



THE MISSION

Everyman's Ministry to the 8th/9th Battalion
the Royal Australian Regiment

Ben and Claudia Ridley

15 Michael Lynagh Drive, Daisy Hill, QLD 4127

0421 913 259

benjamin.ridley@hotmail.com

May 2020

0450 139 554

claudia.ridley@hotmail.com

www.everymans.org.au

Dear supporters and prayer partners, we are living in very interesting times. It has been a few months since I sent out a newsletter update. Much has changed in the world and who would have thought that the world would be in this place only a few months ago? I hope that this finds you well and that this update will give you a measure of joy. Since the last update we went on our mission trip to Uganda and Finland, I went down to Victoria helping supporting the fire fighting efforts of the bush fires, and we of course have had the Corona Virus pandemic hit the entire world. I look forward to telling you about much of the experiences that we have had.

UNDER THE AFRICAN SKY

In late 2019 a team of four consisting of myself, Claudia and our two friends Petri and Katja took a trip to Uganda and Finland. We have known Petri and Katja for many years now and we attend the same church in Brisbane. I asked Petri to be involved with helping to run the EveryVet's ministry to the veteran community as he is a solid Christian and also served in the Finish Army many moons ago. Petri and Katja have been involved in this project in Uganda for many years now and up until last year they have been the only two westerners who have been physically involved. They have also mostly funding the project with their own finances, with the help of some others, including Claudia and me. After prayer and consideration Claudia and I felt the call to become more involved and this



is how we ended up making the trip to Africa and subsequently to Finland. The trip was of course an eye opener. Petri and I left first in early November and our wives followed on a few weeks later. Uganda was much as I had imagined and having travelled previously to third world nations I was prepared for the harsh conditions. After arriving and spending a few days in the capital, Kampala and then the town of Jinja we made our way to the village which we would call home for most of our trip, the village of Kamuge. The first few weeks was a time of mainly preparing liveable accommodation and conditions

for our wives. We stayed in a half-built house that was infested with rats that we had to try and make 'mosquito proof' as much as we could. We had to adjust to everything being much more difficult as supplies were very limited in terms of food and drinkable water. The village of Kamuge has next to nothing in its shops so we had to travel to another town via car to buy food, but even then, our options were very limited. On the last trip Petri had built a church building in the village and the main goal for this trip was to establish new methods of farming to help the local people to be able to achieve food stability. In Uganda, and much of Africa, many of the village people are subsistence farmers and are unable to grow enough food to feed their families, consequently, many starve for periods of the year. To combat this, we teamed up with an organisation called Farming God's Way (FGW). FGW are an organisation who visit villages all over Africa and even places outside of Africa and teach better farming methods to village people. It is all based on the Bible and emphasises honouring God with everything they have. During our time we visited some farms who had been implementing FGW methods for a few years and we were amazed at how whole villages were transformed and had broken the starvation and poverty cycles. The greatest thing was that these farmers were closer to God and their fellow neighbouring farmers, due the emphasis on the community helping one another. We were able to have FGW representatives come and run a workshop in our church building in Kamuge village and we had about a total of 60 local farmers attend who were then able to immediately begin to implement changes to their farms. The farm we stayed at also began to make changes. During our trip we established and registered with the Ugandan government an NGO. The name of the NGO is 'Kamuge Missions International' after the village where we have been operating out of. Our goal of establishing this organisation is to help the people of Uganda through sharing of the gospel and helping them in practical ways. Part of this trip was to be able to report back to Everyman's HQ about the possibility of bringing some veterans over to Uganda under the Everyman's Veterans League. This would be fulfilling two purposes: 1. Helping to give a purpose to veterans who may have lost their identity after leaving the ADF and 2. Bringing more practical help on future trips to achieve more building and farming projects. At this stage we are still working on being recognised as a charity in Australia so that donations can be made as a tax deduction. We have also built a website for our NGO and we have a Facebook page.



A Raging Inferno!

Whilst we were in Finland, I received the message that the ADF were requesting Everyman's support with the firefighting effort on 'Operation Bushfire Assist'. The fires had begun before we left for Uganda and burnt during the entire 2 months that I was overseas. I had actually had a feeling that I was going to go and help during the countries time of crisis a few days prior to the message coming in, and when it came I knew it was God who was calling me to go. Only a few days after landing back in Australia I set off for Victoria and ended up in the East Gippsland region, serving in the towns of Orbost, Omeo and Bairnsdale mainly. I was surprised to find that my battalion 8/9 RAR had



also been sent to Orbost, so that made things easier and I also got to work with many other ADF units including 3 Combat Engineer Regiment, RAAF personnel, and some Army Reserve elements. I also had the privilege of working with P.N.G. Army engineers and Fijian Military Force engineers. There were many long nights and early mornings, but the sacrifice was worth every second! One day that stood out was when I met the chiefs of the defence forces of Australia, P.N.G and Fiji, when they were touring around the various fire affected towns. I had many opportunities for ministry and many spirit-led encounters during my time. I was particularly blessed by the Fijian Army who were all professing Christians, this made speaking about God very easy and I know the Lord spoke to many of them. The Fijians hold God in a high regard and are not ashamed to show it. Every morning and evening the entire group have a time of devotion and prayer, I was able to join in and was even asked to lead the devotions on a few occasions. They were very touched to hear how God had transformed my life from being a wretched sinner to a disciple of Jesus Christ. It was the Fijians and the P.N.G. soldiers that I grew particularly close with and at the end of my time with them the showed me great kindness and they gave



me some gifts for myself and Claudia. The Fijians sung a traditional farewell song to me personally. It was an amazing time and I saw much devastation and suffering, but tragedy also brings out good things in people too and I was amazed to see communities pulling together. I consider it a privilege to go and serve in times like, the times we had down in Victoria. Of course, little did we know that not only our country, but the entire world would soon be facing the greatest challenge that it has known in recent times.

