THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

DECEMBER 2025

Merry Christmas

You can't always get what you want,

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- BRAVERY AWARDS UPGRADED FOR TWO WORTHY VIETNAM VETERANS
- THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PARTNERS OF VETERANS ASSOCIATION.
- DVA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?
- KEL ROBINSON ON THE VVFA—OUR STORY CONTINUES VETERANS STORIES
- AND MORE....

Next issue APRIL 2026

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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

TIPS ON BEGINNING YOUR STORY

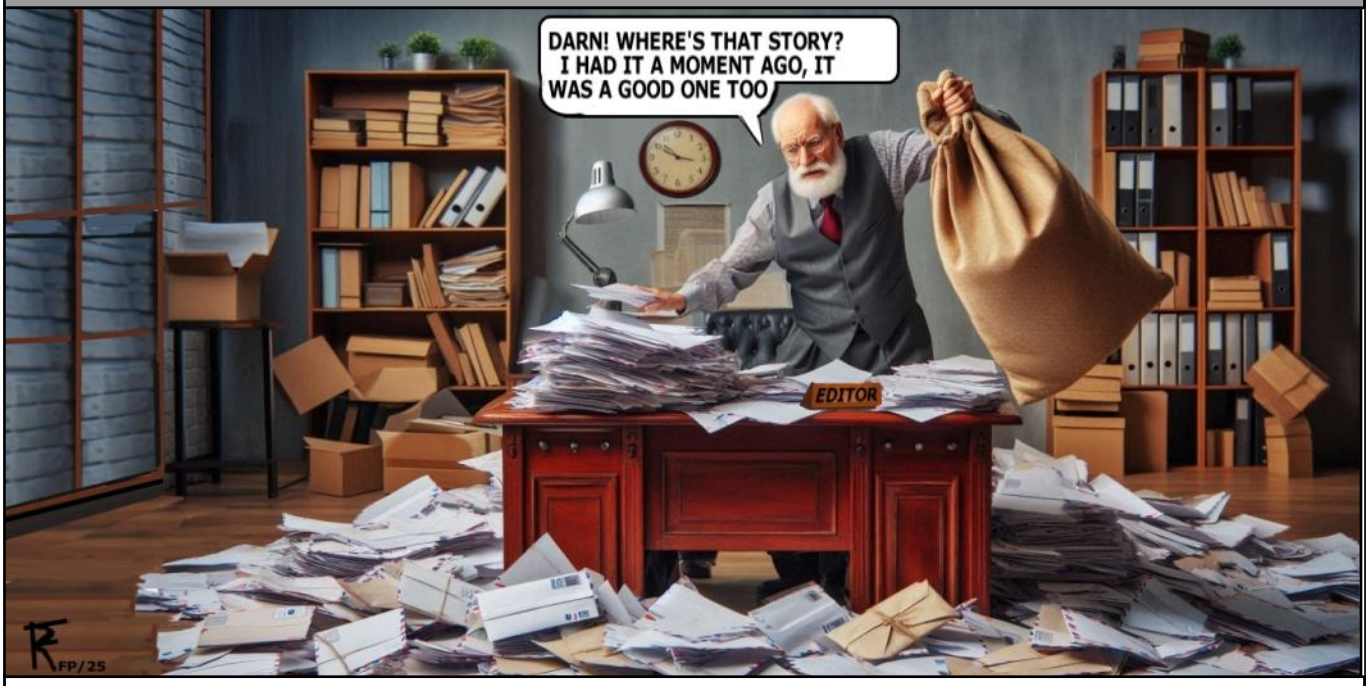
To begin a memoir, start by brainstorming significant experiences and themes you want to explore, and tell readers about.

Consider pivotal moments, vivid memories, and meaningful events that shaped your journey through life.

Create a loose outline to structure your story.

Revise and re-write as you improve the narrative.

And, lastly, don't forget to send your story to us, including photos, preferably scanned in .jpg format. Not copied. if you have them.



Meanwhile we welcome the authors who have contributed to this edition.

Welcome back to John Ingram with episode 13 of the story of the 'Vung Tau Ferry', HMAS Sydney, and Kel Robinson continues with the history of the early days of the Vietnam Veterans movement, and supporters of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association. As well, Boris O'Brien returns with another story from the annuls of B Coy 1 RAR in Vietnam. We also welcome new-comer Norm Austin who writes about the early days at 'The Dat'. And, Norm Jones relates about a soccer match in 1970. As well as, an item we received too late for our July issue from VVFASA, we thought worthy of inclusion, on page 32.

Keep those stories coming in..

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 Reps.

National President	William Roberts OAM
NSW State President	William Roberts OAM
Qld State President	Peter Handy
FNQ President	Jason Ballard
ACT State President	Ward Gainey
Vic State President	John Arnold OAM
SA State president	Mal Thiele OAM JP
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.

RSL NSW and VVPPAA NSW SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT REACHED

In a landmark decision, (the) Vietnam Veterans', Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc. (VVPPAA NSW), and RSL NSW, in conjunction with the Veterans Support Fund, have signed off on a Sponsorship Agreement, that promises to align both organisations in beneficiary elements that include a common and united front to assist all ADF Service and Ex-service men and women, and their families.

Further details can be found in our Secretary Report on page 14

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ADVERTISING CLOSES 2 WEEKS EARLIER THAN ARTICLES.

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S THANK YOU TO ALL EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

As the National President of the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia (VVFA) -' The Federation'- and State President of the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers Peacemaker Association of Australia, NSW Branch (VVPPAA NSW) – which is an affiliate of VVFA – I would like to sincerely express my gratitude and admiration for those who have, and in many cases still are, assisting and supporting the Federation Nationally since it was established nearly forty years ago.

Our mission has always been to assist **all** Veterans (including their families) with their entitlements under the Repatriation System, through Advocacy support and Welfare/Wellbeing assistance and other service-related issues. Our Federation also kept a close eye on any proposed adverse changes to Veterans entitlements and challenged them when necessary or recommended changes that would benefit Veterans generally. We continue to do so.

To enable the Federation to undertake its stated mission we needed help from **volunteers** to be Advocates and to perform the various administrative tasks/roles to ensure that the Offices/Branches were able to operate smoothly that would allow the volunteer Advocates – and in later years paid advocates – to provide professional and timely assistance to our vulnerable Veterans in a pleasant and non-confrontational atmosphere and being able to consult with fellow veterans who are Advocates and in whom they could trust to assist them in lodging Disability and related claims to DVA. It must be remembered that most of the volunteers were suffering from service-related disabilities themselves, so we were extremely grateful for their commitment and for having answered our call for volunteers.

Having started as a volunteer Advocate with the Granville Office in 1994, I witnessed first-hand and became aware of the professionalism of our volunteer and paid advocates at Granville, and nationally, and of their enviable high successes rate with initial disability claims, as well as, following their successful representations at the Veterans Review Board (VRB) and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). I believe these achievements can be attributable to the knowledge they had acquired from their peers and mentors, 'with TIP' and 'ATDP' Training.

Through their knowledge of the Repatriation System, their professionalism and high success rate, our Federation Advocates ensured that the VVFA/VVPPAA NSW is, recognised as being one of the leading Ex-service Organisations (ESO's) in Australia.

Through their knowledge of the Repatriation System, their professionalism and high success rate, our Federation Advocates ensured that the VVFA/VVPPAA NSW is, recognised as being one of the leading Ex-service Organisations (ESO's) in Australia. It is an acknowledgement and recognition that the VVFA/ VVPPAA NSW, and all our members and Advocates should be extremely proud of.

We lost many 'older', experienced, Advocates through the requirement to become ADTP qualified, to continue assisting veterans process claims on DVA. In spite of this, our remaining Advocates, are still actively committed and continue their Advocacy support as best they can under the circumstances.

To say that I admire those who have given up their time over so many, many years, despite their own medical or other disability problems to volunteer their services to help and support their fellow veterans, would be an understatement.

I am also aware that our State Branches, with the help of volunteers, undertake various additional activities, other than Repatriation issues and Advocacy, that assists and supports the veterans' communities generally – too many to mention. But they are equally as important and essential to the welfare and wellbeing of those living in these communities, and I commend you for doing so.

Ladies and Gentlemen volunteers – no matter what tasks/role you had or are undertaking – I would like to once again express my sincere and personal gratitude and that of our Federation members for your continuing commitment in support of our vulnerable veterans and their families.

What you have all done and are still doing is in the true **ANZAC Spirit** – Looking after your mates and their families – Well done.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2

Most of our members and readers would know that over the past few years there have been quite a number of issues and matters of great concern that have been raised with the Government/Minister for Veterans' Affairs/DVA, through the 'Ex-Service Organisation Round Table Forum (ESORT)', and from other Veterans' Forums.

The "ESORT" Forum Members consist of 'Representatives' of most of the larger Ex-service Organisations (ESO's), Department of Defence (ADF) and several others whom the ESORT Forum has deemed appropriate for this purpose.

The concerns and issues expressed by Veterans' and their families are normally raised with ESORT through an Agenda submission lodged by the various member Organisations, or raised by their 'representative' on the day of the meeting, where they are usually discussed at length and considered thoughtfully, and if necessary would be set aside and further discussed at a later meeting, allowing the ESO's representative's to consult with the committee members of their organisation on certain contentious issues.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

As you would all be aware Christmas is nearly upon us. For some, this year has been kind to them and for others not so kind, but whatever the situation is, we all will no doubt be wishing for a good year in 2026 - personally, politically and hopefully with an end to the Russia/Ukraine conflict, and total agreement and settlement of the circumstances in Palestine.

I take this opportunity of wishing all our Federation members, volunteers and paid Advocates/Staff and their families, a very Merry Christmas and happy and prosperous New Year. May Santa deliver everything you have asked for.

President Bill Roberts OAM

When members of ESORT are satisfied with the outcome of their sometimes 'robust' discussions on the issues/matters raised and a consensus reached on an appropriate proposal/recommendation, then it is forwarded to Government for consideration, with hopefully, a favourable outcome.

So it can be seen that ESORT plays an important role in raising matters of concern expressed by the Veteran communities of the various member Organisations of ESORT. It was initially established as a conduit through which the Representatives of the various ESOs could express the many issues and concerns raised by their members and for ESORT to strongly convey the concerns and to put forward recommendations/proposals, in a United Voice, to the Government, to address these concerns/recommendations/proposals in a positive and timely manner.

The Federation has been an active member of ESORT for several decades and will remain so for as long as we can. As you would appreciate the Government is more likely to heed or consider any recommendations for additional or variation to Veterans Repatriation entitlements, Advocacy/ Welfare/Wellbeing or legislative changes, if it is presented to them from a Forum such as ESORT that speaks for ESOs with a United Voice.

Copies of the minutes of the issues/matters discussed at ESORT are usually emailed to State Branches and senior Advocates and can also be found on DVA's website.

(Continued on page 8)

The Federation, who, continues to assist and support Veterans of all Wars, conflicts and Peacekeeping Peacemaking missions, including our much younger cohorts. We volunteer Advocates (nationally) are now mostly 'elderly' and in some cases frail. We have come to the realisation that it is becoming much more difficult to assist and support our younger veterans with Advocacy, welfare/ wellbeing support. The younger cohorts now need to 'step-up to the mark' and take over from us to ensure that they can continue to seek the entitlements and support they need that is relevant to their current lifestyle and living 'environment' - which most of you would agree is different to us 'oldies'.

You would all be aware that there has also been a number of significant issues raised by ESOs and the Veterans' communities generally over the past several years, culminating in the need for major inquiries and a Royal Commission to be conducted concerning the lack of professional and timely service by DVA on a number of Repatriation entitlement procedures particularly, in regards to Advocacy, welfare, wellbeing and a number of other related issues, and of course the very serious matter of Suicides and attempted suicides of current and former members of the ADF, some of which have been related or attributable to the lengthy delays in processing their disability claims.

The adverse and other comments of the Royal Commissioner (RC) in regards to the inadequate services being provided by DVA and their less than satisfactory performance – it might be noted that the former Secretary of DVA (Liz Cosson) made a comment in answer to a question from the Commissioner, that "she was of the view that DVA was not fit for purpose" - and also his comments and recommendations (122 in all) in relation to all other Veteran's matters covered by the RC, are contained in the relevant volume (of which there are seven volumes) of his final report, a summary of is available on the DVA Website.

Presently the biggest issue of concern to the Federation's Advocates, nationally, is the large backlog of disability claims which does not appear to be reducing by any noticeable amount despite the efforts of DVA to comply with the recommendations of the RC to do so by employing additional staff. The Federation and its Advocates are extremely disappointed with the continuing backlog and the lengthy delays in processing claims lodged. Totally unsatisfactory in our view and could possibly lead to further mental health issues as a consequence.

Presently the biggest issue of concern to the Federation's Advocates, nationally, is the large backlog of disability claims which does not appear to be reducing by any noticeable amount despite the efforts of DVA

Whilst we appreciate that DVA has employed quite a large number of additional staff in an attempt to substantially reduce the backlog and address the delays in the processing these claims, it does not appear to have succeeded. More needs to be done and urgently.

It is obvious to the Federation, and no doubt to other ESOs, that the Government needs to urgently inject more funding to DVA to employ further additional staff to completely or substantially reduce the backlog prior to the implementation of the harmonisation of the three Acts on the 1st of July 2026, that would hopefully prevent frustrated, anxious and traumatised veterans from contemplating suicide due to the delay in processing of their claims. We will continue to remind the Government/DVA of their responsibilities to fully comply with the RC's recommendations and requirements of the new Act.

It is understood that nearly all ESOs are reasonably satisfied and happy with the Government's recommendations and proposed changes to greatly improve the services being provided by DVA under the Repatriation System to the Veterans and family communities.

The Government has indicated that the recommendations and other proposals of the RC/ Inquiries will still be open to any further comments/recommendations by stakeholders prior to and following the implementation of the new Act in July 2026, as there will no doubt be matters that will come to light that may have been overlooked or need to be amended, as appropriate.

You are reminded that you are not prevented from lodging a personal submission or comments

to the local Member or Government on any of the issues that have been raised over the past years if it is your desire or wish to do so. However, it would be preferable if this could be done through the Federation. Having regard to the enormity of the work needed to be done to implement the Royal Commission's recommendations, some of which have been implemented and others at different stages of implementation, I would ask our Advocates to remain calm and patient and focus their efforts and support of their current clients in spite of these unfortunate delays.■

William (Bill) Roberts OAM
National President – VVFA
State President - VVPPAA NSW

LATE MAIL:
We received a request included in the column opposite, and flyer facsimile, (Below)

Moe Khodragha, Managing Director - Dialysis Australia Pty Ltd., wrote to us requesting that the following information be distributed to our members:

Moe writes (in part)- 'I have been encouraged to reach out to the VVFA Inc directly from one of our patients who is a Vietnam Veteran Gold Card Holder – 'Vince', who required Dialysis support, (*for which*.), we have assisted.

(We believe) more can be done regarding information about additional health services available to those veterans living with kidney disease, requiring dialysis treatment.

Typically, patients on dialysis need to attend hospital 3-4 days per week for 5 hour treatments ongoing. I'm reaching out to introduce Dialysis Australia, an accredited and experienced at home dialysis service.'

Regards.

What An Amazing Soldier.

Pte Richard Norden

Pte Richard Norden was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for actions on 14 May 1968 during the Battle of Coral-Balmoral.

For an other-ranked soldier, the DCM ranked second only to the Victoria Cross, the highest possible award for courage and devotion to duty in the face of the enemy.

Why was he awarded the DCM ?

Here's why.

Read and be humbled.

'Private Norden, a member of the leading section, asked for covering fire and ran forward — under heavy enemy fire — to the wounded section commander. He killed one Vietcong while moving forward and, having expended his ammunition, recovered the enemy's automatic weapon which he used against further Vietcong while assisting the wounded section commander back to the section. Due to this initial action the life of the section commander was saved under intense enemy fire. Although wounded in his initial move forward, Private Norden again advanced to the forward scout.

He was fired on by an enemy soldier but pressed forward and reached the scout, killing the Vietcong who had been using the scout as a shield. Private Norden, having determined that the scout was dead, returned to the section, collected grenades and cleared the area so that the body of the scout could be recovered. His three attacks into the enemy position on his own resulted in the enemy position being secured. Private Norden showed a complete disregard for his own personal safety, and by his courage and devotion to duty ensured the evacuation of a wounded man and the recovery of the body of the forward scout.'

But there has long been a view that this amazing bravery deserved the highest honour.

So Richard was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia (VC) on 11 November 2024. It took a while but got there in the end.

At a special investiture ceremony in Rockhampton, Australia's highest military honour was presented to Private Norden's widow, Mrs Robynn Freeman, by the Governor General.

The Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia would like Richard's widow, Mrs Robynn Freeman, to know just how proud we are of Richard.

Private Richard Norden receiving his DCM from NSW Governor, Sir Roden Cutler VC

16 July 2025, at an investiture ceremony, Private Norden's Widow is presented with the Victoria Cross

Another very long wait.
Medal for Gallantry Awarded to Vietnam Veteran

John O'Halloran

After nearly six decades, Second Lieutenant John Patrick O'Halloran has received formal recognition for his extraordinary leadership and courage during one of the most intense engagements of the Vietnam War. On 8 August 2025, the Governor-General of Australia awarded him the Medal for Gallantry—an honour that replaces the Mention in Despatches he received in 1967 under the British Imperial system.

The decision follows a detailed submission by retired Warrant Officer Henry Chisholm, who served alongside O'Halloran in 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR). Chisholm's account of Operation Bribie, fought on 17 February 1967 near Lang Phuoc Hai, South Vietnam, paints a vivid picture of a young officer whose command under fire helped save lives and shape the outcome of the battle.

O'Halloran, conscripted in 1965 and trained at Scheyville's Officer Training Unit, was posted to 6 RAR and soon found himself leading 5 Platoon, Bravo Company. On that February morning, his unit was called to support Alpha Company, which had come under heavy enemy fire. What followed was a prolonged and ferocious engagement with a well-armed Viet Cong force.

As Bravo Company advanced, O'Halloran's platoon was ordered to outflank enemy machine guns that had pinned down the left assault element. Despite facing automatic fire and grenades at close range, he led a direct assault that inflicted significant casualties. When additional enemy guns opened fire from just 30 metres ahead, catching the platoon in a deadly crossfire, O'Halloran coordinated artillery support close to his own position and reorganised his men—some wounded, others sent in from other platoons—to hold their ground and evacuate the injured.

The battle continued until dusk, when armoured support arrived. One vehicle was destroyed by a rocket-propelled grenade, killing its driver. By nightfall, eight Australians had been killed and 27 wounded. Operation Bribie became one of the most decorated actions of the war, with multiple soldiers receiving honours for bravery.

O'Halloran's leadership was described as "aggressive, inspirational and unwavering." The official citation praises his "individual gallantry and inspirational leadership".

For O'Halloran, now retired, the recognition is more than a personal honour—it is a tribute to the men he led, the lives lost, and the enduring legacy of those who served.

A true son of ANZAC.

2Lt John O'Halloran just prior to the battle during Operation Bribie Island South Vietnam 1967.

Vietnam Veterans' Day 2025
CANBERRA "HUEY" FLYOVER

It began for us about noon on Friday 25 July 2025, when Rod Henderson, CEO of Australian Peacekeeper and Peacemaker Veterans' Associated Ltd., sent an email to our National and NSW State President of the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia, Bill Roberts OAM, which read in part.

"I have an opportunity for a Vietnam Veteran to sit in a HUEY to do the Flyover of the War Memorial (Canberra) on Vietnam Veterans Day that I would like to speak with you about. I think it would be a great opportunity for one of your members."

By 31st July 2025 . Following discussions between Bill Roberts OAM, National Researcher Graham Walker AM, and Hon. Secretary Ron O'Connor JP, it was decided that Ian Thompson OAM who served in South Vietnam as a 'Chopper Pilot', and bearing in mind his ongoing voluntary work for the Federation, it was agreed that he would be the most appropriate and deserving person on this occasion. The following communiqué was forwarded to Rod Henderson.

"Dear Rod,

The Vietnam Veterans' Federation of Australia very much appreciates your Associations invitation for one of our Veterans to sit in a "HUEY" to do a Flyover of the War Memorial, Canberra, on Vietnam Veterans' Day.

There are so many worthy and deserving Vietnam Veterans available to us to choose from within our Federation to fulfil your very generous invitation to take part in this way, to commemorate and honour all those who served and paid the supreme sacrifice during the Vietnam War and to acknowledge those who are still suffering physically and mentally, as a consequence of their service to a grateful Nation.

We are proud to nominate - Mr Ian Thompson OAM, who served as Flying Officer – Pilot- with NO. 9 SQUADRON RAAF in Vietnam between 1969 and 1970. Ian has, and is still assisting Vietnam and other Veterans' with Advocacy, Welfare/ Wellbeing and many other Veterans related issues, for over the past 30 years. In view of this we believe that he is the most appropriate person to represent our Federation. (And, included Ian's contact details for Rod).

Rod, once again we thank you for your very considered invitation. Best wishes and regards,

William (Bill) Roberts OAM

National President - VVFA

President – VVPPAA NSW

The rest is history, as Ian graciously accepted the offer, and took part in the remarkable "Flyover", as he so succinctly responded a few days after the event of 18th August 2025, Vietnam Veterans Day.

"Subject: Sincere Thanks for an Unforgettable Experience

Just a brief note to express my heartfelt thanks and profound appreciation for nominating me the opportunity to fly in an Iroquois yesterday. It was a deeply significant day for me in many ways.

The last time I flew a Bravo model was on 5 March 1969, shortly before I departed for Vietnam. Yesterday brought with it a flood of emotion, and I am truly grateful to you for making that possible through my nomination.

The familiar thump of the rotor blades, the whine of the turbine engine, and even the sight of the instrument panel -all of it came rushing back, vivid and unchanged despite the passage of 56 years.

With sincere appreciation,

Ian Thompson OAM JP WGCDR RAAF (Ret)

No 9SQN SVN Apr69-Mar70"

(And, in response from us)

Dear Ian,

It was my sincere pleasure. You served your country with dignity, honour and with professionalism. You have continued in the same manner since your military service with your voluntary work and support of your fellow Veterans and their families in the way Advocacy/Advocacy Training, Welfare/ wellbeing and other DVA entitlement related issues. I, on behalf of the Federation and its members sincerely thank you for your continuing voluntary work for Veterans and their families. Well done that man.

I am so pleased to hear that our nomination for you to take part in the Vietnam Veterans Day Fly Past was so meaningful, memorable and significant to you in many ways and one that will hopefully remain with you for many more years to come.

Once again Ian, it was our pleasure to have nominated you to be part of this significant event on the Vietnam Veterans Day Commemorations 2025 in Canberra.

Regards,

William (Bill) Roberts OAM

National President – VVFA, Inc

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

The donations will greatly assist us to continue our Pension, Advocacy and Welfare work and OutReach Programs and assist our service and ex-service comrades who have suffered through the years. We have achieved much in this regard, yet there is still much to do. Our continuation of this work is only possible through generosity such as demonstrated below.

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:

$2,000	**Bryan West**
$1,000	**Tony Ferrato, George Kijurina**
$400	**Frederick Moody**
$250	**Wesley Hindmarsh**
$200	**Anonymous, Barry Elphick**

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 support our cause.

