



THE VIETNAM VETERANS'

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

JULY 2023

A FAIR GO OR A MUG'S GAME?



AN OPPORTUNITY NOW TO FIX IT.

- **WHAT DID THE ROYAL COMMISSIONER SAY**
- **DANGERS IN HARMONISATION OF THREE VETERANS' ACTs INTO ONE**
- **BEGINNGS— VIETNAM VETERANS' MOVEMENT IN NSW AND VICTORIA**
- **AND CONTINUING OUR STORIES FROM VETERANS THEMSELVES**

ALSO
INSIDE
THIS

**NEXT ISSUE
DECEMBER**

VVFA PO BOX 170, 8 MARY ST, GRANVILLE NSW 2142 PH 02 9682 1788 FX 029682 6134

NATIONAL PRESIDENT vvfanatpres@vvfa.org.au NATIONAL SECRETARY vvfanatsec@vvfa.org.au

KCI LAWYERS

ABN 35 490 214 100

Partners

Michael A Carbonaro BA LL B

Greg Isolani BA LL B

Level 5

488 Bourke Street

Melbourne Vic 3000

DX: 488 Melbourne

Ph: 03 8673 5888

Fax: 03 8673 5899

gregisolani@kcilawyers.com.au

www.kcilawyers.com.au

Established in 2001, our team of lawyers provide clients with high levels of personal service and professional representation in a range of legal and commercial matters.



'KCI's experience and expertise has led to them being a respected voice in Military and Commonwealth compensation, advocating for Veterans and families for 27 years'

SERVICES

DVA - Military Compensation

Commonwealth Superannuation (MSBS, DFRDB and Retrospective medical discharge claims)

Asbestos - Dust Disease Tribunal claims.

Industry super claims - income protection - TPD appeals,

Coroner's inquests

claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA

Our Readers love Vietnam Veterans' Stories

Gleaned from letters diaries and memories



Welcome back to **Ian Granland** with the story of his time at Canungra.

And welcome to new contributor Vietnam veteran **Walter Pearson** who is a guide for veterans' tours of the battlefields of Vietnam. He introduces us to a local Vietnamese war memorial which tells a story about mines from our old enemy's point of view.

Welcome to new contributor Vietnam veteran **Rob de Kok** with his moving story of an encounter on one ANZAC Day.

Welcome to new author **Ian Durham** with the story and pictures of his progress from farm boy to dodging RPG2s while clearing jungle on his dozer.

Welcome back too to author **John Ingram** with another episode of the story of HMAS Sydney. ■



**VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION
of AUSTRALIA Inc.**

Incorporating

**Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and
Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW
Branch) Inc.**

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland Branch
Inc.**

Veteran Support Centre NQ Inc - Townsville

**Vietnam Veterans & Veterans Federation ACT
Inc.**

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Victorian Branch
Inc.**

**Vietnam Veterans Federation South Australian
Branch Inc.**

**Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia WA
Branch.**

Vietnam Veterans Federation Committee:

National President	William Roberts OAM
NSW State President	Frank Cole
Qld State President	Peter Handy
FNQ President	Ian Bowron
ACT State President	Ward Gainey
Vic State President	John Arnold OAM
SA State president	Mal Thiele
WA State President	Milton Kirk JP
Research Officer	Graham Walker AM

MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging
Advocacy
Success**

*Membership is due on 1 January each year.
(July 1 for Queensland members)*

Membership to our organisation empowers a team to achieve much within the veteran community, by assisting veterans with claims and applications on a wide spectrum of government provided avenues of compensation and benefits across 3 Acts of parliament.

Each as an individual is ineffective when lobbying governments for change, or to amend an injustice. Together as an organisation, with a strong membership we are able to, and have done, improve pathways for better treatment of veterans.

We survive as an organisation on the strength of our membership, and even if you have won the battle with Veterans Affairs (DVA), there is always the risk of changes in Government policy which may erode benefits and pensions or changes to eligibility entitlements.

We encourage membership from all who support our objectives, veterans, service and ex-service members, as well as war-widows and their families. You don't have to be a member or ex-member of the Australian Defence Forces (ADF). In most instances, anyone may join our organisation, with few exceptions, so why not enquire today.

It is through our membership subscriptions, fund raising activities and many kind donations from our members, and general public, that we are able to continue supporting our fellow Veterans and Service members in need, and meet our increasing welfare and pension workload.

Should you be able to help with a donation, or leave a bequest in your Will, it would be extremely beneficial and greatly appreciated.

We thank you for your kind support. ■

Advertise in our Newsletter

Best rates going

**Australian Military Associations
reunions and contact notices, all
FREE!**

Corporate Rates:

(Monochrome, grayscale, black/white only)

Full Page \$660

Half Page \$330

(Prices include GST)

10% Discount applied to campaigns that run
consecutively for 3 or more issues.

**Contact the Editor
always open to negotiation
editor@vfvfagrville.org**

50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's Vietnam War

Look out for a three part television
series on Australia's Vietnam War on
the ABC.

It will probably be launched
in August 2023.

CLOSE-OFF DATE FOR DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE 1 NOVEMBER 2023

For items of publication contact
editor@vfvfagrville.org

COPYRIGHT NOTICE ©

Copyright of all original material in The Vietnam Veterans Newsletter is held by the author and should not be reproduced for profit without the permission of the author. Reproduction for non-profit newsletters, military archives or study purposes in proper context is allowable but acknowledgement of the author and source should be made.



TWO OF OUR OWN HONOURED IN FIRST KING CHARLES 111 BIRTHDAY AWARDS

We acknowledge and pass on our fervent
congratulations to the following:

Mr John Arnold OAM-Victorian State
President. For service to the welfare of veterans.

Mrs Lorraine Burt OAM-Secretary Clarence
Valley NSW Sub-Branch.
For service to veterans and their families.





HEADLINES

Fair go or mug's game That grossly unequal legal representation at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal..... **Page 6**

Vietnam veteran's story
My Canungra Not everything went as planned. **Page 8**

What the Royal Commissioner said Just how had DVA and governments got away with ignoring so many recommendations of reviews and studies..... **Page 12**

National President's Report Aged Care has unfortunately become relevant to all Vietnam veterans We meet with the experts **Page 16**

Vietnam veteran's story
The Dat Do Stele A local war memorial at Dat Do that tells a story of mines from their point of view..... **Page 22**

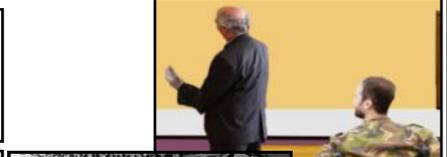
From the editor's desk Is DVA up to its old bureaucratic tricks in its harmonizing of the three veterans' disability schemes into one new..... **Page 26**

The VVAA history drafts How did the Vietnam veteran movement get started in New South Wales and Victoria..... **Page 34**

Vietnam veteran's story
Brothers A moving story of an encounter on one ANZAC Day..... **Page 44**

Vietnam veteran's story
From Farm Boy to Clearing Jungle in Vietnam A great story of one Nasho's war **Page 50**

Vietnam veteran's story
The story of HMAS Sydney Part 5 The lurking underwater danger..... **Page 58**



WHAT ELSE IS MAKING NEWS

50TH ANNOUNCEMENT ABC	3
NATIONAL PRESIDENT EXTRAS	17
NSW VIETNAM VETERANS DAY	21
POEM: THE ELEVENTH DAY	29
NSW PRESIDENT REPORT	32
NATIONAL SECRETARY REPORT	33
WHAT'S IN YOUR GARAGE?	42
PSK FINANCIAL ARTICLE	62
OZ ENTERTAINERS TRIBUTE	65
VALE LORRAE DESMOND AM MBE	76
VALE FRED BASTOCK	79

BOOK REVIEWS & EXCERPTS

THE MINEFIELD	15
WEAVING OF WORLDS	18
THE LONG SHADOW	24
WHEN HE CAME HOME	25
THE CLEARING	30
THE THIRD CHOPSTICK	43
THE HOME FRONT	46
7 RAR REGIMENTAL HISTORY	47

REGULAR FEATURES

1. Authors intro
2. Federation Affiliates list
2. About membership
3. Advert rates, Newsletter close-offs,
3. OAM Recipient Notice.
4. Headliner News Index
5. Other News & Indexes
48. Letters to Editor
61. Crossword Corner & Unknown Comic
64. AVCAT 2024 applications open
66. Reunions & Notices
68. Branches / Sub-Branche Listings
70. Merchandise list/Pics
72. Open Arms advert
73. Membership form
74. Change of Address Form
75. Mortality Report Form
80. Operation Life Advert
81. Last Post
84. Member Discounts



Fair go or mug's game?

The **Administrative Appeals Tribunal** (AAT) is the second level of appeal in the Repatriation system. Veterans who believe their applications to DVA for disability compensation have been wrongly rejected can appeal those decisions to the AAT.

At the AAT the veteran's appeal is opposed by DVA-hired lawyers from prestigious law firms.

Senator Jacqui Lambie was concerned that there was a fundamental injustice in the way DVA was going about confronting veterans at AAT hearings.

It was Question Time in the Senate on 23 October 2019.

Senator Lambie asked 'how much did DVA spend on legal costs with respect to the AAT application relating to Mr Timothy Thurlow?'

94 year old veteran, Mr Thurlow, had applied to DVA for an Extreme Disablement Adjustment. It was a case that had two days of hearings over several months but took about a year to resolve.

The answer to Senator Lambie's question was that DVA had spent some \$73,000 on lawyers and other legal resources to oppose Mr Thurlow's appeal.

The lawyers acting for Mr Thurlow, Greg Isolani of KCI Lawyers, restricted to Legal Aid rates, spent only round \$14,000.

This huge disparity is not unusual.

Indeed it has been estimated that DVA's hired private law firm teams of barristers and solicitors are paid, for AAT cases, round five times as much as veterans' Legal Aid lawyers.

This is a gross inequality, that of course, can unfairly effect the outcome of the appeal.

Vietnam veteran Level 4 Advocate Ross Dunn OAM (12 Field Regiment) identifies the same gross inequality of legal resources and believes the disparity is getting worse.

Ross says that when he is representing a veteran at AAT hearings he can be pitted against a DVA-hired senior litigation expert from a prestigious law firm. At other times he can be opposed by highly experienced litigators from the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS). Ross was recently opposed by the head of a section of AGS.

As well as high level experience, the law firm and AGS lawyers have legal assistants, secretaries, computer systems, legal resource software, etc that Ross and others representing veterans can only dream of.

Ross points out that the veteran will often present a medical report from the treating doctor or psychiatrist; a report based on a good knowledge of the veteran after many consultations. The AAT can send the veteran to their choice of doctor whose report may introduce doubt. Not only might opposing or doubting opinions result from only one short consultation but, Ross argues, often result from the way DVA's lawyers frame the questions.

Veterans and their lay advocates or legal aid lawyers don't have the financial resources to get further reports to support their case, and even if they managed to get one, DVA's lawyers have unlimited funds to get another opposing view and

A FAIR GO OR A MUG'S GAME?



so on.

The inequality in funding has other ramifications.

At AAT hearings the DVA-hired lawyers will often have assistants to take notes. Not so the Legal Aid lawyer and lay advocates. This makes the veteran's representative's job much harder.

Transcripts are sometimes needed. But the AAT does not provide them. That service has been outsourced and is expensive such that it is beyond many veterans. DVA hired lawyers have no such financial restrictions.

DVA hired lawyers may have lined up a list of expert witnesses to appear at a hearing, costing many thousands of dollars. The AAT puts much weight on the evidence of such witnesses. But the veteran often simply cannot afford such witnesses.

Apart from these inequalities not giving veterans a fair go, this disparity ignores the government policy for its departments to be 'Model Litigants'.

This policy is founded upon the concepts of behaving ethically, fairly and honestly so as to model best practice in litigation. Under the policy, government agencies are required to:

- Deal with claims promptly.

- **Not take advantage of a claimant who lacks the resources to litigate a legitimate claim.**

So DVA's behaviour at the AAT seems unfair, harsh and certainly not that of a Model Litigant.

DVA's unfair practice also ignores the 'beneficial' nature of veterans' legislation. What 'beneficial' means is that veterans should be dealt with as generously as the law allows, not exposed to a mug's game such as that at the AAT.

There is a chance now to remedy this unfairness.

The government is disbanding the present AAT and establishing a new one.

It is doing this because of claimed 'jobs for the boys' that has reduced the AAT's effectiveness and credibility.

Regardless of the rights or wrongs of this argument, it is a chance to ensure that the new AAT operates as the original one was supposed to so as not to allow this inequality to continue.

The VVFA has made a submission asking for this change. ■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

MY CANUNGRA

Ian Granland OAM JP

As part of military preparation to go to Vietnam, each soldier had to undergo a two week training programme which specialised in jungle warfare also touching on fitness, indoctrination and general information about what to expect at the sharp end.

This was held at the Army's Jungle Training Facility at Canungra in south east Queensland in the upper Coomera River Valley between the Darlington and Beechmont Ranges and known as Kokoda Barracks. It was established in 1942 to prepare troops for combat in the South West Pacific Area in Army jungle warfare and infantry training, however closed from 1948 – 1954. It was reactivated during the Vietnam War (60s and 70s).

Everyone from the clerks in Saigon to the well-trained grunts in the field had to undergo this education and if the nominees were used to a slow life beforehand, Canungra certainly sorted them out.

Our bus left from Holdsworthy in Sydney's south-west, late one afternoon in October 1969. On it were soldiers from different Corps of various ranks.

The vehicle was pretty full and we soon pressed on into the night, heading north.

It wasn't long before we realised we were in for a long trip. The coach, from a well-known bus company, was not in the greatest of mechanical condition and only after a couple of hours the engine started to throw in the towel.

This condition resulted in one of the

funniest moments I had been involved in during my two years in the army.

After the third time the bus stopped the driver couldn't get it started and we were all forced to "debus" and push the vehicle for a clutch start in order for it to get going.

If you could imagine 40 odd soldiers, all in polyesters (army regulation dress, without coat) pushing an interstate coach along the main Pacific Highway in the middle of nowhere in the darkest of the night, then you'd think you'd have seen everything.

Canungra is situated west of Surfers Paradise in the mountain ranges and the road in was quite a ride.

As soon as the bus stopped there were warrant officers and sergeants all yelling (by numbers), and they didn't care who they yelled at. *"Get out, get out. Line up over here, move, move, move."* There was no respect for rank there.

We were all shown to our tents where all ranks bunked in together. I think there was about 8 in our tent and yes, it was a bit crowded.

There was a captain in our tent, whom the staff at the training centre appeared to know quite well. He was in the Infantry Corps and was far from a yes sir, no sir three bags full soldier.

Every time we went somewhere or did something he knew the answers. I nicknamed him God, and it stuck.

He had no modesty and revelled in his new



Great photo taken by Corporal Mark Doran, Department of Defence.

pseudonym and never did he pull any rank or the like whilst we were together; rather, he was just one of the boys and really, just like a big kid.

Arrival time was early morning and after we settled we ate (the tucker was spot on. In fact the sergeant cook at the unit was later transferred to our unit at 104 Signal Squadron, Nui Dat.), then it was the issue of weapons.

Some of us had brought our unit issue SLRs and some hadn't. Those who were without weapons were issued a rifle for their stay at the centre.

It was round about then that I teamed up with a corporal, nicknamed Rusty (I forget his real name), a regular soldier and member of the RAASC. In fact he was a driver. I later learnt of an extremely funny but dangerous incident he was involved in whilst overseas.

Over the next couple of days it was practice, practice, practice.

I have never been able to master climbing ropes as an exercise and had to endure the

embarrassment of going all through the "why can't you soldier" and "go up again and show your mates how it's done".

One thing the instructors continually held over our heads was the fact that if we failed the course or weren't up to scratch we would remain behind to undergo another two weeks with the next class to come in.

Of course this was all bullshit and used as a "big stick" to make us do our best.

What we did was hard physical work. Up early and knocking off late whilst we resided in camp.

All the overweight diggers soon shed much of their excess fat and at meal times everything on the plate was consumed with little waste; an indication of how much energy they were burning up.

The camp boozer was something else. We worked hard and some played hard. That's where I realised Rusty liked his drink. By Christ some of

(Continued on page 10)



those blokes got pissed, and that was every night!

At one time during our training we were required to cross a river fully geared up. The only condition was that *"those people who have a rifle issued from Canungara will leave it on the banks and come back after you cross the river to retrieve it"*. Quite obviously they didn't want their weapons continually affected by water.

At that stage I **made sure** my weapon was Canungra issue and told the instructors so. Of course it wasn't but I didn't want to spend hours after the exercise cleaning the thing.

Somewhere during the time we were there we were given a day off and trucked down to Surfers Paradise where we simply filled ourselves with grog then picked up in the afternoon and

returned to the unit.

During the course we had to go out bush for five days to enhance our jungle training.

Rather than suffer the indignation of having to eat the food from the uninviting Aussie Ration Packs, Rusty and myself made our way to the unit's shop/canteen; an area way out of bounds for those training like ourselves. It was only for the staff who were posted at Canungra.

There, we purchased all of life's little luxuries, like baked beans, spaghetti etc. to supplement our proposed meagre diet.

With these all hidden away in our packs we boarded some World War II trucks (yes, they still had some left, even in 1969) and were taken miles

away from camp to undergo this intense part of our jungle preparation.

As a bonus, we were issued a new, New Zealand made dehydrated ration which the Army was trialling. It was different and a lot more tasty than the Australian issue which we thought we would have to endure.

First night out was the normal thing, picquet duty etc. etc. however one digger fractured his leg when he was making his way to his station and fell down a weapon pit in the pitch black.

At the end of day two, some of the soldiers started to complain that they were getting the runs, apparently from the new rations.

The problem spread and about half of the platoon had gone down with it, except Rusty and myself. Word was that they were going to terminate the exercise for those suffering from the condition and return them to base.

Immediately Rusty and myself found we "had" the symptoms and joined the growing list of sufferers.

The training was wound down and the trucks reappeared to return us to Canungra.

Strangely though we passed through the camp and continued for miles on the other side.

When we stopped we were all ordered to "debus" (love that word) and eat prior to embarking on what we were told was a 26 mile forced march (something between a fast walk and a jog) back to base where we would be put through some rigorous coalface experience.

For my meal, I selected from my pack some delights which I had purchased from the base canteen; a tin of anchovies and washed it down with copious quantities of water.

We all went in platoon order and it seemed to take forever half running half walking along the dusty road back to the camp.

It took in the vicinity of 2 hours to cover the distance and half way through I could feel the anchovies mixing not too well with my stomach juices.

Suddenly I found I couldn't hold them down any longer and had to stop, much to the chagrin of

our sergeant in charge, to bring up all my lunch on the side of the road. You know, I have never been able to eat anchovies since.

Upon arrival at the extremities of the base we were rested and it was at that stage that I noticed a number of top brass reviewing what I thought was some type of weapons training, just over the hill in front.

We were not told and had no idea what was going on. However our turn was next and as we all stood up, our leader explained that we were about to negotiate a simulated mine field over a distance of approximately 200 metres. We had to run from one side to the other whilst real explosions took place all around us and an old WW II Vickers machine gun blasted away from the hill in front and about 50 metres over our heads. I was hoping they were blanks.

This was all very daunting, but to a man, all we could see was the finish line at the far side of this mine field and we all ran like hell, albeit in a stooped fashion to avoid being "shot" by bullets which seemed to be piercing the air not all that big a distance above.

I must admit some of the soldiers absolutely froze under these conditions – honestly, I couldn't believe it. This was an absolutely simulated exercise, but I can clearly recall grabbing one fellow who at the time, was making love to the ground in front and shitting himself. I half dragged him to the finish line. "F@\$k mate," I said, "what are you doing??"

That was about the end of our training there. For me it was quite different than the every day bullshit life I was enduring at Ingleburn.

It's funny, at the time you meet up with all these blokes with whom you became reasonably good friends, then, that's it, finished. On the bus, which this time did not break down and back to Sydney, most probably never to see these people ever again.

Ian Granland OAM JP ■

(16 MAY 2023, COMMISSIONER NICK KALDAS APM, Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide)

What the Royal Commissioner said:

(and he didn't mince his words)

"This Royal Commission was established in July 2021 to investigate the high rates of suicide and suicidality among Australia's military community. 1600 suicides between 1997 and 2020, that's more than 20 times the number killed in active service over roughly the same period. It is unquestionably a national tragedy and we remain very concerned that that troubling number does not include all members and veterans who have served over this time.

"Tragically, rarely a week goes by that this Royal Commission isn't alerted to the untimely death of another serving or ex-serving member. As we have said before, many other inquiries related to this issue have preceded this Royal Commission, resulting in 57 reports, with over 750 recommendations being delivered over the past 20 years. Most of those recommendations were never actioned or were simply ignored.

"The stark reality is that the failure to act by successive governments, Defence and other agencies, for whatever reason, has cost lives. There has been a significant lack of accountability at all levels of government, the Defence chain of command, as well as DVA. We remain concerned that the ADF does not fully accept its contributing role to the moral, mental and physical suffering of some serving members,

veterans and their families or, indeed, to deaths by suicide" (end of quote)

We note that it was way back in the December 2016 edition of this magazine that a major article was published titled: **Stop Downplaying Military Suicides.**

"Most of those recommendations were never actioned or were simply ignored"

And it was way back in the December 2011 edition of this magazine that it was noted:

'AN AUSTRALIAN Defence Force survey reveals that our younger veterans are suffering concerning rates of psychological stress including PTSD. That's no surprise; the war in Afghanistan is, in many ways, strikingly similar to the Vietnam war. Add to that the multiple deployments in life threatening conditions many soldiers are experiencing and the survey results are to be expected.'

So warning of the unfolding tragedy went back at least as far as 2011 (and probably further). But DVA seemingly just ignored it.

(Continued on page 13)



Royal
Commissioner
Nick Kaldas
APM
Chair of the
Royal
Commission
into Veteran
and ADF Suicide

The Vietnam veteran movement has battled this DVA and government attitude for more than forty years.

Without ex-service organisations battling this mindset, the outcomes would be even worse.

So how do they get away with it?

DVA and the government have a bag of dirty tricks they often use.

Here is an example.

The 2004 Federal election was not far off and the TPI Federation National President Blue Ryan was leading a campaign (strongly supported by the VVFA) to rectify an inadequate TPI pension.

The campaign was gathering veteran and media interest, threatening to damage the government's election campaign.

The government reacted by offering to hold an enquiry after the election. This effectively closed down Blue Ryan's protests.

After the election the government established the Clarke Enquiry which did some

good work identifying areas where increased help was warranted.

But the government was ready. It declared that any changes to the TPI Pension had to be within the existing 'fiscal envelope'. In other words, even if deficiencies were identified, their remedy could not increase the cost to the budget.

This, of course, was ridiculous. If you set up an enquiry to identify possible deficiencies, and deficiencies are found, they will obviously cost money to rectify.

With this ridiculous restriction, the Clarke Enquiries good recommendations could only be implemented if the life-long TPI Pension was ceased at age 65, a completely unacceptable penalty.

So what was the real reason the promise was made to hold the enquiry? Was it simply to quieten the Blue Ryan's campaign before the election with no intention of remedying any inadequacies found after the election?

(Continued on page 14)



In session

There was, too, the notorious case some years ago of the ‘missing sentence’.

The VVFA had sought a document through a Freedom of Information request.

DVA had objected to its release but was overruled.

The VVFA received the document from DVA. But at the same time a copy of the same document ‘fell off the back of a truck’.

Comparing the two copies showed that the document delivered by DVA had a vital sentence removed.

VVFA’s official complaint resulted in DVA being instructed to deliver the full article and to apologise.

Whilst the full article was delivered, the apology never was.

Currently DVA is overseeing the harmonisation of the three veterans’ compensation schemes currently in use, into one new scheme.

DVA repeats the mantra, ‘**No one will be worse off**’

But that is a misleading statement.

It is misleading because whilst there will be no change for existing pensioners, new claimants may be worse off under the new harmonised scheme than they would have been under the old scheme.

