



VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS

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VERNON KING'S WAR



Lots of Christmas holiday reading
**Including: Government in unprecedented
attack on veterans' disability pensions**

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Vernon King: off to war

The beginning of the ANZAC tradition



1st November 1914 - The 1st Australian & New Zealand Expeditionary Force convoy departed from King George Sound, Albany, Western Australia.

The convoy was 38 transports with six naval escorts carrying 30,000 troops and 7,800 horses.

Vernon King left with the Western Australian component from Fremantle on 31 October and joined the convoy at sea.

They were bound for Egypt and Gallipoli.

It was the beginning of the ANZAC tradition.



Vernon King's Diary

By Greg Lockhart

Vernon King's Great War diary is an exceptional document, which I discovered in Albany, WA. It contains powerful first hand accounts both of a soldier's participation in the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915 and of his experience of shell shock. The day before the landing, the assaulting troops were told to divest themselves of diaries in case of capture. Vernon disobeyed, and so, after he was wounded during the fighting for the heights behind Anzac Beach, he may have been unique in that, as a soldier, he had the wherewithal to record his experience on a hospital ship the next day. In relation to the shell shock, which was diagnosed well after a second stint on Gallipoli, it was also most unusual for an individual thus afflicted to record so vividly his suffering and hospitalisation.

More broadly, the way the diary got through to me suggests that it was and is part of a mythic Australian narrative. On a visit to Albany in 2013, I was having coffee at *Dylans on the Terrace*, Albany's Stirling Terrace that is, when someone leant over and cheerfully struck up a conversation. It was Morris Blake, the owner of the café-restaurant. I told him that, back in 2006, the great natural beauty and historical significance of nearby King George Sound had first drawn me to the town. With stories of a great uncle who, in 1916, had been shot in the head while fighting with the AIF in France lying around in my childhood, I had been aware of the Sound's role as the *first* Anzac setting. The large convoy

carrying 30,000 men and 7,800 horses of the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces had assembled there from the Australian States and New Zealand before departing for the war on 1 November 1914. So I told Morris that, as I had finally begun writing something about the influence of that great event on the town, I had come back to have another look at the place. One subject led to another and, then, suddenly, circling back to the Great War, Morris mentioned that his wife Gwen had the Gallipoli diary of a former



I took a photo of Morris and Gwen Blake and arranged to return later in the day.

owner of the premises and that I should be able to

look at it. Gwen came out. We rang Vernon's granddaughter Verna and she permitted me to read Gwen's copy of the diary.

I took a photo of Morris and Gwen and arranged to return later in the day.

Back at *Dylans* that afternoon, the restaurant was closed and Gwen had the time to introduce me to Vernon's narrative. He was born in Melbourne in 1888 and was a miner in Kalgoorlie when, as a member of the militia for five years, he enlisted very early in the war on 18 August 1914. No. 681, he was allocated to C Company of the Western Australian 11th Battalion, sailed across the Indian Ocean with the First Contingent – the WA component left from Fremantle on 31 October and joined the main convoy from the Sound at sea the next day – and was in the first assault wave to land on Anzac beach. Gwen said he almost drowned.

She also explained the context in which his story had survived. After the war, he moved from Kalgoorlie to Albany in 1925. Following an early venture with *The Albany Tea Rooms* in York Street, he opened The Albany Hostel on the Terrace at No. 82 – the very building in which we sat discussing his story. As it happened, Morris' mother Phyllis and her family used to stay at the *Hostel* when in Albany in the late 1930s, and it was on one of her visits that she met Morris' father George then a cook next door at *The White Star Hotel*. After Vernon retired in 1946 the building passed through many hands. It was a derelict terrace when, as it also happened, Morris and Gwen acquired, renovated and, eventually, re-opened it in 1987 as *Dylans on the Terrace*.

Altogether, Vernon's story was and is a living thing. A part of the building at No. 82 Stirling Terrace, the spirit of his narrative lives on

in the links between the King and Blake families and, of course, between the two businesses – not least one imagines in the congenial atmosphere Morris and Gwen have recreated at *Dylans*. Then there are the links between the families and the wider community. During the Federation Festival held in Albany around Anzac Day 2001, Gwen sponsored a visiting Light Horse & Field Artillery Troop from the Margaret River area. Gwen also gave a presentation on Vernon's Anzac experience at the Albany Senior High School. To prepare for this, she had discussions with another granddaughter Beryl – there are three granddaughters Beryl, Faye and Verna – who gave her a copy of Vernon's diary. And this is how the diary came into my hands: with the above-mentioned permission from Verna, Gwen allowed me to borrow and copy her copy.



Vernon with his wife Lousia ('his Guardian Angel') and his daughter Ethel in 1912

The diary shows Vernon had a Guardian Angel. Already, for instance, the title page is inscribed with a dedication 'To My Dear Wife'. Yet even as he proceeded to write to her, he was also keeping a diary for himself. The eruption of that heartfelt dedication in his regular-awkwardly-irregular-

handwriting already suggests his elemental themes: separation and loss.

Rather than start his diary in Australia or on the convoy, he only did so after the AIF reached Egypt in late December 1914 and the monotony of army life in the desert began. Commencing on 2 January 1915, the entries covering the first months of the diary record his observations about mail from home or interruptions in it, bad food, sand clogging his rifle and mind numbing training. His diary was provoked by a descent into an impersonal world of dry masculine drudgery.

force the eye to focus on each word when reading it. Despite the tedium of the early entries, such slow reading combined with his guileless matter-of-fact prose still means his writing gets into your head.

One day, a deployment begins. On Lemnos, he makes a new will and notices warships coming and going. 22 April, he attends a lecture on an upcoming beach landing, and his C Company is light heartedly instructed to capture the first Turkish gun for WA. 23 April: 'had a game of crown & anker (sic) & won £6 from 2/- ... We are supposed to get rid of all diaries (sic) but I have nowhere to put mine & I'm not going to destroy it so I will keep it dark.' 24 April is all 'bustle'. Preparations are made to board the battleship *HMS London*, which was to transport a part of the assaulting force to the Dardanelles: 'All the boys are happy they are all singing, it's quite a relief to be doing something'.

At this exact point the handwriting changes. It darkens and becomes unevenly dense and scratchy for the next few days. From that point on 24 April, the content of the diary shows he was too busy and distracted to write until 26 April, when he went back to the incomplete entry for 24 April and also filled in the gap on 25 April. Then, accounting for the dark flush that came over his already 'dark' diary, there must have been a change of pencil or in the pencil. It is also very likely that Vernon's hand applied an increase in pressure to the writing implement.

The last part of the entry for 24 April completed two days later recounts what happened after he boarded *HMS London* at 11.30 am that day: 'had a grand feed the best since I left Kalgoorlie had another at 6.30 & another at 12 midnight.' Whatever else it did, so much eating would have distracted the assaulting troops from what they were about to do: 'so left the *London* to land at the

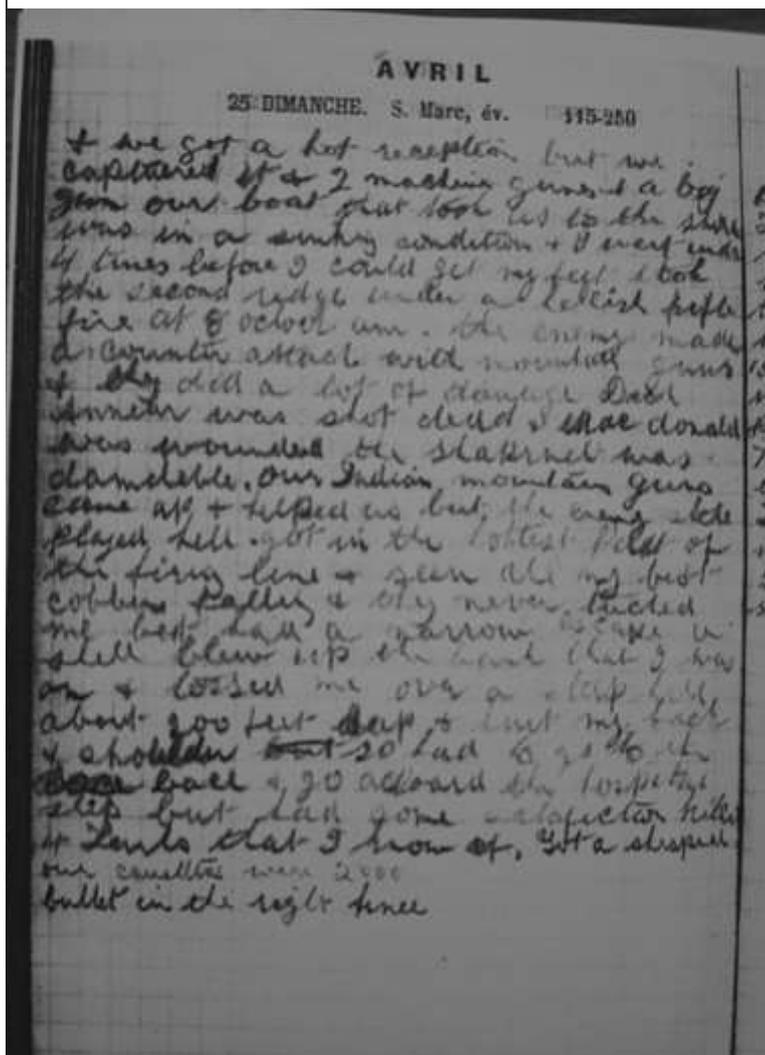


Vernon King and his brother-in-law Bill Petterson, Gallipoli bound

The vacillations in Vernon's handwriting

Dardanelles & it was not a surprise attack we could see on the heights', behind the beach as they approached it in the tows just before dawn.

What might be described as the compelling boredom and banality of Vernon's diary entries for the first few months is, then, the backdrop out of which, as well as against which, the entry for the Gallipoli landing on 25 April stops you in your tracks:



'& we got a hot reception but we captured it & 2 machine guns and a big gun our boat that took us to the shore was in a sinking condition & I went under 4 times before I could get my feet. took the second ridge under a hellish rifle fire at 8 o'clock am. the enemy made a counter attack with

mountain guns and did a lot of damage. Dick Annear was shot dead & MacDonald was wounded the shrapnel was damnable, our Indian mountain guns came up & helped us but the enemy still played hell. got in the hottest part of the firing line & seen all my best coppers falling & they never touched me but had a narrow escape a shell blew up the bank that I was on & tossed me over a steep hill about 200 feet deep & hurt my back & shoulder so had to go to the beach & go aboard the hospital ship but had some satisfaction killed 4 Turks that I know of. Got a shrapnel bullet in the right knee. Our casualties were 2000'

This is an exceptionally powerful first-hand account of the battle, written in a state of shock on board the hospital ship the next day.

26 April: 'going through a lot of pain there is some terrible sights on board. The 3rd Brigade is not a fighting force now they are all killed or wounded.' 27-30 April: his back, arm, and leg are giving him 'hell'. 'We have 1000 wounded on board and many were buried this morning'.

As indicated, Vernon may have been the only participant in the assault to disobey instructions and keep a diary on him. His failure to obey was in any case consistent with his powerful compulsion to record his trauma. Assuming that there was increased pressure on the pencil in his especially dark entries for 25 and 26 April, one might think that, in Vernon's diary, you can see the shock of battle.

The diary runs on with a reference to his daughter Ethel – the mother of Verna, Faye and Beryl – to his hospitalisation and some recreational sightseeing on Malta before his return

to duty on Gallipoli.

On the way 'to Malter (sic)... had a piece of bad luck today was shewing (sic) Ethel's photo to a cobbler & it blew out of my hand into the sea & sank straight away am quite down hearted about it because it is the only thing from home I had to look at.'