Club Blacktown
City of Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch
City of Fairfield RSL Club
Campsie-Chester Hill RSL Club
Vietnamese Invalid Veterans Association NSW
St Columba Anglican School

Vietnam Veteran's Day acknowledgements:

We would also like to thank the following Clubs, Businesses and individuals who generously donated prizes towards our 2025 Vietnam Veterans' Day raffle. The raffle was a great success and all profits from it will be used to assist current and former ADF personnel and their families in time of need.

Mr & Mrs McKenzie
Bankstown RSL Club
Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch
Bankstown Sports Club
Cabra-Vale Diggers
Wenty Leagues Club

RSL NSW Veteran Support Fund

A very big "Thank you" to RSL NSW, for the generous funding sponsorship provided to the Association from the RSL's Veteran Support Fund, and participating RSL sub-Branches.

The RSL sponsorship will greatly assist us to continue to our valuable work in assisting Serving and Ex-service personnel and their families in obtaining support for the physical and other disabilities they have suffered through the years. Continuation of this valuable work is only possible through generosity of benefactors such as RSL NSW and its sub-Branches.

Once again, we extend our most sincere thanks to RSL NSW and its Sub Branches and members for the ongoing support of this Association and for their generosity. The RSL NSW Sub-Branches who contributed to support VVPPAA include:

Kensington	Bass Hill	City of Blacktown
Pittwater	Five Dock	Manilla
Newtown	Enfield/Croydon Park	
Maroubra	Oatley	Mortdale
Merrylands	City of Campbelltown	
Griffith	Brighton Le Sands	
Doyalson-Wyee	Bondi Junction-Waverley	
Enfield-Croydon Park	Bronte	

Ron O'Connor JP
State Secretary
VVPPAA NSW

2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!

Dear Member

It is that time again when annual membership renewals are due.

Members of our various State Branches and sub branches should receive membership renewal notices from their respective organisations. NSW membership subscription renewal forms for 2025 have already been sent out to NSW Branch members under separate cover by the Granville office. In the event you do not receive a form in the mail you can use the Membership Renewal form included in this Newsletter or the one available on our web site at www.vvfagranville.org

To renew your membership, just complete the membership form you receive and return it to your State Branch, Sub Branch or, for NSW Branch members, to the Granville office. Please check the Membership Application form to ensure your details are correct and amend any incorrect details so we can update our records.

Once again, all members of the NSW Branch, who renew by 30 January 2025, will have the chance to enter into the draw to win 1 of 3, $100.00 gift vouchers from Bunnings Hardware.

In addition, NSW Branch Members who renew by as early as 31 December 2025, will also have the opportunity to go into the draw for a $250.00 gift voucher.

So, NSW Branch members, get your application in quickly to Granville to ensure you don't miss out on both these great opportunities.

NSW members please Note: - cheques will only be accepted as a method of payment, provided they are from the major banks, CBA, Westpac, NAB, and ANZ. Other institution cheque payments will be at the discretion of our Administration.

For Direct Deposits, and in the interests of security, we ask that you contact the Granville Office for the Association's Bank Account details.

Your financial support in the past has been most appreciative and we hope you will continue to support the Association and therefore assist our fellow Veterans and Service members in need.

It is through our membership subscriptions, fund raising activities and the many kind donations we receive from members that we are able to meet our increasing welfare/pension workload. Should you be able to help with a donation in this regard it would be greatly appreciated.

We look forward to receiving your renewal for 2025 and thank you for your on-going support and patronage of the Federation.

Ron O'Connor JP
National Secretary
VVFA

NEWS UPDATE

HERE WE CATCH UP ON NEWS FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

(Backlog) Going nowhere.

At the end of August 2025, there were 85,538 claims submitted but not yet finalised. And that figure has been well over 80,000 for many months.

Finding the Backlog figure on the DVA website is not simple. Some might suggest that DVA tries to hide the shameful figure in amongst loads of irrelevant statistics and self-serving excuses must be waded through first.

Let's not be bogged down in irrelevant nonsense. Face it, a claim has either been finalised or it has not. It doesn't matter what In-Box it's in or how many more or less claims have been processed per month. If a claim hasn't been finalised, it's in the Backlog.

Of course, this unacceptable Backlog leads to unacceptable times for processing.

Below is a table showing how long different classes of claims are taking to finalise.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran suicide pointed to these ridiculously long processing times adding to the risk of suicide.

A few months ago we strongly suggested a solution.

All claims that have been in the Backlog for a certain time are automatically accepted.

We have not heard back.

Type of claim	**between lodgement and the claim being decided**
MRCA Initial Liability	**332**
DRCA Initial Liability	**538**
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	**579**
MRCA Permanent Impairment	**222**
DRCA Permanent Impairment	**416**
MRCA and DRCA Incapacity Payments	**94**
War widow(er)'s pension	**104**

Coordinated Veterans Care (CVC)

Last issue we reported on the final evaluation report outcome and it's recommendations. Since then DVA have posted articles on their website about the measures taken to date.

DVA report that the evaluation, commissioned by them, was to assess two main aspects:

- To conduct a programmatic evaluation of the CVC Program against selected criteria, including its implementation and outcomes.
- To identify options for redesigning the Program to better suit the contemporary health system and policy environment, particularly for the veteran cohort.

Since the Program's commencement, the health system context and policy environment have shifted significantly, prompting a need to adjust the Program's design and delivery.

Recommendations were made to improve how the Program meets the needs of current and future DVA clients and to better demonstrate its effectiveness.

The evaluation addressed two key questions:

- To what extent has the CVC Program been implemented as intended?
- To what extent has the Program achieved its intended outcomes?

DVA state that overall, the evaluation supports the Program's value, but highlights the need for redesign to adapt to changing circumstances and improve effectiveness.

We note that some aspects in the evaluation, and picked up by DVA, that some concerns were raised about enrolment practices, with feedback from GPs suggesting that some new enrolees may not be genuine participants.

We ask, are GPs making assumptions about qualified Specialists and Psychiatrists reports?

PARTNERS OF VETERANS ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA

The Beginnings of the Partners of Veterans Association.

June Roe OAM

It all started in 1994 when I received a brochure regarding Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As a commitment to a course I was attending in Sydney in July 1995, I coordinated and arranged for a small Seminar for Wives, Friends and Families of Vietnam Veterans at Granville RSL. During this seminar a Curator from Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre asked me to participate on the Curatorium Committee for Vietnam Voices Exhibition. This exhibit was on display for 8 weeks in Sydney, April to July in 1997, it took 2.5 years to bring everything together. Over 800 people attended the opening ceremony. By setting up approximately 50-60 interviews, I met so many people within the Veteran Community. This voluntary committee position totally opened my eyes after helping to collect precious memorabilia items, and photos.

Approximately late 1997, I'd been seeing a counselor from the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service at Parramatta, (now Open Arms) she put me in contact with another Vietnam Veteran's Wife who lived away from Sydney, Lee Hoinville and we became good friends. Eventually we agreed and constructed a 2nd Seminar to be held again at Granville RSL. The Club was so very supportive.

While spreading the word about our proposed Seminar, my friend Lee discovered apart from our own two groups, (Sydney Sutherland Area and Wauchope) there were another 3 unaffiliated support groups of Partners of Veterans in N.S.W. (Maitland, Tamworth and the Central Coast).

Sadly, due to personal reasons and Lee becoming ill, we felt compelled to postpone the date that was originally set for the October Long-Weekend in 1999. We had a list of approximately 25-28 ladies wishing to attend. With financial support from Robyn Creswell (who was the 1st President of PVA NSW) and the Central Coast Ladies, it was decided to continue with a conference. The venue decided upon was at Myall Lakes N.S.W. (Friday to Sunday, last weekend in August 1999).

We all eventually booked in; sharing 3-4 ladies to each cabin. There was also a small Conference Centre we were permitted to gather in. Lifelong friendships were formed over those 3 days. It was marvelous meeting women who totally understood that each one of us was doing our best to cope with our lives.

So many common threads ran through each of our families. We often met for lunch and dinner; we had some educational, very funny and memorable evenings. During the days, we sometimes split into 5 individual groups, a coordinator for each group,

(Continued on page 18)

Gail McDonell; Shelley Harbourd; Robyn Creswell; June and Lee.) Several thought-provoking questions were put to the participants. We all came back together with outcomes written on a large whiteboard. This was so enlightening for many of us.

On the third day, the decision was unanimous to form "The Partners of Veterans Association NSW". I held up $10 and asked; "who is going to open our bank account". Someone called out, "You do it". We agreed and started with a Steering Committee for the first twelve months. About one month later we held our first Committee Meeting near Singleton in NSW. NSW Branch was decided upon. Deductible Gift Recipient Status was established. Several submissions and a decision made regarding our association Membership Badge. Like the glue, we stick together, P.V.A.

After the first 12 months, some committee positions changed hands. I passed the Treasurers position on to an Ex-Bank Teller member and became the Publicity Co-Ordinator. I felt much more at ease in this position. Tracking the accounts situation and appeasing some members was very difficult in those early days.

Around this time, several Sydney Vietnam Veterans were arranging a postage mail out of the existing data base for the next Battle of Coral/Balmoral Reunion, (1 RAR 1968) to be held in May 2000. I asked them if I could include an information sheet regarding P.V.A. for the wives and partners of the veterans. The men agreed.

Ladies known within the Veteran Community across NSW were contacted and asked if they would be willing to be an area contact person for The Partners of Veterans Association NSW. All we required; if a PVA Member was visiting their area, would they be willing to provide information as to where they could find reasonable accommodation and a decent meal.

A PVA Outreach Team was formed travelling and visiting many groups presenting a Power Point Presentation. Some of the areas included outer Metropolitan Sydney, Penrith, Campbelltown, Katoomba, Wollongong, Kiama, Nowra, Batemans Bay, Narooma, Bega and Eden. Deniliquin, Ballina and Coolangatta. Almost all contacts made then are still holding those positions today, over twenty years later.

Many areas interstate where my husband Richard and I were House Sitting provided us with opportunities to pursue groups in Cairns, Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane in Queensland, VVCS Adelaide in South Australia, also Veteran Communities in Victoria and Tasmania.

In 2002 at Dubbo in NSW we held a retreat, informal meetings and our AGM and Narelle Bromhead was voted in as NSW President. It was at this retreat that discussions took place for us to "go National". Lady Lynne Cosgrove was in attendance and accepted our invitation to be our National Patron. Mrs. Patricia Thompson "Little Pattie" also accepted an invitation to be a PVA Ambassador.

Within Three (3) Years we had Five (5) Incorporated State Branches and became incorporated as a National Organisation. Our State Branches and National Committees over the years discovered many anomalies regarding entitlements for members, many becoming Carers and sadly Widows and War Widows.

Also in 2003, a proposal for a National Quilt Exhibition was mentioned by Margaret Rehorn and assisting her was Marie Gebhart. By 2005, 47 Quilts had been submitted for the project from all over Australia, also one from the daughter of a Vietnam Veteran from New Zealand. In 2006 an Opening Night took place in Canberra; followed by a DVD and a Book; labelled Peaced-With-Love. The Craft Fair also requested from the quilters that the Quilts Exhibition be permitted to travel around Australia and New Zealand in 2007, which very successfully took place.

The Department of Veterans Affairs accepted The PVA as an incorporated Ex-Service Organisation with charitable status within the Veteran Community. All of our state and national Committees across Australia regularly attend Government forums and Veteran Community Organisations meetings today.

The Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (Open Arms now) were a wonderful support to many of us ladies, however, we feel that our PVA meetings have provided deeper understanding, friendships and confidence for us. In turn assistance for veterans and our families. We sincerely wish to assist younger families of Defence Service People, in or out of the forces, male or female. Over time several people asked; Why not wives of Veterans, we explained, we now have Males and Females serving. Either could become a member of PVA.

Alone we can do so much, together we can do so much more.

VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS

(Article 1X)

The First Six Months of the Association's Existence: Part C

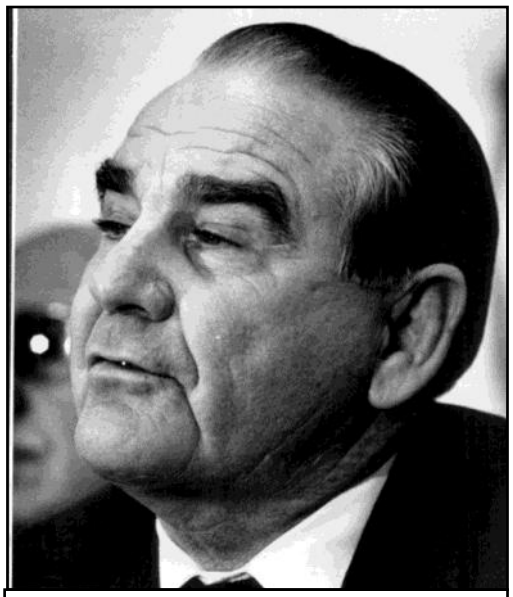
The RSL and the Association

This article is the third of (what has become) four outlining and commenting on events in the important first six months of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association, and setting up the narrative for coverage of the remainder of the 1980s. It, in particular, looks at the relationship between the Association and the RSL

RSL and the Association.

By the time the Vietnam chemical issue emerged with force in December 1979, the two Victorians who were about to announce the birth of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association can have had little remaining confidence that the RSL would act on their concerns.

It will be recalled that RSL National President Bill Keys had been defensive when faced with a renewed media focus on chemical matters in mid-December 1979; he doubtless anticipated that accusations of Government inaction would soon enough extend to the League's own inertia on the chemical issue. He announced that his organisation had created a dossier and was closely monitoring US legal proceedings, hoping, perhaps, that these actions would prove to be effort enough. A day later, though, on 14 December, he was reported as saying that "there now appears to be more in this than meets the eye … [and] … there needs to be a special examination conducted by the Veterans Affairs Department". In usual League National Office fashion, matters were left for the Government to deal with. Keys had failed, too, to acknowledge that there was anything out of the ordinary about Vietnam War chemical harms, despite claims in the media (even at this early stage) of genetic damage, child deformities, miscarriages, cancers and other serious health problems.



Sir William Keys

The Australian mischievously noted, a few days later, that a decision (by persons unspecified) not to have DVA conduct "its own inquiry … followed a call from the League National President … for the Department to establish a special investigation". 'So, much', the newspaper seemed to say, 'for the influence of the League on the Fraser Government'.

Keys' next move was to state that the medical evidence linking health problems with chemicals

"wasn't strong enough for … veterans to claim compensation … [but] …If a connection … were established, the RSL would use the evidence to put a case to the Department of Veterans' Affairs that such people be given war pensions". This was a conclusion hastily reached by someone ill-equipped to evaluate the evidence and whose function didn't normally include public condemnation of veterans' repatriation claims or public second-guessing of the repatriation system.

Holt McMinn

It was with knowledge of this conditional RSL support not extending to family members, and of Keys' expectation that matters wouldn't be resolved for years to come (at least until US litigation was finalised), that Holt McMinn and Bernie Szapiel announced, on 19 December 1979, their intention to form the Association.

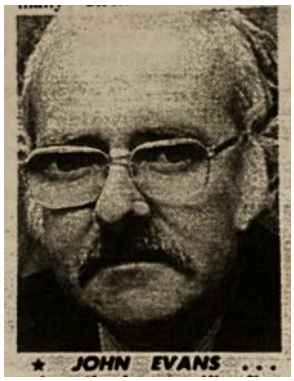
Szapiel, who was clearly unwell at this juncture, had nothing to say about earlier RSL inaction in press reports announcing the two men's plan. He focused, usefully, on his physical difficulties and left McMinn to explain why Vietnam veterans who were worried about chemical exposure couldn't rely on the League for help viz that the League wasn't interested in them and was "siding with the Government's decision not to hold an inquiry". (The latter allegation might have seemed unfair, bearing in mind Keys' 14 December call for a special investigation. However, his failure to publicly object to the mid-December 'no DVA inquiry' decision, and his categorising of defoliant-related claims as just like any others, meant that he did, indeed, appear to be siding with the Government, rather than with dissatisfied Vietnam veterans.)

'Agent Orange got me' says Vietnam veteran Bernie Szapiel

McMinn's end-of-year disdain for the League wasn't only a result of Keys' failure to publicly act in Vietnam veterans' interests in December or to do anything substantial about the health problems brought to his attention by the two Victorians earlier in the year. His contempt was, more particularly, a result of Keys' (or the League's) failure in May 1979 to make contact with the ex-CSIRO scientist, John Evans, who'd been advising the two Victorians on chemical matters. Keys had failed to make or organise contact despite the interest he'd expressed in a scientific paper in the possession of Evans. The request for Keys to catch up with Evans – an early indication of how important the latter's scientific knowledge was to the veterans' cause – was presumably so that someone credible could acquaint the RSL President with existent defoliant science.

(Continued on page 22)

The request was not acted upon by Keys until media pressure made it unavoidable at the end of 1979.



Notwithstanding the Christmas holidays – usually a break for Australians from matters of public importance other than Test cricket – and despite congratulatory communications with Keys following his receipt of a knighthood in the New Year's honours list, the RSL National President could not have been long insulated from media and community disappointment with his late 1979 chemical stance ie with his conditional support for veterans and his failure to express any concern for their families. Keys couldn't, similarly, have been long unaware of the poor optics of his acceptance of DVA's "no investigation" decision. He must, moreover, have been increasingly aware of pressure from ESOs, including his own, to seem more sympathetic towards the nation's most recent veterans.

On 8 January 1980, the day after a Government change of mind on the matter, an inquiry was announced – yes, there would be an investigation but details would have to wait – Keys expressed his hopes of the proposed initiative: in essence, hopes for speed and thoroughness. He called, too, for a preliminary step: a survey, the stated aim of which was to compare the health of a group Vietnam veterans – again, there was no explicit inclusion of families – with that of "a cross-section of the community"

It's likely that Keys hoped the chemical issue would be revealed by his mini-survey to be lacking in substance, just as it had seemed to be in 1972 when the League's call for veterans with defoliant-related cancers to come forward had revealed Justice Toose's defoliant concerns to be premature (see the very first articles in this series). If, after all, only a few Vietnam men owned in 1980 to out-of-the-ordinary post-war health issues, the League and the Government could be excused their previous inaction; the Government could even be relieved of the need to proceed with further investigative measures.

Perhaps Keys reasoned, too, that even if the League's survey suggestion wasn't adopted as a preliminary to the Government's study, it could be paraded before the organisation's critics as proof that the RSL wasn't entirely unmoved by Vietnam veterans' plight and wasn't completely in the Government's pocket.

A still more cynical explanation for the League's survey suggestion would be that it was designed to counter the implied criticisms in the media of Keys' 1979 inaction by Bruce Ruxton, the RSL Victorian

Early Government announcements about the Epidemiological (Statistical Study) were those made on:

7 January 1980 in a DVA press release stating that an independent study would be set up.

11 January 1980 In a DVA press release stating that the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Sydney University (the School) had been asked whether a study could establish if veterans and their children had been harmed by Agent Orange.

21 February 1980 in a Ministerial statement foreshadowing consultation between the School and Defence (to establish whether needed information could be gathered) and further discussions between the School and Government (to permit Government to evaluate the proposed investigation); and

31 March 1980 in a Ministerial statement revealing that, subject to access to "certain data", an investigation proposal looked feasible. Three groups of veterans would be compared to identify differences in the incidence of diseases, genetic defects and miscarriages. All Vietnam veterans and their children would be interviewed. The study would take more than 2 years and cost more than $2M.

Branch President (see below) and could even have secured for the League National Executive some of the good publicity expected to result from the Government's change of heart. A more charitable view would have it that Keys, not unreasonably anticipating delays in commencement and completion of the Government study, desired a faster conclusion to be reached about chemical harms (for the benefit of everyone concerned).

Keys' 8 January 1980 survey call was accompanied by a request echoing the Government's own persistent call for veterans who believed that they "may have been effected by sprays" to report to DVA; Repatriation assistance for conditions claimed to be Agent Orange-related, though, would continue to be dependent on a proven link between the defoliant and health conditions. (The RSL survey would eventually be vetoed by the Government… at the same 31 March 1980 Cabinet meeting at which the Association's proposal for a judicial inquiry was rejected, although Keys later disingenuously stated that that the Government's inquiry steps were an implementation of that RSL proposal.)

After providing lukewarm support for the Government study and floating the mini-survey idea, on January 8, Keys seems to have (with just one exception) publicly disengaged from the chemical investigation issue and from concerns directly related to Vietnam service until the final week of March.

Vietnam veterans heard more in the early months of the year from the Victorian RSL President, Bruce Ruxton, who appeared – at least at first glance – to be more sympathetic to their plight ie to the lack of information available to them on the precise health consequences of any chemical exposure. In early January Ruxton pledged support for the fledgeling Association, and stated that his branch was "100 per cent behind Bernard Szapiel", mischievously (yet correctly) adding that Szapiel had, by making

Bruce Ruxton

earlier approaches to the RSL National Office, gone to the wrong place for help. Ruxton was reported as saying "it was a disgrace that no action had been taken earlier about Agent Orange", not making it quite clear whether his disapproval was aimed at the Government or his National President.

However, the limits to Ruxton's support were promptly revealed, bearing in mind the Government's just-announced study, when he stated on 8 January: "We are going to do everything we can to see that the Federal Government investigates if these disabilities were caused by these chemicals". He'd earlier stated that any inquiry was "largely" the responsibility of DVA … and was seemingly resigned to it taking its course. This "wait and see" approach (which he'd criticised both Keys and the Government for) was at odds with the position of those who believed that sufficient evidence existed in the poor health of some veterans and their children, as well as in John Evans' science more generally, to fast-track the approval of chemical-related repatriation claims … especially bearing in mind the highly unusual 'burden of proof' and 'standard of proof' stipulations in repatriation legislation..

Hollow messaging from Ruxton was the order of the day, again, at the beginning of February when a large meeting of Vietnam veterans took place at RSL House in Melbourne. At this meeting the

(Continued on page 24)

Victorian RSL President criticised the Government study (announced on 11 January as the task of Federal Health Department officers stationed at Sydney University) for a lack

of independence. He followed up with condemnation of politicians for "dodging the Agent Orange issue" and stated that "the Federal Government should pay full compensation *if there was any possibility that Agent Orange had caused birth defects* (the author's italics) in babies of Vietnam veterans." This last statement once again seemed to promise much but meant little in terms of action. Even so, the Association's RSL House Melbourne meeting was reported as a great success for the League.

The strength of many Vietnam veterans' culturally embedded belief that the RSL would act in their best interests explains the preparedness of numerous veterans to latch uncritically on to the more supportive components of statements by RSL officials in early 1980. It was this very belief in the RSL which, in the breach, had exacerbated McMinn's bitterness about Keys' failure to respond in any useful way to (pre-December 1979) approaches from he and Szapiel. It was the same belief in the League that encouraged overtures by Association branches to RSL elements for assistance of various sorts in 1980, which saw Association branches encourage membership of the RSL and which saw them institute RSL Liaison officer positions. The frequency of positive RSL sub-branch and club responses to those Association approaches (evidenced in NSW Association fundraising records in the period from May 1980 onwards) would also have encouraged a view that the National Executive and Keys would either 'come around' or be pressured by 'bottom up' policy formulation processes to eventually support the Association. Some League branch, district and sub-branch actions in the first half of 1980 (most notably in Victoria) would have had the same optimism-encouraging effect when known of through veteran networks.