That would be a bad outcome for this new scheme. What is required is a statement from DVA that:

No claimant under the new harmonised scheme will be worse off than they would have been under the old scheme.

It seems DVA doesn’t want the new scheme to be built round this guarantee, but want to hide that unsavoury fact.

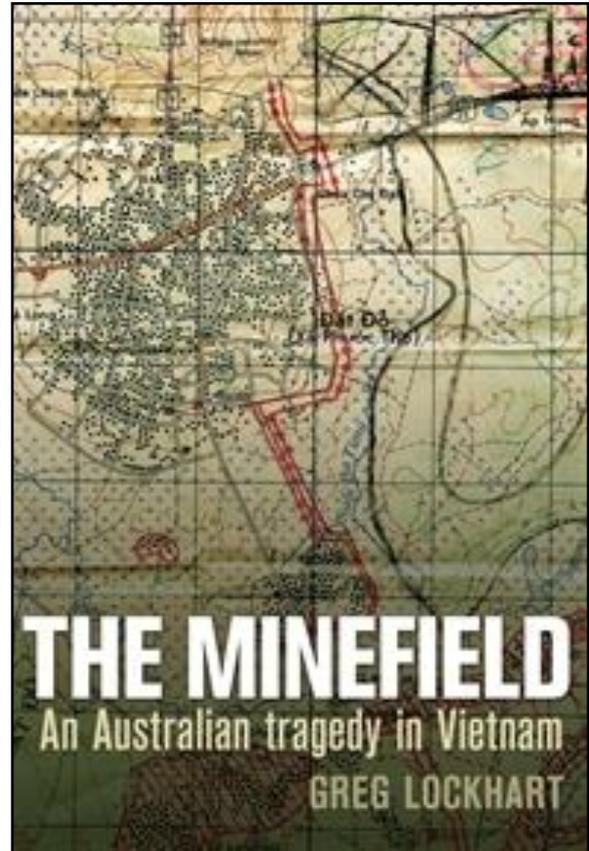
We were hoping that the current DVA was turning over a new leaf. Indeed, there were indications that it was.

It seems, sadly, we were wrong. ■

How could this disaster have happened?

Extract

Graham Edwards, the machine gunner in Corporal DeBomford's section, was riding on top of the APC. When the vehicle stopped he heard what he thought might have been the CO's voice calling over the radio to 'Get those men off that bloody track and get going'. The CO, Lieutenant Colonel Ron Grey, was apparently circling overhead in 'Possum'. Edwards was in the leading assault section and was apprehensive because the Pioneers had been warned they were going into a possible mined area. As he alighted from the APC, he was held back for a few moments as he assisted his Number-2 on the machine gun, who had gotten a belt of ammunition caught on the top of the vehicle. On catching up with the others, Edwards was on the lookout for a good fire position for his gun in the event of a contact. Thus 'reading the ground' with the anticipatory eye of an infantryman, he veered towards a paddy bund he calculated would provide such a position and trod on a mine—that may have been sited with this very move in mind. Back at Platoon Headquarters some 25 or 30 metres behind DeBomford's section, Bourke saw an M16 mine jump 'about two or three feet and explode. Edwards slumped to the ground in the sitting position, silently observing his shattered legs. DeBomford and Private Ros Gillis were less seriously wounded. ■



To get your copy simply ring the NSW Branch Granville Office on 02 9682 1788 or order on-line at www.vvfagranville.org.





Our National Executive meets in Adelaide and discusses Aged Care with the experts.

Aged Care is unfortunately of concern to all Vietnam veterans, the youngest of us being in our mid 70s.

In June, a team from our National Office in Granville along with State Presidents' teams, gathered in Adelaide for our Annual General Meeting.

Aged Care was dominant among our considerations.

On day one we spent some hours with the CEO of RSL Care, an acknowledged Aged Care expert. On day two we had discussions with DVA Deputy Commissioner, Janice Silby, who, of course, is an expert in the field.

Our conclusion is that, the Aged Care arrangements for veterans, as well as suffering the present dysfunction of the general Aged Care system, has additional unsatisfactory aspects just for us.

It starts like this. When veterans who are under the care of DVA enter Aged Care they become the responsibility of the Department of Health, except for any pension entitlements which remain the responsibility of DVA.

This can create some complexity as the list of DVA entitlements the veteran has been enjoying is not the same as the Department of Health's list.

But more importantly, on entering Aged Care, veterans are not asked to 'tick a box' signifying veteran status, despite the legislation specifying 'veterans' are a group (along with some others) with special needs.

This means that Aged Care homes may not know of the veteran's service so that veterans fail to receive acknowledgement (such as on commemoration days) that the legislation mandates, leaving some feeling unappreciated and isolated.

This failure can go unchecked because DVA has no role in checking to see if veterans are being properly treated.

In the past, intending to visit veterans in Aged Care homes to overcome this deficiency, we asked DVA to give us the location of the veterans they knew of. DVA, however, were unable to comply claiming privacy concerns.

How can we improve the system?

1. Identify veterans by 'ticking a box' on entering Aged Care and veterans being asked if they would like veteran visits.
2. Aged Care homes then advises DVA.
3. DVA, in turn, advises ex-service organisations.
4. Ex-service organisation then send welfare representatives to visit.

Also necessary is aligning of Department of Health entitlements to DVA entitlements.

What is vital is that none of us is left isolated and unappreciated in the last years of our lives.

(see Letters to the Editor for a personal experience)

MORE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As at 30 April 2023 there were 73,799 compensation claims that were received by DVA but not yet decided. This is an outrageously large number. The processing times for most claims was between a little under and a little over a year; an outrageously long delay.

We know that DVA is genuinely doing all it can to reduce this backlog but the question remains how DVA could have allowed it to accumulate to such a huge number.

Charging for help with disability pension claims

There is a worrying trend.

Some advocates are advertising their services and charging a fee.

These fees are not small amounts just to cover some expenses, they are substantial fees designed to make handsome profits.

These outfits are charging fees either as a percentage of any payouts or directly. In one case it is 5% of a lump-sum payout or \$250 per claim.

That's a lot of money.

The VVFA has never charged a fee for the help it gives to veterans and war widows submitting disability claims.

There are other ex-service organisations whose help is free and some that charge an acceptable small fee to help cover some costs.

Our free service and that of some other ex-service organisations are backed by years of experience and records of success.

So why would a veteran pay for a service they can get from experienced and successful advocates free elsewhere.

I can only think that a lot of veterans do not know about the free services available.

Perhaps members of the military should be given a brochure about the free services on discharge.

50th Anniversary Commemoration of the end of Australia's participation in the Vietnam war.

"The Department of Veterans' Affairs will deliver a televised commemorative service to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War at the Australian

Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade, on Friday 18 August 2023.

The commemorative service will be broadcast live across Australia by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and streamed online.'

We have been advocating for an eminent Vietnam veteran such as General Cosgrove or Graham Edwards give the main address but our wishes have been rejected. The rejection was based on 'protocol'.

But protocol is not unchanging or unchangeable. It is subject to common sense.

It amounts to an inflexible, hide-bound DVA unresponsive to those it claims to serve.

What are they trying to hide?

Recommendation 7 of the Suicide Royal Commission interim report is: Provide exemption from parliamentary privilege.

Parliamentary privilege means that the Royal Commission is barred from seeing certain government documents.

This means it cannot see how government decisions are made which may be relevant to understanding veteran and ADF suicides.

The Royal Commission says on this issue:

'Despite our clear mandate, parliamentary privilege and public interest immunity claims have seriously, adversely constrained our ability to inquire into and receive the necessary evidence from prior inquiries conducted by and for parliament and to examine government decision-making.'

Is 'parliamentary privilege' being used to unethically hide politicians' doubtful decisions? ■

Vietnam veteran and professional historian Dr Greg Lockhart wrote what is now a classic book on Australia's participation in the Vietnam war, *The Minefield*.

Here is his next book.

Weaving of Worlds: a Day on Île d'Yeu

One day in 2012, Greg Lockhart, who is a Vietnam veteran, visited Île d'Yeu, the French island in the Bay of Biscay. And there, travelling on the other side of the world, he came across stories from the island's past that linked him back to ANZAC and to his experience in the Vietnam War. The island had been the site of several events that resonate in Australian military history: occupation by British Red Coats in the distant past, a German U boat attack off its coast in 1917, the dramatic crash of a British Bomber Command aircraft on it in 1942, and, with the German defeat in 1945, the Vichy leader Marshal Pétain's exile and imprisonment in the Fortress there. In 1945, the dispatch of the French Expeditionary Force, which initiated the long 'Thirty Year War' in Vietnam, is woven into the travel story too; it was the antecedent of the Australian Force, Vietnam.

Also a story of friendship and death, *Weaving of Worlds* is published by Reading Sideways Press in Leiden, The Netherlands.

Pages 131

Cost \$24.90

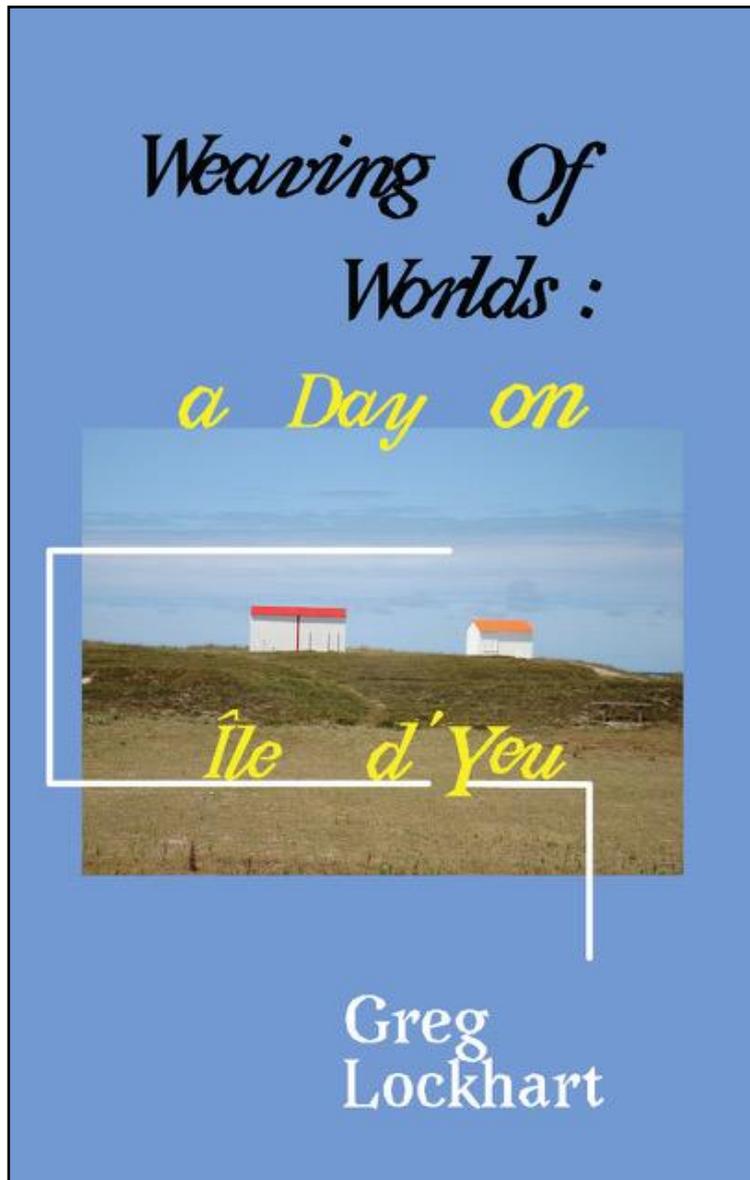
To Buy: on line:

Booktopia

<https://www.booktopia.com.au/search.ep?keywords=Greg+Lockhart+Weaving+of+worlds&productType=917504>

World of Books

Or: <https://www.wob.com/en-au/books/greg-lockhart/weaving-of-worlds/9780645472516>



An extract

‘One more puzzle sealed in time; one more stop. About a kilometre due west from the cemetery, through the forest, but a few kilometres way by road, is Fort de Pierre Levée. It is where former Marshal Pétain was detained during the last six years of his life.

‘We remain silent as the jeep skirts around the spiky tree line; the subject, still unsettled in French history, is the Marshal’s decent into exile. The defilement of his dignified, though deliberately misaligned tomb, which was waiting for us today, bears out that unease...’



**We sometimes
forget just how
brave and loyal
some of our
comrades in arms
have been.
Just what did those
Victoria Cross
winners do to earn
their awards.**



Kevin Wheatly VC

On 28 May, while ARVN troops were engaging *'elements of a trapped enemy battalion'*, a young girl ran into the crossfire. With no regard for his own safety, Wheatley ran to save the child leaving them both exposed to the firing bullets. Using his body as a shield, he managed to carry her to safety. These actions, although not recognised for an award, were included in an early draft of his Victoria Cross (VC) citation.

It was in Wheatley's final moments on 13 November 1965 that his magnificent courage was recognised.

Following a Vietnamese Civil Irregular Defence Group company commencing a search and destroy mission in the Tra Bong Valley, a mere 15km east of where Wheatley and his A Team with the 5th Special Forces Group under

Captain Felix Fazekas were positioned, Warrant Officer Wheatley reported contact with the Viet Cong which quickly turned to a request for assistance. Captain Fazekas immediately organised help and personally fought towards the action area. He then received another message from Wheatley saying Warrant Officer Swanton had been hit in the chest and requested an air strike and casualty assistance. Although told by medical assistance that Swanton was dying, Wheatley refused to abandon his comrade. While under heavy machine gun and automatic rifle fire, he half dragged, half carried Swanton to the open rice paddies, some 200 metres away. Although his mate was dying, he still refused to leave him and instead was seen to pull the pins from two grenades and awaited for the enemy.

Their bodies were found at first light the next morning, with Warrant Officer Wheatley lying beside Warrant Officer Swanton. ■

(from the AWM web-site)



NSW STATE BRANCH HQ & BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB ARE COMBINING ONCE AGAIN TO HOST THE SYDNEY VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE AND FUNCTION TO BE HELD IN THE SPORTS CLUB GRAND BALLROOM

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST 2023

It is hoped that this major event will take place as planned and that we may all come together once more to share our memories and rekindle old mateships.

The usual itinerary of service will take place as before and we remind intending parties of the following:

- 0900hrs Doors open. Meet & Greet at the Grand Ballroom entry hall.
Bar opens 0900hrs to 1015hrs (at the discretion of management) and closed for the service.
- 1030hrs Memorial Service with Padre – Chaplain, Captain Frank Wang
Guest Speaker: Chief Commissioner Stacey Kruck (Rtd) OBE OAM–Everymans
(Service scheduled for approximately 40 to 45 minutes)
- 1150hrs Entrance to Grand Ballroom & function proper
- 1200hrs Entertainment will be provided by the Williams Brothers (subject to confirmation)

Admission: \$50.00 per person. Tables of eight are available. Check when ordering.

Accommodation with Mercure Hotel, Bankstown, adjacent to the Sports Club is to be by private consultation, and the rates offered are to be advised. Breakfast at your own volition. Make sure you mention this function when making your booking. Contact the Mercure Bankstown booking on 02 8111 7100, directly, and quote this event.

Any further enquiry, and to book your table/ticket, is available from the Granville office

Phone: 02 9682 1788. Email: accounts@vfvgranville.org

Keep watching our NSW website for updates prior to the event. www.vfvgranville.org.

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Dat Do Stele

By Vietnam veteran, film maker and tour guide
Walter Pearson

New Shrines Emerge in Old Phuoc Tuy

In the province we called Phuoc Tuy, after more than half a century, two new shrines have emerged acknowledging an Australian presence in the conflict where, in the past, Vietnamese memorials have avoided mention of the Uc Dai Loi.

The more recent construction is in the southern part of Dat Do Town within a hundred metres of the site of a mine incident on 15 June 1969 that killed three and wounded twenty two.

The stele in that building refers to what the Vietnamese call the Battle of Chom Dau. It appears to be a Vietnamese version of what historian Greg Lockhart, author of *The Minefield*, called the Battle of the Box - an area south of Dat Do bounded by the Long Hai Hills and the sea.

During the period between 8 May and 15 August 1969, Australia lost nineteen soldiers killed and 80 wounded on M16 mines that had almost certainly been taken from the Horseshoe to Phuoc Hai minefield.

The Vietnamese version of events is confused and conflates a number of incidents. History shows that on the morning of 24 May 1969, Engineers building a system of bunkers for local forces, returned to the worksite. Local forces who were guarding it overnight set off an M16 as they were leaving, killing one Australian and



wounding three. On 30 May, four diggers from D 9RAR were wounded when a mine exploded near the work site. Further incidents occurred on 15 June and 4 July when D and C Coys of 5RAR suffered heavy casualties, followed on 21 July by the incident that gave rise to the anthem "I was only 19" when A Coy 6RAR hit mines on Operation Mundingburra.

A second new shrine appeared about three years ago near the Long Tan Battle site. While there is a large stele in the building, local authorities are yet to put anything on it. No doubt, how to present details of the 1966 battle are the subject of heated debate among veterans in the province. ■



Walter Pearson
Tour Leader
www.icptours.com.au
Ph: 0424 177 590

Here is a translation of the stele at Dat Do. During the war of resistance against the American invaders, the people and forces of Dat Do had many glorious victories. Many battles left the enemy awestruck, among them, the battle in Chồm Dầu.

In the summer of 1969, Long Dat District met and resolved:

To be determined to maintain the Minh Dam Base,

To maintain the forces' mutual support to attack and defeat the bunker system in Dat Do,

To speed up the guerrilla movement to destroy and wear down the Australian vassal forces.

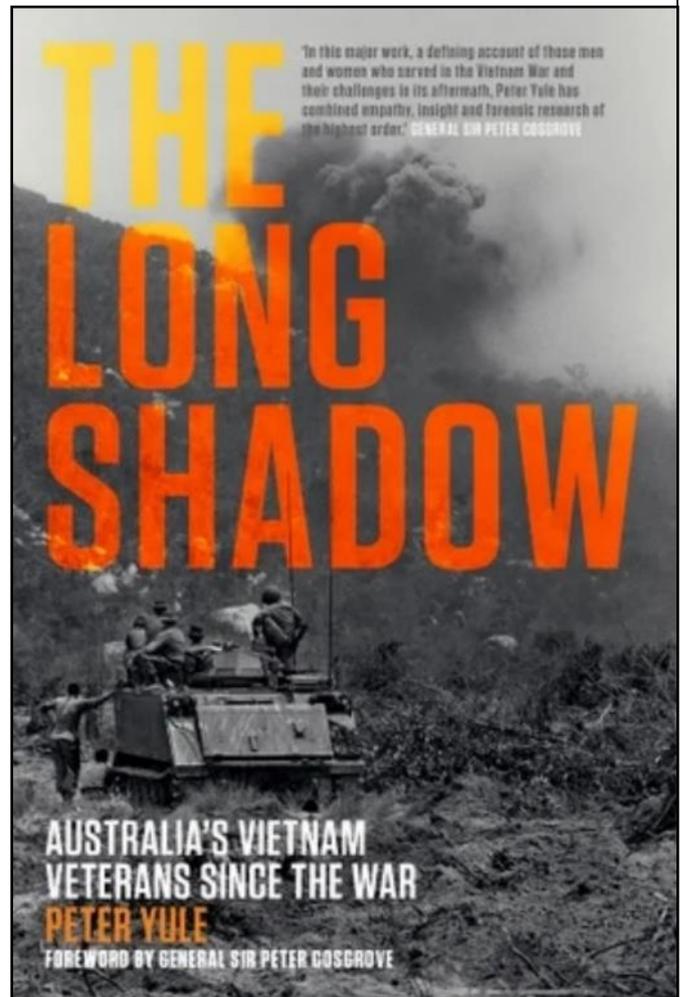
On the morning of the 10/5/1969, a group of Australian troops came to inspect the Chồm Dầu area to progress the building of a number of bunkers. Seizing the opportunity of the enemy's program, Phuoc Hoa Long guerrillas ambushed using the tactic of mining using M16E3, to kill and wound many Australian vassal troops. The enemy was scared out of its wits and had to call in helicopters to rescue them.

The battle of Chồm Dầu had a vital and important meaning in that it cast fear and confusion among the enemy causing them to fear our strength, destroyed their bunker system, bolstered the strength of the guerrilla movement in the Dat Do area, adding impetus for the people to stand up and join the resistance, to win the people's independence.

What's happened there and what's happened since we returned home?

Extract

There was no talk of the possible danger of chemicals. At a briefing session on guy asked what it was they were spraying, and the briefing officer said it was a highly effective concentrated fertilizer which would make plants grow so quickly they would die. He explained that it smelt because it was like fertilizer. The assurance that the chemicals were safe naturally led to carelessness in their use, and Peter Ryan recalled 'a guy being sprayed with chemicals from the tanks for a joke. He was wearing shorts, boots and socks and was covered in it. ■



To get your copy simply ring the NSW
Branch Granville Office on 02 9682
1788 or contact on-line at
www.vvfgranville.org.

Price \$30

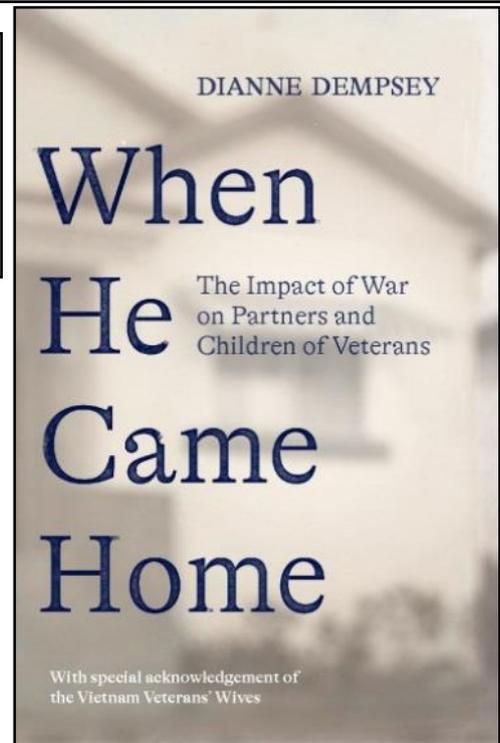
How did our wives cope when we came home?

Worth reading to better understand what it was like from the wives point of view.

Extract

Two of the children didn't see much of their father which meant they didn't see much of me. One of the children hasn't spoken to Geoff for nearly twenty years. But I think they've all forgiven their father now. They used to dismiss him and say, 'Dad was an arsehole.' But now as they've matured, I think the kids see the bigger picture. He's the best grandfather. That's common for a lot of veterans, they are the best grandfathers. They change.

Our married life was hard at first. Geoff had PTSD but we didn't know that. Our husbands didn't get any respect. Geoff's father told him to his face that he didn't think Vietnam was a real war. 'You only went over there for 12 months,' he said. 'What's wrong with you? Go to a real war and then you can talk about it.' So Geoff didn't talk about it. ■



AVAILABLE FROM

Australian Scholarly Publishing
Booktopia
Angus and Robertson
Boomerang Books
Book Depository

AUD\$29.95 (varies between on-line booksellers)

Format Paperback

ISBN 9781922454669

ISBN10 1922454664

Author: Dianne Dempsey

Publisher: Arcadia

Also available as an E-book through Google Play

For enquiries:

Tel: +61 3 9329 6963

Email: enquiry@scholarly.info :

FROM THE EDITORS DESK



Are they trying it on again?

There certainly is the need to reduce the number of veterans disability compensation schemes.

Precious time is used up by ex-service organisations' Pension Officers having to work out under which of the three current schemes a veteran is entitled to claim.

To add complexity, some veterans are entitled to claim a disability pension under more than one of the schemes.

This complexity also complicates DVA's claims management, slowing their processing down. This slowing down adds to other DVA dysfunction, leading to the huge backlog of claims.

The Royal Commission has identified the delays caused by this huge backlog as a possible contribution to veteran suicide.

But beware! Whilst the harmonisation of the three disability compensation schemes into one new scheme is a good idea, will DVA use it as a way of eliminating some of the more generous entitlements of the three current schemes and including mainly the least generous in the new scheme?

