



# RAAF Radschool Association

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Thursday, 14 June 2018

The Honourable Darren Chester MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via Email [minister@dva.gov.au](mailto:minister@dva.gov.au)

Dear Minister Chester,

**Re: Proof of Service for ADF serving members..**

My name is Trevor Benneworth and I proudly served with the RAAF as a Radio Technician from July 1965 to July 1971. I had a tour in Vietnam during 1969-1970 and I am now a TPI.

In 1999, I founded the RAAF Radschool Association which represents men and women who were trained by the RAAF to operate and repair the RAAF's electronic equipment. I also produce a regular newsletter (since 1999) which over the years has grown to a 250 plus page quarterly magazine ([www.radschool.org.au](http://www.radschool.org.au)) with readership of many thousands each edition in Australia and internationally.

Most of our readers were proud to have served Australia in one of her Armed Services, be it in the Army, Navy or the Air Force. Some did the minimum term, a lot stayed on for a lot longer, and of those that did serve, the vast majority remember their time in uniform fondly, they made life-long friends and they get together regularly in large numbers to chat, keep old friendships alive and to recall those "great times." If they had the chance, they would do it all again.

While in uniform they worked on some of the ADF's latest and in some cases very sensitive equipment, they had access to and either flew, sailed, drove, operated or

fixed its aircraft, its ships, its armament or its machinery, some sent and received sensitive messages, some typed and read secret correspondence. As promotions were obtained, some made decisions that determined the safety and security of the Nation.

Some made the ultimate sacrifice for the Nation they loved, some were terribly injured while serving in some thankless land, some saw and were involved in terrible and never to be forgotten events, yet all did it willingly as it was "our job" and we were proud to wear the Nation's uniform.

And then we discharged and were scrapped.

One day we were an important and essential part of a very sophisticated Armed Service, the next day we were pariahs, outcasts, a not to be trusted forgotten people.

It's disgraceful!!!

In the UK, the Government now recognises those that have served the nation. Ex-Service people will have their driver's licenses stamped with the letter "V" to distinguish them as veterans and this will give them recognition and easier access to specialist services and to offers, including retail discounts. We consider the Australian Government should do something similar. It would probably not be possible to emboss our drivers' licences as they are State issued, but a card similar to the Proof of Age card would do perfectly well. These could be issued by the relevant Service as part of the members' discharge procedure. You get a discharge certificate, why not a "Proof of Service" card as well?

It wouldn't be hard to make ex-Service men and women feel "special" – make them feel as though their lives weren't wasted. There are far too many ex-Service people "doing it tough," these are the forgotten people, they live on the street, in solitary, some take their own lives. A little bit of recognition would go a long way.

Although not its only requirement, some form of ID would also make it easier for Ex-Service men and women to access a Defence establishment. It is not as though every ex-Service person wants to get onto a Base every 5 minutes, but if and when they do, having a form of recognition would make it much easier and wouldn't make that person feel he/she was a nobody.

We've a long way to go when it comes to looking after our ex-Service people. There are several splinter groups, the RSL, Defence Community Organisations, Welfare, Legacy etc. even DVA, all with the best of intentions but there isn't a national "symbol" that an ex-Service man or woman can produce to show that he/she has served. The general public would get right behind it, look at the turnout on ANZAC Day – the public are appreciative of the sacrifice their defence men and women have made and businesses could and would direct their marketing to Ex-Service people.

I feel it is well past time that Ex-Service men and women be recognised for their Service to the Nation.

If possible, I would like the opportunity of discussing this with the Minister.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Benneworth', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Trevor Benneworth  
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