Notwithstanding the sympathy and support of some components of the RSL, veterans involved in the Association could only have been irritated by the League National President's failure in early 1980 to support the Association's push for a public inquiry. At least a sub-set of veterans would have identified a want of logic in Keys' position viz in his view that veterans and their families should be compensated through the repatriation system if a link was ultimately proven between health conditions and chemicals, <u>but that the Association shouldn't be permitted its preferred (public) method of forging that link.</u>

If newspaper coverage of Keys' activities is any guide, he made no contribution to public comment on the chemical investigation matter for almost three months: a silence unable to be explained by inordinate busyness on other fronts. Indeed, he seemed to be mostly absent from public discourse about defence and veterans' matters until the end of March, except in late January (when he called for the reintroduction of conscription and the taking of various measures against the Soviet Union), and in mid-February (when he grumbled about the inadequacy of a huge lift in Defence spending by the Fraser Government). Overseas travel only explains silence for part of this period.

Silence on the public inquiry issue, specifically, is best seen as proof of Keys' willingness, after giving the Government's study perfunctory support, to leave public disagreements about the desirable form of Vietnam chemical investigations to the parliamentary champions on each side. The League could thereby avoid any unseemly public scrapping with potential members. It was also able to duck flak arising from its preference for the Government's position on chemical harms, rather than for the position of organised Vietnam veterans.

Keys' silence also reduced the prospect of any probing of what it was that he feared about a public inquiry, as sought by the Association, into defoliant harms. Whatever the rationale for the League National President's absence from chemical debate, the result was a period of suspended public

hostilities at the national level between the League and the Association while, as explained in Appendix 1 (available from the author), the senior levels of the League dealt with a difficult US class action problem away from the public gaze.

In any event, most Vietnam veterans persisted with a willingness to look past RSL senior officials' support for the Federal Government (whether tacit or explicit), even though that support damaged the veterans' cause in the first half of 1980 and afterwards. (It damaged the cause by signalling to DVA that the Department was unlikely to be criticised by the nation's major ESO for rejecting repatriation claims specific to chemical exposure [including claims for conditions that, without recognition of chemical exposure and related harms, were unlikely to be recognised as war-caused]). Anecdotally, some veterans viewed senior League officials' refusal to support the early Association as proof that the RSL leadership's loyalties lay more with its 'friends' in Government than with the most recent generation of veterans, even to the point where the League leadership saw itself as an arm of Government. Another apparently popular explanation was that solidarity with the Government was the inevitable result of a callous calculation of how the interests of the WWII generation would best be served in the time ahead. (These and other reasons for the RSL's identification with the Coalition Government were explored in an earlier instalment in this series.)

When Keys and the RSL at the national level rejoined the fray in the last week of March it was on the morning before a screening of a "60 Minutes" segment on the impact of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese: a segment focussing on child deformities. A newspaper article the day before had tipped Keys off to the program content and, sensing that the footage was unlikely to reflect favourably on the RSL, he took pre-emptive action; he briefed The Sunday Telegraph on the mid-March decision of the National Executive to explore funding for veterans' participation in the US class action. (See the Appendix available from the author for more information on the RSL's efforts to have the Commonwealth fund its take-over of the US work initiated by the Association.)

In the event, the League escaped criticism on the "60 Minutes" report. An interview with Holt McMinn which comprised the final quarter of the program – not his most polished performance – included criticisms of the Government for not accepting an apparently evident link between Vietnamese and Australian deformities, but no tilts at the League. In more normal circumstances, McMinn's comments should have given rise to the question: "What is the nation's preeminent ESO doing for Vietnam veterans and their families?" In the days following, however, the issue of Australian use of Agent Orange in Vietnam re-emerged with force, and the related issue of Ministerial and Defence Department ignorance of the chemicals used by Australians during the War dominated the news (see the previous article in this series). The carnival had moved on; journalists were more interested in the detail of defoliant use and in Minister Killen's alleged misleading of parliament than the issue of what the RSL was doing for Vietnam veterans. And McMinn was too busy extracting whatever advantage he could from the newest developments to take the RSL to task for its belated, possible interest in the US suit. Keys' post "60 Minutes" press release on the class action funding resolution (which made no mention of the Association's widely publicised efforts to join Australian veterans to the US litigation) had proved to be unnecessary.

With veterans almost lining up to talk to the media about their wartime use of chemicals, with McMinn and Evans enjoying unprecedented media prominence, and with the Defence Department's lack of reliable information on chemical use dominating the news, the Government doubtless hoped that the release of more details about its study (including information on the huge scale and expense of the initiative) would dampen most of the criticism levelled at it. On 31 March, after Cabinet approval of the study arrangements the same

(Continued on page 26)

morning, Veterans Affairs Minister Adermann made a statement to the House of Representatives that included more detailed information on the study arrangements and argued against a judicial inquiry. On the next day, Keys held a press conference and issued a press release welcoming the Government inquiry.

This RSL support could well have been requested by the Government in the hope of additional persuasive impetus in the study's favour and of reduced criticism of the beleaguered Veterans' Affairs and Defence Ministers. Keys' press release implied that the study was the result of RSL pressure, and revealed some 'behind the scenes' interactions with the Government, including discussions about the class action and a request "to meet the legal expenses involved in … [that] … action". It also stated that the RSL's solicitor was in daily contact with the US lawyers progressing the US case – a dubious claim at this point – and included an overdue yet cloying statement of sympathy for veterans' wives. The associated media conference was notable for expansion of the request for Government legal funding to cover both US and Australian legal action and, it seems, for a suggestion by Keys that the Association become a sub-branch of the RSL.

Support for the Government study shouldn't really have surprised the Association, even if it thought that it had, through its parliamentary supporters and the media, done a competent job of justifying the alternative way ahead ie the holding of a judicial inquiry. The League's (conditional) intention to involve itself in the US class action also shouldn't have surprised, except in so far as that involvement was this time stated to be limited to members of the WA Vietnam Veterans Sub-Branch.

However, the suggestion that the Association should become a component of the League – probably in keeping with the argument that the League had more Vietnam veteran members than the Association (and thus had the right to speak on behalf of those veterans) – was bound to have surprised. Bringing the more pugnacious Association leaders to heel and taking 'quieter ownership' of the chemical issue by subsuming the Association (in order to please the Government) might have seemed to be desirable RSL goals – and they were ones consistent with the organisation's little-publicised 1979/80 aim of bringing other ESOs under its umbrella –but they would only have been achieved at the cost of internal peace.

The League's request for the Commonwealth to "meet the legal expenses involved in … [the class] action" (not previously revealed, and certainly not revealed at this point to be a request for funding of an RSL takeover of the Australian element of the suit) would also have been unexpected.

McMinn didn't, as far as we know, remark on League class action matters at his own press conference on the same day – he focussed on chemical exposure matters and on the shortcomings in the Government study detailed in his press release – but he did respond to the suggestion that the Association should be a sub-branch of the RSL. In rejecting the proposal he remarked: "Obviously the RSL is an organisation that is virtually a spent force. The RSL has failed to take up this challenge".

If the "sub-branch" exchange marked an even lower point in relations between McMinn and Keys than that occasioned by the Association President's insulting December 1979 remarks about the RSL, it wasn't to be so for long.

After the RSL's extended silence on the investigation of chemical harms, and after media interactions (detailed above) highlighting the League and Association's different positions on the Government study, broadcasters were doubtless keen to get Keys and McMinn together. The ABC's "Nationwide" television program succeeded in doing this (albeit with the two interviewees in studios in different States), and the results were explosive. This was not least because of events in the days before the program (see previous chapter) and an accusation by Keys, reported in morning newspaper on the day of the interview, that the

Association was "headline hunting".

The RSL National President, a vastly more experienced interviewee, performed more credibly on "Nationwide" than McMinn, who'd packed the better part of his live interview experience into the previous week. However, Keys couldn't shrug off the accusations that (a) he'd done little in 1979 for McMinn and Szapiel, after promising support: and (b) that the League had failed to attend a 1979 meeting with John Evans (after expressing interest in a scientific paper in the scientists' s possession). McMinn, at times apoplectically incoherent, confused viewers by claiming that the Association would only reveal its scientific evidence at a judicial inquiry, but then remarking that some senior officials had seen that evidence … and that Ministers would have seen it, too, but for recent cancelled appointments. He created confusion, also, on the matter of 'acceptance' of the Association's evidence – receiving it versus being persuaded by it – and advanced the illogical expectation that the League should be persuaded by evidence it had refused to see/not been exposed to.

If, as Graham Walker credibly suggested to the author, part of the RSL's function in its alliance with the Government was to control rogue elements of the Ex-Services community – and if its mission at this particular point was, consequently, to rein in the Association – it was clearly incapable of honouring its side of the bargain.

"Nationwide" viewers were left with competing views of Vietnam veterans' circumstances. On one hand, Keys' claimed that the League had responded appropriately to the chemical issue, that it was assisting many veterans day-to-day and that the Government study would be effective (but needed to proceed at speed for the sake of veterans' wives). On the other hand, McMinn claimed that the League hadn't done nearly enough for Vietnam veterans, that those veterans were suiciding at appalling rates and that they couldn't, consequently, wait for the outcome of a yet-to-be-detailed Government study.

A cultural preference for underdogs – admittedly, of particular sorts – might have seen previously uncommitted members of the public prefer McMinn's view over Keys', despite the former's erratic performance. The one thing that viewers would have been certain of, regardless of their other impressions, was that relations between the two national presidents were not going to be easily mended.

It was Bruce Ruxton, the already mentioned Victorian League State President, who stepped forward to claim the role of mediator (if not peacemaker), in a period in which the Government was, once again, the main focus of hostilities, and the parliament was, again, the stage on which most of the drama played out.

Ruxton, with the help of NSW League President Colin Hines, organised a meeting between Association officials and the League National Executive. Before the invitations were dispatched, though, the meeting was jeopardised by McMinn's over-excited public reaction to the discovery that Keys had failed to act on chemical information received from ex-Task Force Hygiene Officer, Craig Steel, in early January. (In summary, Steel told Keys that he'd been the officer responsible for defoliant spraying in and around the Niu Dat Task Force base from March 1971 to March 1972, and that he'd consequently possessed guidelines on the use of AO, Agent Blue and Hyvar; these guidelines warned that misuse could result in sterility and deformities. Steel had contacted McMinn in April when other veterans were coming forward with information about Agent Orange use.) McMinn claimed in the pages of the "Truth" newspaper that Keys had withheld "vital evidence" and he described the League President as "a Government agent", before calling for him to resign.

In some quarters, McMinn's criticism (and resulting ABC radio interviews) had the effect of rallying support for Keys, even though the RSL head *appeared* not to have done the right thing with Steel's evidence. (A resignation call from an ex-member of the other ranks was always going to be a

(Continued on page 28)

step too far for the conservative, elderly ex-officers who ran service and ex-service organisations at that time. It was even a step too far for Bruce Ruxton, a fellow-member of the other ranks.)

How is Keys' decision to persist with the 6 June League/Association meeting to be explained? But for McMinns resignation outburst, credible rationales would have included pressure from Ruxton and Hines, and recognition of grass roots League sympathy for the Association cause in (at least) Victoria and NSW … and these explanations may still have had substance in the weeks before the meeting. However, a more convincing rationale was that Keys' (a) understood that cancellation would be eagerly reported by the media; and (b) identified an opportunity to occupy the behavioural high ground viz he could seem gracious by proceeding with the meeting, despite intemperate criticism from McMinn.

Phil Thompson

Gary Adams

If there were any misgivings on the Association side about meeting with the RSL National Executive on its home ground, they'd have been part-dispelled by a surprising concession on Keys' part in the week before the meeting: one neither advertised at the time nor commented upon since. It was made at the Leage NSW State Congress in late May, just a few hours after Gary Adams and the new(ish) President of the NSW Branch of the Association, Phil Thompson, had answered questions from the floor (and had witnessed the passing of a motion in enthusiastic favour of a judicial inquiry); Keys admitted that the Association's request for such an inquiry seemed "reasonable". He didn't then specify what action (if any) the League might take in support of that changed position and he went on to justify previous League actions (by making much of [alleged] efforts in support of Vietnam veterans) … but the admission that the Association's inquiry demand was reasonable had been made. It must have seemed, after the earlier public admission by Bruce Ruxton that he supported a judicial inquiry, and after indications that RSL NSW President Colin Hines was also on-side, that the RSL was finally coming around to the Association's key position.

We don't know whether the expectations of Association representatives attending the RSL's National HQ on 6 June 1980 were shaped by decision making at the Association's early May 1980 National Conference. Policy regardless, at least some members of the Association group – expanded to include the principal solicitor, McMillan (formally invited), and Phil Thompson (either self-invited or encouraged to attend by others) – couldn't have avoided the meeting; the Association couldn't be seen by the media to have ignored a possible League olive branch. The NSW pair, after Gary Adams' efforts to seem conciliatory towards the RSL elements they'd sought funding from, probably hoped for a new fraternal phase in League/ Association relations. They and others, basking in the afterglow of the positive RSL remarks about a judicial inquiry, may (reasonably) have thought there was yet a prospect of League action in support of the judicial inquiry call; 'why else', they might have asked, 'would Bruce Ruxton, in mid-May, have characterised the meeting as an opportunity "to put their case"?'

There were, though, to be no changes in the RSL's position in June. Evans, McMinn and McMillan addressed the meeting, McMinn distributed a document (perhaps including the scientific evidence he'd been keen for Keys to see the previous year) and there was wide-ranging discussion resulting in 'better understanding'

platitudes on both sides. But the only immediate result was a side meeting (presumably after the departure of the Association representatives) of the three attending solicitors (Lonnie, McMillan and Button). This meeting was presumably to discuss ongoing class action cooperation. They recommended to the main meeting that a special committee be established "to go into all the ramifications of Agent Orange – legal, scientific and medical – and subsequently report to an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the National Executive outlining recommended courses of action". This proposal was accepted, and the resultant Special Committee – composed of the three lawyers and five senior RSL figures – was required to report to the National Executive – nearly half of whom were, in any event, on that Special Committee – on 7 September, the day before the RSL 1980 National Congress.

What McMillan hoped to achieve by participating in joint consideration of matters well beyond the legal is mystifying, unless he was trying to be agreeable, having judged the League to be a better potential (de facto) client than the Association. What the Association men made of their solicitor's participation in a League-established and dominated body is not known … but that participation may well have contributed to the souring of the relationship between McMillan and the Association soon afterwards: a souring that resulted, it will be recalled, in senior Association figures' refusal to speak to their principal solicitor and tense communications in writing (see the previous chapter).

By contrast, what the League hoped to achieve was immediately clear. The Special Committee was the pretext for various State motions supportive of Vietnam veterans to be withdrawn or not acted upon at the June meeting and it was the body to which another contentious motion supporting Vietnam veterans was referred. Potential National Executive conflict was thereby delayed if not averted. And McMillan, if he was considered to be the Association's Svengali (or was seen to be more knowledgeable about class action matters than Button and more experienced, generally, than Lonnie) had been lured inside the RSL tent … where, if Colin Hines had had his way, John Evans would soon have joined him. For all of these reasons Keys would have been well pleased with developments. He'd have congratulated himself, too, on the air of gentlemanly calm he'd been able to inject into the combative relationship at the national level … at the very time when, as Parliament would no longer be the focus of McMinn's attention, the League might have been due some hostile Association attention. Most of all, he'd have been delighted that he'd prevented Ruxton and Hines from pressuring the Executive into support of the Association's judicial inquiry call.

Keys had snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. There would, however, be veterans who, ever after, recalled his (and the League's) failure to support the Associations earliest efforts on behalf of Vietnam veterans.■

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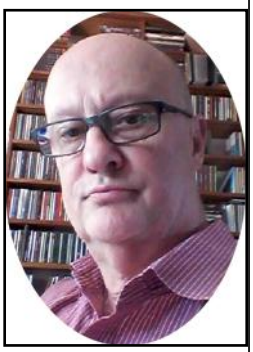
The next instalment in this series traces Association State Branch activities in the first half of 1980.

Kel Robertson is a Canberra writer. 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 with relevant additional information to assist in improving the text. Readers with extra information or who would like a copy of the article with sources cited, can contact Kel at vvhistory99@gmail.com. Readers who wish to take issue with the content of the article are encouraged to view the extra material and notes on sources in the version available from Kel.■



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DVA and Artificial Intelligence: What's Really Going On? Will our claims be judged by a machine?

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has released a statement about how it plans to use Artificial Intelligence (AI). On paper, it sounds reassuring: they promise to be transparent, responsible, and to build trust with veterans. They say AI won't be used to make decisions about claims or pensions—at least not yet.

But here's the thing: words like "currently," "not presently," and "evolving" suggest that change is coming. And that change could mean algorithms playing a bigger role in how claims are assessed or decisions are made.

What Is AI at DVA?

Right now, DVA says it's using AI mostly behind the scenes—for data analysis and internal systems. They're testing tools through a government-wide platform called GovAI, and they say no personal veteran data is involved in those trials. They also use basic computer automation to help staff manage tasks, but they insist that's not the same as AI.

Promises of Transparency

DVA says it will consult with veterans and their families before rolling out new AI tools. They list a range of channels—websites, newsletters, forums, and social media—where they'll share updates and invite feedback. That's good in theory. But the real question is: how deep will that transparency go?

What Veterans Should Be Asking

Here are three simple but important questions:

Will any AI used in claims or health decisions be checked by independent experts—not just government insiders?

Will universities or outside professionals be allowed to audit these algorithms for fairness and accuracy?

Will there be regular checks to make sure the AI isn't biased—especially against vulnerable groups or those with complex needs?

Why It Matters

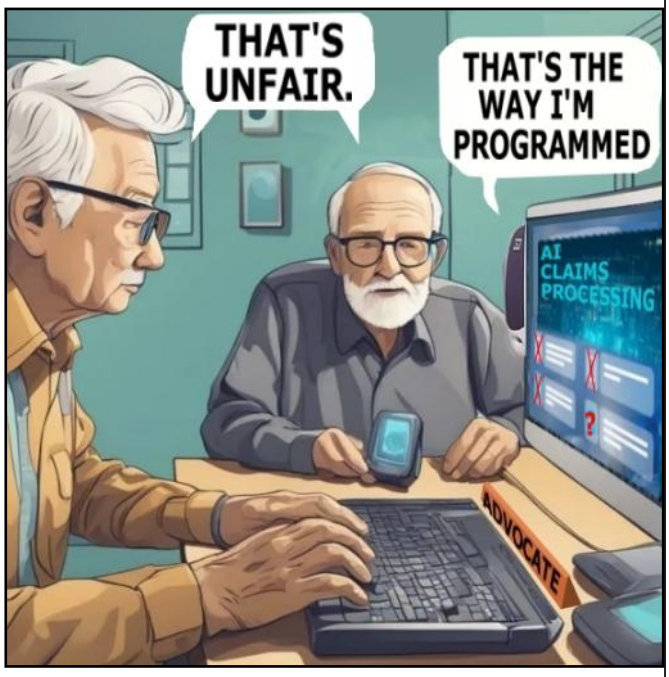
AI can be incredibly useful—but it can also go wrong. If the data it's trained on is skewed, or if the design isn't fair, it can lead to bad outcomes: denied claims, unfair decisions, or missed medical issues. And once an algorithm starts making decisions, it's hard to challenge unless you know how it works.

That's why independent oversight is crucial. Not just internal reviews, but real scrutiny from people who understand how AI works and aren't tied to government interests.

What Needs to Happen

Veteran organisations—especially those in national forums like ESORT—should be pushing hard for clarity. They need to ask tough questions, demand outside audits, and make sure future generations aren't left at the mercy of unchecked algorithms.

Because while AI might speed things up, it shouldn't come at the cost of fairness, transparency, or trust.



Our recent notification by VVPPAA NSW to not accept payments by cheques or money orders has prompted a few members to voice their concern. Here is one example:

Dear Editor,

Recently, advice was conveyed in the July V.V. Newsletter that the Commonwealth Bank has started charging a $5.00 fee per cheque transaction, in a deposit.

The introduction of that fee sucks as it is penny pinching to the extreme which affects many charitable type organisations. It gets up my craw when you read of the billions in profit that the Commonwealth Bank is making and the healthy distribution of dividends made to mostly, wealthy shareholders. I plan to take this up with my local Federal member.

As a result of this fee, I would guess that many members will resort to making a Bank Transfer to pay for their membership renewals, in which case details of the Federation's account would need to be supplied to enable that.

I wish to alert you to a problem with Bank Transfers that I have just encountered. I have transacted numerous Bank Transfers thru my local bank over the years however, in the last fortnight they have implemented a new procedure which results from a tightening up on scamming and identity requirements.

Previously, a BSB and Account Number was sufficient to identity the payees account, usually with a reference to identify the remitter.

The new requirement is that the Payee must be identified, **exactly** the same as what their account name is.

To give an example, I wished to Bank Transfer an amount to pay for a tour fee, to my local RSL Sub-Branch. My Bank Transfer was made out to Collaroy RSL Sub Branch. The payee details rejected because the account name was different to what I provided. The bank staff tried slightly different variations but, none worked.

I rang the Sub-Branch President and advised what I had encountered and he said that usually people just nominate Collaroy RSL Sub Bch and it goes thru fine ... "just a minute and I'll look up the bank statement". He came back and said "Would you believe the account name is actually 'The Returned Services League of Australia Collaroy".

That threw another spanner in the works - the account name was too long for the bank's system to accept. The problem has been referred to H/0 to see what can be done. The point is, the VVPPAA NSW has a similarly long name and if the account name is not the same or, needs to be nominated in full with a similar name ???

The banking system has obviously not given enough thought to this new introduction and needs to go back to base to work out a workable system - an over-ride function would be a good start, if they are happy that the payee has been sufficiently identified to their satisfaction.

Modern technology - It ain't getting any easier !

Good health and stay upright.

Steve N.

We add here that as advised within each issue and on our website, wherever requests for payments are listed we offer that VVPPAA NSW is an incorporated registered name in NSW for the purpose of those wishing to transfer monies by bank transfers. (And is registered for GST deductions). There must be a space after vppaa, before the 'n' of NSW, and all in upper case letters.

We have also encountered the same problems raised by Steve, (above), when paying invoices and other accounts. However, until banks get an insurmountable number of complaints, they will remain obstinate.

Readers are welcome to respond to this item, and I will endeavour to seek a response from our banking institute, for inclusion in the April 2026 issue.

Hi
We thought this speech may be suitable for inclusion in the national magazine?
Hieu Van Le is the Patron for the VVF in SA.
He was our Deputy Governor for 7 years and also our Governor for another 7 years
Hieu is a refugee coming to Australia by boat with his wife in 1977 and was the first Vietnamese to be appointed to this position anywhere in the world
The address to our members was delivered at our Coral/Balmoral commemorative service on 9 May and was delivered from the heart.
Regards
Bob Ellis

We agree Bob –Ed

Commemorative Speech: Battle of Coral and Balmoral
9th May 2025
Presented by the Hon. Hieu Van Le AC
Patron – VVF/SA

[Intro]

I am honoured and grateful for the opportunity to join you today as we gather to commemorate the extraordinary service and immense sacrifice of the Australian soldiers who, 57 years ago, fought so bravely at the fire support bases Coral and Balmoral.

