Pacific Defence Faith Network, reflecting on recent gatherings of the PDFN in Auckland and Canberra and next year's PDFN planned for Fiji. Terry was pleased that support is being provided for Christian Chaplaincy in the Pacific and was interested in how ACCTS may also be able to provide training to military chaplains in the Pacific.

On Thursday morning Jamie and Terry met with Russell and Helen Bielenberg (former ACCTS Pacific workers) and reminisced about times past and how God has been working through ACCTS Ministry. Russell presented Terry with his book *MCF Faithful Service* that he wrote on the history of the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia.



On Thursday afternoon Terry and Jamie met with the Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force and Australian Navigators leader Grant Dibden, Thomas Bielenberg and Andrew Oldfield from the Navigators and James Leitch from Focus Military Ministries at ADFA for a conversation on what God is doing through their ministries at ADFA. Terry had been the military lead for the Navigators in the USA so the discussion was fruitful.

On Thursday evening Terry and I met with Eric and Lynda Burton (Eric was former AMCF VP of the

Pacific), David and Liz Coleman, Daren and Julie Jaensch and my wife Jo over dinner at the Ainslie Football club. This was a good opportunity for Terry to meet with MCF Australia members and for MCF Executive members to understand more about ACCTS [Association for Christian Conferences, Teaching and Service \(ACCTS\)](#)

On Fri afternoon Terry and Jamie flew to Brisbane to have dinner with Fijian chaplain Taniela Tama who had been posted to Brisbane with a Fijian company for six months. Taniela had attended the AMCF World Conference in Brazil so it was great for Terry and Jamie to catch up with and pray for Taniela with his soon return back to Fiji. Taniela advised that during Exercise Talisman Sabre he would conduct a Christian service each night with his Fijian company where they would worship God and he said that many military members from other countries would join them, attracted by the singing and hearing from the Word of God. Taniela advised that many international and Australian military members became Christians through these services (Praise God).

On Friday evening Terry and Jamie flew from Brisbane through Auckland to arrive in Tonga on Saturday afternoon. We were greeted at the airport by Warrant Officer Toni Langilangi and Reverend Ikani (both who had attended the AMCF World Conference in Brazil). Toni arranged for us to have a driver and a mini bus to transport us to our accommodation and for the various dinners and activities around the island. On the Saturday evening Reverend Ikani hosted us for dinner and we finished the evening with a Kava ceremony. He explained the cultural significance of such ceremonies and we talked and prayed together for a couple of hours. Sunday morning was a highlight where we attended Tony's Methodist Church service. In Tonga everyone attends Church on a Sunday and the shops are closed. On the Monday morning we met with His Majesty's Armed Forces MCF Members as well as the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) CAPT (N) Sione Ulakai, the President of our MCF. We were delighted to see 50 MCF Members waiting to formally welcome us at the Navy HQ. Terry and I had an opportunity to share with the MCF Members and we retired to the conference room with the DCSD to continue discussions. Toni very graciously provided Terry and I a tour of the Island on the Sunday and Monday afternoon. We were very spoilt by Toni and Reverend Ikani and encouraged with what God is doing through His Majesty's Armed Forces in Tonga.

I was grateful that Terry made the trip to the Pacific and we were able to spend some quality time together building our relationship and discussing opportunities to grow MCFs in the Pacific region.





Other items that may interest:

Revd. Matt Davies: Building Faith from Balmain to the Barracks In one of Sydney's least religious suburbs, Rev Matt Davies is leading an old church into a season of new growth — both as rector of St Mary's Balmain and as an Army Chaplain serving the Australian Defence Force. When asked how a parish reaches people in a community where more than half the population identify as having “no religion” (Click on the heading to read the full story thanks to Defence Anglicans)

Christian Parents of ADF members - online group

Facebook group - Kristine, the Christian parent of an ADF and a former ADF member, felt God calling her to gather like-minded people to pray for those in Defence. There is now an ever-growing group of Christian parents whose children have some form of association with the ADF who share prayer requests on a private Facebook page. They have come alongside MCF-A to pray and support where possible. They ask names and more sensitive issues or locations not be shared, but all prayer requests are most welcome. You can answer some simple questions to join their Facebook group via this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/595051646753164>