Malta, 4 May-2 June. 'The buildings are lovely the only thing I don't like about it is the bells are ringing all the time ...The hospital is a beautiful building I had to be carried up I could not walk.' Ladies visit, there is afternoon tea and cigarettes and 'they couldn't do enough for us'. A 'bonza' beef dinner. 'I thought we were too comfortable'. For some days, however, there are bed 'bugs and lice in their hundreds'. In Valletta he has 'the triple links' tattooed on his arm and, later, two butterflies on his chest; gets a 'tea invite'; goes to 'the pictures but they were all written in Italian so never enjoyed them too much.' Buys Dardanelles post-cards. Recent arrivals tell that 'a lot of my cobblers' were killed on Gallipoli. Swimming, bridge, billiards, the pictures, 'bonza' military band concerts. On 2 June he is passed fit.

To Cairo and Gallipoli, 6-21 June. 'Picked for the Dards'; writes home; hears 'The Two Grenadiers' sung at a concert; boards a ship in Alexandria and has to sleep on the floor without blankets; suffers 'terrible pains in my left shoulder.' He is transferred to a destroyer at Lemnos and departs for Gallipoli at 7.30 pm.

Gallipoli, 22-27 June. He is happy to see old faces, although they have changed. Ray: 'he has altered a lot since I saw him last'. 'The damned flies (sic) are bad they nearly drive you mad ... 9 of our chaps got hit with a bomb this morning but never killed any ... Old back is not too good. ... moving to frontline and will get a bang at Jacko.' 27 June: 'nothing doing, Jacko got two of our lads ... felt a bit neauise (sic) for the start. I think everyone who has been wounded was shaky.'

Another eleven days on Gallipoli. 28 June: at 12.30 pm his company supports a 9 Battalion

attack, but 'Jacko had more guns than we expected and the poor old 9th got chopped up supports had a hard time too ... 3 of C Company got killed just beside me & I got knocked over with some bags of sand and it shook me up I could not hold my rifle.' At 2 Field Ambulance he is given some pills. 29-30 June: 'very crook. Jacko started firing & I was told to stop in my dugout and I was glad to be told that ... Snipers got three of our boys this afternoon.' 1-4 July: 'Feel as weak as a kitten ... Jacko sending some shells over by me & I am shaking like a leaf. I'll go mad if they don't shift me tomorrow ... flies (sic) damnable ... no mail for me ... my head nearly burst.' Admitted to 2 Field Ambulance with what his service record described as 'neurasthenia'. 5 July: examined by an 'old quack who as much as told me I was a malingerer & I went off amok he is going to keep me here two days and then send me back to the lines.' 7 July: 'very little sleep...chest very crook ...' 8-9 July: 'Had a very bad turn this afternoon I went stone blind for a while and broke out in a cold sweat ... Bad nights sleep ... head like a steam hammer ... I get giddy & fall over ...'. He is taken on board *HMHS Gascon*.

Lemnos, 10-13 July. Vernon is stretchered into hospital and diagnosed with what his service record described as 'nervous disability'. Three days later he is stretchered onto *HMHS Ausonia* bound for Malta.

Remember that Vernon did not understand what was happening to him any more than the medical system did. Note the unstable medical diagnoses of his condition: 'neurasthenia', 'nervous disability' and, at least tentatively, 'malingering' were all applied. It would not be until late 1915 that the term 'shell shock' was officially used to describe the sustained percussive effects of artillery on the deluge of soldiers who had presented with similar symptoms to Vernon. But the term 'shell shock' remained ill defined throughout the war and was in fact banned by the British Army in 1917.

Especially in those circumstances, one can,

again, only marvel at Vernon's record keeping. How anyway was a person in his state able to describe it so clearly or, indeed, at all? Presumably, his trauma compelled him to write to his Guardian Angel. Or, through his compulsory writing to her and his uninhibited self-awareness, his trauma forced him to create a sense of self that existed outside the chaos then enveloping him. By allowing him to maintain a measure of psychological control, his diary functioned as a mechanism for survival.

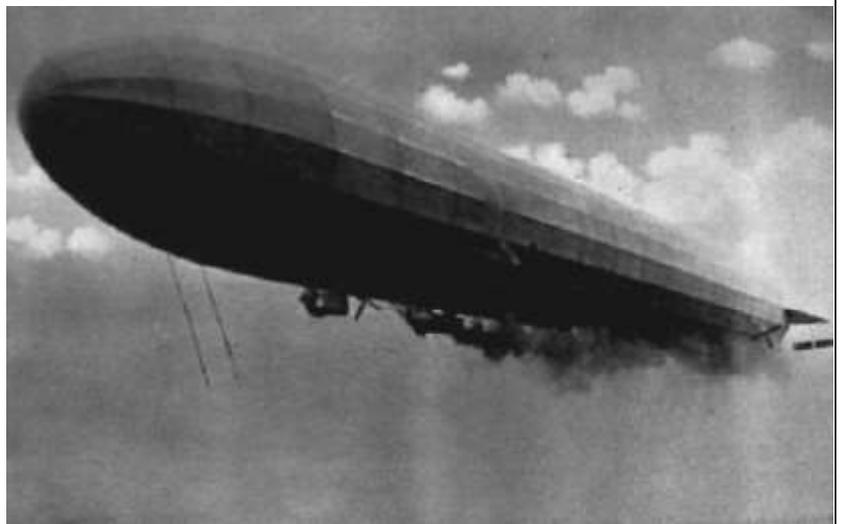
The remarkable narrative goes on to describe his hospitalisation, or the time of his slow revival in the back blast of the battle.

Malta, 14 July-21 August. 'Wake up at the usual time 4 am with a hell of a pain in my side & head went nearly mad ... Wake up at daylight with a bad dream dreaming that I was in a charge & a big Turk was coming at me just started to feel his bayonet in the belly when I woke up ... a chap in the next ward in a hell of a state keeps calling out all day.' There are periods when Vernon can read – Guy Boothby novels and a history of Malta. He can appreciate visitors and flowers and talks with a Chaplain and later visits two local chapels. But 'The life and soul of the ward is a chap with one of his eyes blown out & the other badly injured & he is all the time cracking jokes ... A damd (*sic*) night ... English nurses don't understand us Australians ... No sleep at all ... Had 2 walks about of a 1/2 hour each but it hurts too much.' On 29 July he is told he is 'unfit for future service'. Treated with massages. A week after the early August push on Gallipoli: '600 cases were landed here today but we only got ... in this hospital 120 stretcher cases & they are very bad – one of them came in this section shot through both knees. ... 3 that came in died during the night.' And on 17 August: '12 months today since I listed & the worst day's work I ever did to leave Australia a thing I will

never do if ever I put a foot on her soil again'. On 21 August, 'I am to go to England by the next boat. ... 2 of the lads were taken out to have their legs off ...'.

To England on *HMHS Andania*, 22-30 August. 'Another stage for dear Australia Had a good sleep ... had the gramophone (*sic*) going after tea ... had a bad night ... dreamt all the time. got breakfast served up like if we were a lot of pigs ... got to Gib[ralta] at 6.30 and it is a grand sight and it was a mass of lights when we left at 9 o'clock. ... 4 more lads died today ... saw a young whale but it never stoped (*sic*) long on the surface ... saw another whale ... 2 more boys buried today. Had cheese and pickles for tea & they were alright ... went up on deck ... saw another whale we nearly run it down... Buried an Australian Sergeant he had his leg taken off & he bled to death. Had a great sing song till lights out ... Had a very poor night it was so cold ... in the danger zone now picked up an escort ... Woke up in Plymouth Sound. Had eggs for breakfast but the 2 of them were bad.' He is admitted to London's St Thomas Hospital.

England, 1 September-29 December. He is 'homesick' and has his good nights and bad nights: 'head ached like mad all night' and 'slept well'. Massages, rest and recreation relieve his pain, but it recurs and he sometimes needs a wheelchair. A man tried to commit suicide by jumping off the Westminster Bridge. There are Zeppelin attacks,



including one on 14 October when the guns wake him up at 11 pm. He goes to church and listens to beautiful choral music. Recreation includes chess, jigsaw puzzles and visits from ladies who adopt invalided soldiers. A caring Mrs Spender brings him flowers, fruit, books and good cheer and takes him and others on motor tours of London. He visits her house. She writes from Bath. He makes poppies – ‘fasanaiting (sic) work’. A Miss Guies gives him a 105-year-old purse made by her grandmother to give to his daughter Ethel. Around London, ‘I am like a kid on the moving stairs [escalators]’ and ‘got quite a surprise seeing the [English] girls smoke.’ On 14 November ‘went with Jack to the Tate Gallery it was beautiful I did enjoy it. We are going to know London alright.’ After long talks with a Chaplain, Vernon is confirmed on 21 December in St Mathews Anglican Church by Bishop John Maud of Kensington – ‘never heard such a man before & must hear him again he is wonderful.’ The very last entry in his diary on 29 December records him having coffee opposite St Paul’s Cathedral and asking at several bookshops for Steel Rudd’s work.

As only seriousness cases were sent to England, Vernon’s six months in hospital there confirms the severity of his suffering. His service record finally shows that he sailed from England on 8 May 1916 invalided to Australia with ‘shell shock’.

After returning to Australia, Vernon recovered to become the man people saw around town – or, to adapt the ending of Leonard Mann’s Australian Great War novel *Flesh in Armor*, so he seemed.

A short family history Gwen showed me the afternoon she introduced me to the diary

mentions that he was made a Warden of the Town Hall at Boulder near Kalgoorlie. He later managed a picture theatre for some time before the move to Albany in 1925. There, as we have seen, he ran successful tearooms and the hostel, no mean feat during the depression.

Yet the war had changed his life. When I spoke to his granddaughter Verna on the phone, she told me he never spoke about the war or went to Anzac Day marches. Battle trauma had torn his mind so that when the hammering or the screaming in his head subsided it left a silence he could hear for the rest of his days. Yet better that scar than the screaming.



One of the granddaughters told Gwen that Vernon was emotional when she took him to the wharf to see the arrival of the ship carrying the

pieces of Albany's most imposing man-made reminder of the Great War: the Desert Mounted Corps Monument that now stands on the side of Mount Clarence, overlooking King George Sound. The monument, which features two almost life size men, one Australian Light Horseman and one New Zealand Mounted Infantryman, in action with their horses on a large stone pedestal, is a bronze incarnation of explosive violence and desperate action. It was originally erected at Port Said, where wartime Australian Prime Minister William Morris Hughes unveiled it in 1932. It was smashed during the Suez crisis of 1956. Following Australian-Egyptian government negotiations in 1959, the broken bronze and masonry was shipped to Albany and a photo Albany author David Bird published in his *Apex Avenue of Honour* shows some parts of the monument Vernon would have seen: one of the horses with its front legs and rear hooves snapped off and the other decapitated, as they were swung over the side of the ship on a crane.

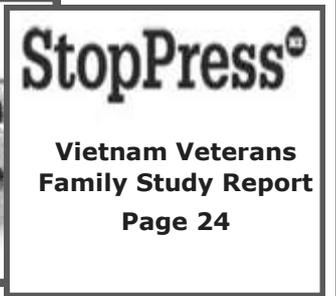
I do not know if Vernon saw the monument after it was reconstructed on the side of Mount Clarence. The reconstruction took some four years as the new design was completed by Raymond Ewers in Frankston, Victoria, and the bronze horses were recast in a specialised process by the Battaglia Brothers in Milan, Italy. In any case, the monument – still with the original bullet holes in the stone pedestal from 1956 treated at some point by Albany experts with tar filler – was completed and unveiled by Prime Minister Menzies in 1964, the year Vernon died. The afternoon that Gwen introduced me to the diary she produced from her papers *The Albany*

Hostel Ledger that Vernon had meticulously kept for the financial year 1930-31. And it occurred to me that this was Vernon's diary in another form, one written in the silence that followed the last entry of his war narrative. Also today, the following photograph of him in later life hangs in *Dylans on the Terrace*. ■



Thanks to Beryl Brown for the following photos:
 Vernon King with brother-in-law Bill Petterson.
 Vernon King with family.
 Vernon King in later life.
 Photos of Morris and Gwen Blake, the diary entry and the monument are by Greg Lockhart.