Before I begin, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation to all members of the Vietnam Veterans' Federation in South Australia, including John Derbyshire and the dedicated members of his team.

Over many years, they have worked diligently and with great compassion to honour their fallen comrades—those who fought and fell at Coral and Balmoral, and throughout the Vietnam War. Their tireless efforts ensure that the memories of their mates are never forgotten. This is the very essence of enduring mateship—a uniquely Australian value that binds comrades through shared hardship, loyalty, and respect. It is this mateship that continues to shine brightly through the work of the Vietnam Veterans' Federation of South Australia (VVFSA).

I also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mal Thiele and the remarkable team of volunteers at the VVFSA. Your unwavering support and outstanding service to our veterans and their families are an inspiration to all. The positive difference you make in the lives of those who served cannot be overstated.

As always, it is a privilege to me to stand in the presence of our veterans and their families. Today, we are especially honoured to be joined by several veterans who fought in the battles of Coral and Balmoral. Your presence here means so much to all of us. You remind us not only of the cost of war, but also of the strength and resilient spirit that lives on in those who served.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here today to remember a chapter of our history that was marked by extraordinary bravery, intense hardship, and deep loss. The battles of Coral and Balmoral, fought during the Vietnam War in May and June of 1968, were among the most significant and intense engagements Australian forces experienced during the conflict. As we reflect on those events, we recall that these were not just military operations or strategic maneuvers—they were deeply personal trials for the young Australians who fought there. Many of them were in their early twenties or even younger. They had arrived in Vietnam full of youthful energy, commitment to duty, and a determination to serve their country with honour.

Just hours after arriving at Fire Support Base Coral, Australian troops were thrust into fierce combat. They faced a heavily armed force made up of North Vietnamese regular troops and local Viet Cong units. The Australians, still establishing their position, were caught off-guard—but they responded with courage, determination, and exceptional skill.

For nearly a month, the fighting raged on through the thick jungle, from hastily dug bunkers and bomb craters. There were moments when they were overrun and the situation appeared dire. But the Australian soldiers stood firm. They never wavered in their resolve. They held the line.

By the time the operation concluded on the 6th of June, 26 Australian soldiers had made the ultimate sacrifice. Twenty-six young men—sons, brothers, partners, husbands, friends—never came home. Countless others were wounded, both physically and emotionally.

Today, we honour their memory. We remember their names, their stories, and their spirit. We hold in our hearts their families, who live every day with the loss of a loved one who gave everything in service to their country. And we also pay tribute to the hundreds of Australian soldiers who fought at Coral and Balmoral and survived—many of whom returned with deep wounds that are not always visible. For some, the personal battle continues, even decades later.

The Vietnam War, as we know, left a profound mark on Australia. From July 1962 until June 1973, more than 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam—across the Army, Air Force, and Navy. The war deeply divided our nation, sparking widespread social upheaval.

It remains one of the most complex and painful periods in modern Australian history.

This year marks 52 years since Australia's military withdrawal from Vietnam. It also marks the 50 years since the end of the war—a war that claimed the lives of more than 3 million Vietnamese people. Over 58,300 Americans were killed, and among our own forces, 523 Australians including 58 South Australians lost their lives, with 2,400 more wounded.

And in the aftermath of the war, almost 2 million Vietnamese people fled their homeland as refugees. Almost half of them did not survive the journey. Those who survived, eventually found refuge and built new lives in countries around the free world, including here in Australia. We are deeply proud to call Australia our home.

For those of us who survived the arduous journey and landed on these shores, it meant starting over—but it also meant carrying with us the memories of a war that had touched every aspect of our lives.

Five decades have passed since the end of the War. Entire generations have now grown up with no personal memory of it. Their understanding of the war comes from history books, documentaries, and the stories told by their parents and grandparents.

But we must continue to share these stories. Today, those young men who fought at Coral Balmoral — full of energy, purpose, and patriotism—have now grown older. Some have left us. But time does not diminish their courage. It does not weaken the bonds of mateship they forged in battlefields. It does not lessen the gratitude we feel for their service.

And so, as we gather here in solemn remembrance, let us reaffirm our commitment to honour those who gave their lives.

Let us care for those who returned.

Let us never forget the cost of war—and the price of peace.

Lest we forget

Hieu Van Le AC

VETERANS STORIES

Overview:

During May or June this year (2025), I received a phone call from a good mate of mine in Brisbane. Tony "Hipshot" Brennan, and he asked if I realised it has been 60 years since B Company 1 RAR sailed for Vietnam aboard the HMAS Sydney.

"Hippy," I says, "I remember it well, like it was yesterday. How time flies." ……

I decide to write about us and forward it for publication consideration in 'The Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter, after calling the Editor, Bob.

THE BOYS OF COMPANY "B" (PART 1)

by

Ray ("Boris") O'Brien

6 Platoon Sig

B Coy 1 RAR

1965-66

READ ON

In June of 1961 my best mate, in Brisbane, Denis Shergold, and I, decided to join the Army. Together, we got on the train in Brisbane, as recruits, and travelled to Central Station in Sydney, to await our next train for a trip to Wagga Wagga, and 1st Royal Training Battalion, (1RTB). Joining us in Sydney was about 12 recruits from New South Wales, (NSW). All up about 25 of us marched into Kapooka, and 3 months later 38 of 39 of our Platoon, marched into the Infantry Centre, Ingleburn, NSW.

On allocation day back at 1RTB we all thought we would be split up into different Corps of the Army, that turned out to be crap. As I said before, 38 of 39 of us ended up at Ingleburn, with 1 going to Armoured Corp, Tanks, as he was ex-CMF Tanks for 3 years.

While at the Infantry Centre, Denis was put back two weeks after an accident. When all of us marched out during December 1961, we were all posted to 1st Royal Australian Regiment, (! RAR), just up the road at Holsworthy Barracks. Nearly all of us went to B Company, (B Coy), but my mate Denis went to D Coy, about 1 Kikometre down the road from B Coy.

There was hardly anyone in the Battalion, (BN), at the time we arrived, however, over the next few weeks the BN began to grow again. Everyone was returning from Leave, as 1 RAR had recently returned to Australia from a tour of 2 years in Malaya. In those days a Company was made up of 4 Platoons, (PL), each of 1 officer and 43 Other Ranks, (ORs). B Coy, to which we were posted, had 4 Platoons numbered 5,6,7 and 8 Platoon. We were all assigned as one group into 5 Platoon, and as we grew to full strength, we started exercises in the bush areas around the Sydney area.

8 platoon had a Section Commander, Corporal Kevin (Dasher) Wheatley. His 2IC was a Lance Corporal, Terry Loftus, who was a giant of a man. Both good Rugby players. 'Dasher' started to teach his Section survival in the bush techniques he had learned in Malaya. Then, when he became Platoon Seargent of 8 platoon, he carried on with the lessons.

After a while, within a few months, 8 PL began to look like grubs, and were a bit on the nose. They did not wash or shave on exercises. With no fires allowed in the bush, rations were always eaten cold. There was no soap, and not much of anything else. Someone gave them the name "Scungees". (Gigantic grubs). They loved the name and considered it a badge of honour.

A section of "B" Company's Six Platoon took time out to pose and grin just before the Australian Battalion attacked the Vietcong stronghold called the "Iron Triangle." From left to right: Lance Corporal Trevor Adams, Tasmania; Pte. Ray Earea, Sydney; Lance-Corp. Gunars Rama, Sydney; Pte. Bob Cross, Coff's Harbour; Corp. Dave Haines, Melbourne; Pte. Ray O'Brien, Brisbane; Corp. Terry Loftus, Sydney; Pte. Ross Mangano, Sydney. Corporal Loftus and Private Mangano were both wounded shortly afterwards, Mangano's wounds requiring the amputation of his left leg.

In 1964 the Army downsized its numbers within Army Battalions. There were only three regiments with 1BN in Sydney, 1BN in Brisbane and another BN in Malaya on a 2 year posting. 4 RAR was planned to be raised in Adelaide, South Australia. Do you want to go to 4 RAR ?, someone asked me. No way I said, "They don't play Rugby. I'm staying in 1 RAR".

With the raising of the new battalion, 1 RAR's Company strength dropped, with a platoon being taken off each rifle company, one officer and 43 other ranks, and a section taken off each remaining platoon, (10 men). Total 1 RAR losses 4 Officers and 292 ORs from the battalion. B Coy now consisted of 4th,5th,and 6th Platoons, the latter including the "Scungees".

One soldier, older than the rest of us, was posted to B Coy, and we learn that he was a paratrooper in the French Foreign Legion. He told us stories about fighting in Vietnam. (Where is that????). He was with a section of paratroopers about to jump into a French Fort at Dien Bien Phu on 7th May 1954. The first Legionnaire had already jumped out of the plane, and he was the next to jump, when the red light came on. The pilot announced that the fort had been overrun and the plane was returning to base. That soldiers name was Heinz Grabowski, and he later served in Vietnam with 2 RAR/NZ (ANZAC Battalion), as a Corporal, in 1967-68.

(Continued on page 36)

Corporal Heinz Grabowski
Vietnam 1967-68
Ex 1 RAR 5PL B Coy 1964

The French had 80,000 Paratroopers in 1954, in a string of forts along a valley. In 57 days and nights over 200,000 Artillery rounds fired by the 'Viet Minh', were aimed at the forts, with Viet Minh overrunning each fort one by one. Dien Bien Phu fell on 7th May 1954. *(The decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 forced them to withdraw, and by April 28, 1956, the last French soldiers had left South Vietnam-Ed).*

On 29th April 1965 Bob Menzies (Australian Prime Minister), announces that Australia will send a battalion to Vietnam to support US Forces. Dasher Wheately had left the company earlier, although 6 PL had a new Seargent, Terry Loftus is still a Section commander. The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, (AATTV), had been in Vietnam in combat roles with the South Vietnamese Army, (ARVN), since 1963.

1 RAR is selected for service in Vietnam, and are to join with a USA unit in country. A reporter from the Sydney Morning Herald, Pat Burgess came to the Company HQ at Holsworthy, and asks to come to Vietnam with us. The OC is very wary, but Pat does the hard yards with us, at Holsworthy, and on board HMAS Sydney. The CO is impressed and allows him to join "The Scungees". Pat Burgess came on a few Operations, (OPs), with our Platoon, including some with heavy contacts against the Viet Cong (VC).

26 May 1965 B Coy sneaks out of Holsworthy in covered trucks, no looking out or in. Midnight. Lots of MPs (Military Police), no wives or girlfriends, family. Big secret. No farewells, off to Sydney Harbour. 1:30am, 27th May, HMAS Sydney sets sail for Vietnam. Lots of activity on board such as physical exercises, bayonet practice and weapons training. Signals lessons, with use of codes, test firing of weapons was carried out on the flight deck, and we even had some Vietnamese lessons. And, Navy SP Bookies to win money off on Saturday races.

The HMAS Sydney arrived in Vung Tau Harbour, South Vietnam at 6am on 10th June 1965. We were greeted by members of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade who were happy to see us. We got on board US Landing Craft, who took us and our equipment ashore, where we found ourselves posted to US 173rd as 3 battalion, (3BN). The 173rd Airborne had just arrived in Vietnam from Japan. There was 1st 503 BN US, 2nd 503 BN US and 1 RAR. We made up 173rd Airborne Brigade stationed at Bien Hoa Airbase, 25 kilometres north-east of Saigon.

In May 1965 US troops numbered 50,000, and by December '65 another 150,000 troops would arrive. Australian troops included 600 from 1 RAR, 80 AATTV personnel, 73 RAAF with 6 Caribou transporters, and a 8 man Surgical Team. We jumped onto US trucks in Vung Tau, and taken to our new base camp at Bien Hoa Air base. We have never seen so many helicopters (Choppers), hundreds of them. They were everywhere.

Our Base Camp was not too far away from known

BIEN HOA AIR BASE

areas of concentrated VC, War Zone D, and the dreaded 'Iron Triangle', which was just across the Mekong river, in front of our forward company positions. 26 June '65 was a crappy day for the battalion, as we had our first casualties.

The battalion was returning from Ops in US Army

'Cattle trucks', taking us back to our company locations.

The truck I was on, was the last of B Coy and some C Coy soldiers. The driver was US Army, who dropped us B Coy troops off at our gate, then proceeded toward 'Charlie' Company lines. As we were moving through our company perimeter, we heard a loud explosion up the road toward C Coy. We thought it was Artillery round, from war Zone D, across the river, and all took cover waiting for more rounds to hit, but none arrived.

Someone called out that there was a lot of noise coming from C Coy up the road, and a few soldiers from B Coy went to take a look and help out if they could. What happened was that a soldier from 'Charlie' coy, in a hurry to alight from the truck, jumped off the back instead of using the walkway, and as he jumped a safety pin on his grenade, which was hooked onto the front of his webbing, was dislodged after getting caught on a nail or bolt. A few seconds later the grenade detonated, with devastating effect. 3 Australians were killed in action (KIA), and 10 wounded (WIA), including two US Soldiers. Orders next day was that in future, all grenades were to be stowed inside pouches on our basic webbing. It was a terrible 'accident' for C Coy.

Ned ('Nellie') MCauliffe and I had been the 2 B Coy Signalers, (Sigs), for a while. We would take turns, with either of us signalling for the Officer Commanding (OC), while the other was the Sig for the 2IC of B Coy. We had just returned from the bush after completing ambush drills and patrolling when the Company Seargent Major, (CSM), told me that the OC B Coy wanted to see me after breakfast in the morning. So I went and saw the OC, and he told me that the 2IC was not going out on anymore Ops. He was staying in camp to do his job, of Administration etc., so there was now no need for a second company signaller. I was to be sent to 6 Platoon to replace their current Sig, Private Priestly, "Elvis". He didn't want the Platoon Sig job anyway, so I move to 6 PL within an hour, and became a "Scungee", 6PL B Coy.

The 173rd troops tell us about 'Free Fire zone', areas full of VC, so they bomb the hell out of everything in the area, even animals with no exception, anything that moved gets brassed up. 6 PL were dropped off choppers in an area that has been heavily bombed by B-52s. There were bomb craters everywhere you looked. Pat Burgess, the reporter, came with us on this Operation.

Every hour, on the hour, platoons were required to send their locations by radio to CHQ, (LOCSTAT), with all messages being sent using the codes of the day. The only time you weren't required to use codes, was when you needed to send a 'Contact' report. They were sent in normal 'clear' messaging.

6 Platoon was patrolling along, with CPL Terry Loftus section following up as the rear section. It was 10 minutes to the hour, maybe 9:50, when I told 'Sunray' (PL Command) that 'LOCSTAT' was due in 10 minutes. He sent a hand signal to stop the platoon for a 10 minute cigarette break. Terry's gun group covered our rear position. I began changing my small antenna for the larger one as communications were crap. Maybe the range or radio itself, as I had to relay through 5 Platoon. I was waiting for the grid references to encode it when all hell broke loose. The large tree I had chosen to lean the radio against suddenly came under fire from numerous rounds. 'F**K! I said, LOCSTAT was given the flick, and I sent "20, 23 in contact wait out" in 'clear'.

Then it hit the fan in Terry's section, as it came under heavy fire from a group of VC who had walked into their section. Two of Terry's soldiers suffered very bad wounds. LCPL Dave Munday was hit in one leg and an arm, by numerous rounds, but still kept firing his Owen gun with one arm and gave Fire Control Orders to the gun group whilst wounded. A second digger was hit in the shoulder and neck by a burst of rounds.

The Medic, "Doc", called out for me to organise a 'Dust-Off' for the two wounded. I got onto 5 PL radio and requested a couple of Gunships and a Dust-Off chopper from CHQ ASAP. 5PL did a great job to pass our request on. A couple of VC passed in front of Dave's Gun Group and a burst of M60 took one VC's head off his body. Terry went forward to retrieve the headless body and placed it in front of Dave to protect him from more wounds from VC fire. Platoon Command took the Lead Section down the right flank to engage the VC, they must have seen him coming and retreated, leaving behind blood trails and the headless VC.

(Continued on page 38)

The dust offs arrived shortly after, and with smoke thrown to signal the OK, they landed and our two wounded diggers were taken to hospital. Pat Burgess (Reporter) helped 'Doc' tend to the wounded and did a wonderful job. Dave Murray's arm was saved, but he lost a leg. Errol survived his wounds and did a second tour, later, with a different Infantry Battalion. Dave received an MM (Military Medal), for his part in the action.

We thought we had the first contact, (by an Infantry Platoon from an Australian Regiment), in Vietnam, however, A Coy had another action about the same time, so we were either first or second contact in Vietnam by Aussie troops.

Back to base a few days later, with no more contacts on Operation Iron Triangle, C Coy and B Coy were side by side patrolling abreast of a main dirt road. My Platoon Commander (PL COMD), Lieutenant Peter Sibree, was talking to a C Coy PL COMD, when suddenly, up ahead, we heard an explosion, maybe a booby-trap we thought. C Coy Officer took off toward the explosion. We told CHQ that C Coy were striking mines or booby-traps. We were ordered by our OC B Coy to stop patrolling and he would come forward and talk to the PL COMD, 6 Platoon, there were more explosions in the C Coy area.

The OC arrived and got onto BN Radio Net and asks for Artillery Support to shell an area in front of B Coy. "Wait Out" was the response from BHQ. C Coy were still setting off booby-traps, B Coy doing zilch, sitting around waiting for the CO's decision. 8 PL lost 1 PL COMD and 11 soldiers to booby-traps. The platoon ended up with only 8 soldiers, with all the rest WIA by mines and booby-traps.

For B Coy, with no Artillery support, the Op was called off. So far 1 RAR sustained 2 KIA and 36 WIA, all to booby-traps or mines. We were told to pull back and 6 PL was the lead platoon, as we started to move out Ross Mangano, the Forward Scout for Terry Loftus' section, set off a M26 grenade. Ross and Terry were both wounded, with Ross losing a leg, and Terry wounded. Terry recovered from his wounds and returned to the platoon after treatment. Not a good day for 1 RAR. We heard later that the mines and booby-traps were put there by South Vietnamese ARVN troops, who were on our side. That's the type of mates you want.

A good day was Bike Race Day. B Coy, while out on Ops, "found" about 50 to 60 push bikes that were used by the VC to get around to their clandestine meetings. We would give them to chopper pilots, and they would hover over B Coy lines at Bien Hoa and 'drop' them off. The US pilots ended up calling us the "Bicycle Coy"

I was asked to run the company book, so I became SP Bookie to raise company funds. With a few hundred US dollars, being with the yanks we were paid in US Dollars, and won many dollars for B Coy funds. The Bike races were a great day, a few beers, lots of fun, on the correct side of the wire. What more could you ask for. We won a couple of thousand dollars for the funds. The 2IC was very pleased with me and my offsider, Trevor, "Foota", and asked the two of us to see him at his tent in 10 minutes, for a reward.

'Foota' and I thought $200 each and a 4 day Leave in Saigon would be nice. The 2IC gave us 2 cans of Budweiser Beers each. What a generous person our 2 IC was, yeah, and he ended up a Major General and the State Governor of Queensland for a few years. More Ops to come.

B Coy 1 RAR BIKE RACE DAY

Boris' story will continue in our next issue, including 'The farmer' and a change of Platoon commander among other duties, during Operations CRIMP and ROLLING STONE

ADVOCATES CORNER

I recently called our NSW Advocates to enter a case study of recent successes of their claims and appeals to DVA. No names no pack drill. Here are some samples, which may be extended across all VVFA advocates in the future.

Case study 1

Following is an extract from an interview looking into getting home care support. Sonny was first a client at the Veterans' Centre East Sydney in 2017. *Redacted to protect identifiers, family members and contact details.*

Background

Sonny is 71. He came to Australia as a boat person after the Vietnam War in which, when serving as a commando he was captured and spent 8 years in a North Vietnamese Re-education (Prisoner of War) Camp in Hanoi. Sonny is going blind. His left eye is worse, and his right eye is compromised by cataracts overlaying his macular degeneration and glaucoma of both eyes. Sonny lives by himself in an apartment above his cousin's Dentistry (REDACTED) and he can be contacted on (REDACTED). We spoke to his son (REDACTED) who has agreed to help his father.

Issues

Eyes

Professor Emeritus Paul Mitchell is Sonny's eye specialist ophthalmologist at Westmead Hospital. Professor Mitchell has recommended Sonny have cataract surgery on his right eye and has been performing eye injections in both eyes for wet macular degeneration for some time. Sonny has another appointment with Professor Mitchell – *prior to going to press* - . Sonny does not wish to have the surgery. He is concerned a patch over his right eye will make him blind. He says a cousin in the USA had similar surgery and is now blind.

Support at home

Sonny is coping, but he could be receiving help via the Government My Aged Care Home Care packages plan. To obtain this help Sonny/ (REDACTED) are to take the following steps:

1. Ask Professor Mitchell to provide a letter of support for Aged Care assistance for Sonny.
2. Visit the Local General Practitioner (GP) ask for an Aged Care Assessment via My Aged Care.
3. Have the GP request the assessment with the Professor's endorsement letter.
4. Have an assessment done by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) member.

Have the ACAT person advise what package Sonny will be offered.

The ACAT member will send a letter with the assessment, services for which Sonny is eligible and a copy of a support plan. Once approved Sonny/ (REDACTED) should:

- Find a local Home Care Package **service provider** (contractor) if wishing to stay at Lakemba.
- Look into the costs if any (a pensioner should have no cost as the package amount – provided by Government- should cover the service)

If unhappy with the time (3-6months) it may take to get a package (funding) there is an option of getting a Commonwealth Home Support Package sooner. Either way when funding is approved Sonny will receive a letter confirming and providing a referral number for his selected **service provider**.

Support at an Aged Care home

During the ACAT the assessor should be asked if the level of care Sonny needs can only be provided by full or part time care at a home. Care at such facilities can range from a self-contained apartment with access to care to a one room with en-suite or shared room. Organising and arranging this is a family task due to the costs involved and selecting the best location. The options considered may be:

- Close to medical help
- Near a relative
- Not far from present location and circle of friends.

Other support

Other support arrangements, which can be provided to Sonny through telephone contact and website exploration by (REDACTED), are:

(Continued on page 40)

- Contact the Macular Degeneration Foundation website http://mdfoundation.com.au
- Seek audio books, a site is libriVox – free public domain audiobooks
- (REDACTED) (VVPPAA NSW) Vietnamese group coordinator (REDACTED). This is for social contact with Vietnamese speakers.
- (REDACTED)Administrator/Accounts (VVFPPAA NSW) 96821788.

Qualified Wellbeing Officer

Comments

The Vietnam Veterans' Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia NSW Branch, (VVPPAA NSW), is there to support Sonny. He has a mobile for contact at any time and the other members listed are available during the day. Decision making relating to the selection of a **service provider** for a Home Care Package is a family issue. VVPPAA NSW could help consideration, but it is not ethical for us to make a recommendation which may impact the (REDACTED) Family finances.