We must remember that DVA has recent form in doing just that. One of the three current schemes entitled claimants to superior hearing aids whilst the other two did not. Rather than raise the entitlement of the lower quality hearing aids to match the more generous entitlement, DVA reduced the higher entitlement to match the lower quality hearing aids of the other two schemes.

DVA now has the opportunity to try it again.

We questioned DVA as to whether any veterans might be worse off under the new scheme.

In answer to our question, DVA replied:

'Recognising that the circumstances and needs of individual veterans can vary greatly, the question of whether veterans will be treated "less favourably" under the new arrangements will often be subjective. **While the assessment processes for future claims may result in a reduced compensation outcome for some veterans,** there are additional benefits potentially available under the MRCA that would not otherwise have been available under current arrangements.'

So, DVA admits, 'assessment processes for future claims may result in a reduced compensation outcome for some veterans'. The added bit about the possibility of added benefits under MRCA is vague and uncertain and certainly not a guarantee of not getting a raw deal.

This is unacceptable.

So we must insist on a guarantee that:

- A successful claimant under the new harmonised scheme must be no worse off than had he/she claimed under the old scheme.
- We understand that veterans on disability pensions from the old schemes and applying for an upgrade must apply under the new harmonised scheme. We strongly suggest that a successful claim should not leave them worse off than had they successfully applied for an upgrade under the old scheme.

And, of course, there is the obvious and just solution that would guarantee no one will be worse off than had they claimed under to old schemes. **That is to simply take the best aspects of the three current schemes and harmonise them into the new single scheme.**

Why not? ■



**It's easy!
The most generous
entitlements from the 3
current schemes should
be harmonised into
the new disability
compensation scheme.**

Old Bob doesn't have a suit and he hasn't been to university but he has common sense



OPTIONS COMMITTEE

Harmonising 3 into
into 1 Scheme

**what makes
them think
they deserve
that?**

**The sky
will fall
in!!!**

Unheard of!!

**Who do they
think they are?!**

**What hair-brained
scheme next?!!**

**Where is my
garlic garland?**



THE ELEVENTH DAY

you can read their names, if you just take the time,
they're imprinted on walls behind shrouds of poppies
in towns or city Shrines of Remembrance and Cenotaphs.

and you can also identify those that returned,
the ones you call Mum or Dad or Grandpa or Ma,
if you are around Commemoration Day sites here and there
in November; where behind medals of recognition they gather with thoughtfulness.

or you can see them in your neighbourhood,
standing, moisten eyed, in suburban and rural homes or gardens,
on the 11th; staring off at mind-images of missing mates.

while they hear, as they do;
a soulful rendition of The Last Post,
bugled faultlessly into calm air,

amazingly, you may be struck by how like you they are,
in manner and lore;
but yet different to the way they were the day before.

sort of private: covering the space between you and them,
with a quiet strength and self effacing distractions,
about the stuff hidden away in medical files that receives laconic action,

held under some clerk's assessing eyes,
in governmental departments,
which tell of other truths and wounds, rarely spoken outside point-building compartments.

so on the Eleventh;

find an inner conviviality with those that helped shape
part of that reality you know as home;
and enjoy the moment, for all it's worth; and know you're not alone.

Graeme Foley

3RAR First tour 1967-68.

Book Review

THE CLEARING

By Rob de Kok
Vietnam 4RAR

"...in decades still to come you will celebrate this day as your second birthday, be found outside maybe, sitting quietly, smoking, ignoring both laughter and tears, M.I.A. for a while. Your friends and lovers will take a lifetime to work out what these silences mean to you, what to do about them – nothing.

But this September day you touch a fellow human, shell to shell. With both hands, being careful not to break him, you turn this black carapace over and find the cloth bundle inside..."

The Clearing is a story built into the flight of one bullet – a bullet which connects two narratives: that of Tim, an Australian conscript, and Khai, a Viet Cong soldier. That one shot joins Tim's next thirty years and Khai's previous twenty – both lives exploding onto the pages like shrapnel from a tortured mind.

Tim spent twelve months in Vietnam and survived. Khai spent twenty years there and didn't. Their fateful contact – a moment of terror and grace in a bombed-out tract of land in South Vietnam – is the heart of The Clearing. From then on Tim can only acknowledge the single shot he fired by holding that bullet in perpetual flight. In doing so shards of memory become unstuck vignettes – irregular glimpses into the lives of two men: one who denies his past and another denied his future.

Erratic, confessional and disturbing, The Clearing is a fictional account of a controversial war, a topical meditation on one life taken away and another changed forever by the after-trace of combat. ■

rob@robdekok.com
robdkok@gmail.com
[m] 0468 464 720
[intl] (+61) 468 464 720
www.robdekok.com

The Clearing. A novel by Rob deKok:
Author Talk and NSW **Book Launch**

Bryan Brown Theatre and Function Centre
80 Rickard Road, Bankstown NSW 2200

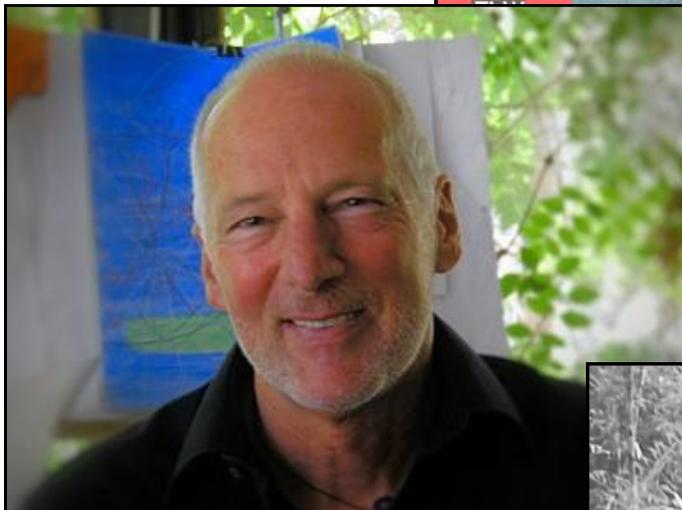
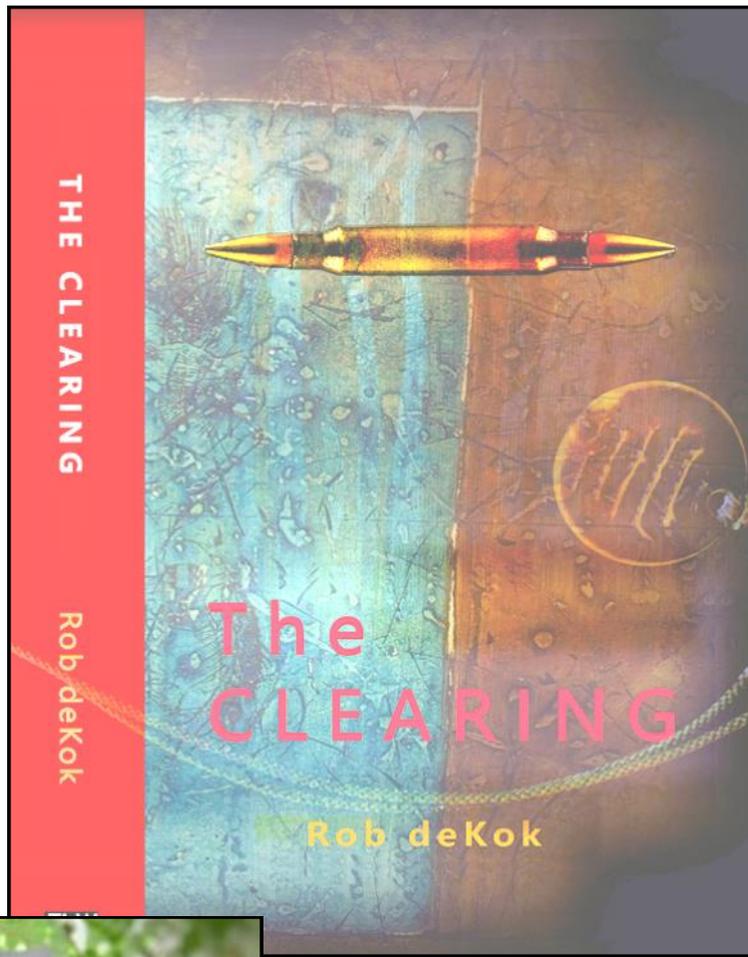
Thursday 24 August

7pm - 9pm

Free Entry. Book will be for sale \$25, cash or Card

Please RSVP via

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-clearing-sydney-book-launch-tickets-640380313757>



Author Rob de Kok
NOW

Author Rob de Kok
THEN
Vietnam 1971
On patrol with 12 Platoon, 4 RAR





NSW President has this to say ...

NSW Branch Well-Being

We continue to meet our stated objectives delivering high quality, high volume services to Australia's current and former ADF personnel and their families. We have an extremely collaborative and dedicated team who continue to provide their selfless contributions to our clients. You are reminded that we have two dedicated Well-Being Advocates, a former Army Senior Officer and a former RAN rating.

AGM

The NSW Branch AGM was held on 24 May 23 when all nomination for positions on the Committee were filled and were elected unopposed. The AGM approved two changes to our Constitution. One being that those with Operational Service since 1990 are eligible for Ordinary Membership.

Veteran Support

As at 31 May the 2023 our Granville office activities may be summarised as follows (Note: these statistics do not include those of our 15 NSW sub-branches who provide marvellous assistance to our veterans).

- Claims this year 420
- Other claims related matters 140
- Decisions received 177
- Phone calls and emails 3025
- Welfare (incl. phone calls) 600
- VRB claims lodged 43 (28 decisions)

Outreach Program

One of our significant services is to go to the veterans who cannot come to us. Our small yet very effective Outreach Team continue to visit places such as from Darwin to Townsville and throughout NSW regional and remote areas to deliver expert advice and assistance on DVA claims. Over recent times they have been often accompanied by a GP who is able to provide on the spot medical diagnosis to enable immediate submission of appropriate documentation to the DVA. Many of the Outreach areas of operation lack medical professionals making the GP's contribution significant in reducing time delays.

Vietnam Veterans' Day 2023

This is the day on which the 50th Anniversary Commemorations are being conducted in Canberra. The NSW Branch Committee has confirmed its commitment to hold our Annual Vietnam Veterans' Day Service and function on this day as usual. Details are included elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Frank Cole
President
VVPPAA NSW

FROM THE SECRETARY



NSW BRANCH

2023 AVCAT SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS

The NSW Branch congratulates the following members who were successful prize winners in this year's AVCAT Scholarship raffle draw.

The Raffle assists with the funding of scholarships for the children and/or grand-children of Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, who may be struggling on their Repatriation Pensions and do not have the spare financial resources, or are in necessitous circumstances to help these children through tertiary education.

The Raffle was drawn in the Veteran Support Centre Office, Granville, in the presence of Committee members on Monday, 29th May 2023. The Lucky winners are:

1st Prize:	Ian Elder	Ashfield NSW
2nd Prize:	John Cotter	Kirwan QLD
3rd Prize:	Trevor Davis	Gloucester NSW
4th Prize:	Frank Best	Mona Vale NSW

We thank all our ticket buyers for their support of the, most worthy, AVCAT Scholarship program. ■

Once again, we say **THANK YOU** to our many members who have made a financial donation to their State Branch.

Without these donations we would find it much more difficult to cater to the needs of our war veterans, service and ex-service persons generally.

Whilst all donations are gratefully received, and combined are of enormous assistance to us, they are too numerous to list.

However, periodically, we will publish a list of individual NSW Branch members who have donated amounts of \$200 or more.

Generous supporters of the NSW Branch since the last Journal are:

\$2,500	Anonymous
\$2,000	Jennifer Savage
\$1,000	Anonymous
\$500	S Dodd, Anonymous, J Mogan Derek Sims
\$470	Colin Robinson
\$300	Frederick Moody
\$220	Ivan Waskiw
\$200	Anonymous

Whilst the above refers to, mostly, individual donations only, we are also indebted to the many RSL sub-branches and other licensed clubs who generously contribute to our cause.

Bankstown Sports Club.

City of Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch

City of Blacktown RSL Sub-Branch

Ron O'Connor JP

Hon. Secretary ■

THE 10-YEAR DRAMA OF AGENT ORANGE

Agent Orange, used in Vietnam, is one of the strongest war chemicals since the gases of World War I. It is a mixture of the herbicide 245T and the stronger chemical 240 (or dioxin). Dioxin is regarded as the most toxic chemical known to man. 245-T is used by many councils to control weeds.

SPRAY VICTIM FINDS HOPE

A former Australian soldier sprayed into sickness by American aerial tankers in Vietnam found hope of a new life this week.

Gary Adams, 32, of Galston, near Sydney, learned that the Federal Government would inquire into the effects of the deadly defoliant, Agent Orange.

An inquiry would mean that he and others would get compensation for their injuries.

Mr Adams, who works as an NRMCA technician, was driving a earth-mover equipped in Vietnam as a national serviceman when he was sprayed.

He has suffered from a painful and distressing skin infection in the groin since shortly after being sprayed and is worried the spray might have affected his youngest child.

"I've been complaining about this stuff for 10 years so it's nice to see that the Government is finally starting to listen," Mr Adams said.

On Friday it was announced that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal will inquire into the effects of the spray.

The spray was used widely in Vietnam to destroy the jungle covering areas where Viet Cong were believed to be operating.

Thousands

Thousands of Australian ex-servicemen arrived in areas where the spray was used.

Reports from America yesterday said at least 30 missions were flown over Australian positions by aircraft spraying Agent Orange.

Quote

"At last, something is being done. I've been complaining for 10 years and the Government is finally starting to listen. I'm only one of a number of guys I know who reckon Agent Orange is still affecting them."

Nine Australian ex-servicemen now have applications before the Repatriation Commission and another 40 are preparing to make massive compensation claims against the Government.

The men claim the deadly spray has ruined their health and led to deformities in children.

This week President Carter ordered an inquiry into the use and effect of Agent Orange after thousands of American ex-servicemen reported falling health and deformities in their children.

Yesterday Mr Adams said the infection showed no signs of clearing up despite constant medical attention.

"I saw the Repatriation Department doctors only three months ago and although they gave me a new name from the one they had been using for the previous 10 years, they said they still didn't really know what it was," he said.

"I'm only one of a number of guys I know who reckon Agent

Orange is still affecting them.

"I'm worried about my younger daughter, Karen-Lee, who is always sick and weighs only 45 lb, about half what doctors say she should weigh.

"Both my family and my wife's family are big solid people but Karen-Lee looks like a midget."

"My other two children are built like me and my wife."

Continued P.14



Gary Adams and his children Samantha, 8, (left), Troy, 9, and Karen-Lee, 5.



Robert Ford with his wife Karen and their son Wade.

Soldier's baby deaf at birth

Mr Robert Ford, of Asquith, a northern Sydney suburb, believes his contact with Agent Orange in Vietnam may have caused his 18-month-old son, Wade, to have been born deaf.

Mr Ford served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970, mostly in Nui Ba, one of the main areas where the Americans used Agent Orange.

Shortly after Wade was born, the child also developed an eyesight defect and now has to wear glasses.

Mr Ford said he himself developed a severe skin rash while serving in Vietnam, a complaint that constantly recurred.

"Doctors have found absolutely no hereditary cause for Wade's deafness and sight problems," he said yesterday.

"I have written to American authorities about the effects of defoliation agents used in Vietnam, but so far have received no reply.

"But with all the latest publicity about Agent Orange and its possible effects on humans, I hope we'll see a breakthrough fairly soon."

Frightened residents demand councils ban herbicide 245T

Councils throughout Sydney are using the controversial herbicide 245T each week.

Despite repeated assurances that research has not shown it to be dangerous, many residents are lobbying for its abolition.

One Pennant Hills couple, who insist the 245T spray caused the death of their five-week-old baby, are opposing its reintroduction by Hornsby Council.

The baby was born last December with shocking abnormalities. Doctors told the couple the baby's death was caused by an environmental agent within the first weeks of pregnancy.

The mother says she sprayed

245T on blackberry bushes early in the pregnancy.

Hornsby Council is undecided about using the sprays, which it banned several months ago.

But other councils continue to use it.

The Hawkesbury River Shire Council - and its five constituent councils, Blacktown, Penrith, Windsor, Culin and Baulkham Hills - use it, as does Sutherland Shire Council.

Regular

And contractors for the Public Transport Commission of NSW regularly use 245T to kill weeds.

PTC spokesman, Mr Pat Prendergast, said: "Research by our agronomist shows the spray is not dangerous."

Mr Prendergast said the herbicide is not used on train platforms or areas close to people.

A fortnight ago the Blue Mountains Council suspended the use of 245T after receiving a petition from more than 20 doctors in the area.

The doctors were concerned there was a connection with an increase in certain forms of cancer in the area.

But not all doctors signed the petition.

One said he could not con-

vince himself that 245T was potentially fatal.

"Put me down as a fence-sitter. I simply can't make a judgment that 245T is as innocuous as some people would have me think.

Connection

"Certainly I know some pregnant women in the Blue Mountains have been frightened, but I have seen no evidence of any foetal abnormalities."

But he admitted there was an increase in cancer of the pancreas in the area, out of proportion with the population.

"I can't offer any reason for this, but the numbers are two or three times higher than we would normally expect."

The concern shown by doctors and the subsequent action by the Council - for the third time - has prompted two Sydney cancer specialists to mount an investigation.

The medical director of the NSW State Cancer Council, Dr Gordon Barclay, and Associate Professor R. McLennan of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Sydney University, will go to the mountains in January.

The two experts will meet the Blue Mountains doctors to discuss and evaluate their reports.

Continued Page 14.

VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS –

EARLY STEPS IN NSW AND VICTORIA

Previously: Earlier parts in this series traced the events leading to the founding of the multi-state Vietnam Veterans Action Association in January 1980 and the later establishment of the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service. This article looks in more detail at events resulting in state organisations in Victoria and New South Wales, noting that some resources on these events couldn't be accessed at the time of writing because of covid-related travel restrictions.

There was an almost typical way in which foundation events unfolded in each of the States and Territories, with a veteran (and, perhaps, family members) coming forward to tell their story in the media (but particularly in newspapers, which were very widely read at the time). They'd then ask other veterans or their families to make contact. More often than not, the key individual later announced an intention to form an organisation to press for an investigation into defoliant-related harms and to obtain appropriate compensation for affected veterans and their families. In cases following the 20 December 1979 announcements by **Bernie Szapiel** and **Holt McMinn** that an association would be formed (see Part 3), the stated aim was, typically, to form a local Branch of that organisation.

The earliest approach to the media by any Australian Vietnam veteran about possible defoliant harms was one by NSW resident **Gary**

Adams in November 1978. This followed the publication of an article in the Sydney Sunday Telegraph about illnesses suffered by US Vietnam War veterans, birth defects in their children and a proposed study/survey of Vietnam veterans, including Australians. Within days, John Kerin MP (who had been approached by a veteran and whose then and previous electorates included a significant number of constituents likely to have served in Vietnam) asked a series of important questions in the House of Representatives about veterans' defoliant exposure.

Even at this early stage, contact with the media had useful consequences.

Victorian Events

The veteran who agitated most in the media in the following year was Bernie Szapiel. After a year of controversy in Victoria about State Government

(Continued on page 36)



Gary Adams and wife Sandra
Sunday Telegraph

responses to birth defects in Yarram and Sale, a lengthy article appeared in The Herald on 12 March 1979 reporting the commencement of legal proceedings by US veterans against the manufacturers of herbicides used in Vietnam. Szapiel at this point came forward. He was quoted as saying that, even though news coverage of herbicide exposure in Yarram had made him suspect a link between his debilitating illnesses and herbicide poisoning, he'd only made "a tangible connection" after reading the article about US veterans in The Herald. Importantly, RSL National President Bill Keys was quoted as saying that Szapiel was the first veteran "he knew of who believed he might have been affected" and that the

RSL would be supporting his case. Two months later, in the Melbourne newspaper, The Age, Szapiel was the named one of three veterans said to be preparing compensation claims for ill health caused by 2,4,5-T exposure in Vietnam.

Then, on 14 December 1979, after a few more newspaper reports on defoliant exposure, on related illnesses among US veterans and on US legal action, Szapiel featured in a story in The Australian which included an arresting photograph of him, his wife, Senia, and son, Nicholas. In this article he provided more information on his symptoms. His stated focus at this time was on gaining recognition of his illness (and the illnesses of others) as war-caused for repatriation purposes. According to Dux and Young, in Agent Orange: The Bitter Harvest, it was this article which resulted in Szapiel prompting McMinn to tell his own story, and that resulted in McMinn taking a more public role, including being interviewed multiple times on TV.

When the next article featuring Szapiel appeared 4 days later in The Age, the National President of the RSL, Bill Keys, had ambitiously taken upon himself the role of the Repatriation Commission in concluding that "medical evidence that Agent Orange caused illness was not strong enough for Mr Szapiel and other veterans to claim compensation." This article otherwise included enough of Szapiel's address for other veterans to find him in the phone book (as they soon did).

Two days later, on 20 December, it was reported that Szapiel and McMinn were trying to establish an association (see part 3 in this series). Public developments such as Bill Keys' waning support (see previous paragraph) and the Minister for Veterans Affairs insistence that the



Bernie Szapiel
(December 1978)

repatriation system was the only means of determining whether veterans had incurred harm were important factors in the decision to form a Vietnam veterans' organisation. They, together, pointed to the need for a different way of securing support and compensation. The call by an official of the Regular Defence Forces Welfare Association for an investigation, and widespread support from the media confirmed for Szapiel and McMinn that they were on the right path.

However, the knowledge that other veterans and their families were experiencing difficulties able to be attributed to defoliant exposure was the key impetus; this knowledge making it clear that collective action was both possible and warranted. The media exposure that Szapiel achieved (in part because journalists were keen to personalise the emerging story about veterans' defoliant exposure) and the publishing of the street and suburb where he lived, enabled early

knowledge of others to be acquired. In the same way, the announcement by Szapiel and McMinn of their intention to form an Association (and the coverage of this story in a national and various State newspapers) encouraged concerned veterans in various states and territories to make contact with Szapiel, resulting in the important, previously discussed, interstate gathering of veterans at the Szapiel home on 4 January 1980.

News on US developments prompted individual veterans like Szapiel to make links between defoliant exposure and their or their family members' medical conditions. The early support of scientist John Evans (an important participant in later events) confirmed those links.

However, it wasn't inevitable that these connections would result in the formation of an organisation in Victoria or, for that matter, elsewhere at this time. The knowledge that other individuals and families were experiencing difficulty was undoubtedly critical.

Szapiel was soon after quoted as saying that the new organisation had its origins in the inactivity of the RSL but, even though developments might have followed a different path if Keys and the National Executive (or even Bruce Ruxton, the Victorian RSL President), had been more supportive at this pre-Christmas stage, there were, as argued above, more factors in play than the attitude of the RSL.

The remarks about the RSL by both Szapiel and McMinn in this initial period are significant, though, because they point to their deep disappointment in Keys and the RSL National Executive (who might have been expected to support Vietnam veterans' request for investigation of the effects of herbicide exposure, notwithstanding their obligation to the broader veteran community). This disappointment was doubtless greater for Szapiel who had thought, earlier in the year, that the RSL believed there to be a link between defoliant exposure and his illnesses. He'd believed, too, that the organization was going to offer him "every support". The rapid

(Continued on page 38)



Holt McMinn OAM in later times.

morphing of Keys' approach from firm support on 14 December ("There now appears to be more to this than meets the eye ... and something more specific should be done about it by the Government") to a 'watch and wait' approach on 18 December ("If a connection with Agent Orange was established, the RSL would use that evidence to put a case to the Department of Veterans Affairs), doubtless magnified Szapiel's disillusionment.

The next evidence of Victorian developments was the inclusion of a contact address, indicating some level of local organisation, in a 16 January 1980 notice in east coast newspapers. This advertisement asked people in at least Victoria, NSW and Queensland who'd been affected by servicemen's chemical exposure in Vietnam to contact the relevant State-based element of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association.