EVERYMAN'S FUNDRAISING GALA

SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2025

5:30PM CANAPES

6:30PM DINNER

EVERYMAN'S HISTORICAL HUT
907 BOUNDARY ROAD, WACOL
EVERYMAN'S 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW
LIVE MUSIC

DRESS BLACK TIE
ATTENDANCE IS BY DONATION

RSVP BY 15/11/2025
BEN RIDLEY - 0421 913 259
BENRIDLEY@EVERYMANS.ORG.AU

Veterans Hub Australia – Sth East QLD

Veterans Hub Australia came to fruition after asking God what I should do to honour Him. I was at the time doing defence advocate work, volunteering and after 18 months of "being still and wait upon the Lord", I (sorry, we) built a purpose built facility for veterans. Constant disappointment with RSL, meant a lot of veterans were being overlooked and ignored. Veterans Hub is run by veterans for veterans. There are a number of buildings; museum/ veterans mess, recreation room, metal workshops, timber workshop, kitchen, cenotaph, Q store, a fully working Spitfire and a 737-800 flight simulator. There is also a newly completed toilet block. We are open 1300hrs to 2100hrs on Fridays for food and fellowship, with other days by appointment. Open to all current and ex service personnel. We are now on Facebook where you'll find up to date information and event info for anyone who wants to join. I would love to allocate a night for MCF-A: for fellowship, prayer groups or Bible Studies or a combination of these.

Phillip Bond - Defence Advocate

(If you'd like to help Phil get an MCF Small Group up and running at the Hub, please contact Phil directly)



VETERANS HUB AUSTRALIA

SOUTH BRISBANE



RUN BY VETERANS FOR VETERANS

- ✓ Veterans Mess
- ✓ Flight Simulator
- ✓ Military Museum
- ✓ Metal Workshop
- ✓ Woodworking Workshop
- ✓ Veterans Recreation Room
- ✓ Kitchen with Barista Coffee Machine

Make new
Friends
Learn new
Skills
in a Safe
Space

A PLACE FOR ALL SERVICE PERSONNEL AND VETERANS TO MEET

We meet every Friday for Company, Conversation and a Cuppa.

Where

Logan Village, QLD

What to bring

Yourself, Good Service Values
and a small contribution
for refreshments



Find us on:
facebook

When

Each Friday from
1300-2100hrs

What Else

We have a Defence Advocate
for DVA Claims
(VEA, MRCA, DRCA)

Contact Us: Ph. 0411 957 952 (Phil)
email: veteranshubaustralia@gmail.com

ABN 24 266 703 686

Have you posted or moved house? Are you deploying or away from home for a few months or longer?

Posted or moved, please update your details [HERE](#)

Deploying or on a long exercise? MCF-A would love to support and pray for you while you're away. Let us know at: mcf.office@defence.gov.au

Membership

[Membership](#) is free and **open to every Christian**. If you've not had an association with Defence or you don't identify as Christian you can be an associate member via the same link.

Donations



Donation Link

MCF is supported almost entirely through freewill donations by members and supporters. Please look at Supporting MCF in prayer, with your time, and through [financial support](#). (Direct debit preferred – details further down page from link) **Note that donations (over \$2) to MCF-A are tax deductible.**

Prayer requests

To put forward prayer points for inclusion in the calendar please email the MCF Prayer Coordinator Dr Daniel Solomon: [Prayer Requests](#)

You can also send through **urgent prayer points** that are sent on confidentially to the MCF Prayer Warriors, or to enquire about becoming an MCF Prayer Warrior, contact the MCF Office or Daniel (via the Prayer Request link above).

Contacting the MCF Office

PHONE: Office: 02 6132 7845.

EMAIL: mcf.office@defence.gov.au You can also find us on Facebook and ForceNet.

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