Greg Lockhart graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1968 and served in the Pacific Islands Regiment and the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. After that he had an academic career and is now Honorary Historian of the VVFA – with an interest in Albany.



Page 2 Vernon King landed on Gallipoli with Western Australian 11 Battalion on 25 April 1915. They got a hot reception. Vernon, in the thick of the battle, was wounded. He was evacuated but later returned to an equally hot reception. And Vernon kept a diary. Greg Lockhart tells the story of finding Vernon's diary and explores its contents.

Page 11 What will the government do next to our fighting troops; half rations?

Page 12 The government, having sent the ADF to war, then cuts its wages and reduces its leave entitlements.

Page 14 The government is hell-bent on downgrading the TPI, other veterans' disability pensions, the Service and War Widow's pensions and the Income Support Supplement.

Page 20 Terry Loftus died on 19 July 2014. He was one of the originals of the Vietnam veteran movement, working with Phil Thompson, Tim McCombe, Ray Fulton, Mick Scrace, Norm Robinson and others to have PTSD and the harmfulness of Agent Orange recognised. He helped thousands of sick and troubled veterans. We will miss him.

Page 22 Dr Graeme Killer, friend of veterans, retires.

Page 23 We railed against that flawed and insulting Official History of the Agent Orange controversy for years. Now the first step has been taken towards a new study.

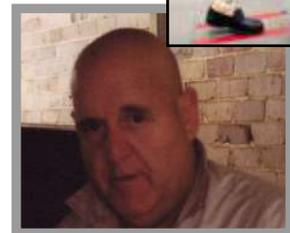
Page 28 Coming up: a giant exhibition at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre called *Guarding the Home Front*. That covers everything from knitting sox to counter-terrorism. It is sponsored by the excellent *Families of the Military Research and Support Foundation*.

Page 30 Before a change of government policy in 1966 allowed the repatriation to Australia of Vietnam war dead, many were buried in the Terendak Garrison Cemetery, Malaysia. It is time to bring them home.

Page 36 Did you lose your Dog Tags in Vietnam? Wayne Brown may have found them. It's quite a story.

Page 42 The ADF's Para-Biathlon Competition. Will you be in it?

Page 44 Is the independence of the VVCS (its separation from the Department of Veterans Affairs) under threat? ■



**CASULA
POWERHOUSE
CENTRE**





National President's Reflection

The government sends the ADF, including 'boots on the ground', to a very dangerous war.

At the same time the government imposes a reduction in **ADF's leave entitlements and successfully argues before the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal that ADF members' wages should be, in effect, cut.**

At the same time, the government legislates to downgrade **veterans' disability pensions that will support the war's** inevitable casualties and to downgrade the pensions for the widows of those who will possibly be killed.

What's next.....half rations?

Read on.....

Regular journal format resumes on page 16 including full index on page 18.

Government commits troops then cuts ADF pay and leave

September 2014

Government deploys 600 military personnel to the war in Iraq.

The Prime Minister emphasises ‘it is a dangerous mission’ against the ‘ISIL death cult’ ‘infatuated by death’. He warns that the deployment ‘could be a long one’ and describes it as a mission ‘in the interests of civilisation’.

It is not just fighter and support aircraft he has committed, it is also ‘boots on the ground’. And those ‘boots on the ground’ will be working with the Iraqi army, troops that have so far proved unreliable failures. Dangerous work indeed.

And, as we have seen, our advisors might even be in danger of being killed by rogue elements of troops they are helping.

October 2014

Government imposes cuts to ADF leave entitlements and successfully argues before the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal that ADF members wages should also be, in effect, cut.

On Tuesday 15 October the government successfully argued before the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal that members of the ADF get below inflation increases to their wages. The government offered a 1.5% pay increase for the next three years while inflation is running at round 2.5%.

That is, in effect, a pay cut.

And that’s not all.

In addition, the government compels ADF leave entitlements to be cut by six days, one of them at Christmas.

The troops themselves are not permitted to comment but *Professionals Australia*, which represents engineers and scientists in civilian defence roles, described the offer to uniformed personnel as “outrageous”.

David Smith, the Australian Capital Territory director of *Professionals Australia*, said the decision came just days after the government formally committed to military action in Iraq.

“At the same time as we’re looking at deploying more people overseas we expect their families to have to make ends meet with a below-



inflation pay increase and expect they'll have less of an opportunity to stay at home by cutting leave entitlements." Smith said.

"It's outrageous. Defence employees, whether they're civilian or in uniform, go above and beyond. To attack their leave entitlements particularly when they're more likely to be deployed or are being deployed is outrageous."

Smith said ADF members had "limited representation" and did not "get a real say in this outcome".

We agree with David.

And remember this. When there is a deployment, it's not just the troops who are sent overseas that are called on to 'go above and beyond'; it's the whole of the ADF. Everyone is doing extra to support those in harm's way.

To cut ADF pay under these circumstances is odious. Odious too is the cut in leave entitlements especially as part of the cut is to Christmas leave, a time when ADF members might make up for being away from their families for long periods. ■

The government's unprecedented attack on veterans' disability pensions

On Thursday 2 October 2014 the government introduced legislation into the House of Representatives to downgrade the indexation of Service pensions, veterans' disability pensions and those of war widows.

The government has a majority in the House of Representatives. This will enable the bill to pass, despite the opposition of Labor, Greens and Palmer United Party.

When the bill passes the House of Representatives, it will go before the Senate.

If this bill passes in the Senate, all of those pensions, will, from 2017, begin falling behind community income standards.

We understand that Labor, the Greens and the Palmer United Party in the Senate are set to vote against this downgrading. If they all do vote against it, the bill will be voted down.

Unfortunately, the government has said that even if this legislation is voted down in the Senate, it will not abandon it; presumably hoping to gain a majority in the Senate in the next Federal election after which they could push it through.

That this government is determined to financially harm disabled veterans (many disabled through fighting Australia's wars), and is determined to financially harm war widows, is disappointing.

That the government would introduce a bill to downgrade the disability pensions that may be needed to compensate the very military personnel it is at the same time sending into battle is cynical indeed.

Cynical too is the government's mantra that we shouldn't worry; these pensions will continue to rise twice a year.

In examining this assurance let's look at what is really happening.

Pensions are static whilst the cost of living and the average wage continually rise. Twice a year there is a 'catch-up' rise in pensions. This is known as 'indexation'.

The question is, 'what are the pensions catching up to?'

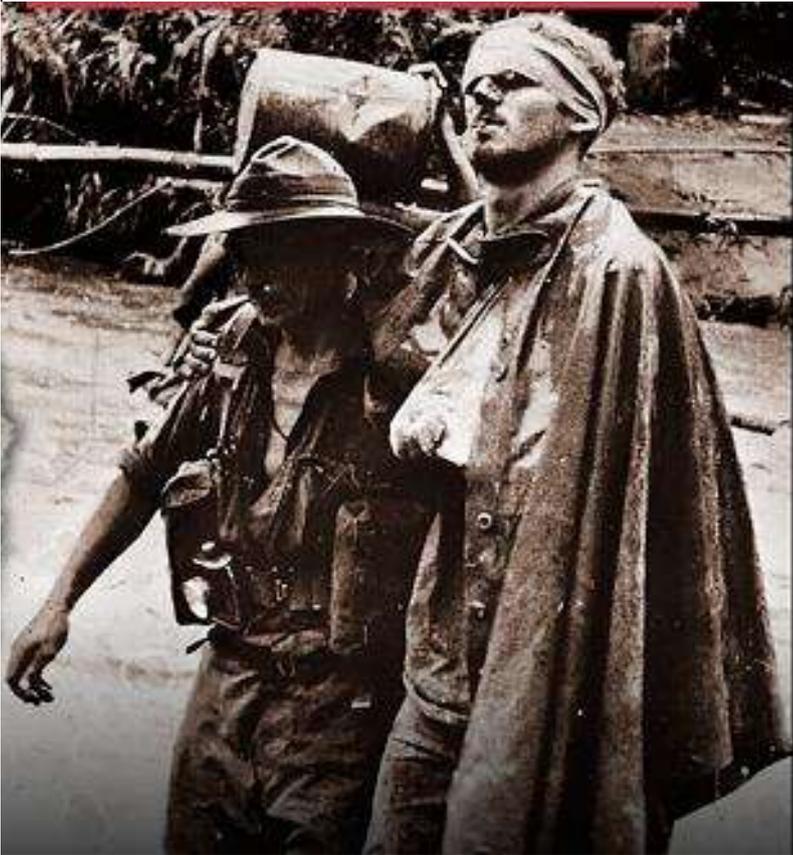
Presently, the six monthly indexation rises are to allow the pensions to 'catch-up' with the increase in the cost of living or the increase in the average wage, whichever is the greater.

Usually increases in the average wage are significantly greater than increases in the cost of living. Sometimes is it the other way round, but not often.

The government intends to link indexation 'catch-ups' only to the increases in the cost of living, excluding the usually greater increases in the average wage.

In this way, over time, pensions will fall further and further behind community income standards.

Mark Riley on 7 News reported on 11 April 2014 that by 2020 the Service Pension would be round \$100 a fortnight less than had no downgrading of indexation taken place. The Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA) estimate is much higher than that.



not allow the Coalition another try after the next election.

The silly thing is, the Coalition government when in opposition before the last election, labelled indexation reflecting only cost of living increases as unfair. It castigated the Labor government for retaining this unfair indexation on military superannuation pensions. So unfair did the Coalition see this indexation that it promised, if elected, to upgrade the indexation of certain military superannuation pensions to become fair by including increases to the average wage in the calculation.

After the election the new Coalition government honoured this promise and added increases in the average wage to the indexation calculation for DFRB/DFRDB military superannuants over the age of 55, a

change that benefited 56,000.

But in an astoundingly cynical about-turn the Coalition government then legislated to strip that same 'fair' indexation from the Service, veterans disability and war widows pensions, and replace it with the indexation it identified as unfair before the election.

The difference is this: Whilst the upgrading of the indexation of military superannuation pensions will benefit 56,000, the downgrading for Service, veterans disability and war widows pensions will financially damage 280,000 pensioners receiving 320,000 pensions.

What do you think of that for a swap?

The question is this:

Did the government dangle fair indexation for the relatively few military superannuants to bring the veteran community onside before the 2013 election, knowing it would land the sucker punch soon after? ■

Similar calculations can be made for losses to the TPI and other disability pensions.

And whilst the fall will not initially be noticeable, (something governments count on) the loss gets progressively greater as time passes.

This is not a trivial matter as the government would have us believe; it is a change that would, in time, make a vast difference to the financial welfare of Service pensioners, veteran disability pensioners and war widows.

And it's not just the indexation of these pensions the government intends to downgrade. It has also introduced legislation to pause for three years the indexation catch-ups of means-test-free areas and the levels of income and assets at which pensions cut out. This will be another financial hit for many pensioners.

In addition, deeming rates will be made less favourable, adversely effecting Part Service pensioners.

We can only hope that the Senate blocks this unprecedented attack and that the situation does



VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION of AUSTRALIA

8 Mary Street , PO Box 170, GRANVILLE NSW 2142

Phone (02) 9682 1788 secretary@vfvfgranville.org

Incorporating

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

Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans & Veterans Federation ACT Inc.