Plan

Sonny to seek Professor Mitchell write a letter of support for Sonny's planned home care help when he has his next treatment.

Sonny/(REDACTED) can then take the letter to his GP and seek the GP organise an ACAT (REDACTED) explore the support available to Sonny through the Macular Degeneration Foundation and via Audible Books and (REDACTED) regarding some opportunities for Sonny to have some social interactions.

(REDACTED) contact Sonny/(REDACTED) in a month's time to see what progress has been made or Sonny and or (REDACTED) contact either of us to advise or seek help.

(REDACTED)

DVA Australia is restricted to providing an early Veterans' Pension for its Allies. There is no rehabilitation or compensation and no Veterans Home Care. A Veteran's Pension was organised for Sonny and it converted to the Aged Pension at 65. Indeed, they are the same amount. 8 years later I am still seeing Sonny and we have lunch together on an irregular basis. Initially we would go to the Vietnamese quarter in Bankstown but now we tend to stay closer to his apartment. He is now on a Level 2 Home Care Package from My Aged Care and is struggling with his memory.

Best regards,
(Advocate Name Withheld)

Case study 2.

Yes, Some DVA Staff Do Care

As Advocates, we deal with DVA on a daily basis. Yes, the Department has a backlog, yes, it's making changes to its procedures on a daily basis. I deal with many departmental staff members. Some follow the procedures first and the Veterans needs second. However, I have worked with delegates who genuinely put our Veterans first.

"George" , and how he was looked after is one good example. George has been a client for years and due to the sexual assaults and other problems, he became an alcoholic. Not only is his family, driving his car, and business significantly affected, but he did attempt suicide.

Claims were lodged for "George" for both Psychiatric and other conditions. Due to his assaults his claims were allocated to DVA's Special Action Team for determination. Their job *is* hard.

The Delegate accepted his mental health conditions, but after nearly 9 months his GP hadn't completed his reports so these conditions had to be dropped. On his mental health conditions alone, the Delegate was able to award "George" a Gold Card. In my thank you email to the Delegate, "George" asked me to pass on his sincere thanks for an outcome he never thought would happen.

The story didn't stop there. "George" took up the option to be assessed for a cash payment under the DRCA Act. The outcome was an offer of over $500,000. "George" accepted the offer, not for the money, but the change it would make to his family. The delegates I worked with were excellent and put "George" first.

DVA is disrupting the lives of many of our Veterans, especially from a mental health perspective. No end date to the backlog, (we're not allowed to call it a backlog! – just awaiting a decision), is in sight. Adding that what I call ill-conceived changes made by DVA, aren't helping our Veterans claims to be determined in a timely manner.

While each Veterans situation, time frames for things to happen and outcomes are all unique, "Georges" outcomes are an example of how positive DVA staff action can make a difference.

(Advocate's name withheld).

DID YOU KNOW ?

FACTS OF INTEREST

Helping Veterans Get the Best from their Medicines

When was the last time you had a good talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the medicines you take? As we get older we tend to rely on more medicines to help us manage our illnesses and maintain our health. Often we take a range of medicines which, if not taken correctly, can result in additional health problems.

Veterans' MATES is a new program from the Department of Veterans' Affairs that helps veterans and their carers avoid these problems and use their medicines safely.

Most medicines are effective when used as directed by your doctor or pharmacist.

You may also use medicines from supermarkets, health food stores or over the counter medicines along with those prescribed by your doctor. But medicines taken in the wrong way or at the wrong time can cause harm, even an emergency.

Up to one-third of hospital admissions of older people are due to problems with medicines. People mix them up, use them incorrectly or simply forget to take them.

Thankfully, these problems are preventable and Veterans' MATES can help.

Veterans' MATES sends information about different health conditions and medicines to veterans, doctors and pharmacists every few months. So far, materials have covered Home Medicine Reviews, heart conditions, diabetes and arthritis. DVA has joined with Australia's leading Quality Use of Medicines organisations to deliver Veterans' MATES to an estimated 16 000 medical practitioners, 5 500 pharmacies and their veteran patients.

You or your carer can begin to better manage your medicines by talking to your doctor and pharmacist about Veterans' MATES. They can arrange a Home Medicines Review of all your medicines.

Get your copy of Home Medicines Review brochure at www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates

Call Veterans' MATES on 1300 556 906

Taking care of your joints

Getting older implies two things, you are less mobile and your joints ache. As well as medication and exercise, there are things you can do every day to help deal with the pain and stiffness and take good care of your joints. Think about your movements, pace your activities throughout the day, Avoid activities that put stress on your joints, as much as you can.

As well as medication, there are simple ways in which you can treat your painful joints.
Warmth applied to the affected area can relieve pain and stiffness. Some people buy special heat lamps or creams that produce localised heat, but a hot water bottle can be just as effective. Make sure it's wrapped in something so it doesn't burn you. Also, make use of heat bead, or grain, bags available at most chemists.

Stress and muscle tension can make arthritis seem much worse. There are many theories about whether what you eat affects your arthritis. As yet there's little scientific evidence to suggest that it does, but some doctors feel special diets are worth trying as long as they don't mean missing out on vital nutrients. If you're considering going on a special diet for your arthritis, it's important to discuss it with your doctor first.
Some people with arthritis find their condition improves when they give up certain foods. But you should always consult with your medico professional first, before trying it yourself.

VETERANS STORIES

VUNG TAU SOCCER 1970
THE DAY THE ARMY AFL COST US A TROPHY

I recently received an email from Stan Middleton OAM, regarding AFL football in Vung Tau and the AFL's request to have relative information for inclusion in their own histories. All sports played by the troops in Vietnam were a welcome relief, and I for one, participated in a number of recreational activities. However, my main passion was soccer, and my tale is how AFL cost our unit a soccer championship in 1970.

When I say "our unit', the team comprised players from 110 Signal Squadron and the nearby Ordinance unit. We usually had 13/14 players in the squad. Most were players of some or little experience, but with good beer drinking ability.

The Vietnamese police team had a player run off to their building every five minutes and a fresh player come on.

We had particularly good players in a goalkeeper, a centre half, a midfielder and a striker. The competition consisted of teams from other units in Vung Tau, plus two teams from the local Vietnamese military/police.

We sneaked enough wins to make the Grand Final against the Vietnamese police team, to be played on the seldom watered ground at the police academy. Came the day – stinking hot and humid, very unusual conditions for Vietnam.

Ran into two of my players as they waited near the Orderly Room, boots in hand. Complimented them on being so keen and early. They informed me they were off to play in a pick-up AFL game. Shock, horror, betrayal. No amount of pleading could change their minds.

One in particular, would be missed – he was what is now called an enforcer. I did a quick tour of our camp, but could only find one slightly obese, unfit replacement.

Later found that the Ordinance unit had lost a player for the same reason, so we started with 11 players and no subs.

As I said before, the day was stinking hot and humid. The Vietnamese police team had a player run off to their building every five minutes and a fresh player come on. Now you were only allowed 5 subs, who in those days could be continually rotated on/off the field. When I complained to the ref (a local), he informed me the police side were using only five subs, I pointed out that , although the players looked the same, they seemed to have used an awful lot of shirt numbers for just 16 players.

The police team were quick and nippy, and ran us ragged in the first half. We had beaten them in the comp proper but our "enforcer" had created havoc by very hard (but fair of course) tackles on their players, which had reduced their numbers by a couple.

It was still 0-0. Our defence had been resolute but we had been forced to do 90% of the defending. We were out of water and the conditions had sapped our energy. Our late call up player said he could not continue. Told him to stay on the field standing near the touch line half way up the field.

"These military teams really take their defence seriously...!"

all our clearances would be directed to him and he would hold the ball until the striker (me) sprinted past him, leaving me one on one with their lone defender. He muffed control of the few clearances that went his way. We went to a 1 Goal Keeper ,6 defenders, 3 wander around in front of defence plus touch liner formation.

They went to 6 (forwards), 3,1,1 formation. Or as one comic put it later, to a 7,8, 1,1 formation, as the replacements continued to roll out their front door.

In the end, we lost 3-0. Our boys never stopped trying, but if you have played any type of football in Asian conditions, the lack of replacements is a big minus. Who can say if the three missing AFL players would have turned the tide but we had made the grand final on merit.

On the plus side, the players' thirst was quickly expunged on return to camp by the early opening of the Ors canteen. By a quirk of fate, the president of the Ors Canteen was also captain of the soccer team.

Norm Jones

VETERANS STORIES

With kind permission from John Verhelst, Editor of 'RED RAT', we bring you a story from Norm Austin. But first an intro from John.

"And…finally, an article by (member) Norman Austin (Cpl, 2781432, who served in RAASC, 18 May 1966 to 23 May 1967). Norm regales us with life in Nui Dat, at the beginning of his arrival there. Thanks Norm, for building our tents and pathways and dunny!" … (From Red Rat August 2025 issue).

LIFE IN THE WET AT THE DAT: the early days

The 1st Australian Task Force occupied the Nui Dat rubber plantations in June 1966, just as the dry season "broke". For months "no body" was ever truly dry.

My counterpart Jeff Williams and I were allocated a piece of dirt on the end of a line of existing hoochies. Under the rubber trees we set up our new "home".

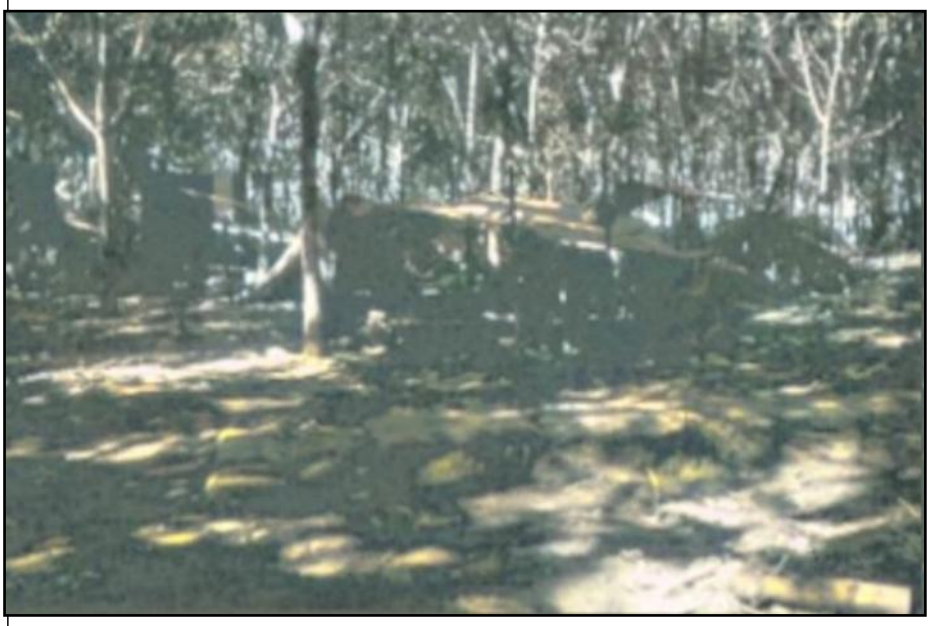
We were provided with low, sprung stretchers, which just fitted length wise under the hoochie, which was made by joining two ground sheets together and stringing them up. Our gear was placed at our feet in discarded 105mm artillery ammunition boxes and we used rods from the boxes to suspend our mosquito nets.

The first afternoon, under orders, we dug a weapon pit adjacent to the hoochie, sited to defend our perimeter, with sandbags lining the top to provide firing rests.

The photo (Bottom left), shows our hoochie, and I can just make out a stretcher in it with the sandbagged weapon pit in the middle ground.

The next photo (Page 43 top), was taken from my stretcher. The fire bucket was used to bail the weapon pit, and on the right, you can just make out the outline of my storage boxes. You can see two figures up the trunk of the central rubber tree, making improvements.

Each day, following the stifling afternoon build-up, flashes of lightening and claps of thunder heralded "Hughie" and you could set your watch by the first downpour, 1700h. It continued for an hour or so, then (mostly) stopped, leaving the rubber trees dripping for hours.



Everything was thoroughly soaked, us, our cot, our personal gear. Draining rapidly downhill the flood turned the red basalt soil into sloppy mud, which as it dried stuck to our boots and built up for an inch or two before it had to be scraped off.

Initially our freshly dug weapon pits drained quickly. However, after a few days the fine mud created an impervious film in the bottom and gradually up the walls, and they stayed full longer and longer. Never needed, they became a myriad of frog swimming pools which had to be constantly bailed out.

Hundreds of happy frogs croaked all night. If in the pitch-black someone stood on a stick or made a noise, the frogs stopped instantly! Hands silently rested on rifles, eyes strained in the dark, ears seemed to burst until gradually one by one, then altogether, the frogs continued their evening chorus. Senses relaxed we dozed off again.

The Task Force supplies were still in Sydney because the wharfies refused to load the army's supply ship HMAS Jeparit, so we were supplied with American C ration packs and ate our evening meal, out of cans, before dusk, in our hoochies and out of the rain. We carried our rifles everywhere with a magazine, ready react! To reduce the potential impact of any incoming mortar bombs we didn't congregate in groups of more than three.

The cooks heated up cans from the "C" packs and doled these out. We were not too fond of "turkey with egg" or "chicken noodles" or "lima beans" but "little boys in sauce" or baked beans with ham" were a hit. This created a market for desirable cans, and some bickering arose when diggers didn't get their preference.

In July we started to get hot meals prepared in the kitchen and consumed in the OR'S mess, on the right, (above) which was erected by D&E Platoon. The cooks did a fantastic job in their kitchen, which comprised of field cookers and benches, protected from the rain by the high-flying tarp.

In July we were weaned off C Rations and had hot meals with American supplies. We ate chicken drumsticks, little squares of canned potatoes, tinned sweet potatoes, lima beans, ham, heaps of sweet corn niblets, tinned sausages and sickly-sweet white bread baked by the Americans. Breakfast was best with eggs, sausages and bacon. Occasionally a stink from rotten eggs wafted through the mess line. In the tropical heat the preserved eggs were

(Continued on page 46)

prone to "go off". The cooks didn't know until they dropped the eggs into the fryer but had to be cooked before they could be removed.

In the evening, the mess became crammed with hungry, obviously green and stinky "sardines" (us), who fortunately could not smell themselves after working in the stifling heat, attired in trousers with long sleeves rolled down to guard against the mozzies.

This was the only time we got together. Whilst eating or waiting for a downpour to abate, we formed a lifelong camaraderie.

After this the "Diggers" headed back to their lines and congregated in small groups. Some drank their allocation of "two cans of beer per day per man perhaps" whilst waiting for "stand-to", that mysterious custom of the Aussie Digger. Each evening, at twilight it was mandatory that we manned our weapon pits, to silently await a possible attack from the enemy. Eventually the whispered command "stand down" was passed around. The next morning, before first light, "stand-to" was repeated in reverse.

It crept on us slowly at first. Then it became omnipresent. The incessant dampness encouraged little bugs to thrive on warm bodies. Tinea and other unknown rashes developed rapidly around our hairy bits and no amount of foot powder, or the green stuff provided by the Regimental Aid Post (RAO), stemmed their growth. We discarded undergarments to enable flesh to breathe but this helped little.

The most common target for rashes was our testicles, which now due to lack of suitable support, gravitated groundward at an alarming rate. Free hands scratch, scratch and scratch.

Aussie humour soon created the famous "Nui Dat Balls". Just mention them on ANZAC day and stories flow like the mighty Murray, faces wince, and blokes tentatively give the family jewels a feel.

When it came to that daily necessity, a trip to the loo, it was an experience. This is a photograph of our first "bog", (below), with the artillery positioned in the open air beyond the road. You will see that as per regulations there is a fire extinguisher under the tree – what chance of a fire do you think?

The bog was one of D&E's master pieces and consisted of a deep hand dug pit, with felled rubber trees supporting a corrugated iron roof. Inside, rubber trees also supported a long board with four holes with lids, and a ventilation pipe. Privacy was provided by hessian walls. It was not uncommon for it to be fully occupied with a few diggers waiting around smoking.

It was mainly used for number twos, as number ones were catered for by "pissaphones", mortar tubes dug into rubble pits. The "boys" did a good job with the bog as it didn't stink and its best feature was that when artillery fired, you would get delightful puffs of hot air rushing from the pit to envelop your bum and privates.

Just a glimpse of life at the Dat, in the wet, in the early days of HQ1ATF.

Cpl Norman B Austin,
RAASC (May 1966 to May 1967)

RUSS MORISON'S 3 BOOKS ON LOGISTICS SUPPORT IN VIETNAM

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David McLachlan, AO, MAJGEN ret (extract)

Want to know how our combat troops in Vietnam were fed, fuelled, and munitioned and much, much more? Get the book!

119 Pages– Hard cover $30/copy plus p&h

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(Paraphrased) David Ferguson MAJGEN, AM CSC (ret)

250 pages-Hard cover $37/copy plus p&h

BOOK 3 -1st Australian Logistic Support Company (1ALSC) Bien Hoa 1965-66 Supporting the Combat Force by Russ Morison

1 ALSC deployed with 1 RAR deployed to South Vietnam in May 1965. This book tells the story of this quickly cobbled together unit of fourteen support elements.

Dealing exclusively with the activities of 1ALSC, many pieces of the jigsaw puzzle have been found to record their history. Whilst this book is about "ordinary soldiers" going about their professional business, it is also about healing, as some of our veterans and our Allies have returned to the Republic of Vietnam post conflict to help rebuild the country after all those years of conflict.

268 Pages–Hard cover $38/copy plus p&h

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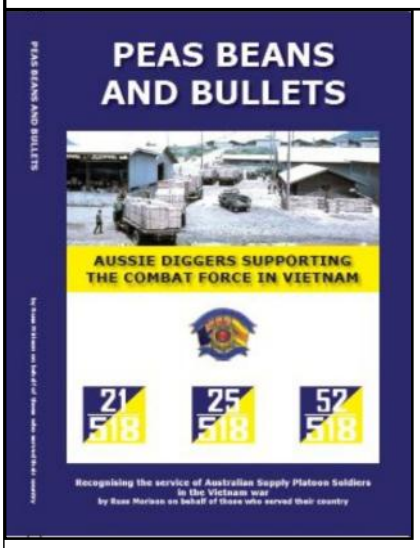

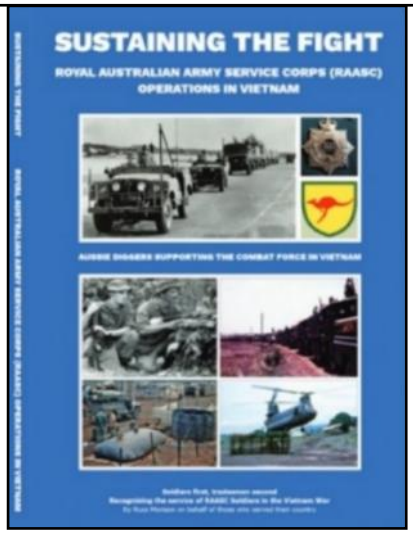

How to Shift into Pension Mode

When and how you can access your super to start an account-based pension.

If our working years can be regarded as the time when we aim to build up our superannuation savings, our retirement years can equally be regarded as the time when we aim to spend them. At least that's the objective for most Australians, which generally leads to the question: how do I start accessing my super funds when I do stop working, or maybe even before I stop working?

This article focuses on the basics, including the general eligibility rules around accessing your super and how to switch your super accumulation account to an account-based pension.

What age can I access my super?

To legally access your super, you generally need to have met a condition of release after turning 60-years-old. You can do so by either stopping work completely (retiring) or by keeping working and starting a transition to retirement income stream (TRIS). Doing so can enable you to reduce your current working hours and use your TRIS pension payments to top up your part-time income.

In either case, you have the options of turning on a pension income stream, making a lump sum cash withdrawal, or doing a combination of both.

How do I start a pension account?

Importantly, to start accessing your super, you will need to roll some or all of it over from your accumulation account into a newly created pension account.

Those starting a TRIS continue to receive compulsory super guarantee payments from their employer (which are taxed at the normal rate of 15%) into their super accumulation account. The funds held in a pension account can be accessed, however keeping in mind that investment earnings in the pre-retirement phase are also still taxed at 15%.

Most super funds offer pension account products and different investment options, similar to their accumulation account products. Those with a self-managed super fund should contact their SMSF accountant and/or speak to us to facilitate the super rollover and pension account conversion processes.

You may need to contact your super fund to find out their process, which is typically as simple as lodging a request with your fund by filling out a form and providing information such as how much of you super you want to roll over, and where to. Once your funds are in a pension account you could then take some out as a lump sum. The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has mandated minimum annual withdrawal amounts, which depend on your age.

There is a limit on the maximum amount that can be transferred as a tax-free retirement income stream from super to a pension account, known as the transfer balance cap. This is currently set at $2 million. The ATO keeps track of how much you transfer, and if you go over the cap it will levy an excess transfer balance tax. If you have more than $2 million in super you have the option of keeping the excess in your super account and paying up to 15% tax on your earnings, or you can withdraw the excess super as a lump sum.

What are the tax considerations in pension mode?

If you're aged 60 or over and fully retired, any income earned on your pension assets is tax free and so are the pension payments you withdraw.

Also, a major advantage is that the profits from any investments sold within a pension account are completely capital gains tax free.

What are the minimum pension withdrawal amounts?

Once you've rolled over some or all of your super to an account-based pension you are required by

law to withdraw a minimum pension amount each financial year, which is a percentage of your account balance based on your age. For new pensions, the minimum withdrawal amount is calculated on a pro-rata basis from when a pension commences to the end of the financial year.

There are restrictions on how much can be withdrawn tax free through a TRIS in a financial year if you're under 65, until you've met a condition of release. The minimum withdrawal amounts is 4% of your super balance and the maximum is 10%.

The table below shows the required minimum withdrawal rates if you're in pension phase and are fully retired. Source: *Australian Tax Office*

Any amounts leftover in your pension account when you die will go to your nominated beneficiaries. Depending on the type of beneficiary (reversionary, spouse, dependent or non-dependent) the amounts can be paid as an ongoing pension stream until the account runs out or as a lump sum.

Consider getting professional advice

If you're wanting total financial flexibility in retirement, you could consider leaving part of your money in super, rolling over some of it into an account-based pension, and also withdrawing lump sums whenever you need to.

There are a range of benefits from adopting a combination of your options, although there may also be potential tax consequences for both you and your beneficiaries.

Managing the combination of a super accumulation account, an account-based pension, an Age/DVA Pension entitlement (if eligible), potential investment earnings outside of super, and irregular lump sum payments, can be highly complex.

Using our services is a worthwhile consideration as you weigh up all of your retirement options.

On behalf of the team at PSK Private Wealth, I'd like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy new Year.

