

NETHERLANDS EX—SERVICEMEN & WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN AUSTRALIA

The Association, which has its National Headquarters in Sydney N.S.W., operates branches in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.

The formation took place in October 1969 and consisted of a merger of the "Netherlands Ex-Marines" and the "Nederlandse Oud Strijders", which since 1951 operated as two entirely separate organisations.

The "Netherlands Ex-Marines" were founded through a get-together at the home of the then Consul-General in Sydney on the 10th of December 1951. This was instigated by a well-known Commander of the "Mariniers Brigade" in the former Dutch Indies. The purpose of the meeting was to 'celebrate the birthday of "Het Korps Mariniers"'.

After that meeting approximately 40 ex-marines got together every year on December 10 in a very traditional style of their own. A Committee was formed, and this arranged for other socials and kept members informed.

"Nederlandse Oud Strijders" originally consisted of a group of 1940-1945 "Oud Indisch gasten" and ex-Korean veterans. They were the first ethnic organisation to march in the Anzac Day March in Wollongong. Later they joined the Americans and French ex-servicemen in the Anzac Day March in Sydney. From the start, the ex-service personnel of Air Force, Army and Navy were part of this group.

The Association is now represented in the Anzac Day Marches in all capital cities.

In 1976 The Association became a member of the "World Veterans Federation". This is an organisation with member organisations in all countries of the world, irrespective of whether they at one time may have been enemies. The aim and objectives of this Federation is to maintain peace worldwide and to advise and liaise with all Governments. The Federation has its National Headquarters in Paris. The World President is Mr. W.C.J. van Lanschot, a Dutchman, who has been in this function for many years.

Also in 1976, the group joined "The Australian Services Council", now known as "The Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council". This Council, which has many Australian Ex-service organisations as its members, is mainly concerned with the welfare of ex-service and defence services personnel. It will recommend to the Australian Government proposals relative to the welfare of ex-service personnel. It was mainly through this Council and the Ex-Servicemen's Committee's efforts, that in late 1979, the Australian Government granted a service pension to Allied Ex-Servicemen & Women. This entitles the person qualifying to obtain a normal pension at the age of 60 or an invalid pension, where applicable.

In 1979, "The Netherlands Ex-Servicemen & Women's Benevolent Fund" was incorporated and has funds available to assist any member in financial need.

The association is very much involved in assistance in obtaining Dutch military pensions for those who qualify.

Most branch committees now have a welfare worker and this person will assist or seek outside assistance if so required with any problems the members may encounter. Most of the branches arrange their own social nights which are usually well patronised