Following that, the first public meeting of

Victorian veterans took place at Anzac House on 2 February 1980, apparently at the invitation of Victorian RSL President Bruce Ruxton, who *appeared* to be more supportive of the Action Association than his Federal counterpart. This meeting was reported as being attended by more than 200 veterans and their wives but no clear or detailed account of what took place has been discovered by the author. An *intention* to ratify a constitution and to decide on a strategy was reported, but any useful detail on outcomes was neither included in the Tasmanian accounts (which focussed on John Evans' announcement that 86 million litres of defoliant had been used in Vietnam) nor included in the only Victorian account (which focussed on a conditional statement of support from Bruce Ruxton and on positive responses from an Action Association spokesman). Despite the over-excited response of the Association spokesman – excused, perhaps, by the fact that Ruxton endorsed the payment of compensation "if there was any possibility that Agent Orange had caused birth defects" – it's likely that a Victorian organisation was formally established, with office bearers elected or appointed, and with a constitution at least foreshadowed.

By the time the first known edition of "Action", the newsletter of the Victorian Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association, was distributed a couple of months later, Garry Hamilton was State President, a major social event had been held, and veterans Tim Hirland and Dirk Van Neuren - both trained social workers - were providing (unspecified) welfare assistance via an "action line" staffed by Billie Mannion.

NSW Events

According to the journalists Dux and Young, NSW veteran **Jim Wares** saw the same 14 December 1979 article on Szapiel in The Australian that had resulted in McMinn being motivated to 'go public'. Wares, they said, had a suspicion that herbicide exposure was responsible for his young son's deformed hand and, on seeing



Jim Wares and son
The Australian 17 December 1979

the Szapiel story, called The Australian for further information. An article on Wares and his son, accompanied by an extraordinarily touching photo, appeared on 17 December. Appearances on TV shows of various sorts followed, as did further newspaper articles. The initial article which, as before, personalised the issue of herbicide harms, in this case did something more significant; it brought the issue of birth defects among veterans' children to centre stage. Wares conceded, in words that would later be repeatedly quoted: "When I was called up and ordered to go to Vietnam, I wasn't keen on it, but I went anyway. If as a result of that, people like me have deformed kids, it's up to the Government to do something."

While appearing in the media to draw attention to the plight of veterans' children with birth defects, Wares was apparently being contacted by veterans and others concerned about the health impact of herbicide exposure.

Bob Gibson, later to be a key figure in the NSW Branch of the Association, was the subject of a story in the Sydney Daily Telegraph on 24 December 1979 in which he recalled spraying Agent Orange and in which he detailed the rashes on his head and upper body. At about the same time, Gary Adams was interviewed (details not known) about the failure of the Repatriation Commission to identify the cause of rashes he'd suffered for the previous decade.

On 26 December, the day before the inaugural NSW veterans meeting, the focus was back on Wares in The Australian and on moves to establish an organisation in NSW. Wares stated that 30 veterans had contacted him in the previous week. He outlined a broad range of health problems brought to his attention, mentioned the groin rash that seemed to be the common veteran factor and referred to a "frightening" incidence of miscarriages among wives. (These details, along with the information which Wares said was supplied by wives – details of their husbands' rages and their children's deformities – enabled other affected families to at last rationalise their circumstances and identify with others in similar situations.) Wares stated that veterans would be asked to complete a survey so that detailed information could be supplied to the Government, with the aim of having a CSIRO committee undertake an investigation.

The initial NSW meeting, organised by Gary Adams, took place at Castle Hill the next day, seemingly premised on the undisputed assumption that the establishment of an organisation was necessary. The meeting was attended by 9 veterans, 4 wives, and one other person. Attendees introduced themselves and explained their family circumstances. Discussion followed on the name and aims of an Association, necessary research, the identities of people who might aid the cause, and whether an RSL Sub-branch could provide legal and financial assistance.

The aims that were decided on went beyond finding out about the use and after-effects

(Continued on page 40)



of wartime herbicides, and beyond the securing of compensation for exposed veterans, their wives and their children. They included investigation of the health of all Vietnam veterans and of the benefits available to them and their children. They further included stopping the use of the relevant chemicals in Australia while an investigation of the employment and impact of those chemicals was carried out.

The meeting had an eye to the steps needed to establish itself as a legal entity and noted that organisations were being established by McMinn in Melbourne and by John Harper in Brisbane. Affiliation with other State organisations (and with any New Zealand organisation) was discussed, as was the limiting of interactions with the media (until such time as a committee was elected and could ensure that proposed contacts were to the advantage of the Association). The appointment or election of Committee members was postponed until the next meeting, to be held some time after Wares' proposed attendance at a

gathering in Melbourne (presumably the inter-state one of 4 January at Szapciel's home).

On 3 January 1980, The Australian reported on Wares' NSW data gathering exercise, noting that child deformities in a group of 50 veterans appeared to be above the national rate. In the same paper, a few days later, Wares responded to the call by Veterans Affairs Minister Evan Adermann for veterans to promptly lodge claims. Wares remarked that the (now) 70 veterans in the NSW group hadn't previously been familiar with Agent Orange (implying that it would take some time for their claims to be prepared and flow through the system). He added that the group was "putting together the facts and figures that the Repatriation Commission should have put together years ago." On 8 January, both Wares and Gibson were quoted in a catchup article in The Age.

Wares, by himself, attended the small 10 January meeting in Melbourne (referred to in part 3) at which (or on the periphery of which) national positions were apportioned.

When, exactly, the next NSW meeting was held, and office bearers were elected or co-opted is unclear. However, an undated progress report to members of the Queensland Branch (with content indicating that it was written in February 1980) refers to a NSW meeting of 30 January. It may be that this was the gathering at which a committee was formed and officials were either elected or appointed, noting that the influential Queensland lawyer, Bill McMillan, wrote to Wares as President of the NSW Branch on 1 February 1980 and to Adams as Secretary of the NSW Branch on 7 February.

Note: Only a handful of Association records from January and February 1980 are present in the VVAA Papers at the Australian War Memorial. As a consequence, it's necessary to rely on newspaper reports to track developments. Some newspapers, like The Australian, reported frequently on related events and provide important clues on the

years to 1970, America dumped almost 50 million litres of a defoliant called Agent Orange over 2.5 million hectares of jungle. Now, ex-United States and Australian servicemen or claim they are suffering effects ranging from cancer to and chronic skin complaints. Their children, they say, are deformed in disproportionate numbers, because of Agent

was a Vietnam he was y herb- bergrown

Chaymore when was he up and die," he

ence Pla- a sort of did things under, al- want a just some- to do. I had silver- heavy, back of ed in one may with

was very to wear loves and make the our skin.

ing, quite small, like

"I've never be like it. I've and he better, or even if

er prior to do. I had silver- heavy, back of ed in one may with

was a here we ance" diabolical well kill as it de- me land- ed 1970.

Dioxin may be the most deadly substance ever isolated.

As a foetus-deforner, it is one million times as potent as thalidomide. There can be little doubt that, even in the minutest quantities, it can cause cancer.

work on

The agent called Hades

By JOHN FRASER

It caused them to go off on a wild, insane growing spree. A synthetic growth hormone which eventually destroyed 2.5 million hectares of Vietnamese forests. Agent Orange would produce misshapen 60 cm banana, warts the size of teardrops, trees which would eventually collapse under their own accelerated weight.

Agent orange is a basic mixture of two chemicals, the main one being 2,4,5-T which contains tiny amounts of a guaranteed killer called dioxin.

Dioxin may be the most deadly substance ever isolated.

As a foetus-deforner, it is one million times as potent as thalidomide. There can be little doubt that, even in the minutest quantities, it can cause cancer.

Quoted last year by Pen-

Three ounces (85 grams)

house magazine, he believes that dioxin accumulates in body fat, where it may remain undetected for years.

When weight is lost, the filthy stuff breaks down into the bloodstream and the victim falls prey to bizarre outbreaks of anger, numb hands and feet, skin rashes — and constant stomach pains.

Dioxin apparently is a total- ly insidious menace. It can stash itself quietly away in body tissues even when the victim is not directly exposed.

Toxicity

It lurks about in the air, water and food. Its toxicity lasts between 14 and 30 years.

Dr Barry Commoner, one of the best, brightest and most outspoken of American biologists, has no doubt that dioxin is "the most toxic man-made substance known".



THREE Australian infantrymen aboard a herbicide spray truck, Vietnam, 1967. Picture supplied by Bob Gibson (in gas mask).

"They also suggested that. Well, if I've got time, it's got to be the world's worst attack of it."

"I've also got hypertension, sorry, you know, when I went to Vietnam. I was a really fit, healthy man in A-one condition, accepted at a time when I was knocked back for the most basic health reasons."

"Now I even have problems with my sex life. My wife and I wanted children but now we just don't dare, and she's taking the Pill, which she never did before."

"When you get all these symptoms you immediately think, oh well, it's my own personal problem."

"But when you find that many of your old comrades from Vietnam have got almost identical symptoms, you have to start thinking."

Bob Gibson, 23, sprayed herbicides only briefly — but now he suffers badly from gastroenteritis, eczematous insomnia, dermatitis on his neck, shoulders and scalp and a chronic genital rash.

"The doctors told me I had a tropical disease," he recalls, rather bitterly.

periods the industry *

Three Australian infantrymen aboard a herbicide spray truck, 1967.

Bob Gibson in gas mask.

Deadly

"It is the most deadly man-made substance, it's very easy stuff indeed," he said.

"And, when you get a bunch of young men, all roughly the same age who served in Vietnam at the same time having the same symptoms, it's obviously more than a coincidence."

"But I believe that a definite link will be very hard — no, impossible to prove."

"The lapse of time, the different kinds of Agent Orange used, the different chemical compounds which made it..."

"I think finally it will be a question of reasonable men giving other reasonable men the benefit of the doubt."

11/1/80
Cover Mail
P4

development of State Branches. Other newspapers, like The Sydney Morning Herald, took little or no notice of local developments. Newspaper reports nonetheless remain the most reliable source of information on the very earliest state and territory-based events.

The next article in this series will look at why, in early 1980, active members committed themselves to the fledgling Vietnam Veterans Action Association.

Kel Robertson is a Canberra writer. He is currently researching the history of the VVAA. The views expressed in this article are his and not those of the Federation.

The aim of "VVAA History Drafts" is to inform readers about progress made with the Association's history and encourage people who have extra information to contact the writer. Readers who have additional information about matters mentioned in this article or who would like a copy of the article

with sources cited, can contact Kel at vhhistory99@gmail.com.

Readers who wish to take issue with the content of this article are encouraged to first view the version available from Kel. ■



What's In your garage?



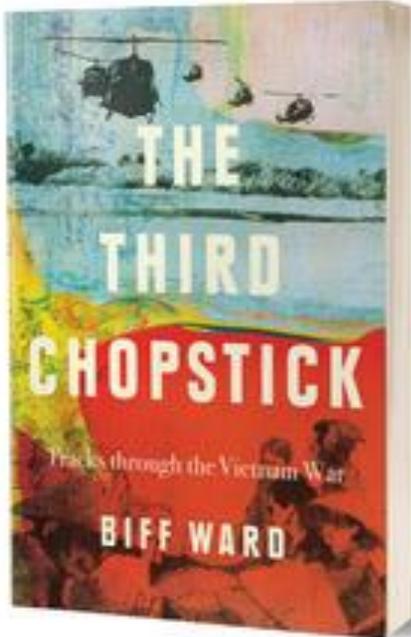
Kel Robertson, who is writing about the origins of the Vietnam veterans' movement in Australia, is anxious to see any Vietnam Veterans Action Association or VVAA documents you may have from the period between Dec 1979 and June 1981.

He has early copies of Debrief but is keen to see:

- Minutes of the May 1980 National Congress of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association (venue probably Canberra) and related correspondence;
- Minutes of the March/April 1981 Sydney multi-state meeting convened by the NSW Branch of the VVAA (and related correspondence); and minutes of the May 1981 VVAA National Congress in Canberra and related correspondence.

If you have these or any other documents from the Dec 79 to mid-1981 period, Kel is keen to hear from you. Please email him at vvhistory99@gmail.com

Do you remember Ray Fulton?



Do you remember Ray Fulton?

He contributed so much to our Federation and to veterans' welfare in general.

This book, amongst other things, is about him.

If you remember Ray, we invite you to write a letter-to-the-editor with your memories.

As I drifted about [at the Granville office, I saw that the volunteer advisors each had their own style, just as Ray had told me in Darling Harbour. One was quiet, focused on pen to paper, another joked and spread his hands. It was triage work. They listened and decided what was needed: accommodation, money, food, medical help. Nearly always, they set the guy on the path to repatriation benefits, which meant supplying contacts for psychiatrists. As volunteers, they worked as much as they wished, every day or once a month.

It's part of our own therapy, they all told me. We've been there.

As they helped each other wind down a little, it granted them enough slack to be able to help the next guy wind down too.

One guy said to me, they wound us up with all that training, but they didn't wind us down. They were working out how to do that themselves. ■

To get your copy simply ring the NSW Branch Granville Office on 02 9682 1788 or order on-line at www.vvfa-granville.org

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

BROTHERS

NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL CANBERRA ANZAC DAY, 2010

Rob de Kok
Vietnam 1971
12 Platoon, 4 RAR

Look at the light in the sky. Could be a poem in this.'

He'd been standing there for some time, all bristle and cocked leg and dreamy eyes. And there was an ancient part of me which knew that, yeah, eventually he would speak.

But to talk of poetry? That was surprise number seven on a morning in which I had not expected much light, or much art. When you're sitting on the cold concrete at the mouth of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Canberra on Anzac Day clutching anti-war leaflets, you don't expect much, except resistance. Shows how wrong you can be.

He was the third person to enter my zone – to come near enough to see what I was doing. The first one, an hour before, also sat a few inches too close – something which, in the west at least, is a kind of calling card. It suggests that there might be a chance of a conversation between strangers.

He'd sat there quite some time, not long after I had arrived. Dark sunnies on, deep blue suit, he'd watched me pull A4 printouts from my bag, fold them, sit on them, and occasionally hand one to the faithful on their pilgrimage up to the shrine.

Maybe he noticed something despite those sunglasses. Maybe he noticed that I was scared, that I was in need of some latter-day bravery. Maybe he noticed that I was judicious in my choice of who exactly to hand my words to.

And I was. I was scared of bad reaction, of any reaction. I was feeling like a man in a cathedral handing out blasphemy. So, yes, I was choosing my targets carefully: younger families, people with children, women...

Soft targets, sure, but I knew a closed face when I saw one. And I also remembered that it was the women, young and old, who'd made a fuss about me four decades ago. Without that compassion, without their asking 'why?' for that war I may not have come back to do this at all.

Mr Sunnies finally spoke. 'You got a cadet out there?' He had a great smile.

I said I didn't. I said that, seeing kids barely waist-high drilling on the red gravel in the centre of Anzac Drive made me uncomfortable. Seeing even smaller kids ducking in and out of the lavender bushes pretending to shoot each other didn't help either. Maybe the child maketh the man. I tried to put that unease into words:

'See that? Bang Bang. You're dead. I think they're being groomed for war – start them thinking that way as soon as possible. They don't call it 'Infantry' for nothing. Have you got a kid out there?'

'Nah. Didn't bring any kids. Not here for that. And you?' he asked.

I told him what I was doing there, and a little of what I did in Vietnam. He listened with respect. Then he spoke for a long time. He'd been sitting on the concrete waiting to join his mates - to join the parade.



He was one of the first Australian troops into Afghanistan. That tour had been brutal on everyone in his unit. He couldn't, or didn't want to, elaborate. Maybe, knowing a little of my background now, he felt he didn't need to.

He'd returned to Australia with his best mate - someone called simply 'G'. But G had disappeared within weeks of arriving home. Like me, G had shunned all help, lost himself in a new place, and had, no doubt, hoped, like me again, for a new life and prayed for a new set of memories.

It didn't happen. It didn't work for G. Over the next four months he became increasingly difficult to contact. Difficult. His old friends tried, his army mates, tried: no contact, no trail. Months later, when G's parents finally tracked him down, it was too late.

For a minute or so the man in the sunnies and I sat together, each of us nursing a memory of a man dead because of the insanity of war. Then, in weird synchronicity and silence, we both stood, shook hands. The dark sunglasses stayed on, but the voice had changed.

'Look after yourself, mate.' Two hands on mine now, two arms, the grip of a man.

I watched him walk to his people, assemble,

and I knew that I was going to hand all the paperwork out to whoever took it, and take everyone as a friend – do anything I can do to stop this latest war and maybe stop other vets coming here with dead mates on their shoulders.

So, later, when the lanky one standing next to me said 'Look at that sky. There could be a poem in this' I knew it was another invitation to talk, and that to talk is good.

He was more my age, but narrowly missed out on National Service. He talked about his father, about one of his uncles, about his grandfather who was 'not quite right', another 'difficult man' who would lose himself for weeks, run away from his life and any sign of love.

His was to be the first of twenty stories that day. When, finally, I gave my very last pamphlet to a WW2 soldier, an old man with a bunch of medals and a stoop, he looked up to say 'Do I know you?'

I didn't have the heart to tell him that he did – we were brothers.

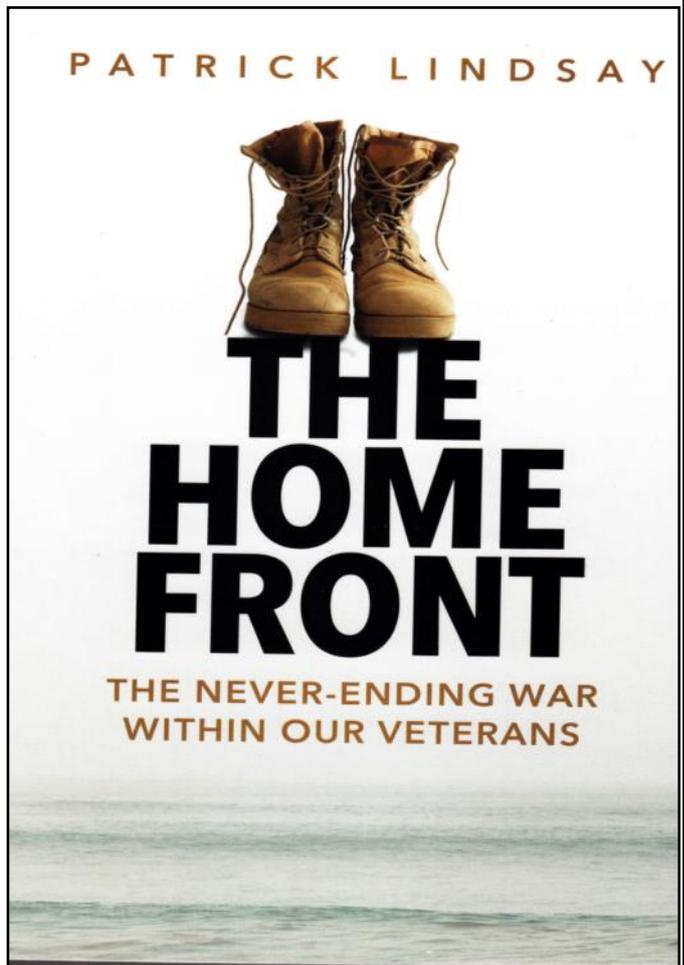
Rob de Kok ■

Book Review

Forty-one Australian soldiers died on active duty in over 20 years of fighting in Afghanistan; in that time more than 1400 veterans have taken their own lives. Veterans today are chronically over-represented when it comes to PTSD, depression, homelessness and suicide. Australians rightfully pause on Anzac Day each year to solemnly remember fallen soldiers, but are we forgetting our returned veterans whose personal battles continue every single day, and how did we get to this point?

In this authoritative, compelling and urgent book, bestselling author Patrick Lindsay (*The Spirit of the Digger* and *Fromelles*, among many) looks at the wide-ranging damage caused by training Australians to be fighting machines and then inadequately supporting them as they re-enter their communities. Featuring moving interviews with veterans and their families as well as a broader analysis of Australian military culture and government responses, Lindsay illustrates both the personal and societal costs of this dereliction of duty.

***The Home Front* is a fascinating and rousing indictment of the culture of war, the thinking of those who wage it, and the cost to those who experience it.**



Available from:
 Angus and Robertson
 Big W
 Booktopia
 Dymocks
 Target

PORKY'S PEOPLE

An Illustrated History of the Seventh Battalion

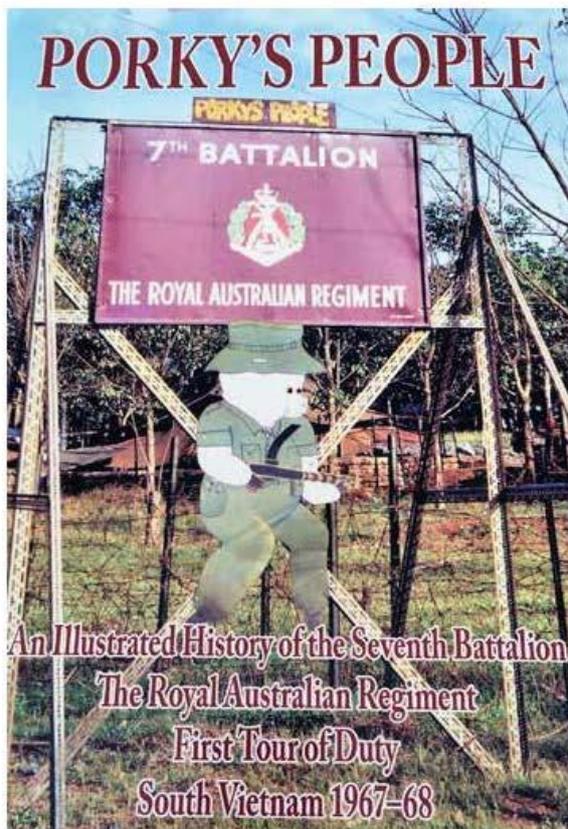
The Royal Australian Regiment

First Tour of Duty

South Vietnam 1967-68

ISBN: 978-098751113-3

Compiled, written, and typeset by Karl Metcalf



Hard cover - Weight: 3kg - Size: A4 -
Pages: 763 numbered - Depth: 50mm
Published & distributed by the

7RAR Association

\$200.00

postage included

to order

email Athony Keech

porky_seven@bigpond.com

About Porky's People

This book tells the history of the Seventh Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (7 RAR) during its first tour in South Vietnam. The book primarily uses images to tell this story, whether they be photographs, artwork, maps, or newspaper cuttings. As the title of the book states, it is about Porky's People and the priority for selection of images has been the people who served in or supported the battalion.

The book is set out generally in chronological order so that the reader can easily follow the sequence of events. The scope of the book covers the period from the raising of the battalion through to the time it returned to Australia and the immediate aftermath.

Each operation has its own chapter with an accompanying map. A short introduction to each operation is provided — sufficient for the reader to understand what the operation was about and the key events. For some operations there are a large number of photographs, and these chapters are necessarily much longer than other operations that have few, if any, photographs.

Newspaper articles have been selected on the basis that they directly describe 7 RAR activities or people, or they provide relevant background information.

This illustrated history captures the essence of that deployment through a unique composition of narratives, reports, records, maps, newspaper clippings, personal reflections and photos. Karl's work is a tribute to all of Porky's People but, in particular, to those of 7 RAR who gave their all in the war."

John Paget
7RAR 20 Apr 1967-26 Apr 1968



Dear Editor,
Another triumph in the latest edition so congratulations.

Full of information and news, just as a newsletter should be.

On a small point, on the front cover you refer to the last people to leave Vietnam were the embassy guard in June 1973, not so.

On the 25th April 1975 the last RAAF C130 left Saigon with the ambassador plus his party and a large amount of luggage leaving behind 4 RAAF Airfield defence guards with some more baggage.

As luck would happen another C130 hearing what had happened was off the coast of Vietnam and went into Saigon to collect the ADGs.

Thus the last out were the 4 RAAF ADGs .

I was lucky enough to do the compensation claims for 2 of the aircrew of the final flight and their tale was a great one to listen to.