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Age on 1 July of pension commencement and on each 1 July thereafter	Minimum withdrawal amount based on pension balance for 2024/2025
Under 65	4%
65 to 74	5%
75 to 79	6%
80 to 84	7%
85 to 89	9%
90 to 94	11%
95 and over	14%

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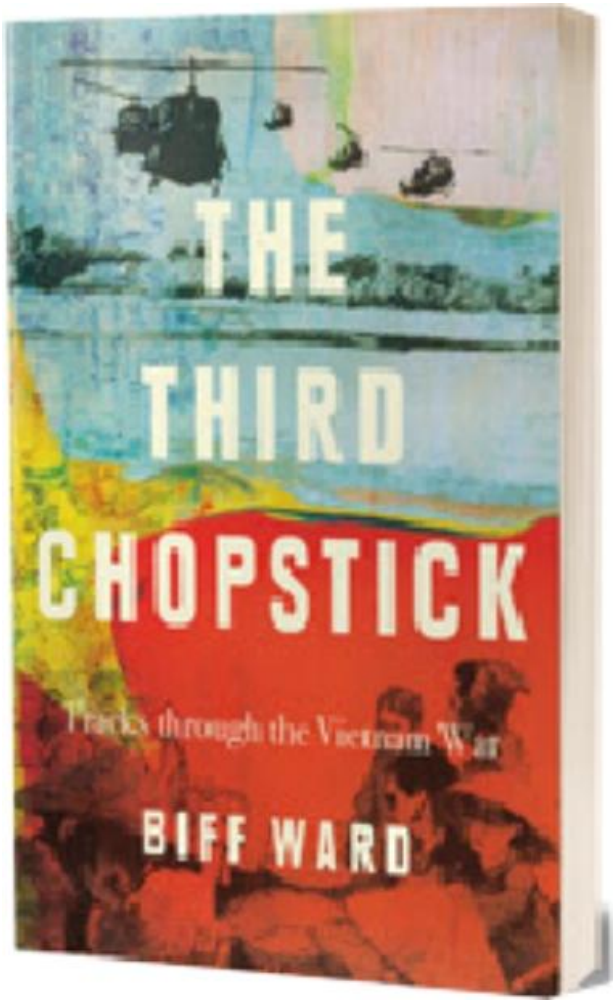
He contributed so much to our Federation and to veterans' welfare in general.

This book, amongst other things, is about him.



To get your copy simply ring the NSW Branch Granville Office on

02 9682 1788or order on-line at www.vvfagranville.org

Other recommended reading see page 60

THE KEY

so many now seem to be shadows in the memory,

men who served in Vietnam.

sons of families, who still know how disruption feels,

and how emptiness can be so gnawing!

sons thrown together into different corps and regiments,

some commanding: many with an eye to their troop's welfare;

some ORs and diggers: many commanding weapons with thoughts of mates,

and all hopeful of a future: prepared as best they could be,

less diffident, and less fearful than they had been:

Before!

when 'self', rather than the whole predominated.

Before

when they patrolled together,

never fully knowing their enemy's whereabouts, or their own nation's mood

at the time, or how it would evolve for them on their return.

yet for all, when in that quiet zone, alone with their thoughts

sometimes succumbing to a tear or smile of remembrance,

cleansing them of the humdrum about,

they again, will envisage real comrades in the shadows,

and feel that commanding love, so important for survival.

Graeme Foley

B Coy, 3RAR 1967-68

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

HMAS SYDNEY:

The bloody "American War" 1966-67

Part 13 of the story of HMAS Sydney, told by one of the crew, John Ingram., 'Collateral Duty'. The night we lost a "Cutter", and the race to a stricken US Submarine.

My other "co-lateral duty" (American terminology) when in Vung Tau harbour was the specific watch-keeping role of protection for the SYDNEY. Two ship's boats would be kept in the water ready for instant action. One was the open cutter, 32 foot in length and equipped with diving equipment including wet suits, weapons, explosives, radios and bottled gas. It was unmanned but under the watchful eye of a ship's diver stationed on the quarterdeck night and day. One night the cutter disappeared in the darkness, the "painter" securing it to the ship's transom having chafed in the strong current and tide. Panic arose of course when the loss was detected as the contents would've been "manna from heaven" in the hands of the enemy. Thankfully the cutter was detected hours later at dawn with contents intact and returned to the ship.

The other craft was a 25 foot semi enclosed motor boat deployed to tow around the ship a crude device which someone had designed and made onboard. I called it "The Scarifier". Agricultural in appearance and guaranteed to kill, not the enemy "swimmer" intent on blowing up the SYDNEY by affixing explosives to her hull, but the three occupants of the motor boat. The "Scarifier" was towed astern at best speed possible, commonly three knots and semi submerged to enable the coil of barbed wire five metres in width to snag floating objects in which could be lurking a saboteur.

I'd do a 4 hour "trick" in rotation with three other junior officers. The crew comprised an officer carrying a sub-machine gun (a vintage Thompson supplied originally to the ship's armoury in 1948), a brace of one-pound "scare charges" (designed to destroy the ear drums of swimmers), an able seaman as bow hand and look-out with a leading seaman as coxswain. In daytime this patrol was supposed to deter the enemy as he'd be able to see us approaching while at night entanglement in the barbed wire would cause drowning. The point overlooked by the designer of this contraption? The boat would either have to pass over the enemy or within metres: rather suicidal for all concerned. One sensed a Kamikaze-like mission.

There was a great deal of debris in the murky waters. I had the dubious pleasure of emptying a magazine or two into bloated, floating corpses of the farm animal variety. A colleague, on one of his night patrols, lobbed a scare charge in the immediate vicinity of my cabin to ensure I relieved him on time at 0350. My cabin was midships and the explosion was muffled. When I reciprocated months later my grenade had much greater effect as his cabin abutted the hull at the waterline. He never played that prank on me again!

The following short article was written by John Head, a soldier who served in Vietnam. I acknowledge it was first published in Rodney Nott's book The Long Haul: Vietnam: Logistics and Support 1962-75. This is one man's recollection of his time onboard the SYDNEY written, as it were, through "layman's eyes". In my opinion, he summarised the situation onboard very well indeed.

AN ARMY PERSPECTIVE

I know nothing of Navy matters or their procedures but let me tell you what I saw and felt at the time I arrived onboard HMAS SYDNEY by helicopter. We got off the helicopter to a beehive of activity, when I heard an explosion alongside the ship we all looked like we wanted to run for cover, but were told that charges were being dropped to deter or stun sappers from putting mines on the ship. (Not until many hours later was I and others told that this was routine procedure) and this went on non-stop until the ship sailed. The ship's engines and propellers were also turned over every so often to keep any underwater sappers away from the hull.

We were shown where to bunk down; our bunk area was below water level. This made you think every time a charge went off. I noticed the sailors were at some sort of action stations, as I saw them watching from the ship and they had on flack jackets and SLR rifles. The Bofor Guns were manned; they were doing their sailor stuff while the ship was being loaded. I and many others felt we were vulnerable, being seen from all angles from the shore. I even thought an RPG could reach us or a sniper could pick us off. Trying to find out what the alertness was about was hard, as sailors wanted to do their jobs and not be distracted. It was obvious to me that the sooner we left Vung Tau the happier the sailors would be.

When night came I witnessed one of the most spectacular events that have stayed with me to this day. If you can imagine that HMAS SYDNEY is a seat in a picture show and the hills of Vung Tau harbour was the screen, it was like watching a movie in cinemascope. On one side there were helicopters flying around then going in at a hill releasing rockets and mini gun fire, red tracer in a continuous red line from chopper to the ground, and in different areas of the bay were artillery explosions mortars and small arms fire from various engagements, tracers flying in different directions some red, green, blue, yellow.

This was strange to look at, as it was not one engagement but many.

VIETNAM: LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT 1962-1975

To think I had left the ground and was on a ship waiting for the enemy to attack us while charges were being thrown in the water, while the clearance divers did their stuff. Looking at the sailors I wondered what effect this might have on them for the rest of their lives, working on a great big steel box in Vung Tau harbour which was a floating bomb.

They must have watched TV and read in the newspapers all about the war in Vietnam and here I was with them watching the real life and death struggles of the fire fight; waiting for our turn? And to think that only the sailors above deck could see this, while those at their stations below decks could only hear some of it, to them every noise from outside the ship would be terrifying.

When would that dormant Russian mine activate and blow up sending HMAS SYDNEY to the bottom, or did this already happen as Hanoi Hanna had said and the SYDNEY had been raised and all this was TOP SECRET? No wonder the turn around times got better, but did the minds of the sailors and soldiers who were at anchor at Vung Tau? I don't think so. Plus I don't think it mattered where the ship was anchored in Vung Tau harbour, it would not have made any difference as the ship was a **Class A** target, full of sailors, troops and supplies, and if it could have been sunk, it would have been. It was the ship's crew, who stopped this, as they were on a WAR FOOTING, they knew they were a target and they foiled any attempt to sink her by doing very well what they were trained to do.

John Head – Vietnam Veteran (Army)

Captain Synnot had a remarkable ability to concurrently focus on the big and little picture. As well as our primary function, the operational role of moving the Army around with their shiploads of stuff, we were also the RAN's major sea training platform for junior sailors and RAN Reservists (officers and sailors). And, if that was not enough, we'd also be involved in multi-national maritime exercises.

One of these was a really big one in the Coral Sea. I was busy in my department when piped to the Bridge. SYDNEY was in the "main body" of the Task Force along with capital ships of the USN and RN. The Bridge team were busy with lots of chatter and activity but nonetheless the "Old Man" (a term of endearment for the captain) called me to his big chair. "I want an assurance, Ingram, we've adequate stocks of paints, brushes and cleaning gear to prepare the ship properly for our forthcoming (annual Admiral's) inspection". I was dumbfounded he was thinking three months ahead. In an organisation so rigidly tiered management wise, I felt awkward in giving him that assurance, but I did nonetheless. And yes, we did have the SYDNEY in great shape for the annual inspection I hasten to add.

But not always did things go so well. We were ploughing away at sea one Sunday afternoon when suddenly my office was plunged into complete darkness and the ventilation fan shut down. It's disconcerting when all you can hear is the constant growl of the turning shafts below and the thrashing of the propellers. I groped my way out of the compartment, up a ladder and through the manhole in the hatch where "normal" life existed. I phoned Damage Control HQ and reported the incident. "Could I please have power reconnected to 4 Papa flat?" "Sure" says my friend the Deputy Weapons Electrical Officer, "just as soon as your Duty Storeman locates a replacement spare for the Bridge gyro. Then you'll get your power back!". I assure you both happened with great haste. He had made his point most effectively!

In November 1966 SYDNEY, having fuelled in Brisbane Port, entered the Mary River and was preparing to embark the next battalion deploying to Vietnam following their final training exercises. The ship turned 180 degrees and was about to

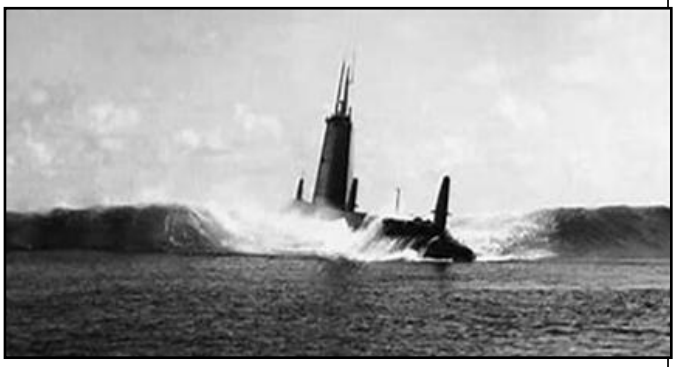
(Continued on page 53)

secure alongside the wharf when we were directed to proceed "at best possible speed" to aid a stricken submarine, the USS TIRU, aground on Frederick Reef 220 nautical miles north east of Gladstone. One can only imagine the looks of disbelief on the faces of the 600 plus soldiers formed up on the wharf ready to embark, enjoy a hot shower, a cold beer and a good sleep after weeks of playing war games in the mud, with the mossies, "drop bears" and crocodiles of the Shoalwater Bay exercise area.

We drove SYDNEY at her best possible speed of 24 knots weaving our way through the inner and outer reefs not knowing what to expect. I recall keeping, from memory, the first watch (2000-2359) as Officer of the Watch. Our navigation radar was basic with a maximum range of 20 miles and limited definition at one to two miles. Visually the heavy clouds cast dark shadows on the ocean giving the appearance of reefs. And in those pre-GPS days one was navigating when clear of land-based aids by "estimated positions" or EPs, an inexact science. We ploughed on with no sonars, let alone forward-looking ones. At this speed the ship, almost 300 metres in length, would take ages to stop. Carriers are not designed for high-speed manoeuvring. A real "white knuckle" ride as we attended to this emergency. Even though the captain and navigator were with me most of this watch I still had the responsibility for the ship and all who sailed in her. I was mightily relieved when I handed over to my relief at mid-night and went aft for some well-earned rest.

Before dawn a single white light was detected onboard the TIRU. I awoke as the SYDNEY slowed to manoeuvring speed and began her cautious approach to render assistance. The sight of the submarine was worse than we'd imagined. She'd hit the reef at 12 knots (officially, more probably 16 we were told at the time) while surfaced, her bow was riding high on the jagged coral while the stern submerged with breakers rolling along the entire outer hull. We felt under these conditions she may last two days at best, less should weather and sea conditions worsen. Getting a boat to her would be near impossible, risking even more lives. Besides with the sub's stern submerged where would an eight-inch rope towline be secured?

USS TIRU was the last conventionally powered (diesel electric) submarine to serve in the US Navy. She decommissioned in 1975 and was sunk as target practice in 1979.



USS TIRU aground on Frederick Reef

With radio contact now established with the TIRU her skipper advised he had two men, both lookouts when she grounded, missing and 16 men with assorted injuries. The rest of his crew of 90 were weary and fearful of their immediate future. Two days and nights of attempts to free the sub had drained them physically and emotionally. The sub was groaning and grinding as her plates flexed due to the constant battering of the three-metre-high swell against her hull. There was also the possibility that, as her diesel and fresh water tanks lightened, her displacement would reduce and she'd slide astern off the reef and sink in the deep waters, taking all onboard to a watery grave. It was not known then whether the outer hull had been breached, her sonar domes ripped out and her keel buckled. Not a great scenario and one that challenged our "Old Man" and his team in the SYDNEY.

First up was the decision to provide urgent medical assistance to the injured crew. Unfortunately, our Wessex hellicopters were at NAS Nowra so our sole medical officer could not be lowered into the sub from above. Undeterred by the prevailing conditions, Surgeon Lieutenant Sam Sakker stepped forward. Once attired in a wet suit and with as many vital surgical instruments and drugs as he could cram inside the garment, Sam began the long swim to the sub with a long lifeline around his waist. From what we could see from a distance of around 400 metres he made three attempts to hold on to the barnacle encrusted hull

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but each time was swept off. The final attempt saw him getting a hand grip on the tower from which he was able to ascend and enter the sub. He then set up an emergency operating table and began saving lives. He was to remain onboard TIRU until she berthed in Brisbane for emergency repairs a week later.

SYDNEY's boats had begun at first light to search for the two missing look-outs. After the grounding these men had been ordered forward by the skipper in the darkness to take soundings to determine water depth. Both were swept away, over the reef into a lagoon where they drifted around, suspended in their lifejackets. When recovered by one of SYDNEY's motor cutters, which had managed to locate a narrow channel in which to enter the coral ringed atoll, they were sunburnt, dehydrated and traumatised by the experience. When delivered safely onboard the SYDNEY the first thing they asked for was a "coke"! (Coca Cola), Meanwhile, onboard the SYDNEY we were preparing to do whatever possible should TIRU begin to break up. This included the obvious rescue of her complement, environmental concerns involving her near full diesoline fuel tanks and information from US authorities in Guam, Yokosuka and Pearl Harbor as to how to secure towing lines without causing even greater risk to the submarine.

No specialised submarine recovery vessel was available in Australian waters. Hence the decision was made to sail VENDETTA from Sydney and the ocean-going tug SS CARLOCK from Brisbane Port. On arrival two days later, sea conditions had moderated somewhat and the tug was able to get a line across to the sub. There followed several attempts by VENDETTA and the tug pulling in unison to free the sub, all unsuccessful. SYDNEY was ordered to leave the scene, return to the Mary River, recover the battalion and return to Brisbane.

Any further delay would've jeopardised our operational obligations. TIRU was later pulled off the reef and made her own way to Brisbane for drydocking whereupon she was inspected for damage. Following temporary repairs to her sonar dome, outer hull, and keel, the submarine made her way from Australia to the United States Naval Ship Repair Facility, Yokosuka, Japan.

SS CARLOCK's sister tug FORCEFUL

Not all diversions or incidents at sea end well. On this occasion SYDNEY was returning from South Vietnam. It was a Sunday and we were north of Fraser Island. The ship's company was paraded in dress white uniforms on the flight deck aft for inspection by the captain followed by a ecumenical church service.

When the captain was called to the Bridge, we knew something remiss had occurred. On the far horizon in perfect weather asea conditions the starboard lookout had detected a floating obstacle several miles distant. 15 minutes later SDNEY hove to alongside then reported to Brisbane Maritime Police the location of the upturned hull of a trimaran. Divers were soon in the water only to discover the skeletal remains of the crew still attached to their safety harnesses. It transpired the vessel had lost contact with Brisbane radio the previous week while competing in the Brisbane to Gladstone yacht race. The starboard float was damaged with a section missing indicating collision at speed, possibly at night with a whale or suchlike, causing the vessel to flip with the crew potentially injured and trapped below. In any case it was a pitiful sight wallowing and semi submerged upside down..

(Continued on page 55)

Skilful handling by the seaplane crane driver and our divers managed to right the vessel and drain it of many tonnes of water. However, as soon as the crane tried to lift the waterlogged plywood and fibre glassed hull, it began to break up as was expected.

With as much debris and personal possessions recovered as possible the ship got underway but that was not the end of the story. The police had attempted to contact the owner only to learn he was lost in the stricken yacht. He'd bought the vessel recently and was attempting to sail her "north about" to Fremantle when they came to grief. The former owner set about abusing the Navy and blaming the SYDNEY for failing to recover the craft intact or towing to a safe harbour. The story became a media "beat up". SYDNEY had done everything possible to salvage the craft, obtain forensic evidence and preserve the remains of the deceased so bereaved families could have "closure" to a sad event at sea.

Ill-fated multi hulled VAGABOND off QLD coast

Our divers entered the submerged hull and discovered white skeletal remains of the crew, still secured to the hull by lifelines. It appeared the collision had occurred at night, days or more previous. The ship reported details to Water Police in Brisbane seeking instructions as to the retention of evidence. "Could we attempt to salvage the catamaran so authorities could determine the cause of the tragedy?". This was attempted using our heavy lift crane sited abaft the island structure, with hawsers secured around the triple hulls. But the waterlogged fibre glass coated light weight plywood hull disintegrated under the weight of tonnes of water contained therein.

SYDNEY wasn't only deeply involved in operational logistics in Vietnam and sea training role for young sailors, but in aid to civil authorities in emergencies. Such was the case following disastrous bushfires which peaked in Hobart on "Black Tuesday", 7 February 1967. 62 people lost their lives, 7500 builders were burnt out, tram cars had ignited on city streets and the Cascade brewery razed to the ground along with four million bottles resulting in a molten silicon hillock.

Not all soldiers enjoyed the prospect of or even the experience of living onboard SYDNEY while destined for operations in a war zone. I cite examples:

When we embarked a battalion at Garden Island the troops were bussed from Holsworthy. Some individuals had over imbibed to the point they needed assistance in ascending the gangway along with their kit bags and weapons. The more extreme cases were stretchered onboard. SYDNEY's small medical team checked soldiers at the gangway and those considered under the influence were confined to stretchers rigged in the open boat spaces and under constant surveillance until sober. This sometimes meant the ship was well clear of the harbour and heading north.

On another occasion we were embarking an Enoggera based battalion in Brisbane Port. The soldiers exited the buses wharf-side and ascended the gangway. Instead of following directions to his allocated quarters, one enterprising soldier walked through the hangar space and out the other side whereupon he stripped to his underpants, dived into the murky waters of the Brisbane River and swam to the other side. He was later recovered by the police and returned to barracks. We had the pleasure of delivering him to Vung Tau the following year. There was no escape!

Sailors, too, resorted to some unusual activities to avoid the war.

One young sailor never washed or ironed his kit preferring to buy new items from the ship's clothing ("Slops") store. This was expensive for him and the store couldn't keep up the supply of new items. His divisional officer was monitoring this strange behaviour while providing counsel along with the Medical Officer. There is a medical term for this condition but in the end the sailor's

(Continued on page 56)

request to be discharged "Unsuitable" from the Navy was both recommended and accepted.

In another case an Able Seaman Steward I'll call "Smith" was diagnosed with an STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease). As such he couldn't be employed in the Wardroom Mess for health reasons. While receiving treatment and until cleared by the Medical Officer, he was employed in the Seaman department chipping rust, painting, scrubbing and so forth. Smith, not entirely unexpectedly, much preferred working outside in the fresh air rather than in the stifling air between decks.

A month or so later I was notified the young lad had a fresh STD: we had another discussion about the perils of such diseases. This time I arranged with the Senior Engineer for him to be temporarily employed in the "Bilge Cleaning Party", the most detested job onboard as it entailed using nasty chemicals to scrub empty fuel tanks. After two weeks of this tough activity, he sought a discharge from the Navy as he'd met a nice girl and planned to marry. I told him no "nice" girl would wish to be involved with a man who contacted VD. I also assured him I knew his "game" was to get out of the Navy at any price.

Smith reacted badly to this advice and within months presented with another fresh VD infection. This time I assigned him indefinitely to the Bilge Cleaning Party and cautioned him being discharged "Services No Longer Required" would have serious implications in future employment prospects once a civilian. In any case I'd not be recommending his release, adding he was basically a good man and if he was to marry and raise a family, he needed to act responsibly.

There are two "happy endings" to this saga. The following year, in October 1967, as I was posting out of the SYDNEY after our return to Garden Island from deployment, Smith introduced me to his new wife, the "nice" girl he'd met. She thanked me profusely for "turning her husband around" and retaining him in the Navy. Then five years later my family and I flew by QANTAS 747B to the UK to take up a posting. As the aircraft prepared for take-off at Mascot the Chief Purser addressed passengers" Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome aboard QF1, the Kangaroo Route to London, my name is ……". I could not believe my ears! Shortly after we departed and the Seat Belt sign was switched off, Chief Purser "Smith", impeccably dressed, came to see me explaining he'd seen my name on the passenger list and was delighted to have us onboard. We were very well cared for on the eight-hour leg to Singapore.

When warships pass at sea there's the exchange of identities as well as traditional marks of respect. On this occasion we were heading south from Vietnam to the east of PNG. We knew MELBOURNE was tracking north along with SUPPLY and escort YARRA. There' always competition as to who secures a visual sighting first and transmits a signal by light. Our captain was the senior captain afloat in the RAN while the Fleet Commander was flying his Flag in the flagship. "One upmanship" was at stake.

With the higher flag bridge in the MELBOURNE the Admiral gained a visual sighting of us first and claimed the honours. In his signal he referred to our captain as "Colonel" Synnot whereupon our captain responded with "Thanks for the welcome; sorry you're unable to see my Privates". Touché!

YARRA & MELBOURNE sucking from SUPPLY with SYDNEY top right. Rendezvous with Flagship north of PNG

In our next issue John begins with storm warnings and rescue missions in Hong Kong just prior to a new fit-out and upgrade to HMAS Sydney.

