



BEN FARINAZZO.

VETERAN | GOLD MEDALLIST | HUSBAND | FATHER | SURVIVOR

It was Australia Day 2015. I woke up to find myself in a living nightmare.

I was fighting an internal battle against post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety. I then broke my neck and back in a mountain bike accident. It felt like I was walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

Three years later I represented Australia in indoor rowing and powerlifting at Invictus Games Sydney 2018 and was fortunate to win two gold medals. Today, I am a proud Australia Day Ambassador and support mental health, veterans and sport.

Unfortunately, my story is not unique. There are many people suffering in the community, across our country and around the world. Standing with them are friends, families and loved ones that are helping and caring for these people every day - they are our true heroes.



VIDEO.

THE SPIRIT OF INVICTUS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXYI9sWVg8Y&t=17s>



BEN'S STORY.

Veteran, Gold Medallist, Husband, Father and Survivor

Ben was born in Brisbane and has Aboriginal and Italian heritage. He attended boarding school at The Southport School, Gold Coast. At age 16 he joined the Australian Defence Force as a Parachute Infantry Officer. In 1999, he deployed on active service as part of the International Force in East Timor. This deployment was the highlight of his military career, but it also left him with deep mental scars that were left untreated.

Following a decade in the military, he successfully transitioned to a civilian career and held several senior executive, CEO and board roles in Australia and offshore. It was during this period that Ben was confronted with the Bali Bombings, Aceh Tsunami and attack on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta. He returned to Australia to focus on empowering Australia's youth and was appointed CEO of Outward Bound Australia. Through his work with the veteran community, he was appointed as a founding Director on the Board of Soldier On Australia.

In 2015, his world fell apart as he faced significant mental and physical challenges. He was diagnosed with chronic and severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. His recovery was complicated when a horrific mountain biking accident left him with significant physical injuries including multiple broken bones in his neck and back. It was during this period that he describes as walking through the shadow of death.

Over the next three years he learnt basic motor functions, techniques to manage his mental health and ways to reconnect with the world. He then began to train harder and lift heavier with the intention of being selected to represent Australia to compete at Invictus Games Sydney 2018. But Ben didn't just compete, he won two gold medals in indoor rowing and achieved a personal best in men's heavy weight powerlifting. He had the crowd on their feet, then in tears as he ran over to embrace his family.

Following his return home, Ben received the honour of being appointed as an Ambassador for Australia Day. In addition, he is a Ambassador for several not for profit organisations and continues to be a passionate advocate for mental health, wounded veterans and the healing power of sport.

He lives with his wife Jodie and their three children in Queanbeyan, near Canberra. He enjoys exercise, horse riding, painting, singing and connecting with others.

Visit: www.benfarinazzo.com Enquiries: contact@benfarinazzo.com

School resources are available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/memorial-boxes/2/case-studies/Ben-Farinazzo>