Regards
John Rogers
VVFA Advocate

~~~~~

*In other sad news we received advice in March that one of our valued volunteers had passed away, however too late to meet our April Issue publication. Following further contact, as per the following emails between NSW President Frank Cole and Debbie, we pass on our deepest condolences to Fred's family, and also included acknowledgement in our tribute notice on page 79.*

Good Morning Debbie,  
Thank you for letting us know of the passing last year of your father Fred Bastock aged 90 years. We were obviously not aware of his passing until we received your email of 31 March 2023.

Please accept our sincere condolences on this sad event. Would you also relay our sympathies to your other family members.

We remember Fred's tireless dedication to Australia's Vietnam War veterans in his capacity as a volunteer at our Granville office. Fred was much loved by his colleagues in this office.

Debbie, we will acknowledge Fred's passing by including details in the Last Post section of the July issue of our National Newsletter. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy of that edition.

Kind Regards,  
Frank Cole  
President

Hi Frank,

I'm so sad you weren't informed of Dad's passing. A younger sibling was tasked with letting all the military people know and he must've missed Granville, which was so important to Dad...he was an amazing volunteer there and we know highly thought of.

He was an extraordinary man, who had 9 kids, 17 grandkids and 24 great grandkids, plus all our spouses who loved him too...he made such a difference to our world, teaching us so much.

He spent his last 5 years in a nursing home and was spoilt by all the staff... he was quite the personality !

We'd be honoured to receive the National Newsletter. He read every edition and kept them close. Even in the height of his dementia we read them to him. He often regressed to Granville, even mistaking us as fellow volunteers sometimes ! It must've been a happy important memory to him.

Debbie Bastock-Freestone



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continued)

**Editor:** DVA abandons veterans when they need it most; when entering Aged Care.

*Maria Barclay authored a compelling submission to the Royal Commission into Veteran and Defence Suicide decrying this abandonment.*

*With her permission, we publish a small part of it here.*

*The full paper is well worth reading. Contact Maria via email to: maria.barclay13@icloud.com*

**Extract**

“My personal motivation.

“That no other older veteran dies before an essential service is delivered by My Aged Care and to hold My Aged Care accountable to the older veteran community. Our older veteran community is being serviced by My Aged Care and placed in the general population pool under ‘Special Needs Category’ and no one within the Department Of Health Aged Care organisational establishment is responsible, therefore no one is being held accountable for our veterans.

“In **April 2020** my husband a Gold Card Vietnam Veteran was assessed at Level 4 – High Needs care, when in hospital, with an offer of a Home Care Package in **June 2021**. The 14 month waiting period is evidence that his Gold Card was not considered, as his sacrifice of war service did not give him priority access. His mental health and unique needs relating to service were obviously not considered as cause for priority. Gold/White Treatment Cards are supposed to be for life, so how could this be allowed to happen?

Why are older veterans with Gold and White treatment cards dying before they receive essential treatment to keep them safe at home or in residential aged care because the My Aged Care system has taken over their ‘care’ from DVA?

“How can a veteran who has earned their Gold and White Treatment Cards access services from the date of issue of these cards, expecting it to support them for life yet that not be the case when their health needs become complex through disease and/or aging and they come under My Aged Care? What is the legislative reference enabling them to do this?

“Why are older high need care veterans being discriminated against by transference to My Aged Care when the Veterans’ Entitlements Act, 1986 (VEA 1986) does not reference age specific restrictions, nor does it allow abdication of responsibility to the Department of Health and Aged Care (DOHAC)?

“Where is it written in the Aged Care Act 1997 that allows the Government to ignore their responsibilities under the VEA 1986? Is there another legislative instrument that allows this?

“Who has the duty of care for our older veterans when they come under both DVA and DOHAC portfolios?

“This treatment of our most vulnerable older veterans was affirmed on the 24<sup>th</sup> May at the Australian War Widows Conference. I raised this issue with the Secretary of DVA, Alison Frame and Veronica Hancock, First Assistant Secretary, Policy. Ms Hancock stated that ‘DVA only provide low level care’. Ms Hancock also admitted that Gold and White Treatment Cards ‘are not accessed by My Aged Care within home care or residential care’.

“The frightening issue here, is that by admitting to this indicates that DVA have been doing this for sometime AND all your members who are older will be disregarded by DVA when their health and home safety needs become more complex. They will not have a choice but be ‘cared for’ by My Aged Care. Evidence indicates that they will be placed in the general special needs pool waiting for services and their Gold/White Treatment Cards will not be accessed.

Maria Barclay

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

## From farm boy to clearing jungle in South Vietnam

**An account of the transition of a farm boy from the small town of Ganmain, in the Riverina area of NSW, to clearing jungle with Cat. D8 dozers in the jungles of South Vietnam.**

**By Ian Durham**

The following story comes from a diary that I kept while in Vietnam and also from the Official Land Clearing diary maintained by Sergeant. Darkie Fadden of the "1st. Aust. Land Clearing team."

I, along with many others, was called up for National Service to serve in the Australian Army in the late 1960's.

I was originally called up for the third intake and would have marched into Kapooka on the 1st of Feb 1966, however the 12 months deferment I was granted due to my father's illness, meant I ended up in the 7th intake.

I was duly picked up at the Ganmain Post Office at the designated time, on the 1st of February 1967 by bus, that had initially started at Griffith and picked up at all the towns along the route, then deposited at 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka.

While the whole atmosphere of yelling and abuse could not be described as "friendly", it was not as big a shock to me, considering my previous experience in the Cadets, as it was to some of the other recruits, particularly from the city, whom I considered had lived a rather sheltered life up until this stage.

I was to be allocated to 8 Platoon B Company, under the "guidance" for want of a better word, of 2nd Lieutenant. Aird and Corporal's White, Deck and Mair. Corporal. White was our platoon "Sergeant." and proved to be a great bloke, not at all your typical Bastard Sergeant.

When the opportunity presented itself, I applied for an Officer selection course, probably an over estimation of my abilities as it turned out, because I did not meet their specifications, and did not pass. As it also turned out, I'm glad that was the result, because I would not have met the great bunch of blokes that I eventually did, and had the same camaraderie with them. As well as that, I came to understand that only the best and brightest officers were selected for Vietnam, and that would probably count me out.

Towards the end of basic training, as was the usual custom, we were asked to nominate the Corp we would like to be allocated to. I did not want to be in infantry, too dangerous I thought, and too much foot slogging, crawling through the bush etc., so I nominated as a first choice, Engineers, because of my farming and truck driving and machinery experience, then Artillery as

a second choice. The big brass obviously agreed with my selection, so Engineers it was.

After the march out, a few days leave, then the drive down to SME (School of Military Engineering) at Casula, where 4 Troop awaited. Engineer training was an interesting experience, never really a dull moment, because an Engineer must be proficient in almost everything it seemed. Our training covered all aspects of basic Military Engineering from mine laying and lifting, explosives, (always a fun thing), chain saw operation, ropes and knots, tunnel exploration (because of the Army's previous experience in Vietnam obviously), and probably the most fun of all, boat operation. Because SME was situated on the Georges River, there was no shortage of training opportunities. We learned how to construct pontoon bridges to cross from one side to the other, able to carry personnel, small vehicles etc.

Our main boat training was done at a place called Camp Sapper, where we all soon became conversant with the main basic punt type boat, able to carry up to 8 people, powered by a 40hp Johnson motor. An interesting sidelight here is we managed to dunk one motor in the water, well, we didn't know we had to check the motor clamps, did we? Fortunately, it was also tied to the boat with a rope, so a simple matter of hauling it back out of the water rectified the situation somewhat.

Because I grew up on a farm, and had a truck licence, I was given the job of driving the troop to various training sites such as the demolition range etc. in an Inter AB160.

On completion of Corp Training, I was posted to 55 AESS, a stores unit at Penrith, probably the slackest unit in the Australian Army. It was just a short walk over the train line to town where we could have morning coffee etc, no questions asked. We were often told, "if you have nothing to do, just keep out of sight", so therefore many a game of cards was played down behind the piles of barbed wire etc.



Re-fuelling the vehicles on the driving course.

It was from 55 that I applied for a driving course. This course was administered by Warrant Officer Rapley, a bloke universally liked by everyone who knew him. After many hours of theory on driving and rules etc, the main practical part of the course was conducted on a route out through the highlands from Penrith covering such towns as Blackheath, Bathurst and the old goldmining areas of Ilford, Wattle Flat and Sofala. This was in the middle of winter and extremely cold at night. We soon learned the value of draining the air tanks at night to prevent the brakes from freezing up. All overnight stops meant sleeping under the vehicles and most mornings our berets were covered in frost. I remember we over-nighted at Sofala, camped near the cemetery, and, as is customary in the Army, we had to do our piquet duty. However the Sofala pub was a popular destination for us, along with a pretty barmaid. Time flies when you're in a situation like that and I missed my roster, however another digger covered my absence, thankfully.

Following the driving course, it was back to SME for a plant course, something I had really wanted to do, as it replicated the work I had been doing back home on the farm.

An added bonus to being a plant operator was the group 7 pay grade it granted.

Following the successful completion of the

*(Continued on page 52)*

plant course, a number of plant operators, along with drivers and some Field Engineers, were segregated into a group that appeared to us, to be just marking time. We had been told that we were to be part of a special force to be inserted into the Northern part of South Vietnam to set up a new base, sometime in Feb. 68. The code name for this group was to be called TALL PINES, but, like a lot of things announced in the Army, nothing came of it, and it all seemed to fizzle out.

Some years later, I wondered did this all really happen, so I did a bit of investigating through the Australian War Memorial, apparently it did happen and it was classified as TOP SECRET.

The following is a re-typed version of the official document from the AWM records.

*TOP SECRET*

*TALL PINES*

*Increase to 17 Construction Squadron RAE*

*(Ref AHQ GS Instr 18/67 of 8 Dec 67)*

*Add a fourth Const. Tp. as an increment*

*Add a plant section increment of 10 OR*

*Total increase Off OR Total*

*2 48 50*

*Departure Feb 68*

Following on from this, at one of our morning parades we were informed that the Army were looking for volunteer Sappers for Vietnam and were asked to think about it for one day, and to give our answers at parade the next morning. It didn't take long to come up with an answer, I couldn't see the point of spending the next year doing mundane Engineering tasks around bases in Australia, when I could be doing something exciting in a war zone, so, 'yes' was my answer.

In fairly rapid succession, jungle training, painting of trunks etc., pre-embarkation leave followed, then, in typical Army fashion, many false starts regarding a departure date. First, I was given the date of 25th Feb. 68, then at the last minute it was changed to the 28th, but that too was changed, so I finally boarded the Qantas 707 on the 3rd of March 1968. Our first stop was Darwin, then after a short stay, we took off,

heading for Singapore, where followed the famous circus act of Civvie shirts on top of poly trousers. I suppose we made at least some concession to the Singapore Government; they officially took no part in the war and could not be seen to support the war effort. It was still not plain sailing, however, because on leaving Singapore, we were diverted to Butterworth air base for a short stopover, apparently Tan Son Nhut air base in Saigon was under Viet Cong attack so it was not safe to land. After a couple of hours under the wing of the plane, it was off to Saigon again, where we finally landed safely.

Over the period of the next couple of months, I was involved in many different plant operator tasks including levelling areas for buildings, hard standing for parking areas, road construction, and excavation of the new swimming pool at the Badcoe Club at Vung Tau. I also took part in building a road from the front beach up to an orphanage on a hill overlooking the beach. On the second of August we were all warned to head for high ground, as there had been a volcanic eruption in the Philippines and there was a danger of a tsunami. After a fruitless wait, a small 2 foot wave trundled into shore, tsunami over.

I was selected to be part of a welcome party for our Prime Minister of the time, John Gorton on Sunday June 9th, not particularly exciting, don't know who was the least impressed.

#### LAND CLEARING

As recorded in the official Land Clearing Team diary, maintained by Sergeant. "Darkie" Fadden, the official name of the unit is "17 Construction Squadron Land Clearing Team". The Commanding Officer and most of the NCO's plus half the operators were provided by 17 Construction Squadron, with the other half of the operators from 1 Field Squadron.

The team was formed on the 2nd of March 1968 with 8 Caterpillar D8H dozers plus 1 International TD 15B dozer. We always had a Company of infantry and a troop of APC's with us to provide protection, but they were not always entirely successful. The Team performed many

clearing jobs such as roadside clearing, to provide safety for traffic, and clearing out from barbed wire and security bunkers etc. as well as clearing out from Vietnamese villages. Its purpose on “Operation Lyrebird” was to clear tracts of jungle 200 metres wide around and through the Nui Thai Vi/Nui Dhin Hills to enable access to, and to more easily observe enemy movement. The fuel for the dozers was flown out by Chinook helicopters in collapsible rubber bladders which were resistant to



US Chinook helicopter delivering full fuel bladders and picking up empties.



Re-fuelling from collapsible rubber bladders

the motor on the right-hand side and emerged just in front of the driving clutches on the left, then entered the cabin where it exploded and ricocheted around the cabin.

Spr. Edwards survived the attack with multiple shrapnel wounds and was airlifted to hospital at Vung Tau by Cas-Evac helicopter. As I was stationed at Vung Tau at the time, I was able to visit him in hospital until he was eventually discharged. I asked

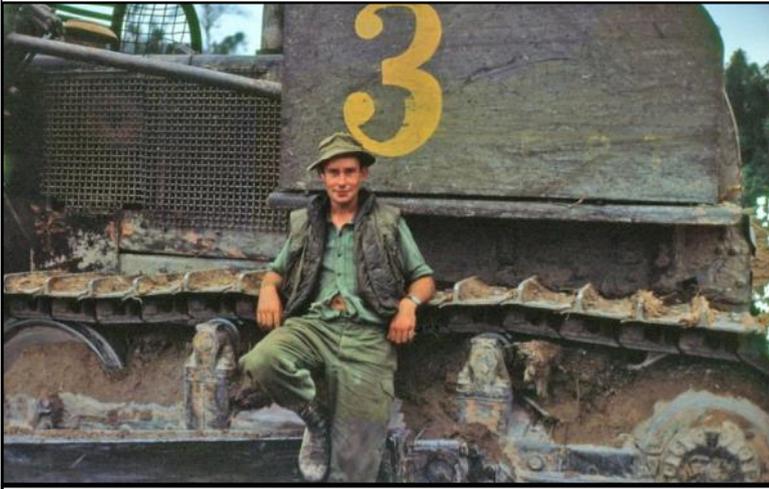
*(Continued on page 54)*

rifle fire. This was then pumped by petrol driven pumps to the dozer’s fuel tanks.

The first RPG (rocket propelled grenade) attack, one of a number during Land Clearing, happened at 1550 hours on the 1st of August 1968, when the team was in the process of establishing a new Fire Support base on “Operation Lyrebird”. A Viet Cong soldier fired an RPG at the dozer operated by Spr. Warren Edwards, nicknamed Dags, from Mudgee NSW, while another Viet Cong fired small arms fire. The RPG entered through the top of



Dozer on fire after RPG attack.



Sapper Ian Durham beside his dozer after a day's clearing.

number of these were discovered by the Field Engineers before we had a chance to detonate them with the dozers, however, some were detonated by both dozers and APC's with catastrophic results. Half way through the afternoon of that first day, I was alerted (screamed at more accurately, it's very hard to hear in the cabin of a dozer,) by Sergeant Fadden to get down out of the dozer and get underneath, apparently 2 VC were sighted in the cut carrying RPG's, however they managed to escape. Interestingly, Darkie Fadden's driver was Lachie Wilson, a talented

him when he was going back out to Land Clearing, and he said "no bloody way, they've had one go at me, they're not having another".

I realised that they would be looking for another operator, so when the offer came for replacement operators, I put up my hand. They say never volunteer for anything in the Army, but I was getting bored with just doing mundane tasks around the base camps and wanted some excitement that I reckoned clearing jungle with large plant would provide, (Cat D8 dozers in this case). Not long after this I was informed that I would be off to Land

Clearing, consequently within one day I was choppered out to Land Clearing and the same day, for the very first time was put on a D8, number 3. This dozer I shared with Bob Pride, later to become one of my best mates.

Previously I had only operated a TD15, a smaller dozer. Right from the start, I had trouble with the dozer, with the left steering brake locking. Eventually this was rectified, so proceeded with the other dozers down the cut. (the "cut" being the area we were clearing). It was always a nervous trip in the dozers to the end of the previous days clearing because of the constant possibility of anti-tank mines being laid overnight by the VC. A



Anti-tank mine and anti-lift grenade laid in our tracks by the VC.

musician and later to become another good friend.

The Army contained people from all walks of life and talents, particularly from those who were conscripted. Later that evening, we took incoming from a couple of RPG's and small arms fire at the camp, we all fired back but with no known result. Eventually Artillery from Nui Dat and our own mortars seemed to quieten things down a bit, however the artillery landed on the wrong side of the cut. This first day was a portent of what was to happen for the rest of the operation regarding enemy activity, they seemed determined to bring Land Clearing to a halt if they



"The Cut" from the air, white tops are dozers.

(ARV) of the Tankies, despite being told not to, attempted to tow a disabled dozer by the top of the blade. This resulted in the whole blade, A frame and lift cylinders being ripped from the dozer. This incident led to what later became a famous "tug of war" competition at Nui Dat between a dozer from the Land Clearing team and an ARV from the Armoured Corp. This competition and the result is another story for a later date. "Operation Lyrebird" continued on till the 1st October 1968, with many contacts

possibly could.

We were not required to man the machine guns at night while we were in camp, this was handled by the infantry protection Company, our only job was to clear jungle in our allotted areas, a hard enough job in itself.

The following day the SAS spotted about 15 VC on the nearby Nui Dhin Mountain, artillery was called in and our own mortars had a go as well, with unknown results.

The next day 2 VC were sighted in our cut, one carrying a bag, the infantry took off after them, and in their haste to get away, one of them dropped

2 RPG's. On the 7th August, an APC heading out to pick up grunts, (infantry) had 2 RPG's plus small arms fire directed at them, fortunately without any casualties. On the 11th, the pilot of the Possum chopper sighted 2 VC sitting on a hill watching us, so he engaged them with M16 fire with again, no known result. On the 12th August, a patrol on the nearby hill located 5 VC in a cave and chased them downhill but ran into a platoon sized force and had to withdraw. A later ambush resulted in one VC KIA. Things were getting more interesting by the day, and a very interesting first week or so on Land Clearing.

An incident happened on the 1st of September when an Armoured Recovery Vehicle



Heading out for the midday change over. It was safer to ride on the top of the APC.

happening for the rest of the operation, obviously the VC were most unhappy with our presence. After pulling down the camp and packing up, all machines and equipment drove out to Highway 15 and were loaded onto transporters for the trip back to Nui Dat. We had received reliable intelligence that there was a regiment of VC in the area with the aim of wiping us out, but luckily we managed to get out before this happened. Needless to say, it was a rather nervous trip down the cut to the road, coupled with the overnight stay at the road, before we all managed to load onto transporters and head back to Nui Dat. Our little team of dozers, trucks, rovers etc. would have been no match for a VC Regiment, despite the

*(Continued on page 56)*

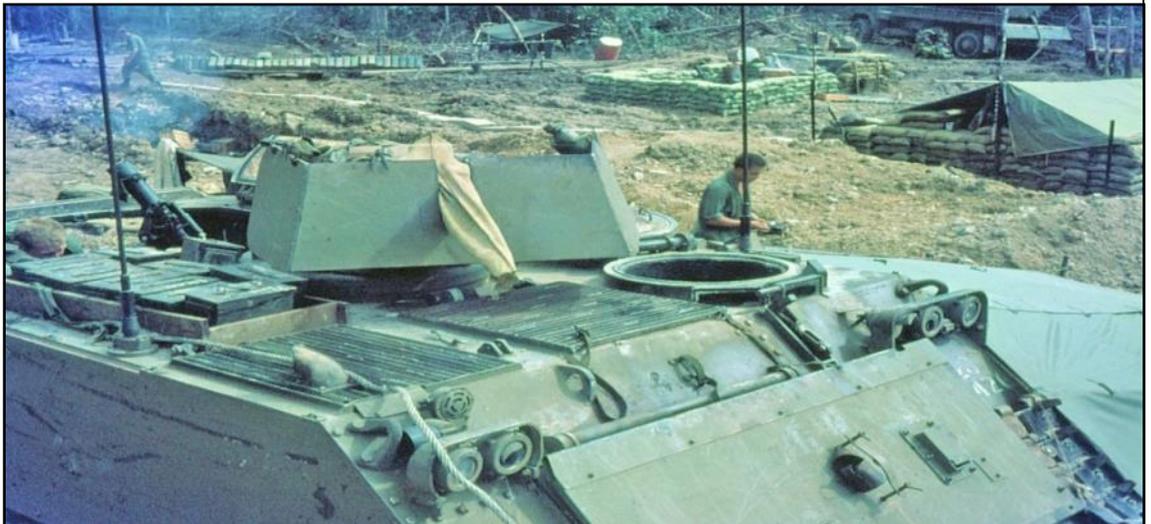
protection of a company of grunts and the troop of APC's.  
This was the end of "Operation Lyrebird" and the next couple of weeks were spent cleaning up, repairing, servicing and painting the dozers for the

next operation. Oh, not to forget of course, more importantly in our minds was a couple of days R&C down in Vung Tau.

Ian Durham ■



Tucker time for operators at the mess



Mortar protection at LYRE BIRD fire support base.

# *Commemorating Australian Service in the Vietnam War*

In 2023, the Australian Government will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War with:

- a televised Commemorative Service (service) at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade, on Friday 18 August 2023; and
- production and distribution of a Commemorative Medallion (medallion) and Certificate of Commemoration (certificate).

## **Commemorative Service**

18 AUGUST 2023 FROM 10:00AM

Attendees are encouraged to plan their journey and arrival times carefully. You are requested to arrive prior to 10:00am; the site will be open from 9:00am.

You are encouraged to use public transport where possible to attend the service as car parking is extremely limited. Free shuttles to the service will be provided from the Canberra CBD going directly to Anzac Parade.