Invitation to TPIs

If you are a TPI, you are invited to join the TPI Veterans' Association of NSW. You will then ***be eligible to enjoy the following benefits***:

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Be eligible to attend monthly meetings in Sydney and enjoy camaraderie with fellow TPIs afterwards.

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Be part of a dynamic organisation that has an up-to-date business plan.

Have your interests and welfare represented in Canberra.

Have the TPI Veterans' Association representing you at major ceremonial events.

……

To join, please call the office on (02) 9235-1466; or email our membership officer, Sara to request an application form (email office@tpinsw.org.au).

Or call into the office on Mondays to Thursdays between 9am and 4pm. (Level 4, 55 York Street, Sydney).

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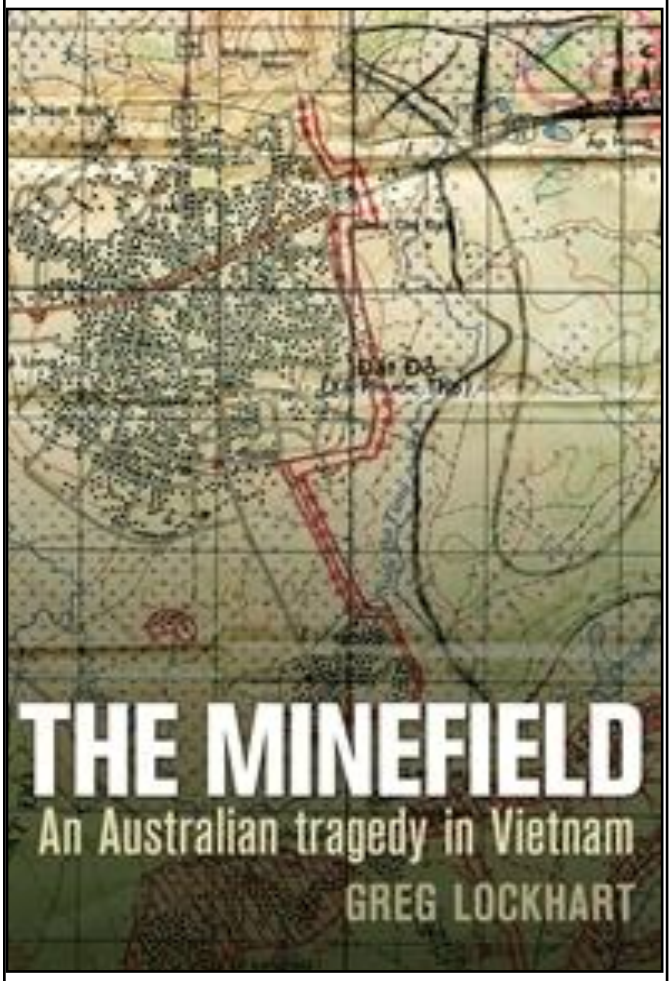

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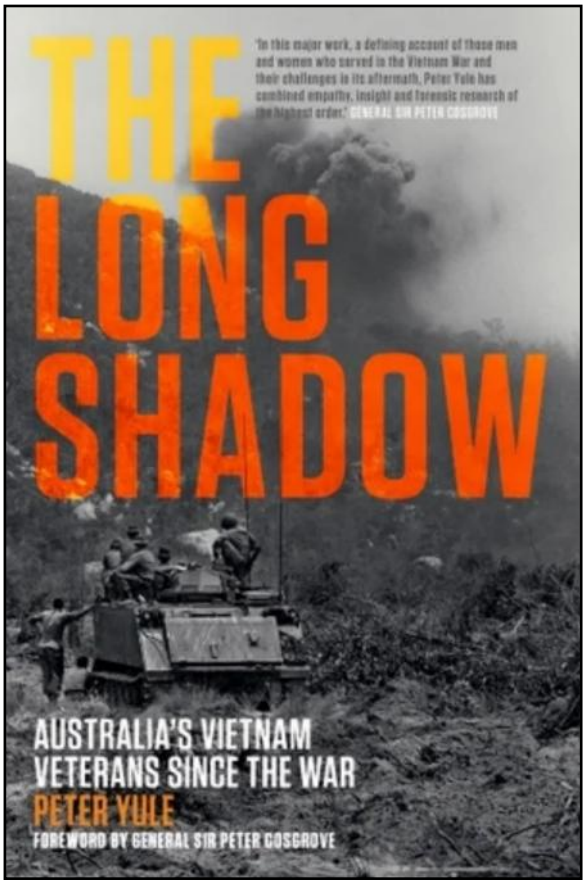
What happened to us in Vietnam and what's happened to us since we returned home?



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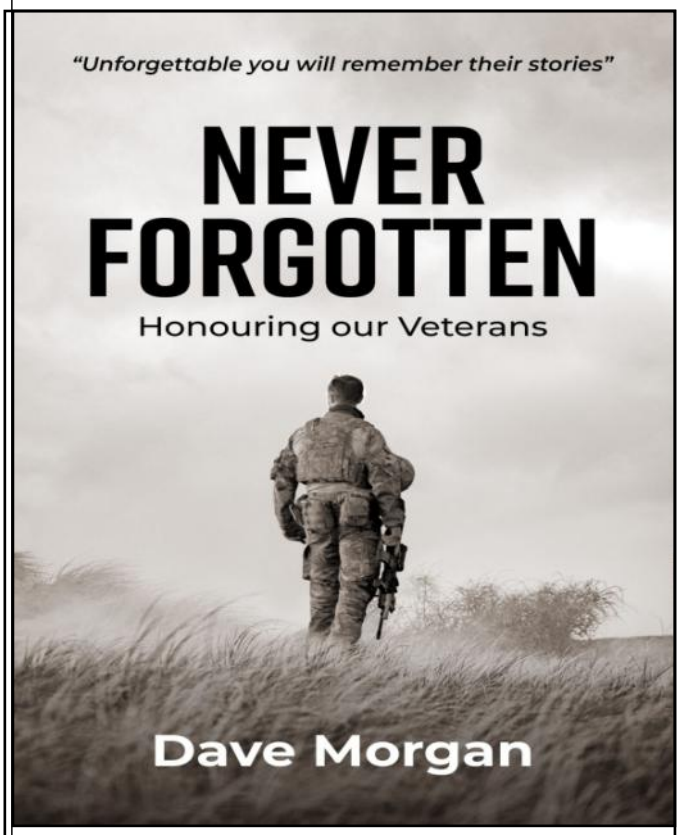


Never Forgotten

Honouring Our Veterans

Author: Dave Morgan

ISBN: 9781923144613

$32.99

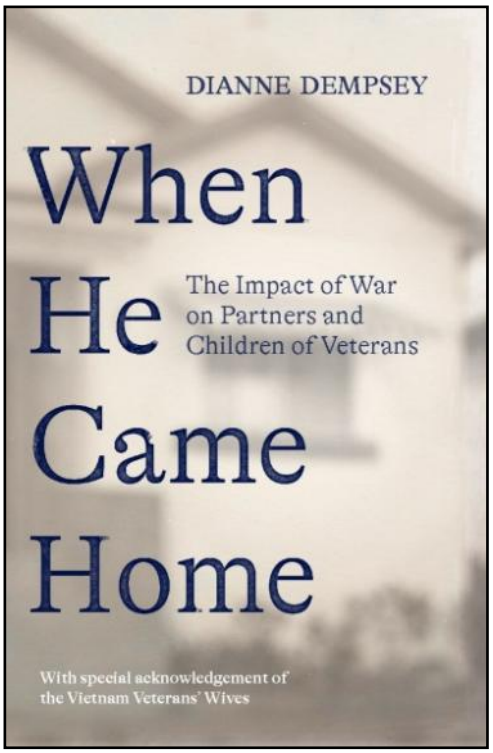
from Big Sky Publishing

Available on-line through Big Sky Publishing
https://www.bigskypublishing.com.au
All proceeds from this book will be donated to Legacy Australia.
Also available at:

Amazon.com.au	$22.00 (23 Feb 2025)
Booktopia.com.au	$30.25 (23 Feb 2025)
Limited Big W stores	$22.00 (23 Feb 2025)

How did our families cope when we came home?

Worth reading to better understand what it was like for the wives and children.



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Australian Scholarly Publishing
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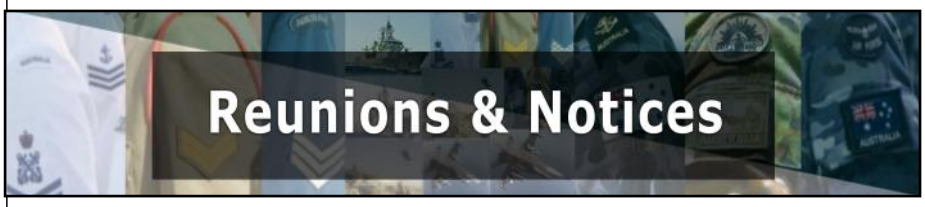


1966 MOBI REUNION
Date: 1 Jan 2026
MOBI's of 1966 entry. We are planning a reunion early 2026 for our 60th.
Please indicate your interest ASAP by text, email or phone.
Reunion details
Contact details
Name: Denis (Shady or Dick) Lane
Phone: 0434 505 889
Email: seaview_38@bigpond.com

75th Anniversary of the Formation of Women's Royal Australian Army Corps
Date: 12 Feb 2026
12-16 February 2026. WRAAC - WRAAC Association WA invite all WRAAC, RAANC, CMF, RESERVES and ADF.
Visit WRAAC 75th Facebook page for details or email.
Reunion details
Location: Perth, WA
Contact details
Name: Delma Lim
Phone: 0437 489 638
Email: wraac_wa@hotmail.com

Navy HMAS Cerberus General entry 20/1985
Date: 21 Feb 2026
40 years RAN basic training graduation.
Reunion details
Location: Perth, WA
Contact details
Name: Mark Shuttleworth
Phone: 0418 906 489
Email: shuttm@outlook.com

HMAS Leeuwin 54th Marks Morrow Howden 50 Year Reunion
Date: 5 Mar 2026
5 - 7 March 2026. Ahoy there, Shipmates - save the date. A gathering to remember our time together at Leeuwin, Partners are most welcome and encouraged to join us.
Reunion details
Location: Kawana Surf Club, QLD
Contact details
Name: Tony Yarnold
Phone: 0417 228 276
Email: tyarnold1960@gmail.com

HMAS Leeuwin, Ramsay Stevenson Divisions, 55th Intake
Date: 17 Apr 2026
17 - 22 April 2026. This reunion will celebrate 50 years since we walked through the gates of HMAS Leeuwin. All recruits and their partners are welcome and encouraged to attend. There be a meet and greet night, Reunion Dinner and a farewell breakfast. Reunion program including venues and cost to be confirmed.
Reunion details
Location: Adelaide
Contact details
Name: Ian Taylor
Email: 55threunion2026@gmail.com

HMAS Leuwin 16th Intake (1966-1967)
Date: 19 Jun 2026
19 - 22 June 2026. 60th anniversary reunion. Contact Colin (below) or Ken Griffin - harlandgriffin@hotmail.com
Reunion details
Location: Port Macquarie
Contact details
Name: Colin Hardie
Phone: 0416 250 242
Email: hardiecolin4@gmail.com

'A' Battery Association Inc. "WARNING ORDER 2026!" 155th Birthday & Reunion
Date: 31 Jul 2026
31 July - 1 August 2026. Celebrating the 155th Birthday of both the Royal Australian Artillery and 'A' Battery, culminating with a formal cocktail party at the Brisbane Tattersall's Club on 01 August 2026. More information on this event can be found on the association's website, under "Upcoming Activities". "Once 'A' Gunner, always 'A' Gunner!" Once in 'A' Battery, always in 'A' Battery!" Email the below or management@abtyassn.org.au
Reunion details
Location: Brisbane, QLD
Contact details
Name: 'A' Battery Association Incorporated
Phone: 0411 166 904
Email: abtyassn@abtyassn.org.au
Website: https://www.australianartilleryassociation.org/a_bty_association/index.html

B. Company 2 RARNZ 70-71
Date: 16 Aug 2026
Reunion details
16 - 21 August 2026.
Location: Maroochydore
Contact details
Name: Michael Gay
Phone: 0439 031 285
Email:
gaymick@bigpond.com.au

60th ANNIVERSARY HQ1ATF ASSOCIATION REUNION
Date: 16 Nov 2026
16 - 20 November 2026. Contact John for all information.
Reunion details
Location: Tiona Holiday Park, Pacific Palms
Contact details
Name: John Verhelst
Phone:
Email: jeverhelst@gmail.com
Website: www.hq1atf.org

"Someday we'll be laughin' at this cockup at some flamin' reunion!"

SEEKING

PETER HENNESSY & IAN COMPTON

"Dobbo" is seeking two mates from the 2nd Intake. We believe Peter Hennessy was from Port Macquarie and served with 5 RAR. Ian Compton may have come from Granville.

Anyone who knows of both or either is asked to contact:

'Dobbo' via email to:

wgdobson@bigpond.com

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

MCMILLAN JOHN

Chris Joannides is seeking
2792737 John McMillan
86 Transport Platoon RAASC
1970 -1971.

Anyone knowing of Johns' whereabouts is asked to contact Chris direct via email to Christo@gmail.com

Seeking any information re the following who served with 131 Div Loc Bty RAA in SVN - Edward Bruce Cooper b.1950; Frederick Brian Markwick b.1948; Terry Leslie Welsh b.1949; Robert Andrew Bruce b.1945; Eric Raymond Thompson b.1948; John Creighton Martin b. 1941; 131 Locators Association Inc. - Member.

Contact: Name: Peter
Phone: 0409 697 865

PAUL BRANDT

Trying to get into contact with ex-serviceman Paul 'pour habit' Brandt.

We are due for a few beers. Retired 2023. Last known whereabouts: 5th Engineer Support Regiment.

Contact Wazza
Phone: 0490 028 064

LOST LOCATORS

Seeking any information re the following who served with 131 Div Loc Bty RAA in SVN - Edward Bruce Cooper b.1950; Frederick Brian Markwick b.1948; Terry Leslie Welsh b.1949; Robert Andrew Bruce b.1945; Eric Raymond Thompson b.1948; John Creighton Martin b. 1941; 131 Locators Association Inc. - Member.
Contact:
Name: Peter
Phone: 0409 697 865

WANTED KNOWN

Did you serve in Saigon, Vung tau or Nui Dat?

I am putting together my fourth book (rough title) "Proud to be a Pogo-Aussie Diggers Supporting the Combat Force" and I would like to hear your stories.

Contact:: Russ Morison

Phone: 0408 947 935

Email: dabblers3@gmail.com

See adverts for Russ's 3 other books on page 47 of this issue.

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** Email: **billr@vvfagranville.org**
PO Box 170, (8 Mary St.) National Secretary: **Ron O'Connor JP** Email: **secretary@vvfagranville.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.vvfagranville.org
secretary@vvfagranville.org
President: **Bill Roberts OAM**
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
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: **Warren Willis**
Mob 0447 066 996
warren.willis@bigpond.com

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

EUROBODALLA
28 Emmott St.
Moruya 2537
Ph: (02) 4474 2362
President: **Russell Graham**
Mob 0418 721 745
Secretary: **Helen Kop**
Mob 0419 201 788
helen_kop@bigpond.com

GREAT LAKES
2/60 Kenrose St.,
Forster, 2428
Office: 0480 283 744
vvaglforster@gmail.com
President: **Derek Hinde**
Secretary: **Paul Dawson**
0413 886 265
Hours: Mon & Thur 1000-1300

HASTINGS MANNING MACLEAY
PO Box 5330
Port Macquarie 2444
Office at Wauchope RSL Sub-Branch
Office Ph: (02) 6581 5230
Advocate only: 0493 717 807
Vets614@gmail.com
President: **Bill Wagner**
Secretary: **Jill Opie**
Hours: 1000-1330 Tue, Wed, Thu.

ILLAWARRA
Legacy House 96 Market St
Wollongong NSW 2500
Ph: (02) 4228 6774
vvaaill@aapt.net.au
President: **Robert Cohen**
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@vvfamudgee.org
President: **Ken Atkinson**
Mob 0428 246 147
Secretary: TBA
Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed 9:30-3:30

NEWCASTLE & HUNTER
17 Tyrrell St., PO Box 288
Wallsend 2287
Ph: (02) 4951 2666
nclvets@bigpond.net.au
President: **Michael Frost**
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: 0457 258 891
Email: ralphtodd@bigpond.com

SHOALHAVEN
PO Box 3229
North Nowra NSW 2541
President: **Clyde Poulton**
Mob 0412 642 848
Secretary: **Carl Robinson**
shoalhaven.vietvets1@gmail.com

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

TAYLORS ARM
798 North Bank Rd
Taylors Arm 2447
President: **TBA**
Ph: 02 6564 2153
Secretary: **Stephen Spear**
Mob 0439 642 181
Email: cvpb16@hotmail.com

WENTWORTH-COOMEALLA
Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat
PO Box 397
Dareton NSW 2717
Ph: 03 5027 4447
rdveteransretreat@iinet.net.au
President: **Michael Chopping**
Mob 0481 306 854
Secretary: **Geoff Forde**
Mob 0419 114853

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

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

VICTORIA
VVF Victorian Branch Inc
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 167
Newcomb Vic 3219
13 Tyson Loop
Charlemont Vic 3217
President: **John Arnold OAM**
johnrayarnold44@igmail.com
Secretary: **Iris Cargill JP**
Mob 0488 053 973
ritscargill@yahoo.com
Mon - Wed 0900 -1400
VIC SUB – BRANCHES
Hamilton: Bill Garrett
0438 722 144
Grampians: Ron Jensen
0409 023 487
Respite Housing For Veterans in need
Bowder Veterans Housing
160 Coppards Rd Whittington 3219.
Mob: 0488 053 973

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**

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**
Mob 0448 195 020
president@vvfqld.com
State Sec/Treas: **Peter Cameron OAM**
Mob 0408 276 044
treasurer@vvfqld.com
www.vvfqld.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**
Mob 0424 476 027
Secretary/Treasurer: **Peter Cameron OAM**
Mob 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
secretary@vsctsv.org.au
President: **Jason Ballard**
Secretary: **Alison Abby**

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
vvfsa@tpg.com.au
http://vvfsa.org.au
President: **Mal Thiele OAM JP**
Secretary: **Don Cochrane**
SA ZONE REPS
BROKEN HILL
Des Kennedy
M: 0412 458 054
MILITARY MUSEUM BUBLACOWIE
Welfare Officer: **Chris Soar**
Mobs 0448 994 561/0428 377 287
Ph: 08 8853 4379
REPS
ALICE SPRINGS AREA
Alan Wilkes
KATHERINE AREA
Scott Landers

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

TASMANIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY MEMBERS WANTING ADVOCACY SERVICES ARE ASKED TO CONTACT THE OUTREACH PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR AT GRANVILLE

Mr. Dennis Hanmer OAM on 02 9682 1788

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.

Honour Their Legacy. Preserve Their Memory.

We invite you to support the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway

a place of reflection dedicated to the courage and sacrifice of our veterans.

Your tax-deductible donation helps preserve this living memorial
and keeps their stories alive for future generations.

Donate now to ensure the values of Kokoda endure.

www.kokodawalkway.com.au/support-us

Thank you for your support.

admin@kokodawalkway.com.au | ☎ 9166 0890 (Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm)

OPEN ARMS Veterans & Families Counselling

OPEN ARMS Veterans & Families Counselling
1800 011 046
Veterans & Families Counselling

Australian Government Department of Defence
1800 628 036
Mental Health all-hours Support Line

Lifeline
13 11 14
Lifeline Australia

Transitioning from the ADF

After years of service in the ADF, transitioning from full-time military to civilian life can present unique challenges for even the most accomplished veteran. Many Open Arms counsellors have a military background, and have also been trained to work with veterans, so they can help you make a successful transition into civilian life.

Common challenges

Some challenges faced when transitioning to civilian life include:

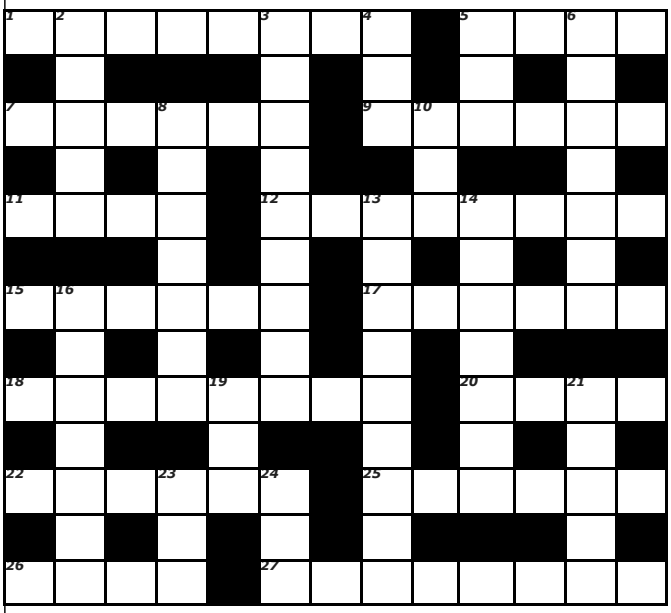
- finding a new job outside defence
- integrating into a new community
- navigating a different medical system
- finding appropriate housing
- enrolling kids in a new school
- establishing a different family dynamic

Stepping Out

Stepping Out is Open Arms most popular workshop for those transitioning, to learn

- the experience of change as part of life
- the transition from the ADF to civilian life
- skills for planning ahead
- skills for staying motivated and adaptable
- expectations, attitudes and troubleshooting
- maintaining relationships and seeking support

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

1. Particular
5. Noisy metal dome
7. Prior
9. Powerful
11. vend
12. Metal glove
15. Tall measure
17. Town in Qld
18. Nomad
20. Zodiac symbol
22. Slang for wife
25. Fearful
26. Actor '*Pretty Woman*'
27. Cabinet member

DOWN

2. Portion
3. Cargo ship
4. Lettuce
5. Pub counter
6. Encased torch
8. Owed to
10. Metallic element
13. Unsure
14. Firing mechanism
16. Look over
19. Flightless bird
21. Wonderland girl
23. Observe
24. Total

Solution next issue

JULY 2025 SOLUTION

■	I	M	P	O	R	T	S	■	T	S	A	R
S	■	U	■	P	■	R	■	P	■	I	■	A
E	A	G	L	E	■	Y	O	U	N	G	E	R
R	■	■	■	R	■	I	■	B	■	N	■	E
V	I	L	L	A	I	N	■	L	E	A	P	■
I	■	A	■	■	■	G	■	I	■	T	■	M
C	A	N	D	L	E	■	O	C	C	U	P	Y
E	■	D	■	E	■	S	■	■	■	R	■	S
■	A	S	I	A	■	C	O	N	N	E	C	T
O	■	C	■	G	■	H	■	E	■	■	■	E
M	E	A	S	U	R	E	■	C	L	E	A	R
I	■	P	■	E	■	M	■	K	■	R	■	Y
T	I	E	D	■	B	E	E	S	W	A	X	■

THE UNKNOWN COMIC

A man died and went to Heaven. St Peter says to him "Before you meet with God, I should tell you, to be honest you really didn't do anything particularly good. We're not really sure what to do with you. Can you tell us anything you did that can help us make a decision?" The newly arrived soul thought for a moment and replied, "Yeah, once I was driving along and came upon a little old lady who was being harassed by a group of thugs. So I pulled over and went up to the leader of the thugs. a big, muscular guy with a ring pierced through his lip. Well, I tore the ring out of his lip, and told him he and his gang had better stop bothering this lady or they would have to deal with me!" St Peter says, "Wow that's impressive, "When did this happen?" "About three minutes ago," came the reply.