Vietnam Veterans Federation Victorian Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans Federation South Australian Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Federation of Australia (WA Branch) Inc.

Vietnam Peacekeepers Peacemakers Federation of Tasmania Inc.

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Researcher: Graham Walker

State Branches Office Bearers

Listed in the Branch List Pages

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OUR COVER

Vernon King and his brother-in-law Bill Johnston
Gallipoli bound 1914

With thanks to Beryl Brown

Brown and Blue strips represent 11 Battalion colour patch.

FREE PENSIONS & ADVOCACY SERVICE



From The Editor's Desk

- We represent former as well as current members of the defence force.
- We represent veterans of all conflicts from World War II to Afghanistan.
- We have many years of experience helping with claims in all the Military Compensation schemes.
- If your initial claim has been unreasonably rejected we have experienced Advocates to prepare and present an appeal to the Veterans Review Board.
- Should an appeal to the Veterans Review Board be unsuccessful we can, for entitled veterans, arrange legal representation and legal aid for Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearings.
- These services are free.
- Neither is there any obligation to join our Federation although you would be welcome to do so.

Contact any of our Branches or Sub-Bran­ches from the lists elsewhere in this Journal. Alternatively, visit our website, www.vfagranville.org, and email from the lists included.

Tasmanians wishing assistance are asked to call Dennis Hanmer from our Outreach Program at our Sydney Head Office on 02 9682 1788.

We're getting a lot of feedback on our stories about the government's intention to downgrade veterans disability, war widows; and Service pensions. You've been asking for more information.

So we've supplied it in this edition.

Some respondents can't believe the government would be deploying troops to Iraq and at the same time cutting ADF leave entitlements and arguing before the tribunal for what amounts to a pay cut..

We write about that too in this edition.

We are glad to hear your views on these matters.

Other talk round the traps seems to be questioning the amount of \$320 million being spent on the ANZAC Centenary celebrations when such things as childcare for young mums visiting Counselling Centres can't be arranged because the government sees it as unaffordable.

To quite a few of you, that seems out of balance.

There's quite a lot of reading in this edition for those lazy Christmas holidays.

Happy Christmas reading everyone.

For new material and compliments, please Write, phone, or e-mail:

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Email: editor@vfagranville.org

OTHER COMMENT ABOUT ARTICLES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

'The Secretary'.

Email: secretary@vfagranville.org

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Vietnam Veterans Day 2014 Thanks to prize donors

The Vietnam Veterans Federation would like to thank the following organizations for their very generous donation of prizes in aid of our raffle on Vietnam Veterans Day, 2014. Our very special thanks go to the Bankstown District Sports Club directors, management & staff for their ongoing generous support.

Bankstown District Sports Club, Bankstown RSL sub-branch, Bankstown RSL Community Club, Cabravale Diggers, Castle Hill RSL, Costco Casula, Fairfield RSL, Hong Ky Meat Wholesalers, Ingleburn RSL & 3 anonymous donors.

The combined generosity of these organizations enabled us to raise in excess of \$1,000 on the day & these funds will assist us in providing the much needed assistance to not only Vietnam Veterans but Veterans of all conflicts.

Once again, thank you all.

*Terry Corcoran
(Organising Committee)*

President's Christmas Message



Happy Christmas to all our members and readers.

And while we are enjoying our Christmas family gatherings why not send a Christmas message of support to our troops in Iraq.

supportthetroops@defence.gov.au

Government's unwelcome Christmas Present to us

Sadly, the Government's Christmas present to veterans and war widows, in the form of the 2014 Federal Budget, is a most unwelcome one.

The Government has introduced legislation into Parliament to downgrade the indexation and thresholds that will, in time, substantially reduce the real value of Veterans Affairs pensions and payments. Affected are the Service Pension, the TPI pension, other veterans disability pensions, the War Widows Pension, the Income Support Supplement and the equivalent MRCA (younger veterans) payments.

The government, in a particularly mean spirited act, has withdrawn its share of an agreement with the States to fund Service pensioners' concessions for travel, electricity, phone and council rates.

The government, in another mean spirited act, has axed the three month backdating of Veterans Disability Pension claims; a very long standing concession that recognised the unique nature of military service.

It has introduced legislation into Parliament to axe the Seniors Supplement (\$876.20 a year) for

Gold Card holders not receiving income support.

It has introduced legislation cancelling the indexation on the Clean Energy Supplement added to Veterans Affairs pensions and payments, condemning it will quickly lose real value.

Legislation has been introduced so that Military Superannuation not previously counted, will now to be counted as income when applying for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

As I write, much of this legislation has been passed by the House of Representatives where the Coalition Government has a majority, and has been presented to the Senate for consideration. There, where the Coalition government does not have a majority, we hope Labor, the Greens and the Palmer United Party combine to vote this mean legislation down.

By the time you read this, the result may be known.

Our work

It has been another busy year with our offices round Australia handling some 2,000 compensation claims and some 300 appeals.

Thanks to our expert volunteers and our dedicated staff, there has been a high success rate.

As we feared, a large number of our clients are coming from recent conflicts. We expect the proportion of younger veterans to increase.

Sadly, we see the experience of returning younger veterans to be a rerun of our own.

Tim McCombe



Mentoring Task Force Three (MTF3) enjoy time out for Christmas lunch at Tarin Kot, 2012
More troops away this Christmas

We'll Miss Terry



Terry Loftus died on 19 July 2014.

At a crowded funeral, his family and friends, many of his 1RAR colleagues, members of the Vietnamese veteran community and some of those grateful for the help he had given them, mourned the passing of this much beloved member of the veteran community.

Graham Walker, on behalf of all those who Terry helped and inspired, gave the following eulogy.

In 1981, the Vietnam Veterans Association had its office in the storeroom of an old RSL hall in Granville. It was from there that Phil Thompson and his gang were helping sick and troubled veterans with advice, medical assistance and compensation claims. They were also campaigning for the establishment of shop-front counselling centres and for the release of information on the use and effects of Agent Orange.

Terry became a key member of the team.

Veterans would come to the Granville

office, sick, depressed, embarrassed and anxious. Terry just loved turning that around. He would make them realise they were not only understood but amongst those who shared their experience. Those veterans would so often leave the office with their heads up, probably having had a laugh for the first time in a long while.

Terry absolutely beamed when their compensation claims succeeded.

Terry did this work for more than thirty years, helping many hundreds, perhaps into the thousands, of Australian and Allied veterans.

Terry cared specially for those veterans doing it really tough. He took under his wing several vagrant veterans, getting them compensation and in at least one case, taking action to legally manage the veteran's money. He took an interest too in veterans in prison.

He was a big bloke with a big heart.
We shall miss him.

In 1983, Terry, Phil Thompson and Tim McCombe met the young musician John Schumann to hear his new song, 'I Was Only 19'.

John is in Western Australia so can't be here at the funeral today but he sent this message:

"Terry Loftus appeared at my hotel room in Coogee Bay in February 1983 accompanied by a stony faced Phil Thompson and Tim McCombe. The three of them were there to interrogate this left-wing singer-songwriter from Adelaide who had written a song about Vietnam veterans. I was seriously intimidated by all three - but particularly by Terry who was huge, bald well before Peter Garrett made it fashionable and very imposing. In time, these three blokes and I became mates and I learned that, rather than being intimidating, Terry was warm, gentle, and bighearted. As one of the first five or six veterans who heard "I was only 19", Terry's approval and support was critical to me and critical to the eventual success of the song. One cold, wet night in Sydney, as a skinny little musician, I was seriously underdressed for the weather. Terry gave me his army greatcoat. "This will keep you warm," he said. It has done so now for many years - but not as warm as the thoughtfulness of the man who gave it to me. If I were not in the middle of Western Australia - Mount Magnet to be precise - I would be with you all today to bid farewell to this lovely, gentle giant. Another mate safe behind the wire. Our world is a poorer place for his passing and a much better place for him having been in it." ■

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Doctor Graeme Killer, friend of veterans, retires

"We've losing a good one there."

Someone in the office had just heard that Graeme Killer was retiring at the end of the year.

"That's the bloke who writes those intelligent and interesting articles in *Vetaffairs* isn't it?" someone else piped up.

Yes it is and much more. Dr Graeme Killer has been the principal medical adviser to the Repatriation Commission for many years and has shown a sympathy with and empathy for veterans. He has shown this in his

attitude to veterans as a group and has always been on hand to help with difficult individual cases.

Perhaps his 23 years in the Royal Australian Air Force including serving in Malaysia involved in aeronautical casualty evacuation during the Vietnam War, gave him that added insight.

We felt secure knowing that it was Graeme serving on those important medical committees such as the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Reference Committee and were grateful for his pioneering work in the Health Links Program between the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs.



We are not the only ones to have benefited from Graeme's professional competence. He has been personal physician to Prime Ministers Keating, Howard, Rudd and Gillard and has had a similar role with Government House, Canberra since 1991.

A few months ago Graeme gave us a scare having a rather nasty heart attack. We have followed with relief the news of his good recovery.

Those veterans who have had the good fortune to be associated with him will feel

a sense of loss at his retirement. He will be hard to replace.

Graeme wrote of his retirement: "I'll always be on the side of veterans and do what I can to help them in any way." We know he always has been on our side and has done a great deal to help.

We are grateful for that.

He was made a well deserved Officer of the Order of Australia in 1999 for service to the veteran community.

We wish him a happy retirement. ■

New Agent Orange study on the way

Was the Vietnam veteran leadership of the campaign to have the harmfulness of exposure to Agent Orange recognised, motivated by greed and dishonesty as the Official History would have us believe? Or were they, as we believe, concerned about the well-being of their fellow veterans and their families?

Was the leadership's behaviour deplorable as the Official History claims or did it display the best aspects of the ANZAC tradition, as we strongly believe.

Readers will know that last year, after some years of representations by the Vietnam Veterans Federation, the Council of the Australian War Memorial decided a new official study was warranted.

Earlier this year, Dr Peter Yule who is associated with Melbourne University, was commissioned for a preliminary examination of the available evidence in preparation for a full study.

Dr Yule's report will go before Council in March next year after which, it is expected, a historian will be commissioned for the full study and production of a new Official History volume covering post-Vietnam war medical and health issues.

There is a long way to go yet, but the first steps are being taken. ■

THANKS FOR DONATING

A MESSAGE FROM THE NSW BRANCH

Once again we say THANK YOU to our many members who have made a financial donation to their State Branch. Without these donations we would find it much more difficult to cater to the needs of our war veterans, service and ex-service persons generally. Periodically, we will publish a list of individual NSW Branch donors of amounts of \$200 or more. Whilst ALL donations are gratefully received, and combined are of enormous assistance to us, they are too numerous to list.

Donors to the NSW Branch of \$200 or more since the last Journal were:

\$2000	Dennis Small
\$1500	Joseph Bartos
\$1000	Vera Ward
\$ 500	Name withheld on request
\$ 2500	ARVN Association of NSW
\$ 350	Mary Smith
\$ 200	Frank Curphey

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

(as at November 5 2014).

NSW BRANCH AGM.
NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT NEXT AGM
WILL BE HELD ON 23 MAY 2015.
SEE PAGES 40 & 41 FOR DETAILS AND
NOMINATION FORM.

Stop Press

Vietnam Veterans Family Study Report

The study compared the health of the sons and daughters of Vietnam veterans with those of National Servicemen who stayed in Australia.

Significant differences were found for most of the measures of mental health (ever diagnosed with or treated for depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal plans or actions) and for skin conditions, migraines and sleep disturbance.

