

Veterans' on board for film festival

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Canberra, ACT - The Veterans Film Festival (VFF) is delighted to announce the appointment of three new board members. Damien Thomlinson, actor (Hacksaw Ridge), Talissa Papamau, founder of Modern Soldier and author, Wing Commander Sharon Bown (Ret'd).

The VFF is dedicated to putting the spotlight on stories about veterans', their families, first responders and the impact warfare has on society, will return to Canberra in October 2017.

Damien Thomlinson, President is an Australian veteran of the war in Afghanistan, former Special Forces, author, motivational speaker, actor (Hacksaw Ridge) and Brand Ambassador. Despite losing his legs in the Afghan war, he has never lost his energy and enthusiasm, which he now channels to helping inspire people from around the world.

'I am honoured to have the opportunity to play such a significant role with the festival,' says Damien Thomlinson. 'This is a great opportunity for filmmakers and veterans to present their stories on the big screen.'

Talissa Papamau, Vice President is an Afghanistan Veteran, and former Australian Army Combat Medic. Following her medical separation from Defence, Talissa founded the online veteran support group Modern Soldier and is the Executive Director of the Remembrance Foundation. Talissa is a consultant to various Government departments and has had numerous engagements with journalists and the media industry.

'All films submitted to the official competition category will be eligible to compete for the coveted Red Poppy Awards,' said Talissa Papamau. 'In 2016, female filmmakers won most of the awards.'

Wing Commander Sharon Bown (Ret'd) served as a Nursing Officer in the Royal Australian Air Force for 16 years, with deployments to Timor-Leste in 2000 and 2004; Afghanistan in 2008 as Officer-in-Charge of the Australian Medical Task Force in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. Sharon was seriously injured in a helicopter crash in Timor-Leste in 2004, but successfully fought to continue to serve, despite her injuries. As a result of her personal experience of service and her role in providing care for Australian Defence Force personnel and their families in Australia and overseas, Sharon is a passionate advocate within the field of Military and Veteran's Health. Sharon is the author of One Woman's War and Peace: a nurse's journey in the Royal Australian Air Force, and is a Member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial.

For more formation about the festival visit www.veteransfilmfestival.com

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IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION: <http://bit.ly/2v5TawU>

About the Festival

The annual Veterans Film Festival (VFF) screens films from around the world, which explore real or imagined stories about warfare.

The VFF showcases stories that promote a greater understanding about veterans', their families, first responders and the impact of war on society.

The festival presents feature films and short form cinema from Australia and around the world, including: fiction, non-fiction, animation, documentaries, archival, TV series and virtual reality.

All films submitted to the official competition will be eligible to compete for the coveted Red Poppy Awards. Hand blown glass trophies will be awarded in the best film categories. In 2016, female filmmakers won 67% of the awards.

The festival also curates an eclectic program of forums, competitions, workshops, video games exhibitions and discussion panels with, guest presenters, filmmakers, historians, veterans and the public.

The VFF encourages talent and assists the development of filmmakers and the arts community, while highlighting contributions from serving and ex serving veterans and their experiences.

The festival offers a meeting ground and artistic canvas to engage with filmmakers, actors, festival audience and veterans of all ages, cultures and abilities.

The Veterans Film Festival is a not-for-profit cultural organisation, whose aim is to raise awareness and contribute to our understanding of veterans' experiences before, during and after service, their families and the impact war has on society.

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