

SOLDIER ON ANZAC APPEAL

Honour veterans of the past and support veterans of today

Private Thomas Marsh and David 'Dave' Stafford Finney

Whilst the majority of these shared stories have seen our contemporary veterans and family members go on to secure their futures, this is not always the case. For some, what they go through is too much.



Australian War Memorial
H00123

Private Thomas Marsh, 51st Battalion

Marsh was born in England and emigrated to Australia just before the First World War. Enlisting from Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, he saw service on the Western Front with the 51st Battalion.

Marsh was captured in his first action at Mouquet Farm in August 1916 and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of war in Germany. He survived captivity and the war and returned home to Australia in April 1919.

Less than four weeks after his return home, Marsh took his own life in a suburban street in Fremantle.



David 'Dave' Stafford Finney

Dave enlisted into the Royal Australian Navy on 22 June 1998 and served for nearly 20 years as a Marine Technician Electrical. In between deployments, he was based between Cairns, Sydney and Canberra. Dave was medically discharged on 13 December 2017, whereupon he made Canberra his home. He is the father of two children, tragically he lost his firstborn to SIDS.

Over his 20-year career, Dave was involved in operational deployments including in the Middle East, Bougainville, East Timor & Timor - Leste. He took part in Military Exercises with both Australian and foreign forces conducted in multiple locations around the world. Some of these incidences and events were 'literally' life threatening to both himself and others. He helped prevent toxic gas leaks and was awarded a Maritime Commanders Commendation for his heroic efforts in extinguishing a potentially 'catastrophic' engine room fire in October 2004. In Hawaii in 2016 he risked his own life to save the life of a drowning man.

As outstanding and event filled career as Dave's was, the traumatic situations had taken their toll and caused significant injury, and he fully comprehended that he had a serious problem. Dave was desperate to understand and to rebuild, but after three hospital admissions he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), and subsequently medically discharged from the Navy.

In the months after discharge, Dave volunteered with children's charities, including those for children affected by cancer, worked one on one with disadvantaged boys, and as a mentor at his local Men's Shed. He fought so hard to recover.

Dave eloquently documented his suffering due to his PTS injury in raw detail. *"Australia has come a long way in recognising and treating PTS since World War I, but we have not yet come close to a 'cure'."* Dave's story verifies that we need to do much more.

David Stafford Finney lost his battle on 1 February 2019.

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