In the case of depression, anxiety, and suicidal plans and actions, the sons and daughters of Vietnam veterans were almost twice as likely as the sons and daughters of Vietnam-era personnel to report being diagnosed with or treated for depression, being diagnosed with or treated for anxiety, or making plans for or attempting suicide. Reports of being diagnosed with or treated for posttraumatic stress disorder were three times more common for the sons and daughters of Vietnam veterans

The analyses also identified deaths from suicide, especially in the sons, as being more common in the Vietnam veteran group.

We must prevent this pattern reoccurring in the sons and daughters of the veterans more recently returned for war and peacekeeping operations.

One measure would be to guarantee child care for young mums wanting to visit VVCS counselling centres. This could well be a hurdle preventing attendance. The government has declared it unaffordable. Our view is it could save untold suffering and the very high financial cost of dysfunctional families.

We also note the tiny cost involved compared with the \$320 million being spent on ANZAC Centenary commemorations.

For full details: www.dva.gov.au/vvfs

MEMBERSHIP NOW DUE

2015 MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT IS NOW DUE!!

It's that time of the year again to renew your Association Membership.

NSW membership subscription renewal forms for 2015 have already been sent out to NSW Branch members under separate cover by the Granville office. Members of our various State Branches and Sub Branches should receive membership renewal notices from their respective organisations. In the event you do not receive a form in the mail please use the Membership Renewal form included in this Journal. (OPPOSITE).

When using the mailed form ensure all details are correct before completing and returning in the reply addressed envelope.

Your financial support in the past has been most appreciative and we hope you will continue to support the Association. Even if you have won the battle with Veterans Affairs there is always the risk of changes in Government policy which may erode benefits and/or pensions or change eligibility entitlements.

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



**Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers
Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.**
Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia



2015 Membership Application / Renewal Form

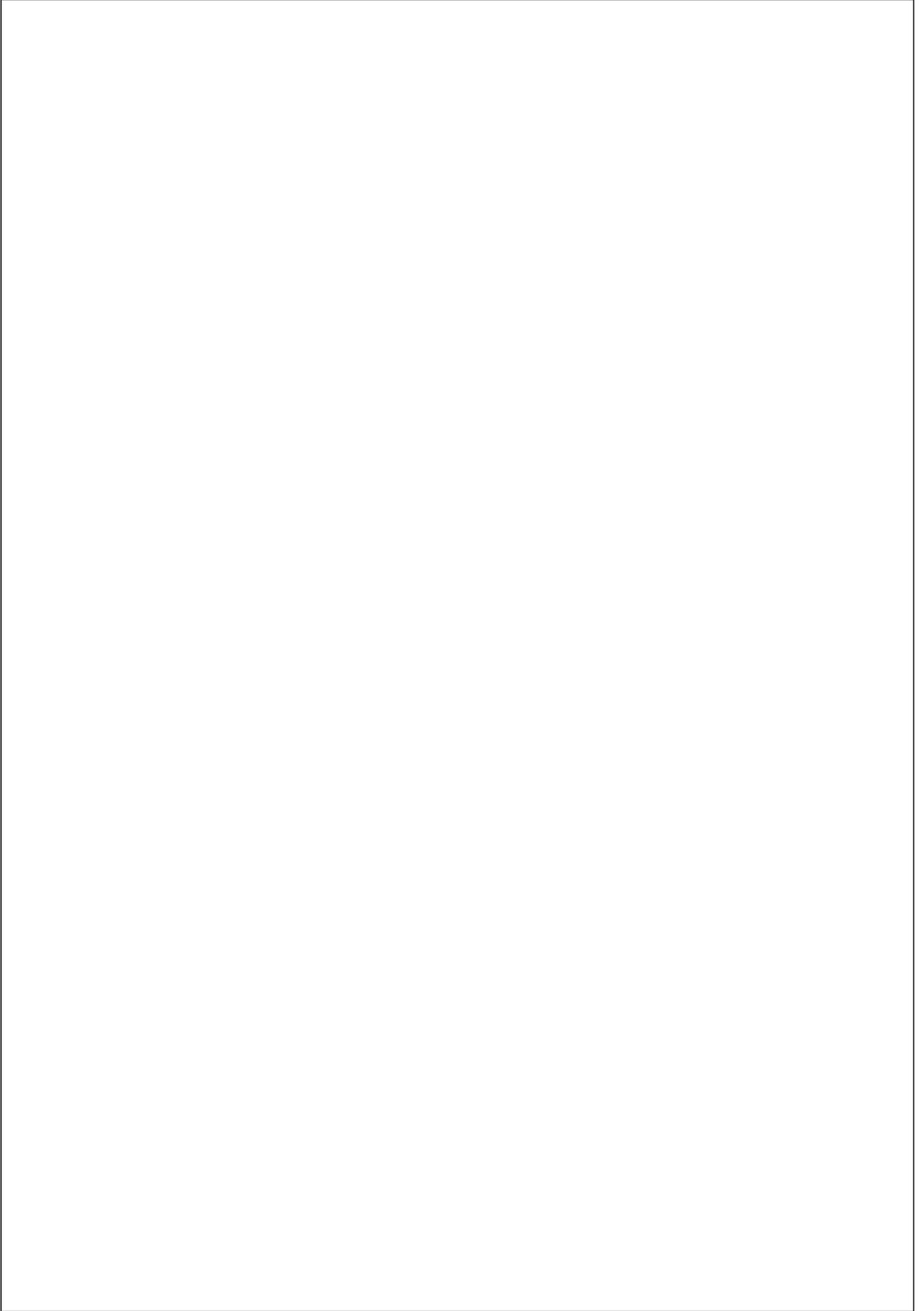
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SURNAME		FIRST NAME		SECOND NAME	
STREET ADDRESS					
SUBURB				STATE	POST CODE
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MERCHANDISE ITEM NUMBER	QUANTITY	ITEM PRICE *	
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		*Item price available overleaf, on-line or in Journal.	\$

<p>PAYMENT OPTION Payment may be made by Credit Card, (phone or post), Cheque, Money Order, or by cash if paying in person. Make all Cheques & Money Orders payable to: VPPAA (NSW BRANCH) Inc. Post to: PO BOX 170 GRANVILLE 2142 Remember to endorse the reverse of Money Orders before posting to this office. It protects you if separated from Form. Please note that more items of memorabilia may be available at a Branch or Sub-Branch office near you. Contact the Granville Office on 02 9682 1788 for advice. Email: secretary@vfvagranville.org</p>	<p>PAYMENT METHOD (CIRCLE ONE ONLY) CASH CHEQUE MONEY ORDER MASTERCARD VISA</p>			
	<p>CARDHOLDER NAME (PRINT)</p>			
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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To help us maintain our records please complete this form if your address is different to that on the mailing list or if you are about to move.

Please print clearly

Family Name _____ Given Names _____

Membership No. _____

Signature _____

Old Address: _____

Old Contact Number: _____

New details:

New Address _____

_____ State _____ Post Code _____

New Contact Number: _____

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' Name _____ Service number _____

SVN Unit _____ Tour date(s) _____

Cause of death (if known) _____

(**SR** Service Related **UK** Unknown **S** Suicide **O** Other)

Date of death (if known) _____ Location at time of death (State & Town) _____

Your name _____

Address _____

_____ State _____ Post Code _____

Phone no _____ Signature _____

Please Return To

**The Welfare Officer,
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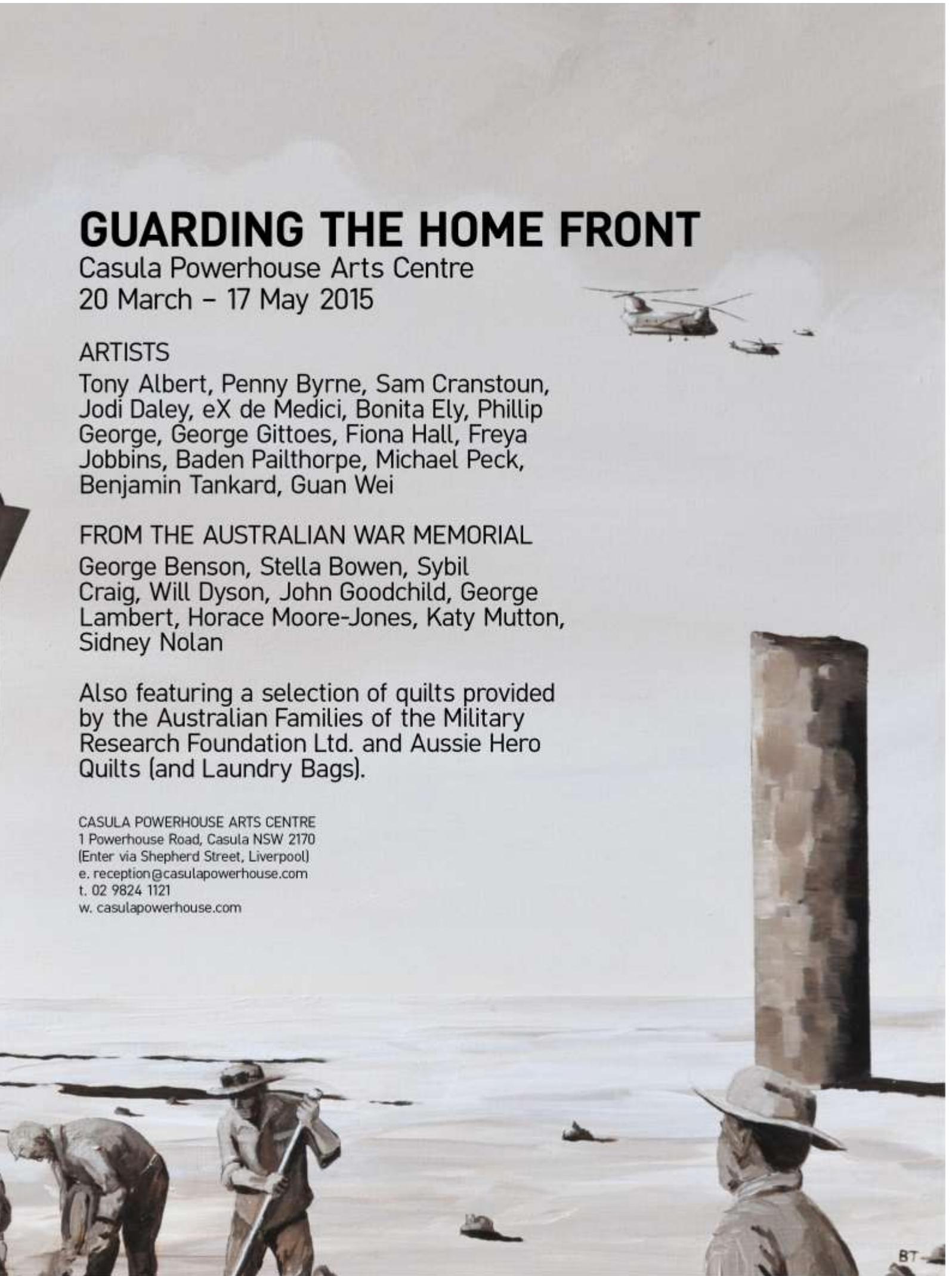
Tony Albert, Penny Byrne, Sam Cranstoun,
Jodi Daley, eX de Medici, Bonita Ely, Phillip
George, George Gittoes, Fiona Hall, Freya
Jobbins, Baden Pailthorpe, Michael Peck,
Benjamin Tankard, Guan Wei

FROM THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

George Benson, Stella Bowen, Sybil
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Benjamin Tankard, *The Gleaners*, 2012, acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the artist.



Not all our Vietnam war dead have been repatriated— It's time we brought them home

Excerpts from an appeal by Major General David Ferguson AM, CSC(R)
(edited by Graham Walker)

Background

The Australian commitment to the Vietnam War began in 1962. Until 1966 Government policy was that servicemen were buried where they fell or died of sickness or wounds. Not so for Vietnam. The war dead were flown to Malaysia or Singapore for burial unless the next of kin or benefactor were able and willing to pay for their repatriation to Australia and their subsequent burial. That the ability of next of kin to pay was a determinant of where Vietnam war dead were buried, is shameful.