A tough old country guy counselled his granddaughter that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gun powder on her porridge every morning.
The granddaughter did this religiously until the age of 103, when she died. She left behind 14 children, 30 grandchildren, 45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren, and a 40-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.

Two friends are walking their dogs -- a Dalmatian and a Chihuahua -- when they smell something delicious coming from a nearby restaurant. The guy with the Dalmatian says, "Let's get something to eat." But the guy with the Chihuahua says, "We can't go in there, we have dogs with us." So the first guy says, "Just follow my lead." He puts on a pair of sunglasses and walks into the restaurant. "Sorry," says the owner, "no pets allowed." "But this is my seeing-eye dog," the guy with the Dalmatian says. "A Dalmatian?" "Yes, they're using them now." The owner says, "Very well, then, come on in." The guy with the Chihuahua repeats the process and gets the same response from the owner: "Sorry, pal, no pets allowed." "But this is my seeing-eye dog," says the second guy. "A Chihuahua?" asks the incredulous owner. "A Chihuahua?!," says the man in the dark glasses. "They gave me a Chihuahua?!"

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.

OPEN ARMS Veterans & Families Counselling

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

FORMERLY KNOWN AS

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

VVCS

Call 24/7

A service founded by Vietnam veterans

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.

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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

Website: : www.vvfagranville.org

01/01—31/12 Yearly

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 IN THE BOX BELOW**]**

SERVICE NUMBER	SERVICE UNIT	O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE
		[If applicable – optional]

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			
			$
			$
Stock item number and prices are merchandise lists at branches.	available on line and from And, inside your Newsletter.	TOTLAL AMOUNT DUE	$

SELECT YOUR PAYMENT METHOD (Tick one only) CASH _____ CHq ___ CREDIT CARD ___ DIRECT DEBIT ___

CREDIT CARD DETAILS (Mastercard or VISA only)

CARD HOLDER NAME (PRINT)	CREDIT CARD NUMBER			

EXPIRY DATE	TRANSACTION AMOUNT	SIGNATURE
_ _/_ _ _ _	$	

CHEQUES FROM MAJOR BANKS ONLY WILL BE ACCEPTED. CBA, WESTPAC, NAB, ANZ.

PHONE FOR BANK TRANSFER PAYMENTS. INCLUDE NAME AS REFERENCE.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS MAY BE PHONED IN TO (02) 9682 1788 MON-THU 10AM – 3PM.

Email: accounts@vvfagranville.org Post: VVPPAA NSW PO Box170 Granville NSW 2142

OFFICE USE ONLY

MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT DATE:	**DONATION RECEIPT DATE:**
MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT NO. :	**DONATION RECEIPT NO. :**
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

OFFICE USE ONLY
MEMBERSHIP REGISTERY
DETAILS CHANGED
DATE: ____/____/____

INITIALS: _____

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@vvfagranville.org

MERCHANDISE LIST

STOCKS AS AVAILABLE ANY REORDER MAY DELAY DELIVERY

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 ENS	5.00
1105	NSW STICKER	6.00		1403	LAPEL PIN ARMY	8.00
1107	RED PEN VVFA	8.00		1404	LAPEL PIN RAR	8.00
1108	NSW STUBBY HOLDER	10.00		1405	LAPEL PIN RAAF	8.00
1109	STUBBY HOLDER TRICOLOR	10.00		1406	LAPEL PIN CROSS	8.00
1111	VVFA GREEN CAP	22.00		1411	LAPEL PIN FAMILY	7.00
1112	VVFA BLUE CAP	25.00		1500	STICKER TWIN SET REG	7.00
1113	VVFA WHITE CAP	25.00		1501	STICKER REGULAR	7.00
1114	VVFA BLACK CAP	25.00		1507	STICKER TWIN SET NASHO	7.00
1115	CAP BLACK ^62-75’	25.00		1502	STICKER NASHO	7.00
1120	Mr. GADGET	8.00		1503	STICKER DAMN PROUD	8.00
1121	NOTEBOOK/PEN	8.00		1504	STICKER LOVE or LEAVE	5.00
1122	COOLER TOTE	14.00		1506	STICKER SUPPORT	7.00
1125	KEYRING NAVY	8.00		1508	STICKER SUPPORT NAVY	7.00
1126	KEYRING ARMY	8.00		1509	STICKER NAVY VET	7.00
1127	KEYRING RAR	10.00		1510	STICKER SUPPORT ARMY	7.00
1128	KEYRING RAAF	8.00		1511	STICKER ARMY VET	7.00
1129	KEYRING VVFA	10.00		1512	STICKER SUPPORT RAAF	7.00
1130	LANYARD	10.00		1513	STICKER RAAF VET	7.00
1201	THE MINEFIELD	45.00		1514	STICKER AFGHAN VET	5.00
3440	HOW TO RESEARCH	45.00		1515	STICKER IRAQ VET	5.00
3442	THIRD CHOPSTICK	40.00		1516	STICKER SOMALIA VET	5.00
3445	LONG SHADOW	POA		1517	STICKER TIMOR VET	5.00

MERCHANDISE IMAGES

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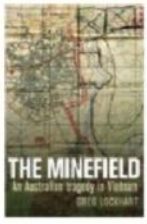

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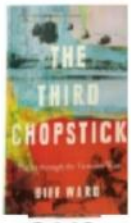

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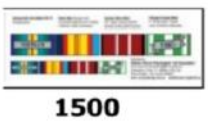

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MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

PLEASE CHECK STOCK AVAILABILITY BEFOREPLACING ORDER

NAME:				
ADDRESS:				
TOWN:		STATE:		PC:
PHONE:		ALT PHONE:		
EMAIL:				

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE ea	QTY	TOTAL
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
		$		$
XXXXXX	POSTAGE & HANDLING	$		$
XXXXXX	RAFFLE TICKET/S	$ 2.00		$
XXXXXX	DONATION AMOUNT	XXXXXX	XXXX	$
XXXXXX	TOTAL ORDER VALUE	XXXXXX	XXXX	$

DELIVERY ADDRESS:	
(IF DIFFERENT TO ABOVE)	

PAYMENT METHOD M/CARD VISA DIRECT DEBIT **NO CHQUES OR MONEY ORDERS ACCEPTED**
(Cross out payment type that does not apply)

NAME ON CARD:				
CARD NUMBER:				
EXPIRY DATE:	/	APPROVED AMOUNT: $		
SIGNATURE & DATE:				

MERCHANDISE SPECIALS June-Dec 2025

ONLY WHILE STOCKS LAST
ALSO AVAILABLE ON LINE
http://www.vvfagranville.org and select "SHOP" button

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE $
3301	BUCKLE VETERAN	15.00
3133	KRING ARMY AVI	8.00
3140	KRING RAAC	8.00
3402	PIN MAP REGULAR	8.00
3403	PIN MAP NASHO	8.00
3405	PIN MAP GRANDAD	8.00
3406	PIN VIETNAM VET*	8.00
	*LIMITED STOCK 2 LEFT	
3407	PIN SLOUCH BRNZ	8.00
3408	PIN SLOUCH COL	8.00
3412	PIN VIETNAM CHOPPER	8.00
3414	PIN AVF 62-73	8.00
3415	PIN RAA	8.00
3500	RED PEN TORCH SET	10.00
3501	PIN GOLD KANGAROO	10.00
3502	PIN SPIRIT O MATESHIP	10.00
3503	PIN AUS. FOREVER	10.00

ONCE EACH 'SPECIAL' ITEM SELLS OUT IT WILL NOT BE RESTOCKED OR AVAILABLE

PURCHASES CAN BE MADE AT OUR ON-LINE SHOP AT www.vvfagranville.org. LOOK FOR **"shop".** OR BY POSTING THE ORDER FORM (LEFT) TO VVPPAA NSW PO BOX 170 GRANVILLE NSW 2142. OR BY EMAIL, OR PHONE THROUGH THE ORDER TO (02) 9682 1788 DURING BUSINESS HOURS 9:30AM TO 3:00PM WEEKDAYS.

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
R54849	NAH	RA	GARDINER	HMAS MELBOURNE	19/6/25	30/8/41
O2202	LT	RH	HAY	HMAS MELOBOURNE 3	24/6/25	2/4/30
R58179	NAM	GJ	WALKER	HMAS MELBOURNE 3	25/7/25	13/6/45
R29003	CPO	LAG	WAGNER	HMAS MELBOURNE	23/5/25	29/1/29
R55969	MUS	MH	WORTHAM	HMAS MELBOURNE	16/7/25	9/1/43
R106589	OS	EA	EVANS	HMAS SYDNEY	12/6/25	13/7/53
R44887	PO	SBJ	GOLINSKI	HMAS SYDNEY 3	24/5/25	15/6/33
R42544	ERA	DC	HIGHNAM	HMAS SYDNEY 12	1/6/25	15/7/45
O770	LTCOM	IJG	MOLONY	HMAS SYDNEY 2	7/7/25	26/7/28
R63881	LS	GR	MCLAUGHLIN	HMAS SYDNEY 6	2/6/25	6/11/44
R57479	LC	JP	RIMMER	HMAS SYDNEY 8	6/6/25	5/8/41
R65669	SAV	ST	WEST	HMAS SYDNEY	19/6/25	1/8/48
R59443	PO	RA	HOULT	HMAS VENDETTA 2 SYDNEY 10	18/5/25	26/4/45
2788304	CPL	BF	FINLAY	ARMY STAFF HMAS SYDNEY	6/6/25	16/8/45
R54413	LAS	PA	WAPLINGTON	HMAS MELBOURNE/HOBART	2/7/25	28/9/40
O1688	LT	MB	FORREST	HMAS HOBART	17/7/25	3/2/42
R57121	OS	BC	LILLYMAN	HMAS HOBART	24/0/25	18/9/42
R41679	PO	M	THORPE	HMAS VENDETTA	21/6/25	28/12/30
R93583	LS	RG	SPRING	HMAS SYDNEY 2 VAMPIRE	31/5/25	23/5/46
R110371	OS	PJ	DORANTE	HMAS VAMPIRE	3/5/25	19/8/53
R62065	COOK	WG	SMITH	HMAS VAMPIRE	14/7/25	9/9/45
R59982	PO	RF	ATLEE	HMAS DUCHESS	11/6/25	1/4/46
R62050	AS	SJ	OLIVER	HMAS DUCHESS 2	11/7/25	24/5/44
O347	LT	JW	ELLIS	HMAS SYDNEY 2 PERTH 2	16/7/25	30/1/39
R63464	LEM	J	CIEMCIOCH	HMAS PARRAMATTA/PERTH 2	28/6/25	25/12/46
Apology	**From**	**July**	**Issue. Surname**			
R53307	PO AC	LR	**LARDER**	HMAS MELBOURNE	25/4/25	12/11/38

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
R54223	PO	GR	COOKE	HMAS YARRA 2	6/6/25	11/7/40
R53829	NS1	JA	PERRY	HMAS YARRA 2	29/6/25	8/7/35
R58456	LS	U	REINHOLD	HMAS YARRA/JEPARIT 4	23/5/25	29/12/43
R45552	LAM	AT	BURTON	HMAS MELBOURNE/RAN HFV	18/5/25	7/5/32
129044	CAPT	WM	GUNDER	AATTV	16/5/25	20/1/39
218723	TPR	DC	ORR	3 SAS /1 SAS	12/7/25	23/1/50
218751	TPR	JJ	WILLIAMS	2 SAS	2/6/25	27/3/44
311528	MAJ	B	BRADSHAW	CAU 2 / 1ARU 2 / OD	20/7/25	19/6/41
2792720	CPL	LA	MEREDITH	VISIT 3	15/6/25	16/8/48
373107	LTCOL	FS	HALLISSY	CMF VISIT	5/7/25	1/1/30
214228	SGT	PJ	COTTER	HQ AFV	27/6/25	12/2/43
53611	SGT	DH	PETKOVICH	HQ 1ALSG	4/7/25	2/2/40
2790593	PTE	DW	KING	1ARU / HQ1ATF	8/8/25	11/2/48
2791994	PTE	PA	MCQUEEN	1ARU / 5RAR / HQ1ALSG	4/8/25	28/11/48
53967	SGT	RG	MASON	AFV PROV	31/5/25	8/10/42
2794964	CPL	RJB	HOUTING	AFV PROV	11/5/25	19/9/49
2782166	LT	ID	PEACHEY	AFV DET 1CZPOSTAL	19/5/25	30/3/45
2905022	CPT	IC	ELDER	1FD HOSP/8FDAMB/1,4FD RGT	21/10/25	23/3/39
216361	CPL	GJ	BAXTER	HQ AFV 2 8 FDAMB/1FDHOSP 3	14/5/25	20/4/47
2790180	PTE	MG	DONG	1 FD HOSP	8/7/25	31/10/47
217799	LCPL	AS	MENERE	1 FD HOSP 2	11/6/25	19/5/46
217249	PTE	DA	DETLOFF	85 TRAN PL	9/6/25	18/10/49
61919	PTE	SE	HEPPLE	85 TRAN PL RAASC	12/7/25	19/8/50
3795450	PTE	EC	THOMAS	2 TRANS PL RAASC	3/7/25	24/4/47
2794991	CPL	GG	KEIR	HQ 26,5 COY RAASC	22/9/25	4/10/49

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
54703	SGT	JD	TILBROOK	102 FD WKSP	5/6/25	30/1/45
2788980	LCPL	RG	BOURCHER	2 AOD	26/6/25	4/11/45
218282	LCPL	JR	GREEN	2 AOD	2/5/25	15/1148
3795359	LCPL	PK	HASSGALL	2 AOD	1/7/25	19/11/47
2411471	CPL	M	VIDAL	2 AOD	6/7/25	13/11/37
3794481	LCPL	RN	HARTLEY	104 SIG SQN	10/5/25	30/4/48
215697	CPL	JR	NOONAN	709,552 TROOP/104 SIG SQN	31/7/25	20/1/47
216283	SIG	PJ	FLAHERTY	506 SIG TROOP	3/6/25	29/6/46
216544	CPL	MA	SCRASE	110 SIG SQN	15/6/25	28/11/47
6709065	SIG	PR	LORD	110 SIG SQN	1/10/25	14/10/47
23769	SGT	RG	GOURLIE	709 SIG TROOP	10/6/25	9/10/26
41701	SGT	FR	ALBURY	106 FD WKSP	29/7/25	19/7/34
37834	SPR	R	BELLINGER	1FD SQN	13/7/25	22/5/43
2781424	SPR	DW	WAGSTAFF	1FD SQN	17/6/25	30/5/45
54021	SGT	TJ	MELBIN	1FD SQN	28/8/25	13/2/36
2794480	CPL	JW	LUCKE	198 WKSEC	15/6/25	12/2/46
2788020	SPR	HA	KRZEMIEN	AFV DET 55 EW&PK	11/5/25	16/3/47
2785749	SPR	RJ	CUBITT	DET30 TERM SQN	18/8/25	24/2/45
216893	SPR	ER	BAYLIS	21 ENG SUPP TROOP	27/5/25	7/10/48
2794716	SPR	MJ	DALY	21 ENG SUPP TROOP	10/7/25	15/10/49
38059	CPL	NA	NORTON	32 SMALL SHIPS 2	18/3/25	19/10/42
3789166	SPR	R	FINN	32 SMALL SHIPS	5/10/25	23/4/45
2786773	SPR	J	PULIS	32 SMALL SHIPS	7/8/25	11/3/45
1201739	2LT	GJ	MCKENZIE	32 SMALL SHIPS	25/10/25	7/3/49
2793121	CPL	TP	DEVINE	17 CONST SQN	16/9/25	12/12/48
5715148	SPR	JT	RICHARDSON	17 CONST SQN	15/8/25	2/11/46
2794158	SPR	RJ	CAMPBELL	17 CONST SQN	21/8/25	12/4/49
2795482	CFTMN	IC	CURREY	17 CONST SQN 2 /106 FDWK	4/7/25	14/2/48
2782458	SPR	R	GRAY	17 CONST SQN	5/6/25	12/3/45
2781619	LCPL	LH	GRIEVE	17 CONST SN	3/7/25	20/4/45
2795378	SPR	JM	RINSES	17 CONST SQN	10/5/25	22/9/48

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
2790250	GNR	AM	LEIGH	1 FD REGT	7/6/25	25/10/47
2789647	GNR	RM	O'DWYER	1 FD REGT	23/8/25	10/12/47
216180	LBMDR	JS	MCCABE	4 FD REGT	4/8/25	19/4/47
2786173	GNR	SJ	COOPER	4 FD REGT	4/7/25	21/1/46
2793773	GNR	GW	MULDER	12 FD REGT	7/6/25	17/2/48
29156	WO2	M	VANDYKE	AATTV / 12 FD REGT	29/7/25	4/11/38
2786506	LBMDR	LW	BRIDGE	DET 131 DIV LOC BAT	9/9/25	12/9/46
3787689	GNR	DP	MCMANUS	DET131 DIV LOC BAT	5/6/25	16/2/45
3410957	SGT	NJ	LINDROOS	DET 131 DIV LOC BTY	27/8/25	14/10/39
2788587	TRPR	BJ	ARMSTRONG	B SQN 3 CAV REGT	16/9/25	27/2/47
2140626	CPL	WA	TURNER	B SQN 3 CAV REGT	10/8/25	17/6/45
3786786	PTE	G	GLASSFORD	1 APCSQN/ASQN 3 CAV R	15/5/25	14/4/45
313311	TRPR	DM	RODGERS	A,C,SQN 1ARMD REGT	24/6/25	21/1/50
2785836	PTE	EF	HYNDS	1 ARU	26/7/25	30/1/46
2793444	PTE	K	BRYSON	1ARU /8RAR / HQ1ALSG	22/6/25	19/4/49
2149002	PTE	GG	HASTINGS	1 RAR	20/7/25	16/1/49
2787247	PTE	RK	JARVIS	1 RAR	29/6/25	26/12/45
2786263	PTE	LJ	HUGHES	7 RAR / 1 RAR	24/8/25	18/4/46
2786887	PTE	DS	COLLESS	1 RAR	28/8/25	12/9/46
37824	CPL	DWT	CUNNINGHAM	1 RAR3	14/9/25	3/8/43
2783970	PTE	GJ	FREEMAN	1ARU / 6 RAR / 2 RAR	3/5/25	26/7/45
312640	PTE	ID	PAYNTER	2 RAR	17/5/25	28/3/51
2786717	PTE	RM	LUCAS	3 RAR	26/7/25	25/7/45
2787513	PTE	AR	MUNRO	1ARU/HQAFV/1ARU/3RAR	19/6/25	3/7/46
2795854	PTE	CCF	MAISEY	1ARU / 3 RAR	19/6/25	17/11/49
2785313	CPL	RC	HAWKINS	3 RAR	7/8/25	27/3/45
335011	LTCOL	FP	SCOTT DSO OAM	OF2 / 3 RAR	15/4/25	19/1/29
18187	PTE	B	SIMPSON	3 RAR	18/4/25	7/6/45

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
2787272	PTE	RD	BROWN	1 ARU / 4 RAR	4/7/25	12/12/45
275775	MAJ	VE	HALLINAN	4 RAR CMF, ATT 7,4 RAR	1/6/25	8/1/29
2790650	PTE	JS	HARRIS	1 ARU / 4 RAR	10/7/25	14/1/48
2789565	PTE	G	KEARNES	1 ARU / 4RAR 2	27/7/25	10/12/47
2789681	PTE	AP	SORENSEN	1 ARU / 4 RAR	29/6/25	19/9/47
235166	MAJ	MC	MORRISON MID	3 RAR / 4 RAR	18/8/25	12/6/37
217342	PTE	WB	LYNCH	4 RAR	17/8/25	25/12/47
2789432	PTE	RJ	CLOUGH	1 ARU / 5 RAR	28/5/25	25/7/47
215122	MAJ	EA	RICHARDSON	5 RAR	26/7/25	15/12/32
2789639	LCPL	BJ	URQUHART	5 RAR	10/6/25	12/9/48
215721	CPL	DB	ASHCROFT	6 RAR 2	30/6/25	16/7/46
1734002	LCPL	RC	GIGG	6 RAR	17/5/25	19/7/47
2781904	PTE	BG	KESTERTON	6 RAR	15/6/25	1/1/45
2788472	LCPL	BA	LYTTLE	6 RAR	17/6/25	21/3/47
215332	LCPL	GJ	MCGUFFOG	7 RAR	19/6/25	14/4/43
2790384	LCPL	AR	PENFOLD	7 RAR	30/7/25	18/4/46
2784308	2LT	JF	SLAVIN	7 RAR	29/7/25	16/2/45
61599	CPL	SJ	COCKER	1 RAR / 8 RAR	8/6/25	14/11/45
3796198	PTE	G	BUTERA	1 ARU / 8 RAR	28/7/25	1/1/48
1734982	PTE	P	CREEDY	8 RAR	24/6/25	15/12/47
312807	PTE	GL	HUNTER	8 RAR	21/11/24	31/8/44
4720571	PTE	LR	JAGGER	8 RAR	26/8/25	11/2/48
2791151	PTE	IR	WISE	8 RAR	27/7/25	16/1/48
4719105	CPL	LB	KROPINYERI	9 RAR	26/7/25	22/8/46

Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
O316966	FLT	CNM	CASSELS MID	35 SQN	3/6/25	11/8/23
O17860	FO	WS	MCALISTER MID	35 SQN	2/7/25	3/5/41
A56537	CPL	JW	FOLEY	2 SQN	26/5/25	27/8/47
A34268	SGT	BD	HARE	2 SQN 2 / HQ AFV	15/5/25	30/8/31
A15963	CPL	D	MALONEY	2 SQN	3/7/25	14/8/40
A222219	CPL	BR	MILLER	2 SQN	11/6/25	27/12/46
A112836	LA	GD	NELSON	2 SQN	31/7/25	7/6/46
A110730	SGT	RF	POTTS	2 SQN	25/6/25	12/9/45
A216955	CPL	B	CLARK	9 SQN	15/6/25	27/1/39
A224871	LA	JWH	KING	9 SQN / 1 OPS SUPT	23/5/25	23/11/45
A43264	CPL	TL	RODGERS	BASE SUPT FL/HQRAAF	25/7/25	4/4/39
A316656	LA	JW	HUDSON	1 OPS SUPT	10/6/25	16/11/47
A218586	LA	MS	RICHARDS	79 SQN	15/6/25	28/2/38
FRIEND &	VOLUNTEER		SA STATE BRANCH			
		OE	JORDAN		24/9/25	
		PJ	DAVIS	SERVICE 1972-93	19/7/25	

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.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

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ROZELLE
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10% Discount

Can anyone confirm the advertisers here are still operating. And providing discounts for veterans.
Report all infringements to the Editor at the Granville office on 02 9682 1788 or via email to bobf@vvfagranville.org

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