Only 6,000 seats are available for this service. Accessible seating and support are provided to those who have indicated a need for accessible assistance when registering for an attendance pass.

All attendees planning to attend the service are required to register for an attendance pass to access the commemorative site.

To obtain an attendance pass, please visit [vietnam50.teg.com.au](http://vietnam50.teg.com.au)

## **Commemorative Medallion and Certificate**

While Australia can never repay the debt we owe to the 60,000 who served in Vietnam, the medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home.

The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War.

The medallion is free of charge for any veteran who served in the Vietnam War.

Applications are made online at [dva.gov.au/vietnam50](http://dva.gov.au/vietnam50)

Please note that you will need to know your service number, or the service number of the veteran you are applying on behalf of, in order to apply. If you require support to apply, please phone

**1800 VETERAN** (1800 838 372) between 9am and 5pm AEST Monday to Friday, and say the word 'medallions' when prompted. You can also email [\*\*commemorations@dva.gov.au\*\*](mailto:commemorations@dva.gov.au)

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Here we have Part 6 of the story of HMAS Sydney told by one of the crew, John Ingram

## HMAS SYDNEY: the bloody “American War” 1966-67



(In which the dangers of underwater attack are explained)

Soldiers liked souvenirs with a particular propensity for SYDNEY's cutlery and crockery embellished with the RAN crest and superior in quality to that issued to soldiers. Naval officer's cutlery was silver plated and of special appeal. Significant quantities of our cutlery, bone china coffee cups and saucers would “walk ashore” both in Australian ports and South Vietnam. Checking soldiers' baggage before disembarkation would've been both unwise and impossible. We kept records of the “losses” and were eventually able to convince Army Office to reimburse Navy the costs of replacements.

Portable “transistor” radios became a “must have” by the mid-1960s but would not function inside the ship's hull. At night men would huddle in dark gun sponsons and suchlike listening to the crackle of **Radio Australia** for news of home. Or in Asian waters any station which could be detected including the **Voice of America**, to be later immortalised by Robin Williams in the film “**Good Morning, Vietnam**”.

Of note to us in the SYDNEY was another English-speaking radio station which beamed its propaganda from the North (Vietnam) courtesy of “Hanoi Hannah”. Hannah would know whenever we were within range, describing us in hysterical terms “as lackeys of US imperialism, that we'd be destroyed by those we wished to harm” and suchlike threats. Of course, it was easy to dismiss her intimidating messages but disconcerting to know Hanoi knew of our presence. There were instances where irresponsible US forces exposed us to attack by breaking radio silence, or in one instance, illuminating us from a searchlight in a maritime surveillance aircraft as we proceeded at speed towards Vung Tau harbour. When the captain threatened the offending aircraft with gunfire, the light was extinguished.

The Saigon River delta is a vast expanse of water in which lies a myriad of low-level mud islands, mostly vegetated. To the north are treed hills interspersed with houses visible from the designated anchorages exposed to the elements



and enemy forces. Tidal action is very visible while the water a debris littered murky brown. Safe diving activity is only possible at slack water and then very limited in duration. In 1966 there were as many as 50-60 merchant ships at anchor or secured to buoys in neat rows waiting to make the hazardous passage up the long channel to the Saigon wharves. Most of these are old, some former "Liberty" ships. Their owners are well aware of the dangers: on the one hand trying to profit from the war while on the other tasking second-rate ships in America's "Big Push" to rapidly escalate their military presence in South Vietnam. But the "logistics train" had become constipated short of the destination.

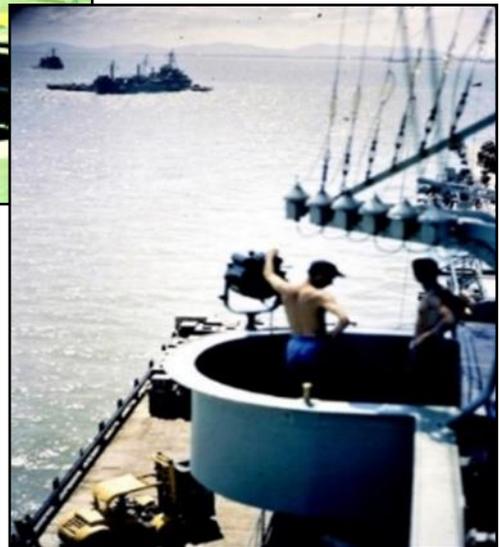
To serve as a visible warning of their presence the VC (Viet Cong) had left evidence of their recent activity in the form of masts and superstructure of two merchantmen sunk by explosives at nearby anchorages. Their technique was simple and deadly: a very simple device comprising two captured US 225 kg iron bombs each secured inside a 44-gallon drum with a detonator attached. The two drums connected by a length of rope were then released to drift with the tide. On fouling an anchor cable, the drums would hit a ship's side with massive, destructive force.

We were also very conscious VC "swimmers" using basic snorkelling equipment

and working as fishermen by day and saboteurs by night were operating in waters between Vung Tau and Saigon. To counter this activity an RAN Clearance Diving Team was assigned to the area to back up US Navy SEAL teams.

This must have been an awful task for many reasons including the fact by 1967 SYDNEY was way overdue for refit and the hull, shafts, propellers etc were heavily coated in a swathe of marine growth 50-100 mm in depth. This was having a significant impact on the ship's performance, including fuel consumption. The Naval Board was being held to ransom by certain militant unions, in particular the Painters and Dockers, opposed to Australia's involvement in the war. Their mission was simple: to stop SYDNEY and her escorts from participation in the conflict. Projected as an act of altruism it was a convenient lie. This union and its anarchist, communist sympathising leaders effectively seized the opportunity to create ongoing industrial strike activity to force the weak federal coalition governments of the day into ever increasing concessions. While I had deep, personal issues with the war, its objectives and prosecution by the US government I had even less sympathy for the belligerent and bloody-minded attitudes of certain union leaders and their members who benefited from this sad situation at our expense.

*(Continued on page 60)*

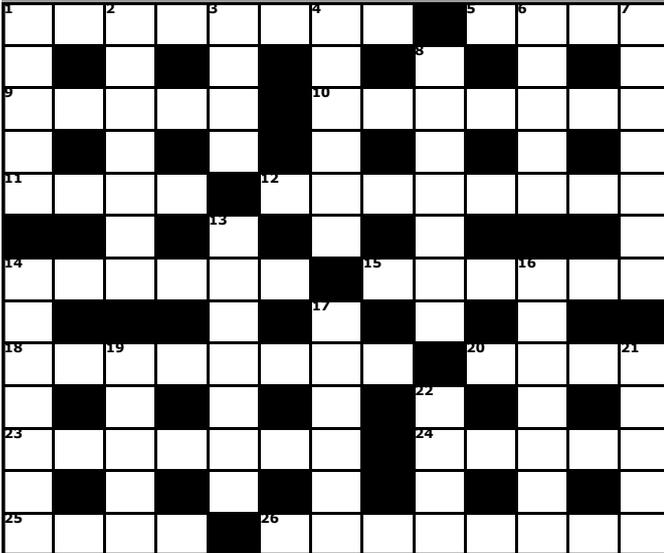


SYDNEY's signalmen closed up 24/7 USMC hovercraft on patrol while an RAN destroyer stands by

*SYDNEY, whenever at a designated anchorage, was a prized target and our escort/s, supplemented by RAN divers, would "sweep" the immediate area of the intended berth prior to check for explosive devices positioned either on the harbour bed or, limpet-like, to our hull. At slack water ships' diving personnel would undertake a complete survey of hulls below the waterline. At all other times the propellers would be turned at irregular intervals to ward off potential saboteurs and scare charges dropped over the side of ships as a deterrent.*

The 2 hangar lift wells were open when at anchor to provide essential ventilation. This posed a "calculated risk to ship safety" as a well lobbed mortar by the enemy in the nearby hills would have major consequences. ■

# CROSSWORD CORNER



**ACROSS**

**DOWN**

- 1. Dried fruit
  - 5. CEO
  - 9. Relative
  - 10. Lean, slim
  - 11. Flying toy
  - 12. Rules, standards
  - 14. Corrugations
  - 15. Brawled
  - 18. Station walkway
  - 20. Milliners creation
  - 23. Try
  - 24. Comms device
  - 25. Team
  - 26. Hill
- 1. Smelly animal
  - 2. Found
  - 3. Cancelled
  - 4. Guarantee
  - 6. Command
  - 7. House employee
  - 8. Ruin
  - 13. Fragrance
  - 14. Reiterates
  - 16. Relative
  - 17. Cave
  - 19. Performed
  - 21. Exhibited

*Solution next issue*

**APRIL 23 SOLUTION**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | C | H | E | T | E |   | C | H | A | R | M |
| O |   | H |   | A |   | N |   | O |   | C |   | I |
| R | O | A | M | S |   | S | O | N | A | T | A | S |
| T |   | L |   | T |   | U |   | S |   | U |   | L |
| A | B | E | T |   | R | E | G | U | L | A | T | E |
| R | O | T | A | T | E | S |   | M |   | L | I | D |
|   | W |   | P | O | D |   | W | E | B |   | B |   |
| S | E | T |   | M |   | R | E | S | U | M | E | D |
| E | D | U | C | A | T | E | D |   | D | I | R | E |
| V |   | M |   | H |   | V |   | B |   | R |   | F |
| E | M | B | R | A | C | E |   | I | R | A | T | E |
| R |   | L |   | W |   | A |   | A |   | G |   | R |
| S | L | E | E | K |   | L | I | S | T | E | N | S |

# THE UNKNOWN COMIC

My pen can write underwater. It can write other words too, but *underwater* is a favourite word.

You can't face backwards on stairs. And in every dictionary I've checked, wrong is always spelt wrong.

Behind every angry woman is a man with no idea of what's going on.

Me and batteries have something in common. I'm not included in anything either.

A woman shouted to me at the railway station and asked how she could get to the other platform. I told her she was already on the other platform.

On a dark and stormy night a hitchhiker spots a car approaching and jumps in just as a shard of lightening flashes nearby and a roar of thunder shakes the car. He only notices there is no driver after settling in and getting his bearings in the back seat. The car is moving forward on a slight downhill grading and building speed, when he sees that there is a curve ahead. Just at that moment a hand appears and adjusts the steering wheel at precisely the right moment. This scenario is repeated two more times, before seeing a village ahead during flashes of lightening, and picking the right moment when the car slows on a slight uphill twist in the road, the hitchhiker makes a move and springs into the stormy night making a beeline across a paddock, and into the village pub.

There he is just getting his third double Bundaberg and telling the spellbound patrons all about his ghostly and terrifying adventure when the door opens and two muddled but strapping young blokes stride toward the bar, when one of them suddenly props and points at our terrified hitchhiker.

"Hey! There's that dude that jumped into our car while we were pushing it!"

## PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

### 5 money mistakes to avoid if you're going guarantor

**If you're going to balance the future of your home or property on someone's reliability to pay their own mortgage, make sure you're across the risks.**

Nearly 40% of Aussies said it took them between two and five years to save for a deposit on a home, while 25% said it took them between five and 10 years<sup>i</sup>.

If you have a family member who wants to get into the market sooner than that, you may have discussed whether you'd be willing to speed up the process (if you're in a position to) by going guarantor.

This is where you use the equity in your own property as security for the loan they're taking out. It's essentially a promise by you (the guarantor) to the lender, that the borrower will make the necessary repayments and if they don't, or are unable to, you'll repay the loan for them.

While there may be benefits for the person you're going guarantor for (they mightn't need such a big deposit or could avoid paying lenders mortgage insurance), here are some things to avoid before making a decision.

#### 1. Not knowing what you're signing up for

Depending on the lender (and each will have their own terms and conditions if they allow for this type of arrangement), you can use your property as security on someone's entire home loan, the entire loan amount plus additional costs, or limit the guarantee to a portion of the loan.

The role of guarantor will generally be limited to immediate family members, but may include siblings, grandparents and even former spouses, depending on your lender.

Meanwhile, how long you act as guarantor will depend, but once this person's loan has reduced beyond a certain level, you can ask to be removed as guarantor, although this will have to be approved by the lender and fees may apply.

#### 2. Not considering changes in circumstances

You always want to hope for the best but over the term of this person's home loan, there could be a point where they lose their job or become injured or ill and be unable to make repayments for a while.

For this reason, you may want to find out if they have a back-up plan, any emergency cash stashed away or personal insurance (what type and how much).

If things don't go as expected, repayment of their home loan becomes your responsibility, so unless you have additional funds, worse-case scenario, you may have to sell your home to clear this person's debt and there could also be flow on affects regarding your credit report.

#### 3. Not giving much thought to your own bucket list

Going guarantor reduces your ability to borrow funds, so it's important to think about whether you have other plans that could be affected – such as holidays or other big purchases.

You may also want to give some thought to your retirement. June 2021 figures (which assume you own your home outright and are pretty healthy) show individuals and couples, around age 67, who are looking to retire today, need annual budget of around \$44,818 and \$63,352 respectively to fund a comfortable lifestyle<sup>ii</sup>.

With that in mind, you don't want a sudden liability, such as being called on as guarantor, to jeopardise your retirement plans.

#### 4. Not expressing your expectations

Before making any decisions, it's important to discuss and consider:

- both parties' circumstances and expectations over the life of the loan
- having an agreement in place to help make sure everyone is on the same page

how long you expect to be involved and what your exit strategy as guarantor might be.

#### 5. Not exploring other financial avenues

There may be other financial avenues that could work better for you and the borrower depending on your situation.

#### Could you gift a deposit?

If you can afford it, gifting a deposit might be something you'd prefer to do. A good deposit will reduce the amount your family member needs to borrow, and the interest paid over the life of their loan.

Going down this avenue also means any loss you incur will be limited to the amount of the gift.

Bear in mind, if you happen to receive Centrelink payments (or are planning to in the future), you'll need to consider that a gift of this nature could impact your benefits, so do your research.

#### Could you go in as a co-owner?

When you buy a home with family members, you share responsibility for the costs involved while receiving the benefits of investing in property, depending on your arrangements.

It's important to understand that as a co-owner you are included on the loan and only own a share of the property. If you sign as a joint borrower, you're also equally responsible for the home loan so are equally liable for the entire debt with the principal borrower.

Again, it's a good idea to document each person's rights and obligations.

**Acting as a guarantor is a serious legal responsibility and you may be required to get legal advice before a lender will accept the arrangement. We're here to help.**

i [Finder - From down payment to dealbreaker: Average house deposit now exceeds \\$100k \(April 2021\)](#)

ii [Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia \(ASFA\) Retirement Standard \(June 2021\)](#)

iii [Bank of Mum and Dad report 2021: Property boom puts parents under pressure](#)

To discuss further or to arrange a time **to review your current financial position please contact:**

**Paul Messerschmidt (Partner) MFinPlan**

**PSK Private Wealth**

**0414 811 777**

**(02) 8365 8333**

[paulm@psk.com.au](mailto:paulm@psk.com.au)

Paul Messerschmidt of PSK Financial Services Group Pty Ltd trading as PSK Private Wealth ABN 24 134 987 205 is an Authorised Representative of PSK Advisory Services Pty Ltd - AFSL 234656. Any advice included in this document has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on the advice, you should consider whether it's appropriate to you, in light of your objectives, financial situation or needs. ■



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'  
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

CELEBRATING **20** YEARS

# AVCAT SCHOLARSHIPS

Tertiary scholarships for children and grandchildren of  
Australian ex-serving veterans

**\$4000—\$6000 a year, for 3 years**

Eligibility includes Australian residency, child or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran, full-time tertiary student in 2024 enrolled in a minimum one-year course at uni, TAFE or RTO and in receipt of, or eligible to receive, a means-tested Commonwealth educational benefit - Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, or Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES)

Applications open Vietnam Veterans' Day  
18 August 2023

And close midnight 31 October 2023

Apply online at  
[avcat.org.au](http://avcat.org.au)



## AUSTRALIAN ENTERTAINERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(A memoriam to the Late Lorrae Desmond AM MBE)  
in compliment with the tribute by Sylvia Raye starting on page 76

Most of our readers and members would be aware that a number of Australian entertainers and musicians (ABC Band), under the auspices of the Government Sponsored Australian Forces Overseas Fund (AFOF), entertained our troops in Vietnam throughout the War.

They did so in their own time and were not paid, and even though they understood the risks they were taking, as Little Pattie can attest to, they felt that it was the least they could do to show that they cared about our troops and wanted to lift their morale whenever possible, and they did just that. We salute them for their commitment and the risk they took to entertain our troops and also some of our allied forces.

The entertainers that we acknowledge in particular are – Lorrae Desmond AM MBE, Dinah Lee, Little Pattie OAM, Lynne Fletcher, Jacqui De Paul and Sylvia Raye. They were fondly known by the Australian troops as ‘Our Girls’. Following the war they continued to support our veterans in various ways and continue to attend ceremonies, commemorations and reunion dinners where they were often called upon as ‘guest speakers’. How can we forget these ‘ladies’ (our girls) - what great ‘trouper’. We love you.

Lorrae Desmond AM MBE, who not only entertained Australian troops on numerous occasions in Vietnam between 1967 and 1971, but also entertained troops in other theatres of war or conflicts between 1954 and 1959 and a number of other areas since 1971.

It was with great sadness when we were informed that Lorrae passed away on 23 May 2021. I and a number of other Veterans attended her funeral in Sydney. She will be greatly missed by many Vietnam veterans who knew her as an entertainer in Vietnam and thereafter, but also by many of the general public who would have remembered her for her starring role as ‘Shirley’ on the long running television show of the ‘Country Practice’.

Lorrae lived in the UK for quite some time where she also had a successful career in the entertainment business and was much loved for her wonderful performances.

Well done Lorrae and may you Rest in Peace.

There is a further tribute, commencing on page 76, by Sylvia Raye who was one of the ‘AFOF’ entertainers in Vietnam and continued to entertain for many years thereafter not only in clubs but was also a regular on Television and worked on radio programmes with the ABC Orchestra. Sylvia remained close friends with Lorrae until her passing:

William (Bill) Roberts OAM JP  
National President VVFA  
Snr Vice President VVPPAA NSW ■

# Reunions & Notices

## **A Field Battery Vietnam 1971**

### **Group**

**Date: 14 Aug 2023**

**14-20 August 2023. Contact Bill by 14 July for payment and further information.**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: Townsville/Lavarack Barracks, QLD**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Bill Downie**

**Phone: 0407 036 344**

**Email: abatteryreunion2023@gmail.com**

## **2nd/4th Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment Association**

**Date: 15 Aug 2023**

**Townsville, QLD**

To be held around Townsville and Lavarack Barracks 15 - 20 August 2023. Further details are on the website or via email

[reunion@24rarassociation.com](mailto:reunion@24rarassociation.com)

### **Contact details**

**Name: Phillip Smailes**

**Phone: 0409 642 067**

[committee@24rarassociation.com](mailto:committee@24rarassociation.com)

[www.24rarassociation.com](http://www.24rarassociation.com)

## **17th Intake 24 platoon D Coy 1 RTB Kapooka 1969**

**Date: 18 Aug 2023**

Looking for those of us who trained together in 24 Pl D Coy for a bit of a get together during and after the 50th anniversary commemoration.

### **Reunion details**

**Location: Vietnam Forces National Memorial, Anzac Pde, Canberra, ACT**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Ernie Burgers and Baz Collins**

**Email: [ernie.burgers@bigpond.com](mailto:ernie.burgers@bigpond.com)**

**Website: Facebook - 17th Intake 24**

**Platoon D Coy 1 RTB Kapooka**

## **IT'S ON AGAIN!**

### **VVPPAA NSW**

## **VIETNAM VETERANS DAY BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB**

**Date: 18 August 2023**

**Grand Hall foyer**

**Meet and Greet 9:30-10:30am**

**Commemorative Service 11am**

**Luncheon and Show 12:30-3:30pm**

**Recommend table reservations from Monday 3 July by calling Granville office Admin**

**02 9682 1788 to secure a spot.**

Tickets expected to go on sale 17 July, following release of July issue of The Vietnam Veterans Newsletter.

More details as they come to hand, check our website often

<http://www.vvfganville.org>

## **RAAF Catering Reunion**

**Date: 1 Sep 2023**

**1-3 September 2023. RAAF**

**Catering personnel, serving and ex serving. RSVP by April 2023.**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: Wagga Wagga**

### **Contact details**

**Name: William Sullivan (Sully)**

**Phone: 0417 218 579**

**Email: [sullivanw.n@bigpond.com](mailto:sullivanw.n@bigpond.com)**

## **RAAF Surfin Reunion**

**Date: 15 Sep 2023**

**15-17 September 2023.**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: Ipswich, QLD**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Garth Steinhardt**

**Phone: 0487 195 418**

**Email: [surfinreunion@gmail.com](mailto:surfinreunion@gmail.com)**

## **RAAF SURFIN REUNION**

**Date: 15 Sep 2023**

**15-17 September 2023**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: Ipswich, QLD**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Garth Steinhardt**

**Phone: 0487 195 418**

**Email: [surfinreunion@gmail.com](mailto:surfinreunion@gmail.com)**

## **Ex RAAF Surface Finisher Reunion**

**Date: 16 Sep 2023**

**15-17 September 2023. A reunion for ex RAAF Surface Finishers and their partners. Activities include welcomes, Friday social, lawn bowls, official event and farewell breakfast. For info, please contact Jacko or Garth Steinhart on 0487 195 418.**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: CSI Ipswich, QLD**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Greg Jacko Lyons**

**Phone: 0413 700 298**

**Email: [gregjackolyons@gmail.com](mailto:gregjackolyons@gmail.com)**

## **102 Field Workshop SVN - RAEME**

**Date: 29 Sep 2023**

**29 Sep - 1 Oct 2023. Members and their partners are invited to attend the bi-annual reunion on my property. Ample free camping available with basic shower and toilet facilities and limited access to power. Numbers attending are required for catering purposes.**

### **Reunion details**

**Location: 'Avondale', 601 Brays Road, Gannawarra, VIC**

### **Contact details**

**Name: Noel (Loonda) Lake (OAM)**

**Phone: 03 5456 9246**

**Email: [koonda@activ8.net.au](mailto:koonda@activ8.net.au)**

**RAN Writers Association Reunion**

Date: 13 Oct 2023