Protector, carer, neighbour

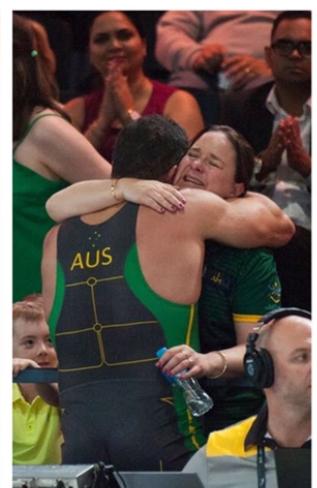
AUSTRALIANS IN EAST TIMOR



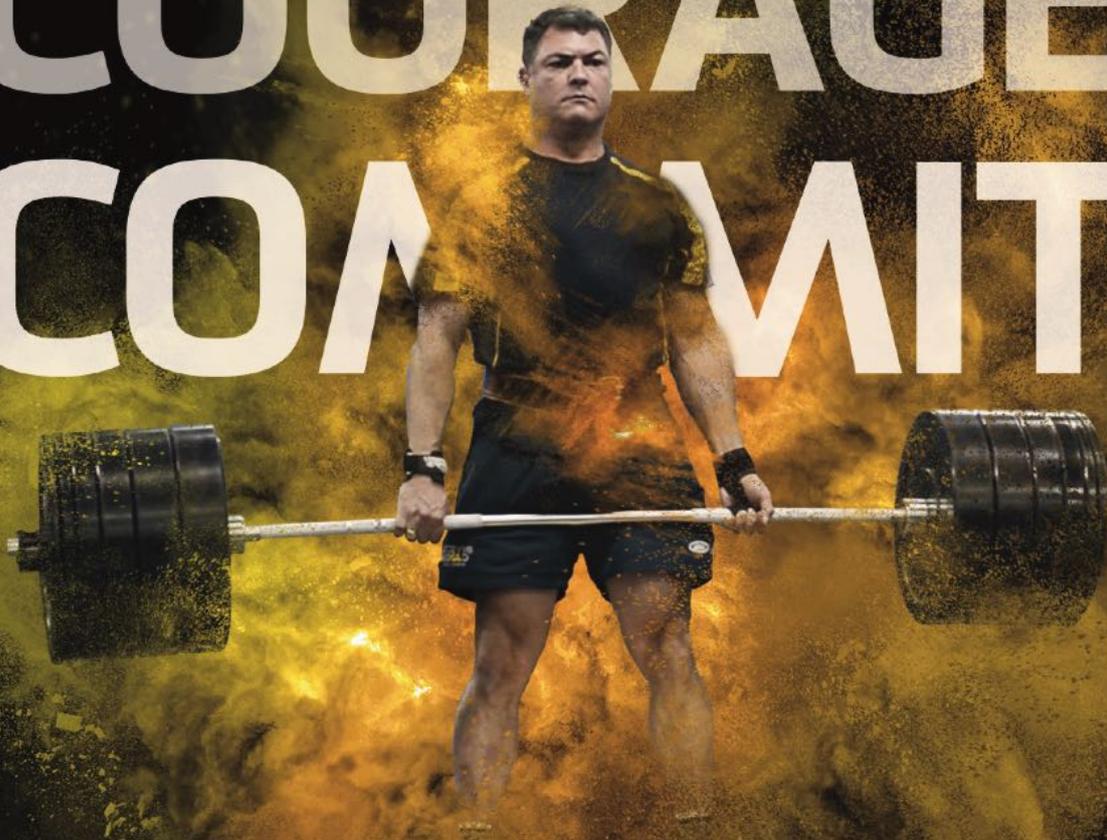


LAUREL WREATH .

The Laurel Wreath is an ancient symbol of **victory**, **honour** and **peace**. It was a symbol of Apollo and the leaf was believed to hold physical and spiritual qualities. It is worn as a symbol of victory in military, sport and poetry.



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COMMUNITY.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

A man with short dark hair, smiling, wearing a green and yellow polo shirt. He is holding a microphone. The background is a blue textured wall. A name tag on his shirt reads "INVICTUS GAMES BEN FARAGO".

Ben is an ambassador and passionate advocate for mental health, veterans and the healing power of sport.

He continues to serve by raising awareness and support for public and charitable organisations that help those suffering in the community.

He chooses to support and affiliate with organisations and brands that align with his experience, values and demonstrate commitment to provide hope to the Australian people.

AFFILIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES.

Ben is grateful for the opportunity to support and collaborate with Australians of all ages and backgrounds. Below are a few examples of Ben's community service and engagement activities:

- Australia Day Ambassador
- Governor General's ANZAC Day 2019 message
- INTERFET 20th Anniversary commemoration with Abel Guterres, Timor Leste Ambassador to Australia
- Australian War Memorial Courage for Peace exhibition
- Lifeline Canberra Ambassador, Annual Gala Ball keynote and fundraising
- Lifeline Australia National appeal and Holding on to Hope podcast
- Soldier On Australia Ambassador, Annual Gala Ball keynote and fundraising
- Wesley Mission Heroes United function to raise funds for homeless
- OzHelp Foundation National Workplace Wellness forum speaker panel
- Australian Institute of Sport Healing Power of Sport presentation to staff
- Australian Federal Police Health and Wellness presentation
- School presentations and resources to support education, confidence and resilience
- UNSW Canberra Ambassador Facing Equality series
- Westpac Mental Health and Resilience presentation
- PwC Mental Health and Resilience presentation

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REACH OUT.



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Twitter <https://www.twitter.com/benfarinazzo>

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCleV913Cy3wxJPq8gunhZoA>



BEN FARINAZZO.

VICTORY | HONOUR | PEACE

THE FIRST AND
GREATEST VICTORY
IS TO **CONQUER**
YOURSELF – PLATO