Those compulsorily sent to Malaysia were interred in the then newly established local base cemetery in the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade military base at Terendak Garrison, Malacca, Malaysia. One was interred at the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore. In a break of long-

standing policy these Australian servicemen were not 'buried where they fell'. Those sent to Malaysia and Singapore were interred in cemeteries in foreign lands unconnected with the conflict in which they paid the ultimate price.

The Terendak Garrison cemetery is deteriorating and for security reasons is exceptionally difficult to access.

Australian Government Policy – Interment of War Dead

The first death of an Australian soldier in Vietnam occurred in June 1963. He was Warrant Officer William Hacking, AATTV. His remains were returned to Australia at family expense. Subsequently three more deceased members of 'The Team', as they became known, were returned to Australia. One was Warrant Officer Ron Scott

AATTV. His return was funded by his American and Australian colleagues. He was accompanied to Australia by the American who led the fund raising. The other two were Warrant Officer Kevin 'Dasher' Wheatley VC and Warrant Officer Ron Swanton. In November 1965 the return of each of them was privately funded. All must have been returned with government co-operation and endorsement.

But not even this policy of return at next of kin expense was uniformly applied. When Lieutenant David Brian, 3RAR, was killed on border operations in Malaysia in March 1964, repeated pleas by his young heavily pregnant 21 year old widow living in Malaysia to have the remains of her husband returned with her to Australia at her own expense were bluntly refused. Lieutenant Brian was the first to be interred in the newly established but empty Terendak Garrison Cemetery.

The First Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Group (1 RAR Group) arrived in Vietnam in late May 1965. Between May 1965 and January 1966 ten members of 1 RAR Group were returned to Australia at family or benefactor expense. Individual families, benefactors or Legacy paid funeral costs. Concurrently, other members of 1 RAR were compulsorily buried in Terendak Garrison Cemetery, Malaysia.

This baseless, unfair and inconsistent government practice stood in contrast to the extant policy of repatriating to and burial in Australia at public expense, "the bodies of civilian employees of the Commonwealth, of servicemen in public service type appointments and service personnel on garrison duties..."

Recognition that the situation was unacceptable, led to a review.

In January 1966, following the review, the Australian Government formally changed policy. From that time most bodies of servicemen who paid the ultimate price were returned to Australia for burial or cremation at Government expense. The families of the deceased soldiers who had previously met the cost of repatriation were reimbursed transportation costs (though this

largess did not extend to burial). Regrettably and unfairly, neither did the government largess extend to the repatriation of those already interred in Terendak and Kranji. Indeed such repatriation was specifically forbidden.

This denial of repatriation from Terendak is even less acceptable because the government stated (according to Defence Press Release No 51 on 21 January 1966) that the fallen would be buried in a 'war cemetery'. Terendak is not such a cemetery. It is a 'garrison cemetery' where not only the fallen but also others living in the garrison may be interred.

After this change of government policy, the dead whose next of kin did not wish to have remains returned to Australia were not interred where they fell nor buried in a 'war cemetery'. They were flown to Malaysia and buried in Terendak Garrison Cemetery.

Terendak Cemetery

Terendak Cemetery is not a Commonwealth War Graves cemetery. It is a 'garrison cemetery' with Service personnel and dependents interred. It is not subject to the protocols of the Commonwealth War Graves agreement. The cemetery presently has 323 Commonwealth Non-World War servicemen and dependants interred in the grounds. Only thirty four of those interred are Australian. One is from operations on the Malay Peninsula (Malay-Thai Border), twenty four from the Vietnam conflict, two from accidents and eight are family members of Australian Army personnel serving in Malaysia.



Amongst all the gallant soldiers buried in Terendak are five members of Australia's most decorated unit from the Vietnam War, the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV). They are Major Peter Badcoe VC,

Warrant Officer Max Hanley MM and three other Warrant Officers. They are together with nine members of the First Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Group (1965-66) and two from the second tour by the unit (1968-69).

Of the twenty four soldiers laid to rest in Terendak Garrison Cemetery from the Vietnam War, ten were interred before Government policy changed. Following the change in policy fourteen soldiers whose families did not want the remains returned to Australia, were buried in the cemetery. They include six National Service soldiers. The reasons for decisions by the next of kin are not known, nor whether family reluctance remains.

Transfer of Terendak Garrison to Malaysia

The withdrawal of British Forces from the Far East led to the redeployment of Australian Forces to Singapore and the handover of Terendak Military Garrison to Malaysia in March 1970. It is now the highly secure military base of the **Malaysian Army's 3rd Division** and supporting elements.

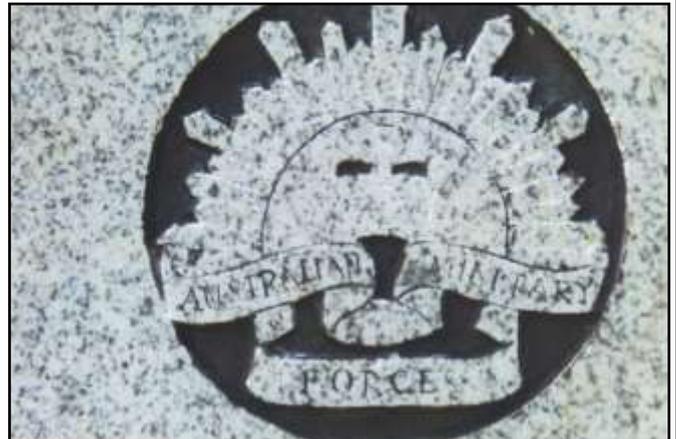
Although the Vietnam conflict continued after the handover in 1970, no further Australian Service personnel were interred in the Military Cemetery. In December of 1969, during the handover period, Second Lieutenant Alan Jellie, was the last Australian to be buried there.

Terendak Military Cemetery – Present Situation

The cemetery is located at the far northern end of the Garrison in a hollow. It is hidden from sight and is surrounded by jungle. Access is via a narrow road leading from the main artery through the camp. It is away from public view. Entry is through large black metal gates. There is no access to the cemetery other than through the security conscious Garrison.

Terendak Garrison Cemetery is not a Commonwealth War Graves cemetery but is maintained under contract through the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Even so, the cemetery is not in good condition. The tropical climate has taken its toll. The site and

grave stones have deteriorated over the years. It is not maintained in the same condition as Commonwealth War Grave cemeteries throughout South East Asia, the Middle East or Europe. The headstones of those buried there are deteriorating and the Rising Suns are in



particularly bad condition. The change since the establishment of the Garrison Cemetery in 1964 is of great concern. Photographs do not capture just how advanced is the deterioration of the site and the headstones. It is a depressing place.

Most important is that the potential for further degradation of the site in the years ahead is very high, indeed certain.

It is not a simple case of 'clean-up the place'. There is a requirement for 'significant investment' to bring the cemetery to an acceptable standard. Sadly, such investment is not imminent only some cosmetic improvements.

The important issue is what is likely to occur in the years ahead.

Accessibility.

Malaysia remains a member of the Commonwealth and the national Government works in close cooperation with Australia. However, terrorist and other threats remain. That alone rightly demands that the security surrounding major military bases reflect the threats. It is especially important for Malaysia as **Terendak Military Garrison is Malaysia's largest military base.**



Photo taken April 2014

Cemetery through Terendak Garrison. A minimum of six weeks advanced notice is required as well as challenging security clearances imposed at the highest level of the Malaysian Armed Forces. Even after arrangements have been made and security clearances given the Garrison can go into 'lock-down' at any time. Common-sense says that this will not change and nor should it. With the changing nature of terrorism, in the years ahead, gaining access will most likely become even more challenging.

That the families and friends of those interred should have to face such difficulties and uncertainty to visit the cemetery is unacceptable.

Repatriation

Of the 521 Australian Vietnam War dead there are 24 who have not been returned home. These 24, under an unheralded change in government practice, were not buried where they fell; they were instead flown to Malaysia or Singapore, countries unrelated to the conflict, for burial. However, inconsistent application of this practice and change of government policy in 1966 resulted in some Vietnam war dead being repatriated to Australia but not others. The resulting confusion and unfairness should be remedied by the next of kin of all Vietnam War dead at Terendak being given the option of repatriation.

The fact that the Terendak Military Cemetery is not a Commonwealth War Graves



Funeral of Corporal Frank Smith 1RAR, a 1959 National Serviceman soldier who signed on, was the second Australian soldier to be killed in the Vietnam War

is family involvement not only in the initial decision but also where their loved ones would be interred in Australia.

ANZAC and Commonwealth Links

The Vietnam War involved a national commitment by New Zealand in 1964 and an ANZAC commitment from 1965. Seven New Zealand soldiers of the 37 killed in Vietnam were interred in the cemetery before the New Zealand government followed Australia to repatriate war dead to New Zealand.

There may also be other New Zealand military personnel

and dependents that were killed on the Malay Peninsular or during Confrontation with Indonesia. It is not known how many of these latter casualties may be buried in the Terendak Garrison Cemetery. The New Zealand government is aware of the issue and may well be interested in a joint operation to repatriate those interred.

It's Time to Bring Them Home

Amidst confused, inconsistent and unfair government policy before January 1966, many of our war dead were compulsorily buried in Malaysia and Singapore while others were repatriated to Australia at the expense of families or benefactors.

Difficult access to Terendak Garrison Cemetery will remain and deterioration in the future is certain. It is not an appropriate place for Australian war dead.

Amongst those interred in Terendak Military Cemetery are highly decorated members of the **Traning Team and soldiers from 1 RAR Group's** first tour

2015 is the 50th Anniversary of the deployment of 1 RAR Group to Vietnam. In full consultation with families it is time for Government to make a commitment to bring them home. ■

cemetery, the escalating difficulties of access and the cemetery's deteriorating condition are further grounds for the option of repatriation of Vietnam War dead as well as grounds for the option of repatriation of all other Australians buried there. For instance, the request made for the repatriation of Lieutenant David Brian denied at the time of his death and again very recently should now be granted. There are two soldiers who were laid to rest in Terendak who died in motor vehicle accidents on the Malay Peninsula. They should be included as should the seven members of soldiers' families buried there.

At the same time, the next of kin of Warrant Officer Kevin Conway, who is the sole casualty from Vietnam buried in Singapore, will need consideration.

Where no preference is expressed by next of kin, remains should be repatriated as a matter of national responsibility.

Whether a quick decision in favour of repatriation is made or not, it is time to advise the next of kin of those interred in the Terendak Garrison Cemetery of its present state and of the difficulties of access. Critical in the decision process

OUTREACH PROGRAM— PENSION TOURS 2012

Our Outreach Program continues to be extremely successful in reaching out to Veterans, service and ex-service community living in regional and/or remote areas.

Any Veteran, widow of a Veteran, and/or relative of a Veteran in rural NSW, seeking assistance of the Outreach Team in matters of Service Pensions, Disability Pension Claims, War Widow Pensions, and/or MCRS Claims, etc., should contact the *OUTREACH COORDINATOR* (below) , who will organise assistance.

In the event that members have friends who need assistance they are urged to contact Dennis Hanmer who will coordinate the visit program. Of course, the more people wishing assistance in any one town or rural area, the more fulfilling the trip will be for the team.

Remember, we assist all Veterans, and service and ex-service personnel, in any matter relating to your service that may require the lodgement of a claim or application with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The team will provide assistance and advice to ALL Veterans of ALL conflicts, including Peacekeeping and Peacemaking deployments. ALL personnel who served in the Armed Forces between 1973 and 1993 ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REPATRIATION BENEFITS. OUR SERVICES ARE FREE.

