

Meet Dave Lassam, the Man for the Job: My 39 Years Service in the Royal Australian Navy

Dave Lassam

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Meet Dave Lassam, the Man for the Job is an anecdotal memoir that gathers interesting tales from a man's military life.

Retired sailor Dave Lassam's expansive memoir *Meet Dave Lassam, the Man for the Job* is about his four decades of service in the Australian Navy and his deployments abroad.

This book represents a firsthand depiction of the military—one not filtered through other media. From the 1970s to the 2010s, Lassam worked as a medic and medical administrative officer in the navy. He helped evacuate Australians after bombings in Bali and took part in humanitarian missions in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Here, he discusses treating patients after car accidents, managing sick bays, reviving patients after heart attacks, and dealing with the post-traumatic stress disorder and health issues that put an end to his military service.

Lassam, a dedicated public servant, is careful to emphasize naval accomplishments like supplying humanitarian aid. But he also covers the unpleasant elements of military life, like being volunteered to do particular duties, the “us versus them” mentality that separates people of different ranks, and the discomfort of wearing heavy formal uniforms for ceremonial guard functions like parades. Indeed, the book is diaristic in form to the extent that it includes everyday details and feelings, too, such as awe at seeing a large Russian warship, anxiety while preparing to deploy on a rescue mission, and honor over being named an honorary medic while serving with the US Navy. Its tone is matter-of-fact and methodical, moving through anecdotes at a regulated pace, covering events like a plane crash and treatment of an injured recruit in turn. Lassam recalls rushing from emergency to emergency and brushes with death too.

But as it moves toward coverage of the health issues that pushed Lassam out of military service, the book becomes less cohesive; it less concludes than it does trail off with additional notes about the pride that Lassam took in his work and about a family member's continuation of this legacy. A smattering of black-and-white photographs from Lassam's personal collection are present to illustrate facets of the military service he details, as with images of a dramatic demonstration of medical evacuation helicopter operations; they are intimate embellishments of his assorted recollections.

Directed toward civilian friends, *Meet Dave Lassam, the Man for the Job* is the unfiltered memoir of a retired military man who devoted himself to his service.

JOSEPH S. PETE (January 12, 2023)

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