



Media statement

From: Annie Collison (Porter Novelli) on behalf of Mercy Health

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Trigger powers to 102

Mercy Health residential aged care homes are full of amazing people with incredible stories but Les Trigg, a resident at regional Victoria's Mercy Place Colac, has a story that's hard to top.

This Thursday "Trigger", as he is known by those closest to him, turns 102. He will be joined by wife Pam but last Friday he received an early gift.

Glenn Beckett, who is the husband of a staff member at Mercy Place Colac, took Les for a ride through the streets of Colac on his Harley Davidson.

Reaching 102 is not a bad result for a chap who was orphaned by the aged of seven. Les lost his mother when he was a baby and by the age of seven, his father had also died. After these devastating events, Les and his sister moved into foster care.

"As children, Jean and I lived with a number of families and for a time, we were fed not much more than rabbits and spuds, but we somehow always made do," Les said.

Les was sent to fight for Australia and the Allies in World War II.

"In my 20s, I joined the transport unit in the army, but I was soon transferred to the infantry, which meant spending time in the jungles of New Guinea." Les said.

"It was interesting to say the least".

To this day Les is proud of his service, the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) he developed from his wartime experiences in New Guinea which caused deep emotional stress for much of his adult life.

Les has often spoken of the PTSD he suffered as a result of war service.

He says the first relief he felt was when he returned to New Guinea and visited the Lae War Cemetery where many of his army mates were laid to rest decades earlier. Les has followed the motto: "Never lose sight of each other."

The cemetery visit was pivotal in his recovery.

"Life hasn't been easy. I've had a lot of kicks but I've only known one way and that's to keep on going," says Les.

In 2021, coverage of Les' 100th birthday made its way on to the front page of the Colac Herald and shortly afterwards he was interviewed live to air on the ABC.

Most of the celebrations then were conducted online due to the coronavirus restrictions.

For many years, he has been Mercy Place Colac resident gardener and for a number of years he managed the flags and flag poles at the front of the home.

“These days he still manages the flags but in different ways. Now, he politely tells us which flags goes where and to what level.

“He keeps us on our toes,” a staff member says.

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