
Editorial

Inaugural Perth AMMA Conference

The first AMMA Conference in Perth will be held from 12-15 October 2023. Perth, and wider Western Australia (WA), has had long links to Australian military history and to past and contemporary military strategy. From the initial deployment of the Australian Imperial Force through Albany in 1914 to key submarine bases, special forces training and RAAF Catalina links to Asia and Europe during the Second World War, WA has played a significant role in Australia's military history. The submarine base at Fremantle, established in 1942, became a significant hub for the operations of Allied submarines patrolling the Indian and Pacific Oceans, disrupting enemy supply lines and conducting reconnaissance missions. The Catalina flying boats, based in Matilda Bay, Perth, played a critical maritime patrol, reconnaissance, and anti-submarine warfare role. The ongoing key Defence capabilities at HMAS Stirling, RAAF Base Pearce, and Campbell and Irwin Barracks have ensured that Perth remains an important part of Australia's defence.

The Australia, United Kingdom, and United States (AUKUS) agreement is a trilateral security partnership aimed at enhancing defence and security cooperation among these nations. The pact, announced in September 2021, involves Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, with



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1. Cairns L. Secret Fleets: Fremantle's World War II Submarine Base. Western Australian Museum; 2011 Sep 1.
2. Cleworth R, Linton JS. RAAF Black Cats: The secret history of the covert Catalina mine-laying operations to cripple Japan's war machine. Allen & Unwin; 2019 Sep 3.
3. Vietnam War 1962-75 | Australian War Memorial (awm.gov.au)

HMAS Stirling poised to play a crucial part in housing and supporting the new submarines. This development underscores the strategic importance of Perth in the regional security landscape and highlights its role as a hub for naval operations. The AUKUS pact and its implications for Perth's maritime significance have sparked discussions about defence priorities, regional dynamics, and Australia's place in the broader Indo-Pacific geopolitical context. As military health practitioners, understanding these developments and their likely impacts on Defence health services remains an important consideration.

Australia was involved in the Vietnam War between 1962 and 1973, with over 60,000 Australian army, navy and air force personnel serving during the period; 523 died during the war and almost 2,400 were wounded. Australia's participation in the war formally ended when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973, with the last combat troops, a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon, withdrawing in June 1973. With the 50th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam war for the Australian forces, the cover pages commemorate the service of these individuals and the sacrifices made.

Our third issue of 2023 contains a range of articles on diverse topics spanning infectious diseases, clinical medicine, clinical and operational training, and military health history. We continue to attract a good range of articles, including from overseas. Other military and veterans' health articles, however, are always very welcome, and we would encourage all our readers to consider writing on their areas of military or veterans' health interest. We would particularly welcome papers based on presentations planned for our 2023 conference in Perth, but welcome any articles across the broader spectrum of military health.

I look forward to seeing you in Perth.

Dr Andy Robertson, CSC, PSM
Commodore, RAN
Editor-in-Chief