



## “FLYING THE FLAG” A BIG PART OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA ASSOCIATION NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL GROUP

The opportunity to get together a quorum of members of The Order of Australia North American Group is more akin to herding cats: the membership is widely dispersed over the United States and Canada. As a result, apart from the iconic gatherings hosted each year by the NARG's Vice-Patron, the Australian Ambassador to the United States, much of the activity of the Group focuses around showing the flag at important events, and being available to support visiting holders of Orders when they visit Washington, DC.

Every year since the Group's foundation, one or more members lay a wreath at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at the Korean War Memorial on Washington, DC's Mall, and then participate in functions at the Australian and New Zealand Embassies during the day. For Australians abroad, the ANZAC Day services are often important rallying points at a time when thoughts are of family and Australian history. In the US, in particular, there are also a number of holders of ranks in the Order of Australia who are deployed military personnel, on assignment in the US.

Others earn their membership in the Order through their work in North America. Former Australian Naval Attaché Commodore Vincenzo (Vince) Di Pietro, CSC, was awarded his AM in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2016, for his distinguished work while an Attaché in Washington, as well as for his outstanding leadership of the RAN's Fleet Air Arm when he returned to Australia. He, and other great members of the Order, such as Australian astronaut Dr Paul Scully-Power, AM, are greatly missed when they return to Australia, but they represent the great work Order holders have done during their time in North America.

Hosting, greeting, or helping visiting holders of Orders becomes a key part of the NARG mission, too. In June and July 2016, Professor Peter Collignon AM, and his wife, Sally, visited Washington, DC, from Canberra, where Peter is a consultant in microbiology and infectious diseases and Professor at the Australian National University Medical School. North America Regional Group Chair, Gregory Copley AM, and his wife, Pamela, were delighted to be able to meet with the Collignons, not just for hospitality, but also to see where they could help with Peter's research mission in the US.

Peter received his AM in 2010 for service to medicine, particularly as a practitioner and educator in the fields of clinical microbiology, infectious diseases and infection control.

Members of the NARG as well as other visiting members of the OAA are invited to contact Gregory Copley, Chair of the Group, if they're visiting Washington, DC. His email is [GRCopley@aol.com](mailto:GRCopley@aol.com).



*“Visiting Fireman” Professor Peter Collignon AM with Gregory Copley AM, Chairman NARG, during the recent visit by Peter and Lucy Collignon to the US Capital.*



*Gregory Copley AM, Chairman, NARG, laying a wreath on behalf of the OAA on ANZAC Day at Washington DC's Korean War Memorial on 25 April 2016.*