...A THOUSAND WORDS

As pictures speak a thousand words, I thought I would add a collection of some of the photos from the bush fires down in Victoria. The top right photo was taken with the Australian Chief of Defence. The middle right was taken with American fire fighters who came to help.





ON 'THE HOME FRONT'

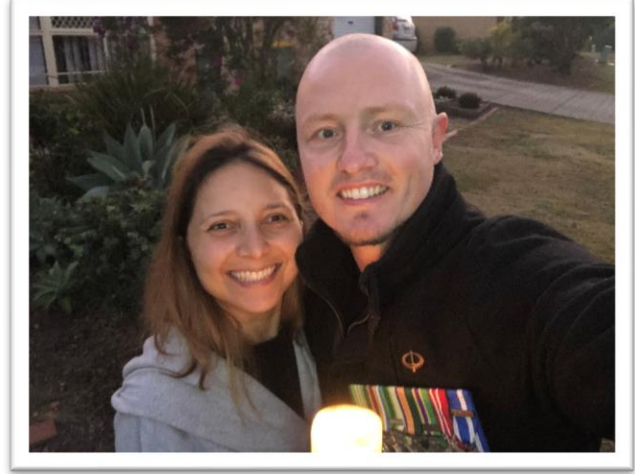


Our trip to Uganda was in stark contrast to our trip to Finland afterwards. When our friends Petri and Katja initially invited us to join them in Uganda, they also extended the invitation to join them visiting their family in Finland for Christmas. After initially turning down the offer for Finland, we decided that it was not going to cost too much to add a couple of weeks in Finland and also we were excited to have a white Christmas, a first for Claudia and only the second for me. For both of us it was the first time to go to Europe and we enjoyed seeing a different part of the world. We also found that the Lord had things for us to do whilst there. We visited churches and spoke about our time in Uganda and many people were interested in supporting the work that we have been doing with both Uganda, and our work with Everyman's Veterans League in Australia. We also enjoyed tasting different foods, going on a one-horse open sleigh on Christmas day, the Finish sauna, swimming in a near frozen lake, visiting castles and taking a ferry across to Estonia for a day trip. Neither of us ever thought that we would have gone to Finland, but it was certainly an amazing experience and one we will not forget.

Claudia's Corner

Dear brothers and sisters, our trip to Uganda & Finland was truly unforgettable. We thank God for your prayers, and we had some amazing experiences of God's merciful leading hand over the whole time we were away in Uganda and Finland. We thank God for Petri and Katja sharing their previous experiences of how things work over in Uganda, and we were not too surprised by the challenges we faced. The grace of God was able to work in me as to remind me that I'm still a work in progress, but also to work through me.

That is a wonder that will never cease to amaze us. God in me, working through me and working with me. In Uganda, we had two local children's gathering with their parents listening the gospel message and partaking in the food provided, and also a Sunday school meeting, with translators in all those meetings. However, the last day of our stay in the village we were running an amazing workshop for the local farmers and it happened that by accident Ben and I were locked outside our house. Meanwhile, God had orchestrated something else and a group of 6 children came and sat next to me. They were Muslims (see bottom right picture on page 2). The oldest could understand and speak English well and I was able to talk to her about the Lord. She was an orphan and I was able to give her a Gideons bible and ask her to read John 1:12 and after she read, she had tears running down her cheeks. I told her the Gospel and that if she receives Christ she would have a Father in heaven that would never die, nor leave her, nor forsake her. It was an amazing experience. After that, I felt to give to her and her siblings some children's clothes we brought from Australia. However, the occasion didn't permit, and I was burdened in my heart, but I left it with the Lord, who knows all things and can work miracles. So, the next morning we were packing everything and saying goodbye and I was still praying that the girl would somehow come, so we could give her the clothes. We then left the property and the bag ready to be given to her. As we drove one minute down the road, we saw a girl picking up sticks in the field, who I could only recognise because she was wearing the same dress as the day before. We stopped the car and Katja and I waited with her while Ben and Petri went back to the house to get the bag. Praise be to God who alone works wonders. I hope you will be blessed and encouraged to serve Jesus anywhere whatever the circumstances around you.



It certainly was a busy few months for us being away from home for long periods of time and then after Corona Virus hit, for me all the Everyman's work came to a grinding halt, but for Claudia her work load went into over drive. Please pray for her to be sustained with the increased workload. One thing that I decided to do was to record messages from our Everyman's Veterans League to the staff and residents of Bethany, where Claudia works. People sent in recorded messages from all over the country. If you would like to watch the video it is on the Everyman's Facebook page.

We hope that you will remain well and keep trusting the Lord during this difficult time. Jesus warned us that times like these would come in Matthew chapter 24. Even though the world has become a dark place with hard times possibly being ahead and things looking like they may never go back to the way they were, our anchor holds within the veil! We have a hope that does not fade!

Matthew 24:25 See, I have warned you about this ahead of time.

Much love,

Ben and Claudia



EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE
Serving the Australian Defence Force