13-15 October 2023. For more details, please email or visit the website.

**Reunion details**

Location: Sydney, NSW

**Contact details**

Name: RAN Writers Association

Phone:

Email: [scribes@ranwriters.com](mailto:scribes@ranwriters.com)

Website: <https://ranwriters.com>

**HMAS Leeuwin 49th Intake**

Date: 13 Oct 2023

13-15 October 2023. RHOADES Division 49th anniversary. Meet and Greet at Olims Bar and Bistro 18:30 Friday 13th October, corner of Ainslie & Limestone Ave, Braddon. Sunday Drinks and Goodbyes 11:00 15 October, Olims Bar. Drinks open to past and present members of the Royal Australian Navy living-in/visiting Canberra. ANTEA NAVIS SODALIS CONSOCIUS (Past Shipmates Reunited). Contacts and further information: Bruce 'Biscuit' Arnott, [iba107@hotmail.com](mailto:iba107@hotmail.com) or 0448 883 701; Garry "Tiger" Lyons, [glyons@gmail.com](mailto:glyons@gmail.com) or 0402 000 748; or Andrew (below).

**Reunion details**

Location: Canberra, ACT

**Contact details**

Name: Andrew 'Possum' Freame

Phone: 0408 114 205

Email: [andrew.freame@bigpond.com](mailto:andrew.freame@bigpond.com)

Ex Naval Stores / MLSC members of all ranks

Date: 20 Oct 2023

20-21 October 2023. Enquiries from other branches more than welcome.

**Reunion details**

Location: Coffs Harbour, NSW

**Contact details**

Name: Alan Cady-Ellis

Phone: 0407 436 498

Email: [temporaryloan@gmail.com](mailto:temporaryloan@gmail.com)

**8/9 RAR Association**

Date: 27 Oct 2023

50th reunion of raising the Battalion linking 31 Oct 1973. All welcome, remember Vietnam to Afghanistan/ Iran

**Reunion details**

Location: Samford, Brisbane, QLD

**Contact details**

Name: Gregory Decker

Phone: 0417 464 251

Email: [pointstar@bigpond.com](mailto:pointstar@bigpond.com)

Website: <https://89rar.com/welcome/> or <https://www.facebook.com/89RARAssn/>

**HMAS Leeuwin 35th Intake Stevenson Division**

Date: 10 Nov 2023

10-14 November 2023. 52nd Anniversary Reunion.

Location: Fremantle

**Contact details**

Name: Blue Skimmings (Skimmo)

Phone: 0488 977 312

Email: [bluevicki1@hotmail.com](mailto:bluevicki1@hotmail.com)

**21 Construction Squadron RAE**

Date: 11 Nov 2023

Reunion/reconnection for all serving and ex serving members and their partners. The cost will be determined on numbers prior to the date. If accommodation is required, it would be advisable to book early. There will be a meet and greet on Friday 10th and Remembrance Day service on the 11th prior to the reunion. On Sunday, a BBQ will be held for all those staying.

**Reunion details**

Location: Royal Hotel (Derms), Seymour, VIC

**Contact details**

Name: Bill Thornley

Phone: 0438 140 759

Email: [we.2.bez@bigpond.com](mailto:we.2.bez@bigpond.com)

**106 Field Workshop**

Date: 20 Nov 2023

Location: Steeples Club Mornington, VIC

To commemorate the 55 years since 106 Fd Wksp formed at 1 ATF Nui Dat SVN on The Order of Battle 1st Nov 1968.

**Contact details**

Name: Milton Pearson

Phone: 0488 050 261

Email: [csm1066869@gmail.com](mailto:csm1066869@gmail.com)

**Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force and D&E Platoon**

Date: 21 Nov 2024

Location: Adelaide, SA

Dedication Service at the Pathway of Honour, (Adelaide War Memorial) where our own Memorial will be unveiled.

**Contact details**

Name: John Verhelst

Phone: 0437 212 121

Email: [jeverhelst@gmail.com](mailto:jeverhelst@gmail.com)

Website: [www.hq1atf.org](http://www.hq1atf.org)



**"One day we'll all be laughin' at this cockup at some flamin' reunion!"**

**VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA**

**FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING**

**NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE (VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE)**

**VVFA Inc** National President: **William (Bill) Roberts OAM JP** Email: [billr@vfvfagranville.org](mailto:billr@vfvfagranville.org)  
 PO Box 170, (8 Mary St.) National Secretary: **Ron O'Connor JP** Email: [secretary@vfvfagranville.org](mailto:secretary@vfvfagranville.org) Granville,  
 NSW 2142 Tel: 02 9682 1788 Fax: 02 9682 6134 Web: <http://www.vvfa.org.au>

**NEW SOUTH WALES  
 VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE**

**VVPPAA NSW Inc.**  
 8 Mary St PO Box 170  
 Granville NSW 2142  
 Ph: (02) 9682 1788  
 Fax: (02) 9682 6134  
[www.vvfvfagranville.org](http://www.vvfvfagranville.org)  
[secretary@vfvfagranville.org](mailto:secretary@vfvfagranville.org)  
 President: **Frank Cole**  
 Secretary: **Ron O'Connor JP**  
**Hours:** Mon-Fri 0900-1600

**CENTRAL COAST**  
 PO Box 505 Ettalong 2257  
 Ph: (02) 4344 4760  
 Fax: (02) 4344 5467  
[centralcoastveterans@bigpond.com](mailto:centralcoastveterans@bigpond.com)  
 President: **Alan Ball**  
 Secretary: **Eric Daniel**  
**Hours:** Mon,Wed 0930-1330

**CENTRAL WEST**  
 7 March St  
 Orange NSW 2800  
 President: **Lindsay Wright**  
 (02) 6362 5959  
 Secretary: **Wayne Willis**  
 0447 066 996  
[wayne.willis@bigpond.com](mailto:wayne.willis@bigpond.com)

**CLARENCE VALLEY**  
 PO Box 137  
 Grafton 2460  
 Ph: (02) 6649 4186  
 President: **Ron Shoebridge**  
 Secretary: **Lorraine Burt OAM**  
[newsouthwalespva@gmail.com](mailto:newsouthwalespva@gmail.com)  
**Hours:** Mon-Fri 0900-1700

**EUROBODALLA**  
 28 Emmott St.  
 Moruya 2537  
 Ph: (02) 4474 2362  
 Mob 0419 201 788  
 President: **Russell Graham**  
 Secretary: **Helen Kop**  
[eurobodallavietnamveterans@yahoo.com.au](mailto:eurobodallavietnamveterans@yahoo.com.au)

**GREAT LAKES**  
 Unit 3, 80-82 Kularoo Drive  
 Forster, 2428  
 Ph: 0480 283 744  
[vvaglforster@gmail.com](mailto:vvaglforster@gmail.com)  
 President: **Graham Kelly**  
 Secretary: **Paul Dawson**  
**Hours:** Mon & Thur 1000-1300

**HASTINGS MANNING MACLEAY**

PO Box 5330  
 Port Macquarie 2444  
 Office at RSL Wauchope Sub-Branch  
 Office Ph: (02) 6581 5230  
 Advocate only: (02) 6581 5509  
[hmmvppaa@c2a.com.au](mailto:hmmvppaa@c2a.com.au)  
 President: **Bill Wagner**  
 Office Manager: **Lyn Hancock**  
**Hours:** 10 –13:30 Mon, Tues, Thur.

**ILLAWARRA**  
 Legacy House 96 Market St  
 Wollongong NSW 2500  
 Ph: (02) 4228 6774  
[vvaaill@aapt.net.au](mailto:vvaaill@aapt.net.au)  
 President: **Ian Birch**  
 Secretary: **Pam Bowmaker OAM JP**  
**Hours:** Tue, Fri 9:30-12:30

**MUDGEE & DISTRICTS**  
 Inglis St, Railway Station  
 PO Box 511 Mudgee NSW 2850  
 Ph: (02) 6372 7740  
[secretary@vfvfamudgee.org](mailto:secretary@vfvfamudgee.org)  
 President: **Ken Atkinson**  
 Mb: 0428 246 147  
 Secretary: **Renee Lamshed**  
 Ph: 0433 073 387  
**Hours:** Mon, Tue, Wed 9:30-3:30

**NEWCASTLE & HUNTER**  
 15 Tyrell St., PO Box 288  
 Wallsend 2287  
 Ph: (02) 4951 2666  
 Fax: (02) 4951 2633  
[secretary@nhvv.org](mailto:secretary@nhvv.org)  
 President: **Ian Bell**  
 Secretary: **Dave Hansen**  
**Hours:** Mon, Thu 0900-1300

**RIVERINA**  
 PO Box 7120  
 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650  
 President: **John Ploenges**  
 Ph. (02) 6922 9766  
 Secretary: **Ralph J Todd**  
 Mb: 0418 446 590  
 Email: [ralphtodd@bigpond.com](mailto:ralphtodd@bigpond.com)

**SHOALHAVEN**  
 PO Box 3229  
 North Nowra NSW 2541  
 President: **Clyde Poulton**  
 Mb: 0412 642 848  
 Secretary: **Carl Robinson**  
[shoalhaven.vietvets1@gmail.com](mailto:shoalhaven.vietvets1@gmail.com)

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS  
 BOWRAL MITTAGONG MOSS  
 VALE**  
 PO Box 900, Moss Vale NSW 2577  
 President: **TBA**  
 Mb: 0420 864 133  
 Secretary: **Norman Austin**  
 Mb: 0427 854 141  
[shvvppa@gmail.com](mailto:shvvppa@gmail.com)

**SOUTH WEST SLOPES  
 VIETNAM VETERANS INC.**  
 3 Thomas Street  
 Junee 2663  
[jc18746@bigpond.com](mailto:jc18746@bigpond.com)  
 Ph: (02) 6924 1924  
 Mb: 0408 296 765  
 President: **John Curtis**  
 Secretary: **Barbara Curtis**

**TAYLORS ARM**  
 798 North Bank Rd  
 Taylors Arm 2447  
 President: **George (Stuart) Johnson**  
 Ph: 02 6564 2153  
 Secretary: **Stephen Spear**  
 Mb: 0439 642 181  
 Email: [cvpb16@hotmail.com](mailto:cvpb16@hotmail.com)

**WENTWORTH-COOMEALLA  
 Raymond Deed Veterans Retreat**  
 PO Box 397  
 Dareton NSW 2717  
 President: **Michael Chopping**  
 Ph: 0481 306 854  
 Secretary: **Sheila Sanders**  
 Ph: 03 5027 4447  
[rdveteransretreat@iinet.net.au](mailto:rdveteransretreat@iinet.net.au)

**VVPPAA (NSW BRANCH)  
 ZONE REPS  
 FAR SOUTH COAST**  
**Gary Berman**  
 Bega RSL SB  
 Ph: 6493 0449  
 Mob: 0409 888 248  
[gandsberman@bigpond.com](mailto:gandsberman@bigpond.com)

**VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA  
FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING**

**QUEENSLAND**

**VVF Queensland Branch Inc.**  
18 Leagues Club Drive  
PO Box 2817  
Nerang Business Centre  
Nerang Qld 4211  
Ph: 07 5578 2233  
Fax: 07 5578 2822  
**State President: Peter Handy JP**  
Mbl: 0448 195 020  
president@vfvqld.com  
State Sec/Treas: **Peter Cameron OAM**  
Mbl: 0408 276 044  
treasurer@vfvqld.com  
www.vfvqld.com

**VVF Brisbane/Gold Coast of Australia**

**Regional Sub-Branch Inc.**  
18 Leagues Club Drive  
PO Box 368  
Nerang Qld 4211  
Ph: 07 5502 2836  
admin@vietnamveterans.net.au  
President: **Andy Bryson**  
Mbl: 0424 476 027  
Secretary/Treasurer: **Peter Cameron OAM**  
Mbl: 0408 276 044

**TOWNSVILLE**

**Veteran Support Centre NQ Inc**  
**TOWNSVILLE**  
PO Box 280, Garbutt East  
JC Butler Bldg  
1 Charters Towers Rd  
Townsville, 4814  
Ph: 07 4772 4655  
vethelp@bigpond.com  
President: **Ian Bowron**  
Secretary: **Kayla Mastalerz**

**VICTORIA**

**VVF Victorian Branch Inc**  
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 167  
Newcomb 3219  
OFFICE: "The Annex" NO MAIL PLEASE:  
Barwon Health  
Myer St, Geelong 3220  
President: **John Arnold OAM**  
johnarnold@iinet.net.au  
Secretary: **Iris Cargill JP**  
Mb 0488 053 973  
ritscargill@yahoo.com  
Mon - Wed 0900 -1400

**VIC SUB - BRANCHES**

**GRAMPIANS**

Secretary: **Ron Jensen** 0409 023 487  
*Respite Housing For Veterans in need*  
Bowder Veterans Housing  
160 Coppards Rd Whittington 3219.  
03 5248 0996

**ACT STATE BRANCH**

**VV&VF ACT Inc**  
9 Burkitt Street, Page. 2614  
Veterans Support Centre Belconnen  
Ph: 02 6255 1599  
office@vscact.org.au  
www.vvfact.org.au  
President: **Ward Gainey JP**  
Secretary: **Leanne Connor**

**TASMANIA**

**ALL PENSION ENQUIRIES TO DENNIS HANMER OAM**  
**NSW HO 02 9682 1788**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VVFA WA Branch**  
30 Cornish Ave  
Woodvale WA 6026  
Ph 08 9409 6682  
vfvfabranch@gmail.com  
**President: Milton Kirk JP**

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

*Contact SA Head office for Northern Territory contact details.*  
*Contact Granville Office for future Darwin Outreach Programs*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**VVF South Australia Branch Inc.**  
The Yerbury Centre  
Unit 1, 31-39 Norfolk Rd  
Marion SA 5043  
Ph: 08 8296 2411  
Mon – Thur 1000 – 1500hrs  
vfvfa@tpg.com.au  
http://vfvfa.org.au  
President: **Mal Thiele JP**  
Secretary: **Don Cochrane**

**SA ZONE REPS**

**BROKEN HILL**

**Des Kennedy**  
M: 0412 458 054

**MILITARY MUSEUM BUBLACOWIE**

Welfare Officer: **Chris Soar**  
0448 994 561/0428 377 287  
Ph: 08 8853 4379

**SA REPS**

**ALICE SPRINGS AREA**

**Alan Wilkes**

**KATHERINE AREA**

**Scott Landers**

**Currently in the ADF, Transitioning, a younger Veteran?**

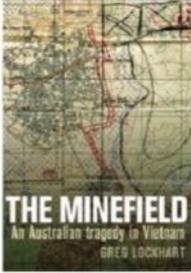
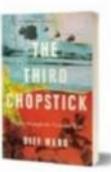
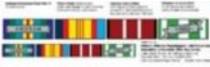
**We invite you to join our association and become a member.**

Simply select your preferred Branch or Sub-Branch from the list above, complete the form on page 29, and mail it, or email a copy, to the address indicated.

# MERCHANDISE LIST

| ITEM # | DESCRIPTION            | PRICE    | ITEM#                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | DESCRIPTION             | PRICE   |
|--------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| 1101   | NSW PLAQUE             | \$ 50.00 | 1401                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN RAN           | \$ 5.00 |
| 1103   | NSW BADGE              | \$ 10.00 | 1402                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN ENSIGN        | \$ 5.00 |
| 1104   | NSW PATCH              | \$ 14.00 | 1403                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN ARMY          | \$ 8.00 |
| 1105   | NSW STICKER            | \$ 6.00  | 1404                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN RAR           | \$ 8.00 |
| 1106   | NSW PEN                | \$ 7.00  | 1405                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN RAAF          | \$ 8.00 |
| 1108   | NSW STUBBY HOLDER      | \$ 8.00  | 1406                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | LAPEL PIN CROSS         | \$ 8.00 |
| 1109   | STUBBY HOLDER TRICOLOR | \$ 10.00 | 1500                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER TWIN SET REG    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1110   | VVFA PAD/PEN           | \$ 6.00  | 1501                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER REGULAR         | \$ 7.00 |
| 1111   | VVFA GREEN CAP         | \$ 22.00 | 1502                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER NASHO           | \$ 7.00 |
| 1112   | VVFA BLUE CAP          | \$ 22.00 | 1503                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER DAMN PROUD      | \$ 5.00 |
| 1113   | VVFA WHITE CAP         | \$ 22.00 | 1504                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER LOVE or LEAVE   | \$ 5.00 |
| 1114   | VVFA BLACK CAP         | \$ 22.00 | 1505                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER PROUDLY         | \$ 5.00 |
| 1115   | PLATE SURROUND LGE     | \$ 12.50 | 1506                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SUPPORT         | \$ 7.00 |
| 1116   | PLATE SURROUND SML     | \$ 12.50 | 1507                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER TWIN SET NASHO  | \$ 7.00 |
| 1117   | VVFA PEN/TORCH SET     | \$ 6.00  | 1508                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SUPPORT NAVY    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1124   | KEYRING VVFA GADGET    | \$ 6.00  | 1509                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER NAVY VETERAN    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1125   | KEYRING NAVY           | \$ 8.00  | 1510                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SUPPORT ARMY    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1126   | KEYRING ARMY           | \$ 8.00  | 1511                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER ARMY VETERAN    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1127   | KEYRING RAR            | \$ 10.00 | 1512                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SUPPORT RAAF    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1128   | KEYRING AIRFORCE       | \$ 8.00  | 1513                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER RAAF VETERAN    | \$ 7.00 |
| 1129   | KEYRING VVFA           | \$ 9.00  | 1514                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER AFGHAN VETERAN  | \$ 5.00 |
| 1130   | LANYARD                | \$ 10.00 | 1515                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER IRAQ VETERAN    | \$ 5.00 |
| 1131   | BANGLE                 | \$ 5.00  | 1516                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SOMALIA VETERAN | \$ 5.00 |
| 1201   | THE MINEFIELD BOOK     | \$ 45.00 | 1517                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER TIMOR VETERAN   | \$ 5.00 |
| 1301   | BUCKLE RAN             | \$ 35.00 | 1518                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | STICKER SUPPORT/THANK   | \$ 5.00 |
| 1302   | BUCKLE SERVICE RIBBON  | \$ 35.00 | <p>ALL ITEMS (ABOVE) ARE FOR SALE VIA OUR WEBSITE,<br/>                     (www.vfagranville.org/ecommerce/index.php).</p> <p>AND AVAILABLE FROM OUR GRANVILLE OFFICE AND SOME SUB-BRANCHES. PHONE TO CHECK CURRENT STOCK AVAILABILITY. THE WEBSITE ALSO HAS FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PRODUCTS AND WE ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO USE THIS FACILITY BEFORE CONTACTING THE OFFICE. All proceeds go toward our Scholarships for the children and grandchildren of veterans.</p> |                         |         |
| 1303   | BUCKLE RAR             | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1304   | BUCKLE RAA             | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1305   | BUCKLE RAE             | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1306   | BUCKLE RAAC            | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1307   | BUCKLE RAAF            | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1308   | BUCKLE RAAMC           | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1309   | BUCKLE RAASC           | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1310   | BUCKLE RAEME           | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1311   | BUCKLE RAS             | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |
| 1312   | BUCKLE RAAOC           | \$ 35.00 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         |         |

# MERCHANDISE PICS

|                                                                                             |                                                                                             |                                                                                             |                                                                                              |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>1101   | <br>1103   | <br>1105   | <br>1106   | <br>1107   | <br>1201   |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1108   | <br>1109   | <br>1116   |                                                                                              |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1111   | <br>1112   | <br>1113   | <br>1114   |                                                                                               | <br>3420   |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1120   | <br>1121   | <br>1122   | <br>1125   | <br>1126   | <br>1127   | <br>1128   |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1129 | <br>1130 | <br>1308 | <br>1309 |                                                                                               | <br>1312 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1401 | <br>1402 | <br>1403 | <br>1405  | <br>1406   | <br>1411   | <br>3440  | <br>3442 |                                                                                               |
| <br>1500 | <br>1501 | <br>1507 | <br>1502 | <br>1503 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1504 | <br>1505 | <br>1506 | <br>1508 | <br>1509 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1510 | <br>1511 | <br>1512 | <br>1513 | <br>1514 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>1515 | <br>1516 | <br>1517 | <br>1518 |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
| <br>3120 | <br>3133 | <br>3134 | <br>3140  | <br>3141   | <br>3301  | <br>3302 | <br>3401 | <br>3402 |
| <br>3406 | <br>3407 | <br>3408 | <br>3409  | <br>3412  |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |

Our name has changed but we will continue to provide professional, military aware, support to all current and former serving ADF personnel and their family members.



Free and confidential counselling to support your mental health and wellbeing is available 24/7. We also run group programs and suicide prevention training.

**JUST CALL 1800 011 046**

If overseas call +61 8 8241 4546

Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service

**FORMERLY KNOWN AS**



**Call  
24/7**

**A service founded by Vietnam veterans**



1300 924 522

Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah provide compassionate care for those in need of psychiatric help. The goal of the hospitals is to provide positive outcomes, not only for our **patients** with a mental illness but also for their **family and carers**.

As centres of excellence within Wesley Mission our Wesley Hospitals have been providing professional and compassionate care for over 60 years.

Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah are private psychiatric hospitals which offer both **in-patient** and **day patient** services. Our treatment programs combine medication, therapy and include life skills and support networks to ensure recovery is effective, ongoing and enriching.

**Our programs**

- Alcohol    Drugs    Eating disorders
- Anxiety    Depression    Bipolar disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Schizophrenia and psychosis
- Veterans services

91 Milton Street,  
Ashfield NSW 2131  
  
&  
  
7 Blake Street,  
Kogarah NSW 2217



**VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) Inc.**

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

1 JAN—31 DEC

Website: [www.vvfagranville.org](http://www.vvfagranville.org)

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM**

|         |            |             |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| SURNAME | FIRST NAME | SECOND NAME |
|---------|------------|-------------|

STREET ADDRESS

|             |       |           |
|-------------|-------|-----------|
| SUBURB/TOWN | STATE | POST CODE |
|-------------|-------|-----------|

|            |              |             |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| HOME PHONE | MOBILE PHONE | OTHER PHONE |
|------------|--------------|-------------|

EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]

|                |              |                                    |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| SERVICE NUMBER | SERVICE UNIT | O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|

|             |              |                     |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| NEXT OF KIN | RELATIONSHIP | CONTACT PHONE [NOK] |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|

| ITEM                                                      | QUANTITY      | PRICE             | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------|
| MEMBERSHIPS SUBS                                          | (YEARS)       | @\$30.00 PER YEAR | \$    |
| DONATION                                                  | (AMOUNT ONLY) |                   | \$    |
| RAFFLE TICKET/s                                           |               | @\$2.00 EACH      | \$    |
| MERCHANDISE                                               |               |                   |       |
|                                                           |               |                   | \$    |
|                                                           |               |                   | \$    |