Contact: Dennis Hanmer (JP) Mob: 0428 388 221 Ph: 02 9682 1788 Fx: 02 9682 6134

Email: secretary@vfvagranville.org Mail: VVPPAA (NSW Branch) Inc., PO Box 170, Granville. 2142



1300 924 522

Our programs

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

91 Milton Street,
 Ashfield NSW 2131

&

7 Blake Street,
 Kogarah NSW 2217

Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah provide compassionate care for those in need of psychiatric help. The goal of the hospitals is to provide positive outcomes, not only for our patients with a mental illness but also for their family and carers. As centres of excellence within Wesley Mission our Wesley Hospitals have been providing professional and compassionate care for over 60 years.

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

The story of the missing Dog Tags

By Wayne "Sam" Brown ex B Coy medic 4RAR/NZ 68/69

Back in 1994 I visited Nui Dat with my mother, an ex-ARVN tour guide and his ex-VC driver/minder. We'd booked the overnight Vung Tau, Baria and Nui Dat side trip in Australia as a nostalgic prelude to a 21 day tour of Vietnam with popular Australian company, Travel Indochina. Flying into Vietnam a day earlier we overflew coffee-coloured, serpentine river systems and geometric, patchwork paddy fields; some displaying staggered lines of circular, water-filled craters; relics of wartime bombing runs on the outskirts of Saigon.

It had been 25 years since the Qantas freedom-bird delivered me home in March 1969 and I was feeling somewhat apprehensive, wondering what my reception would be like from the "old enemy"?

Apprehension dissolved rapidly as Mum and I spotted the Peace Tour's welcome sign and our escort's beaming smile. In a rattly old Datsun sedan they drove us across Saigon, (now Ho Chi Minh City) to the comfortable International Hotel on Vo Van Tan St for our first night's stay.

Picking us up early next morning we threaded through crazy traffic out of the city to begin our nostalgia tour of Nui Dat and environs.

Assured in halting English that all venues we'd requested would be visited in turn, we right-angled at Bien Hoa onto route 51, (formerly route 15) and into Baria/Vung Tau Province, (formerly Phuoc Tuy). Stopping briefly at Baria market for biscuits, fruit and drinks we then drove in the general direction of Nui Dat. Our "all-knowing, overconfident" guides became bushed, unfamiliar with the area, eventually pulling over an ox-cart driver to get firm directions. Within 20 minutes the Datsun was parked in the shade of a scraggly tree inside the Pearly



Gates. We'd arrived!

On our 1968/69 4 RAR/NZ tour of duty I'd spent most time as a company medic in the bush and only now was able to explore my old base camp at leisure. Just inside the twin brick columns of the Pearly Gates I veered off amongst the lines of newly planted rubber trees, coming across a couple of boulders painted red and blue and displaying faded unit insignia. Nearby were concreted subterranean command bunkers, eroding into disrepair; half-full of leaf litter and red laterite sludge; their original sand bag protection long since decomposed. Lunch-break

schoolkids gawked at us as they cycled or walked the rutted track, along with two curious uniformed soldiers, one being donkeyed on his mate's pillion seat. Their camp was not far distant and definitely out of bounds with me still feeling a tad twitchy.

Luscombe Field was readily located having motored past SAS hill's western flank, then, rumbling along the airstrip's crumbling surface, I endeavoured to pinpoint 4 RAR's and B Coy's lines, figuring we were in the general vicinity in relation to Nui Dat hill. Once off the airstrip nothing seemed familiar. Most ancient rubber trees had long since been consumed as firewood and the area sub-divided into tiny farmlets and fruit and vegetable gardens. Rudimentary rustic houses built from salvaged scrap were fenced with bamboo and strands of "our" barbed wire!

As we pulled over to orientate and take photos a young lad approached with outstretched hands. Taken aback briefly I found myself

staring at a collection of dog tags; most with scorch marks, encrustation and red soil stain; the shapes we'd worn around our necks during the conflict. Regaining my composure I soon realised he wasn't merely showing me the discs but offering them for sale. I had no bargaining or language skills back then and wondered about their souvenir value and authenticity. Taking a chance I offered a US\$10 note to which he readily agreed before racing off home, delighted to help out with the family budget for some time.

Visiting the Long Tan Cross was an eerie experience as an area of the rubber plantation had

been cleared, the sacrosanct white cross dominating the red clay plain.

Vung Tau had a familiar feel but smelt much better as we booked into the Canadian Hotel on Front Beach's esplanade, 500 metres north from the Grand Hotel. Planning to have a drink or two in the Grand, a venue I'd not frequented in 68/69 as I limited my brief Vungers forays to The Flags precinct. We were thwarted, however, as the hotel was undergoing periodic refurbishment.

Drinks and lunch at the Palace, immediately behind the Grand was a pleasant oasis to spend the hottest and most humid hours before heading back to Saigon to re-pack for our comprehensive tour next day.



Several years ago I re-discovered the dog tags after a house move and conducted a simple check using my basic computer skills and the book, *Vietnam Remembered* with its veteran's nominal roll. I found the tags to contain genuine names and numbers, none

belonging to deceased soldiers during the actual conflict. Two sets were of Kiwi origin and one US.

I've often wondered just how the dog tags came to be left behind in Vietnam? Were diggers symbolically ditching their discs when RTA or did they have new sets punched out, the old ones dumped at the base tip? Years ago I read of one soldier on a similar Nui Dat visit to mine, who was offered a set of dog tags. They were his own! From memory he'd hung them on a nail in the shower block when his ablutions were interrupted by an incoming mortar barrage,

thereby losing contact with his ID discs.

By cross-checking my references and information I compiled a list:

Aplin 43911 M O Pos (?106 Fld workshops) 2 tags.

Appleby 111814 Meth RH Pos (? C Coy 4 RAR/ 9 RAR/1 Armd.) 1 tag.

W. A. Fiedler 55391 RC A Pos (?1 RAR) 1 tag.

Glyde B. D. 243044 Pres. 04 Pos (? 1 Fld Sq) 1 tag.

3792034 R. W. Higgins P A Neg (? 104 Sigs) 2 tags.

218787 P. Ison ? RC 0 Pos (?1 Ord Fld Park.) 1 tag.

Johnson Harry R RA 67107676 B + 408 90 1109 Bapt. (? US) 1 oval tag.

17600 A. J. Laws Meth OR H (?1 Fld Reg 105 Fld Baty) 1 tag.

213683 McDonald D. W. C of E (?1 Fld Reg 105 Fld Baty) 2 tags.

3109523 J. A Maccioni RC A Pos (? 3 Arm Sq. 1 Arm Reg. B Sq. 3 Cav) 2 tags.

441123 N. W. O'Loughlin C of E (? HQ AFV) 1 tag.

39406 Paaka M. J. RC A Pos [? V Coy NZ) 2 tags.

214113 G. W. Rae O Pos (? AATV 1 ARU 6RAR/ 7 RAR) 1 tag.

1734196 R. Swann Meth O Pos (?17 Const.) 1 tag.

39414 P. F. Titchener C E A Pos (? 6 RAR) 1 tag.

2787647 P.A.D. Walker O. C. A Pos (? C Coy 4 RAR/NZ) 1 tag.

378284 R. Wipou Meth. RH Pos (? W2 Coy 4RAR/NZ) 1 tag.

3179750 M. T. Wood Pres O Pos.....? 1



Entrance to Nui Dat, Now

tag.

27921 no name C E O Pos 1 tag.

157571 blank.....1 tag.

Fast forward to 2014. I'm rapidly approaching my senior years, gradually down-sizing, ticking boxes on my bucket list and passing on items to those who'll appreciate them, dog tags included. Anyone wishing to become re-acquainted with their or their relatives discs please send me a form of photocopied ID and a stamped SAE to the address below and I'll happily forward them on.

W. Brown

71 McAndrew St.

Caboolture Qld 4510"

NB: Jean Williams OAM was the person accompanying me in 1994; my Mum. She returned to Vietnam on two more occasions to attend an Agent Orange Conference in Hanoi and to garner material for inclusion in her several books regarding the wartime chemical issues. Now out of print the titles included *Harvest Of Tears*, *Cry In The Wilderness*, *The Devil's Rainbow*, *Children Of The Mist* and a veteran's poetry anthology, *Homecoming*. These literary works have assisted many veterans trying to unravel the complexities of Agent Orange, birth defects and veteran's health; further vindicated by the recent announcement of an unbiased history re-write. ■

**DON'T THROW THIS JOURNAL
IN THE BIN!!!!**

When you have finished with this Journal, or, in some cases, when two are received in the one household, **don't recycle through the rubbish** collection. One option is to pass it on to a mate or leave it in a place **such as your local doctor's surgery** or some other public area. This will allow greater circulation of the Journal and inform others of our long-standing existence and of assistance which continues to be required to cater for the needs of current and former ADF members and their families.

LEAVE A GIFT 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.

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.



**VVCS - Veterans and
Veterans Families
Counselling Service**

A service founded by Vietnam veterans

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service provides counselling and group programs to Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families. It is a specialised, free and confidential Australia-wide service.

VVCS staff are qualified psychologists or social workers with experience in working with veterans, peacekeepers and their families. They can provide a wide range of treatments and programs for war and service-related mental health conditions including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Veterans Line can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and counselling.
Phone 1800 011 046.*

* Free local call. Calls from mobile or pay phones may incur charges.

VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., will be held at Merrylands RSL Club 10.30am Saturday, 23 May 2015.

AGENDA

Opening of Meeting by the Chairman

Apologies

Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2014.

Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2014

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Membership Report

Election results (for Office Bearers)

President

Senior Vice President

Vice Presidents (2)

Secretary

Treasurer

Committee Members (10)

(see next page in this Journal for Nomination Form)

Appointment of Association Auditors

Appointment of Association Legal Representatives

Appointment of Life Members

Other Business by leave of the Chairman

Close of Meeting.

Any items for General Business must be in the hands of the Secretary by close of business on

Monday 4 May 2015.

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2016.

Frank Cole

Hon. Secretary

NSW Branch

**VIETNAM VETERANS', PEACEKEEPERS' & PEACEMAKERS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.**

2015 ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Members wishing to nominate for one or more of the following positions on the NSW Committee are asked to indicate with an (X) alongside those positions:

- President (1)
- Senior-Vice President (1)
- Vice Presidents (2)
- Secretary (1)
- Treasurer (1)
- Committee Members (10)

*Members nominating for a position(s) must be financial for the year 2015.

Details of Nominee:

.....
Print Name	Signature	Memb No

Details of Seconders (2)

.....
Print Name	Signature	Memb No.

.....
Print Name	Signature	Memb No.

NOTE:

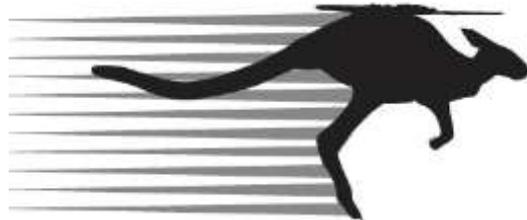
All nomination forms must be in the Secretary's hands by COB 8 February 2013.

Should an election be required personal profiles will be requested and ballot papers will be posted. The election results will be declared at the AGM anticipated to be on 23 May 2015.

Veterans, Ex-Servicemen and women

Physically disabled from your service or an accident?

.....have you thought about “Para-Biathlon”?



Biathlon, the most popular winter sport in Europe, is gaining popularity in Australia despite our short and mild winters. Australian Biathlon (AB) has modified the sport to work in with our firearms legislation and have made this an all-year round sport with a laser Biathlon system. This system is ideal for para-biathletes who want to try out the sport before committing to investing in expensive high precision firearms.

