

[08/08/01 FESR Service Now Etched in Defence History](#)

AFTER QUEENSLAND MEMORIAL SERVICE JULY 2001

FESR Founding member and Past President Noel Payne in company with National President John Carlyon ensured perpetuity of Royal Australian Navy service to the Far East Strategic Reserve when they unveiled a plaque recognising the ships and personnel who took part, at a colourful service in Bundamba Memorial Park last month in Queensland.

Over 500 people jammed into the small park to witness the historic ceremony to include representatives of all Defence Services, FESR veterans and their families, Ex-service and community groups, Federal and State politicians, local Councillors, and even passers-by intrigued by the pomp and splendour of the occasion.

There was a wonderful sense of ceremony to the event. From the standing ovation given to Australia's Living Treasure, World War 1 veteran Eric Abrahams who clearly loved to be part of it all, to the disciplined drill of the gun crew who discharged a 3-gun salute to mark the respect of the event, it became a significant landmark in the remarkable chapter of the FESR.

As usual the RAN Reserve Band and Catafalque party displayed the professionalism befitting their service image and lent further colour to a well-run service. An added touch came from a contingent of Royal Nederland's Navy Veterans who stood proudly under their banner alongside that of the FESR during the service.

The congregation were led in prayer by Senior Port Chaplain Bill Pearson and helped considerably in the vocal department by the impressive Ipswich Girls Grammar School Chorale, with students Alexis Peters and Jessica Malcolm featuring in the presentation of the Naval Prayer and Last Post in tandem with the RAN Bugler.

FESR Life member Noel Payne provided the gathering with a synopsis of the long struggle for equity, and despite the solemnity of the occasion, liberally sprinkled his address with humour much to the delight of all present. Noël said afterwards "This is the result of arguably the toughest campaign ever fought for ex-servicemen and women, and whilst it brought frustration, tears, jarred my confidence at times, and certainly affected the health of many of us, the results are evident in the blokes faces today, so, yes the 5 years were worth it-Would I do it again? –Joe, I couldn't it would kill me."

President John Carlyon represented absent FESR Patron Admiral Sir Richard Peake and Naval Association National President Admiral Mike Hudson who were both instrumental in the long battle for FESR recognition and read their respective apologies and best wishes to loud applause in the park.

On completion of the service, the memorial be-decked in a wealth of flowers and wreaths was the subject of much photography along with veterans proudly wearing medals now awarded for their FESR Service and the camaraderie continued over lunch at the nearby Goodna RSL Club.

Club President Vivian Stanbury hosted the FESR Association, VIP's and Guests, and her fierce pride in the club was evident by good food, first class organization, and a great sense of humour. One lovely touch was a play through by the RAN Reserve Band who received spirited response from patrons enjoying club facilities as well. FESR plaques were presented to Vivian and Bundamba Memorial Park Project Officer Steve Donovan, in appreciation of their kind and generous support of FESR activities to cap a memorable day for the FESR Association.