|                                                           |               |                   | \$    |
|                                                           |               |                   | \$    |
|                                                           |               |                   | \$    |
| Contact Granville for Stock item lists numbers and prices |               | TOTAL AMOUNT DUE  | \$    |

PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD (Tick one only) CASH \_\_\_ CHEQUE \_\_\_ MONEY ORDER \_\_\_ CREDIT CARD \_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD DETAILS (Mastercard or VISA only)

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| CARD HOLDER NAME [PRINT] | CREDITCARD NUMBER |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

|             |                  |                       |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| EXPIRY DATE | AMOUNT CONFIRMED | CARD HOLDER SIGNATURE |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| (Mnth/Yr) / | \$ |
|-------------|----|

All cheques and money orders payable to VVPPAA NSW Branch Inc. Mail to PO Box 170 Granville, NSW 2142 Credit Card payments may be phoned in to (02) 9682 1788 Mon-Fri 9:30am – 3pm.

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT DATE: | DONATION RECEIPT DATE: |
|--------------------------|------------------------|

|                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT N <sup>o</sup> : | DONATION RECEIPT N <sup>o</sup> : |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| MEMBERSHIP CARD NUMBER: | COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT): |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|

|                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT): | BANK SHEET ENTRY BY (PRINT): |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|

# CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

**OLD DETAILS** [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

OLD ADDRESS

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

**NEW DETAILS** [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

NEW ADDRESS

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

EMAIL ADDRESS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Complete all sections and post to:*

The Secretary  
 VVPPAA NSW  
 PO Box 170  
 Granville  
 NSW 2142

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>       |
| <b>MEMBERSHIP REGISTRY</b>   |
| <b>DETAILS CHANGED</b>       |
| <b>DATE:</b> ___ / ___ / ___ |
| <b>INITIALS:</b> _____       |

# VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

As you are aware, Vietnam Veterans are dying at a rate higher than while on Active Service. This situation is perhaps a natural phenomenon compared to non-serving members of the public, who might die of an illness which is equally distributed through the population of the same age group.

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc has for many years maintained records of the deaths of Vietnam Veterans and the cause of death if known. This has proved invaluable regarding the health standards of Vietnam Veterans when compared to the general public. We seek your assistance in reporting the death of Vietnam Veterans, past or recent, to allow the Federation to expand and preserve it's record base.

Kindly circulate a copy of this page through your RSL Club, Unit or Corps reunions and meetings and raise it as an issue. The information gained from these reports will greatly assist all Vietnam Veterans and their families regarding future claims for benefits.

*Please print clearly*

VETERANS DETAILS

SURNAME FIRST NAME SERVICE NUMBER

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

SVN UNIT/S TOUR DATES

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|--|--|

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

SR Service Related UNK Unknown S Suicide O Other )

DATE OF DEATH (If known) LOCATION AT TIME OF DEATH

|  |        |         |
|--|--------|---------|
|  | (TOWN) | (STATE) |
|--|--------|---------|

YOUR NAME

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

SUBURB/TOWN STATE POST CODE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

HOME PHONE MOBILE PHONE SIGNATURE

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

RETURN FORM TO: The Welfare Officer

VVPPAA NSW Branch  
PO Box 170  
Granville NSW 2142

Phone: 02 9682 1788  
Fax : 02 9682 6134  
Email: [secretary@vfvagranville.org](mailto:secretary@vfvagranville.org)

# VALE

## Lorrae Desmond AM MBE



Lorrae Desmond AM MBE. 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1929 - 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021.

Written by Sylvia Raye with Love.

I first met our darling Lorrae in the late 60's. In those days the ABC employed a 40-piece orchestra and recorded programs for radio. We were both regulars at that time. I married the percussionist in the orchestra in 1973. Fell in love with him in 1970 when I toured Vietnam with an ABC concert party. I mention my late husband Mark Bowden as he started working with Lorrae in the 50's when they both worked at the Celebrity



Club, a very exclusive nightclub in Sydney. Mark

was 24 Lorrae was 22, I might add I was 8 at the time, Mark being nearly 17 years older than me.

Lorrae was the first woman to have her own TV shows on the ABC. The ABC band worked on her shows, Mark was on drums. In 1962 Lorrae was the first female to win a Gold Logi and deservedly so.

Living in the UK, where Lorrae had a very successful career, she would come back to Australia for Television and live performances.. Lorrae was also a great actress and had 10 amazing years as one of the stars of Country Practice. Who can ever forget Shirley?

Lorrae first toured Vietnam with the ABC Band in 1967, before I met her or Mark for that matter. Our other dear friends, Dinah Lee and Jacqui De Paul were also on that tour.



Mark, Dinah, Lorrae 1967 in Vietnam

Four other tours would follow.

1967/68 - Vietnam

1969 Sept - Vietnam

1970 Nov - Vietnam

1971 Nov – Vietnam

What a lot of people don't know is that Lorrae also gave her time to entertain in other theatres of war.

1954 - Suez Canal Zone

1955 - Middle East - quick tour then through to

Samalia (then named Somaliland) into Kenya during Mau Mau Uprising

1956 - Middle East

1959 - Singapore & Malaysia

Lorrae's dedication to our Vietnam Veterans would feature throughout her life. She always loved her "boys" and later received a plaque from our Vietnam Veterans, declaring her the Mother of All Vietnam Veterans. I know how much this plaque meant to her.



These words came from a digger.

***"It was always a big day when the entertainers came from Australia to put on a show. Vietnam was all a dull green and brown to us. When Lorrae Desmond, this blond Goddess in a gold dress, stepped out on stage, it took our breath away. I can say those of us who were there will always love Lorrae, always."***

(Continued on page 78)



Lorrae's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday.  
Dinah Lee, Lynn Fletcher, Little Pattie, Jacqui De Paul. Lorrae and me

# CHLIGHT

Volume 55, Number 4 • Summer 2013

A few years ago, a small group of us who entertained in Vietnam got together and formed the Forces Entertainment Association, Lorrae Desmond, Dinah Lee, Little Pattie, Lynne Fletcher, Jacqui De Paul and me. I designed our banner which would enable us to march on Anzac Day with Lorrae as our leader. The bond between us "girls" as our boys affectionately called us, grew stronger, we would often attend as a group, services, memorials and sometimes we would be guest speakers at reunion dinners. The bond was not just between us but also with "our boys."

When Lorrae passed away, I lost not only a friend but someone who was loved by all that knew her. Not only was she a woman of immense talent she was a woman of kindness, filled with empathy and compassion. This photo of the both of us together at the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Legacy is how

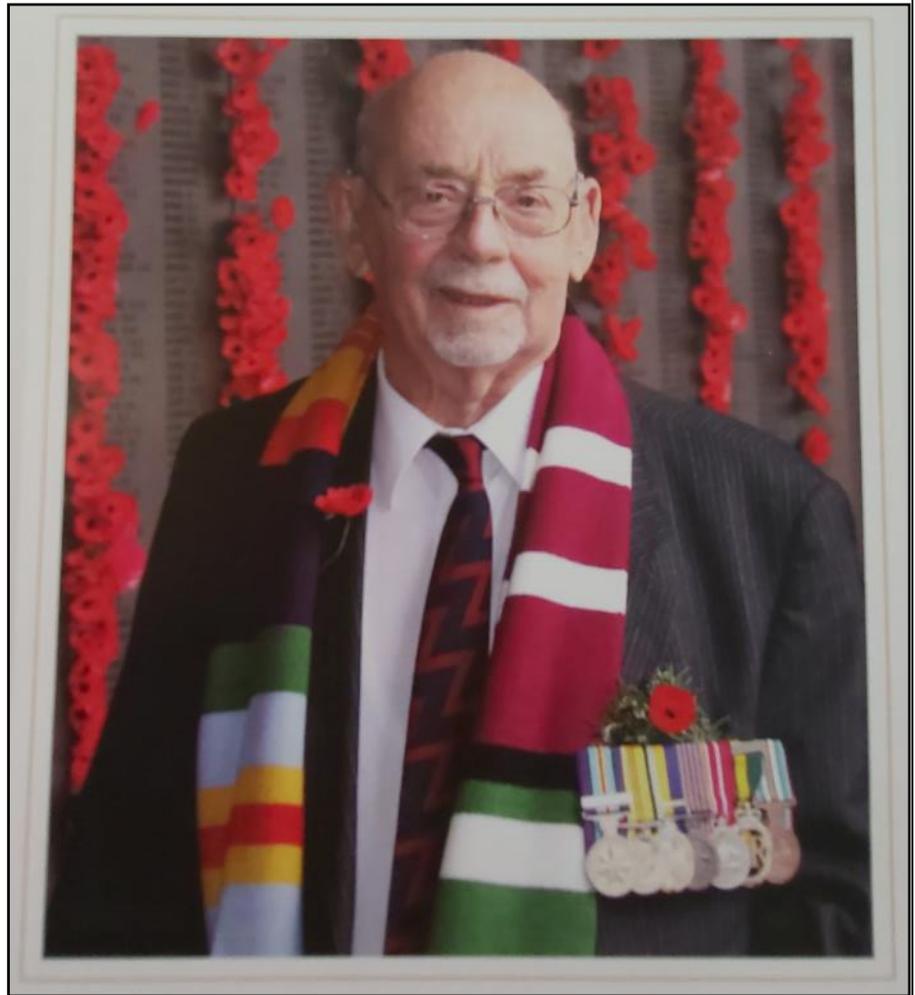


I want to remember my friend. Rest in Peace Lorrae, you will always remain in our hearts, never to be forgotten. ■

# VALE

**FREDERICK JAMES  
BASTOCK**

**8 May 1933 to 17  
September 2022**



Frederick James Bastock was a much loved and long serving volunteer at our Granville Veterans' Support Centre. He was an extraordinary man who had nine children, 17 grand-children and 24 great grand-children. Fred spent the last five years of his life in a nursing home where he was a very popular resident. He never forgot his volunteering days and always looked forward to receiving our National Newsletter.

Sadly, we did not learn of his passing until a couple of months ago and regret not having the opportunity to provide our final farewells.

Fred was an CMF Captain 7 Field Regiment who was attached to 1 Field Regiment in South Vietnam in 1969.

**REST IN PEACE SOLDIER.**



## Please consider leaving a bequest in your will

Every Veteran deserves a lifestyle and better treatment than is currently available. Every Veteran should be able to successfully attain their rights to pensions and just compensation.

Yet we still receive veterans unaware of their rights, what they may be entitled to, and where and how to apply or enter a claim.

Through your Will, you have the power to help us achieve our goals. Help surviving veterans, and those that follow them, to receive their true entitlements.

Through your Will you have the power to make a difference. Any gift you bequest to our Association, no matter how large or small, will assist a fellow veteran.

You don't need to be wealthy or have tens of thousands of dollars to make a difference to the lives of veterans and those who follow us. Many people leave amounts both large and small through their wills to our association.

Combined each amount assists our association to carry on the vital support network we provide to the veteran community.

### Operation Life



## Register Now!!

CALL **1800 011 046**

**OPEN**  
Veterans & Families  
Counselling  
**ARMS**

Operation Life workshops emphasis is on suicide prevention – they aim to help members of the services and veteran community to recognise someone who might be thinking of suicide, and link them with appropriate assistance. There are 3 types of workshops

- Suicide alertness for everyone (Safetalk) ½ day presentation
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) 2 day skills course ASIST Tune Up ½ day refresher workshop

Workshops are open to anyone concerned about veterans, their family, friends and mates in the service and veteran community. Welfare, Compensation Advocates and other helpers from ESO's are welcome and encouraged to attend.

FORMERLY

Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service





| Number  | Rank | Intl | Surname          | Unit                               | DOD      | DOB      |
|---------|------|------|------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| O3022   | SL   | BJ   | BIRD             | HMAS SYDNEY 3/PARRAMATTA           | 25/4/22  | 16/10/49 |
| R94205  | OS   | P    | FRANCIS          | HMAS SYDNEY/DERWENT                | 23/5/23  | 17/2/48  |
| R62407  | SA   | HA   | SLUITER          | HMAS DERWENT                       | 7/5/23   | 12/5/46  |
| O1171   | LTCM | HEF  | TOOTH OAM        | HMAS BRISBANE                      | 14/10/22 | 29/1/37  |
| R43245  | SAW2 | BR   | SHRIMPTON        | HMAS BRISBANE                      | 29/8/22  | 19/1/49  |
| R55696  | AS   | EW   | HENDEREON        | HMAS QUIBERON/YARRA 2              | 20/11/22 | 9/7/42   |
|         |      |      |                  |                                    |          |          |
| 276640  | CAPT | TJ   | SMITH            | AATTV                              |          |          |
|         |      |      | (LTCOL RTD)      | AM MBE RFD ED                      | 18/4/23  | 12/9/42  |
|         |      |      |                  |                                    |          |          |
| 2101632 | CAPT | FJ   | BASTOCK          | 1 <sup>st</sup> FDREGT(ATTACHED)   | 24/9/22  | 8/5/33   |
|         |      |      | (SEE OBIT NOTICE | ON PAGE 79)                        |          |          |
|         |      |      |                  |                                    |          |          |
| 2789322 | CPL  | GC   | ROBERTS          | RAAOC/DET HQ AFV                   | 24/1/23  | 18/11/47 |
| 2792902 | CPL  | GC   | HANSEN           | 2AOD                               | 1/12/22  | 20/3/49  |
| 38133   | SSGT | MM   | SMITH            | 2AOD                               | 12/7/22  | 10/9/43  |
| 2783181 | PTE  | PD   | BAKER            | 85 TRANS PL RAASC                  | 1/1/0/22 | 21/2/45  |
| 4718385 | PTE  | TW   | JOHNSON          | 85 TRANS PL RAASC                  | FEB 23   | 8/7/45   |
| 2794939 | PTE  | CA   | COOPER           | 86 TRANS PL RAASC                  | 18/5/23  | 22/11/49 |
| 3787179 | PTE  | KR   | SCENEY           | 87 TRANS PL RAASC                  | 7/22     | 12/6/45  |
| 216296  | SPR  | BG   | CROOKS           | 1 <sup>ST</sup> FD SQN             | 2/2/23   | 11/11/46 |
| 2785480 | SPR  | FJ   | NEAL             | 1 <sup>ST</sup> FD SQN             | 10/1/22  | 30/1/46  |
| 2781302 | LCPL | GR   | BLACK            | 17 CONST SQN                       | 24/4/23  | 7/4/45   |
| 4411141 | WO2  | GM   | MCDONALD         | DET30TERMSQN/AS JOHN MONASH        | 21/2/23  | 17/9/40  |
| 43679   | CPL  | JE   | FREEMAN          | 32 SMALL SHIPS SQN x 6             | 19/12/22 | 3/9/47   |
| 64336   | CPL  | DE   | TUCKER           | 102 FD WKSP                        | 27/11/22 | 12/12/40 |
| 213051  | SSGT | IT   | MILLS            | DET 131 DIV LOC BAT                | 9/1/23   | 7/9/34   |
| 214108  | SGT  | LH   | SAWYER           | CSQN/BSQN 1 <sup>ST</sup> ARM REGT | 8/9/22   | 7/8/43   |
|         |      |      |                  |                                    |          |          |



| Number  | Rank | Intl | Surname  | Unit               | DOD      | DOB      |
|---------|------|------|----------|--------------------|----------|----------|
| 55865   | LCPL | RWR  | WALKER   | 1ARU/6,8 RAR       | 27/9/22  | 8/12/42  |
| 215681  | PTE  | JP   | HUIGENS  | 1 RAR              | 13/4/23  | 29/5/46  |
| 213974  | SGT  | CT   | SHAY     | 1 RAR (2)          | 17/4/23  | 8/8/32   |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
| 6708410 | PTE  | J    | HANEK    | 2 RAR              | 3/23     | 21/4/45  |
| 1202871 | PTE  | RD   | DANGAARD | 1ARU/8,7,2 RAR     | 17/3/23  | 2/6/49   |
| 2782603 | PTE  | PMc  | KENNEDY  | 2 RAR              | 6/5/23   | 12/2/45  |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
| 215156  | CPL  | CJ   | ROSS     | 5 RAR (2)          | 25/2/23  | 9/8/45   |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
| 2781935 | PTE  | HJ   | DOLSEN   | 6 RAR              | 24/3/23  | 15/3/45  |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
| 3795572 | PTE  | LR   | MAYNARD  | 8 RAR              | 23/1/23  | 15/12/48 |
| 216099  | CPL  | JA   | NORRIS   | 8 RAR              | 22/4/23  | 2/7/46   |
| 2793137 | PTE  | R    | REED     | 1ARU/8 RAR         | 13/1/23  | 2/7/49   |
| 2793851 | PTE  | TC   | PILCHER  | 1ARU/8 RAR         | 2/23     | 11/4/49  |
| 2790930 | 2LT  | PJ   | PHILLIPS | 1ARU/HQ1ALSG/8 RAR | 2/23     | 25/4/48  |
| 2790191 | LCPL | AJ   | KINGDOM  | 8 RAR              | 23/2/23  | 20/5/47  |
| 1201998 | LCPL | RH   | BLIGH    | 8 RAR              | 12/3/23  | 7/11/46  |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
| 2788800 | PTE  | IF   | LYGOE    | 9 RAR              | 21/12/22 | 7/1/47   |
| 2789848 | PTE  | BH   | MOONEY   | 1ARU/HQ1ALSG/9RAR  | 10/3/23  | 16/9/47  |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |
|         |      |      |          |                    |          |          |



| Number  | Rank | Intl | Surname   | Unit              | DOD     | DOB      |
|---------|------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------|----------|
| A218624 | CPL  | KC   | PRITCHATT | No.2 SQN          | 14/4/23 | 14/6/40  |
| A42407  | CPL  | GW   | DUNSTAN   | RAAF TFV          | 18/3/23 | 14/5/38  |
| A222223 | LA   | TJ   | COLLIER   | No.35 SQN         | 6/5/23  | 27/3/47  |
| O228000 | PO   | G    | TOSCAN    | DET S 36 SQN 1975 | 7/8/22  | 26/11/54 |
|         |      |      |           |                   |         |          |
|         |      |      |           |                   |         |          |
|         |      |      |           |                   |         |          |
|         |      |      |           |                   |         |          |

**Loving Lord, bless them forever in Your eternal peace.  
 Let the sounds of strife, the cries of battle, the wounds of war  
 be calmed for all eternity in Your loving and endless grace.  
 Let these great warriors find rest at last,  
 Ever reminded that we who are left behind  
 Cherish their spirit, honor their commitment,  
 send them our love,  
 and will never forget the service that they gave.**

PLEASE NOTE

*We make every endeavour to ensure the accuracy of all names published in "The Last Post". If any omission or error has been made we apologise unreservedly...please contact the editor if you feel an error has been made.*

# MEMBER DISCOUNTS

The following businesses are offering discounts to members of The Vietnam Veterans Federation.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>NEW CARS</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>BATTERIES</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>SMASH REPAIRS</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>CARNEEDS Pty Ltd</b><br/>152 Parramatta Rd<br/>STANMORE<br/>Prptr: Robert Stenta<br/>Ph: 9519 1441<br/><b>10% discount</b><br/><b>On mechanical repairs &amp; competitive prices on tyres and batteries.</b><br/>To all Vietnam Veterans Federation Members.</p> <hr/> <p><b>MALCOLM MOTORS</b><br/><b>Automotive Service Specialist. All mechanical repairs &amp; servicing.</b><br/><b>15% Discount for members on services and repairs.</b><br/><b>JOE CARE</b><br/>603-605 Parramatta Rd<br/>Leichhardt NSW<br/>MTA Lic. # 42198</p> | <p><b>carhelper.com.au</b><br/>New car buyer's advocate<br/><br/>Buy a discounted new car over the phone and have it home-delivered<br/><br/>No salesmen, just independent advice from a Wheels magazine car reviewer<br/><br/>Contact James Whitbourn<br/><b>Motoring journalist &amp; new car buyer's advocate</b><br/>james@carhelper.com.au<br/>0403 892 897<br/><br/>Service cost of \$165 reduced to \$110 for members</p> | <p><b>POWER PRODUCTS</b><br/><b>For all your power needs</b><br/><br/><b>BATTERIES</b><br/><b>SOLAR POWER</b><br/><b>INVERTERS</b><br/><b>GENERATORS</b><br/><br/><i>Motor Cycle battery specialists</i><br/><br/>Russell is offering 15% discount to VVF Members on Batteries . 5% on Solar products,<br/><br/>Inverters &amp; Chargers 10%<br/><br/>3/3 Sovereign Pl<br/>South Windsor<br/>Ph: (02) 4577 7761<br/>Fax: (02) 4577 7768</p>                                                    | <p><b>Wreck-A-Mended</b><br/><b>Smash Repairs</b><br/>Unit 1, 20 Bosci Rd<br/>Ingleburn NSW<br/>02 9605 9008<br/><b>Ask for Alan</b><br/>Tell them you are a member and they will send us a donation</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b>TRAILERS</b><br/><b>TOWBARS BULLBARS</b></p> <p><b>Fastfit Bullbars &amp; Towbars</b><br/>Trailer sales and spares-side steps<br/>Bike beacons-Custom work<br/><br/>65 St Hilliers Road<br/>AUBURN<br/>Ph: (02) 9749 1209<br/><b>10% Discount on products</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES</b></p> <p><b>Motor Cycle Accessories Supermarket</b><br/><br/>Head Office.<br/>321 Parramatta Rd<br/>Auburn NSW<br/>(02) 9648 1400<br/>www.mcas.com.au<br/><b>CITY:</b> 9261 5182.<br/><b>LIVERPOOL:</b> 9601 8276.<br/><b>CARINGBAH</b> 9574 5100<br/><b>PENRITH</b> 4737 6100<br/><b>10% Discount except helmets and tyres</b></p>                                                              | <p><b>Ashfield Battery Centre</b><br/>110 FREDERICK STREET<br/>ASHFIELD, NSW, 2131<br/>02 9798-6166<br/>GEORGE KAWAUCHI (owner)<br/><b>We sell:</b><br/>CAR, TRUCK, MARINE, DEEP CYCLE, GOLF CART, MOBILITY, MOTOR CYCLE BATTERIES.<br/><br/>CHARGERS, SOLAR PANELS, BOOSTER CABLES, FUSES, GLOBES, INVERTERS, TERMINALS, BATTERY BOXES.<br/>OPEN FROM: 9am - 5-30pm Mon-Fri<br/>OPEN SAT FROM: 9.30am- 3.30pm<br/>Closed Sundays and public holidays.<br/><b>10% Discount to veterans</b></p> | <p><b>FLOOR COVERINGS</b></p> <p><b>Waratah Floor Coverings</b><br/>473 Burwood Rd<br/>BELMORE<br/>Ph: (02) 9759 6511<br/><b>Ask for Special Rate</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>EXHAUST SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>Menai Mufflers</b><br/>Unit 4/788 Old Illawarra Rd<br/>MENAI<br/>Ph: (02) 9541 4720<br/><b>20% Discount</b><br/><b>Balmain Radiator Centre</b><br/><b>Mark Borghonzian</b><br/>22d Crystal St<br/>ROZELLE<br/>Ph: (02) 9818 4920Mbl: 0419 417 206<br/><b>10% Discount</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>NEW AD SOON</b></p> <p>Know of a company that supports your local veterans with discounts.<br/><br/>Ads placed in this section are free<br/><br/>0421 690 959<br/><br/>For advice</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p><b>MOTELS</b></p> <p><b>Golden Chain</b><br/><b>Motor Inn Ltd</b><br/><br/>Ph: 1800 023 966<br/><br/>Must have Golden Chain Card. Its Free When You Call The Number Above And Ask<br/><br/>Present your Federation membership card and ask for a "Golden Link" card to be issued.<br/><br/>There is a <b>10% discount</b> on room rates <b>Australia wide</b></p>                                                                                                                           | <p><b>MOTELS</b></p> <p><b>Golden Chain</b><br/><b>Motor Inn Ltd</b><br/><br/>Ph: 1800 023 966<br/><br/>Must have Golden Chain Card. Its Free When You Call The Number Above And Ask<br/><br/>Present your Federation membership card and ask for a "Golden Link" card to be issued.<br/><br/>There is a <b>10% discount</b> on room rates <b>Australia wide</b></p> <p><b>TRAVEL TRANSFERS</b></p> <p><b>GROUP TRANSFER</b><br/>Airport or Cruise Terminals<br/>All Tours, All Services<br/><b>15% DISCOUNT FOR VETERANS</b><br/>For Bookings call:<br/><b>Michael Viet</b><br/>(02) 9723 2262<br/>0404 754 899</p> |

If you're reading  
this we don't  
have to tell you –  
**it works!**



## Stand out from the crowd!

In these difficult times, you need to get noticed. Attract new customers, boost sales and brand recognition with innovative marketing, direct mail, print, and fulfilment services. Getting back on your feet can be tricky. However, targeted, direct mail can be the difference with cutting through the noise and finding your next client.



02 9633 2883

info@alphamail.net.au

www.alphamail.net.au



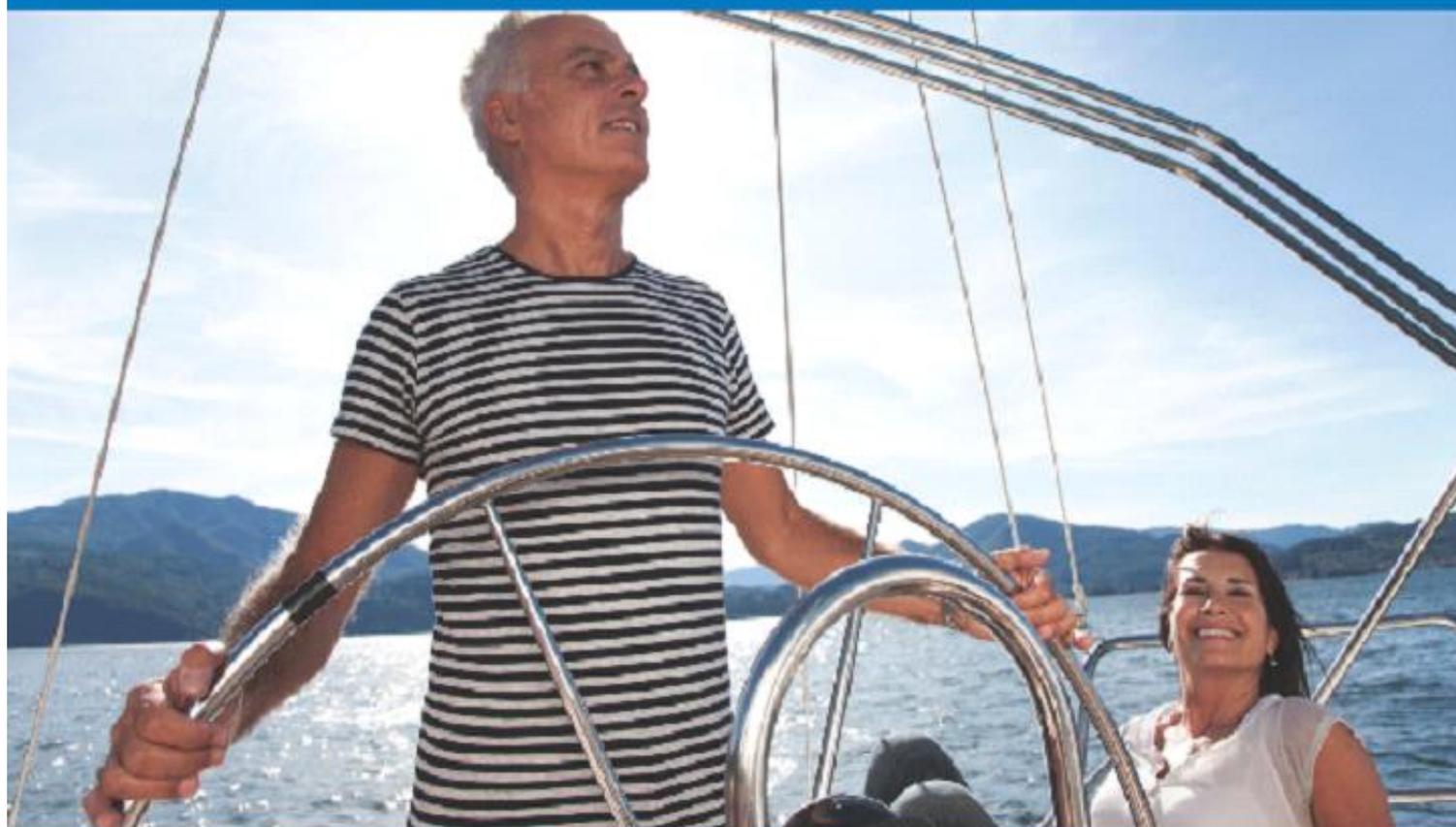
**ALPHAMAIL**

Smart Name. Simple Solutions.

*Need a hand*

# NAVIGATING YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

Talk to us to ensure you are maximising your financial position



• DVA / Centrelink strategies • Superannuation • Retirement planning  
SMSF • Aged Care • Investment • Estate planning

We offer a complimentary meeting on presentation of your  
VVPPAA NSW or VVFA Branch Membership Card.

Call PSK Parramatta today!

PAUL MESSERBACHMIDT Partner and Senior Financial Adviser  
M 0414 811 777 T (02) 8686 8900 E paulm@psk.com.au