Para-biathlon is a multi discipline sport combining cross country skiing with target shooting using a high precision .177 calibre air rifle to shoot 15mm targets at 10m. This Paralympic sport has three classes of events – sit, stand and vision impaired for each gender.

The athlete skis a loop usually 2.5 km for men and 2 km for women, ski or sit ski into an on-snow range, where the air rifle will be handed to them. Then, lying prone they shoot at five self-setting targets. If they miss a target, they must ski a short penalty loop for each miss, before heading off to ski another loop. The athletes do this four times for long distance events and twice for sprint events..

The winner is the para-biathlete with the quickest time.

Distances skied vary depending on the event but in most instances a long race would be 12.5 km for men/10 km for women and short races would be 7.5 km for men and 6 km for women.

Australian Biathlon’s Laser Biathlon System is an adaptation of the sport, replacing air rifles with lasers.



This is a photo of James Millar, upper limb amputee, who was Australia's 2006 Para-Biathlete to Torino. He again represented Australia in the 2010 Paralympics in Cross Country Skiing.

For those who enjoy endurance sports, para-biathlon may a sport to explore. Fitness is a must, not just to ski at a high aerobic rate, but also to be able to control and recover the heart rate to enable accurate shooting between the periods of exertion.

A US para-biathlete at the 2014 Sochi Paralympics, Oksana Masters, had transitioned from rowing only 2 years before competing. She first started skiing in 2012 and won 2 bronze medals in para-nordic skiing, and came fourth in para-biathlon!

Will you be Australia's 2018 Para-Biathlete to the Korean Paralympics?

Some para-skiers with lower limb amputations will have a prostheses that adapts to the ski boot, which in turn is clipped into the ski binding. The skating technique used does not need flexibility in the foot part of the prosthesis.

Para-skiers like this gentleman in the photo would be classed as "Standing", while those on sit-skis are classified as "Sit Biathlon". Vision Impaired para-biathletes use electronic rifles hooked up to head phones, which emits a high frequency pulse with an elevated pitch. Naturally, they'd ski with a guide.

Check out this video from the 2014 Paralympics on Biathlon.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cua4cHmtjVg&list=PL6CBAXPeBajIAG_3RN8SBPn3100B3m6ip&index=3

Biathlon is incredibly exciting to watch as the leaders can change in seconds depending on how they shoot.



You're welcome to visit us at Australia's only on-snow Biathlon range at Whiskey Flat, Mt Hotham, Victoria or you can try the summer events where you can run, cycle, skate, rollerski, or use your wheel chair to come into the laser range. Check Australian Biathlon's website for their calendar of events: <http://www.biathlon.asn.au/>. If you're visiting the Perisher ski resort, you can try Laser biathlon which has been set up close to the Perisher Nordic Shelter.

VVCS Independence Under Threat?

In 1980 a group of Vietnam Veterans including Phil Thompson and Tim McCombe, after many consultations with other Vietnam veterans, realised many psychologically damaged veterans needed counselling. This group opened its own Counselling Service at its then Vietnam Veterans Association office in Parramatta, employing 3 qualified volunteer counsellors. Case Studies were written up by one of the counsellors that became a telling part in the associations' submission to government, that a counselling service was required for veterans and their families.

Not long after, in 1982, the government established the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS), and invited Phil Thompson to give a speech in Adelaide at the first Counselling Centre opening.

Since then the VVCS has grown to include many programs aimed at benefitting the veteran as well as the immediate family. In April 2007 the VVCS changed its name to (the) Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service to satisfy an alarming increase in the younger veteran now seeking counselling.

From the beginning, it was understood that for veterans to have complete confidence in the

Counselling Service it would have to be, and be seen to be, separate from and independent of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (DVA). To this end the independent National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established to advise the Minister on operational aspects of the Service.

To ensure its independence, the Committee's membership did not include Departmental officers. Instead it was comprised of the Head of the Counselling Service, independent medical experts, representatives of ex-service organisations from whose membership would come a good proportion of the clients. The committee was to be chaired by an

independent eminent person. In other words, the NAC was set up as a buffer between the DVA and the Minister, a guarantee of the Service's operational separateness. To make the independence clearer, counselling centres were located away from Departmental buildings.

In October 1988 a Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into counselling and ancillary services for Vietnam veterans, titled "After the March ", made its support of an independent Counselling Service clear. It recommended that the National Director of the



VVCS be a statutory office. This independence was, and is needed for two reasons.

The first is that many veterans have mixed feelings about the DVA. This is hardly surprising as the Department fills both the adversarial role of judge of pension claims as well as benefactor. Yet for counselling to be effective, there can be no hint of judgement.

The second reason why the Counselling Service must be both independent and be seen to be independent is that clients must feel absolutely confident that their counselling conversations are secure. There cannot be the slightest suspicion that clients' files are available to officers of the Department or that there is the chance of casual conversations between VVCS staff and DVA staff. Any such suspicion, would, of course, render counselling useless.

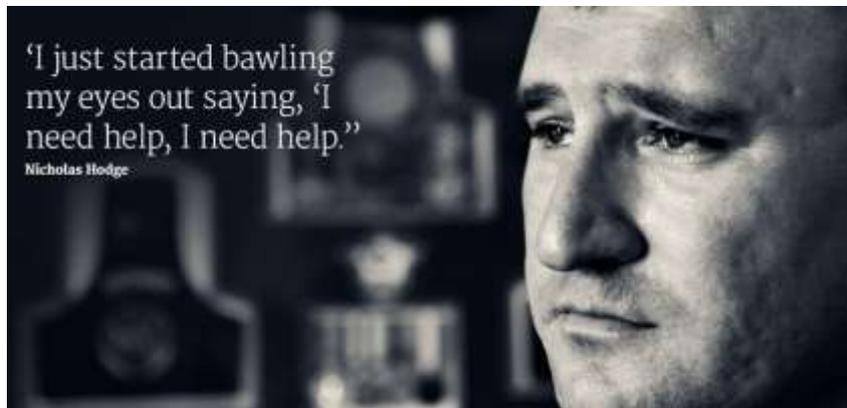
The NAC is concerned that soldiers with PTSD are going off to war, often motivated by a sense of belonging to their unit, not realising the danger they put themselves and their comrades in. The ADF's programme of PTSD awareness may help, but would require the soldier to turn himself in, risking missing the deployment and perhaps promotion.. However, the PTSD sufferer may be attracted to approach the VVCS knowing it is entirely separate from both DVA and Defence and has the expertise to assist him. The VVCS counsellors have the expertise to help but also may, in severe cases, be able to dissuade the sufferer from going to war . Other external sources of help may well lack this perspective.

If we want to attract ADF sufferers of PTSD seeking external assistance to choose the VVCS, we must remove any obstacles to that

choice. Any hint that their counselling was not absolutely confidential will render it useless. The VVCS must always be seen to be independent and separate from both the ADF and DVA. Another fear would be that the sufferer might be observed and reported, therefore VVCS offices must have discrete entrances, waiting areas, and reception, even if located in the same building as DVA offices.

A July 2010 report in a review of the VVCS delivery model commended its services to the veteran community and made several recommendations to enhance the treatment toward the veteran and to include immediate

family in any analysis and counselling of the veteran. Even this report included the necessity to ensure that VVCS is in no way compromised



by any close proximity to any DVA office.

DVA is presently, in New South Wales reviewing the VVCS office locations. It is, we understand, contemplating moving the VVCS headquarters from its Parramatta office to join the DVA in its inner Sydney headquarters.

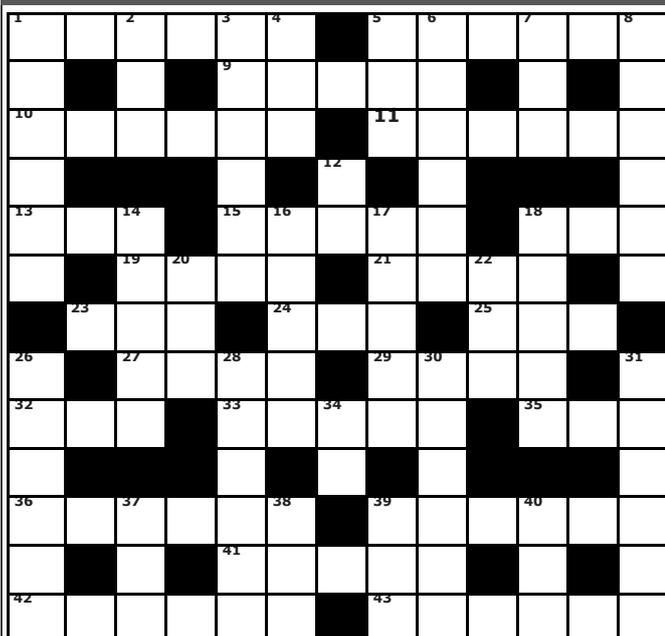
Such a co-location could dissuade some veterans from attending, getting help and thus avoiding an in-theatre disaster

If the inappropriate co-location of DVA and VVCS offices is purely part of a DVA push to save money then it is a deplorable act. Its **ONLY concern must be veterans' welfare and in this case,** saving the lives of secret PTSD sufferers seeking deployment to war zones, and the lives of those who serve with them.

The VVCS Offices in Parramatta NSW lease will expire in April 2015. Watch this **space.** ■

REUNIONS, COMMEMORATIONS, NOTICES

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

1. Female sibling
5. Afraid
9. Fleet related
10. Open parcel
11. Crown
13. Fall ill
15. Telling fibs
18. Charge
19. Notion
21. Small island
23. Flightless bird
24. Dark bread
25. Consumed
27. Necklace ball
29. Manage
32. Twice one
33. Cinema attendant
35. Mother deer
36. Paint roughly
39. Skin condition
41. Fight authority
42. Expanse, width
43. Stood on hind legs

DOWN

1. Steam rooms
2. Timber cutter
3. Allow, permit
4. Light knock
5. Unhappy
6. Sticks to tightly
7. Fishing pole
8. Make wet
12. Greeting
14. Dance under pole
16. Back gardens
17. Nephews sister
18. Treated famously
20. About to arrive
22. Length of pool
26. Horses home
28. Reddish hair
30. Prophet, seer
31. Order
34. That man
37. Small speck
38. Wager
39. Ever (Poetic)
40. Hearing organ

[Solution next issue]

THE UNKOWN COMIC

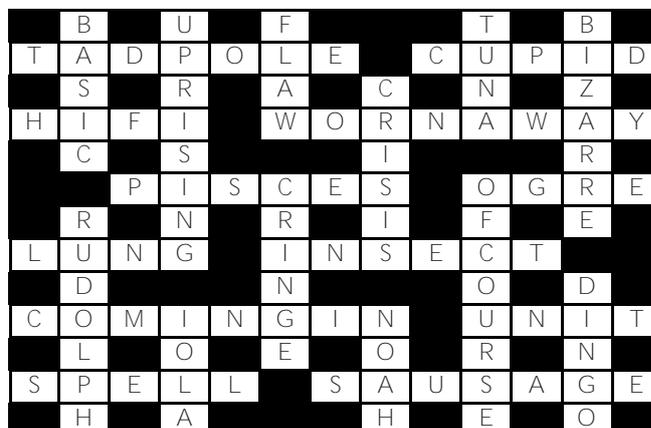
A man and his wife are at a restaurant, and the husband keeps staring at an old drunken lady knocking down champagne with VB chasers at a nearby table. His wife demands, "Do you know her?" "Yes," sighs the husband. "She's my ex-wife. She took to drinking right after we divorced seven years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since." "My God!" says the wife. "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long?"

A very sick man is in the hospital, and on many drugs which give him bowel problems. After many false alarms, he accidentally soils the sheets. Very embarrassed, he balls up the sheets and throws them out the window, where a drunk is staggering on the way home. The drunk starts flailing at the sheets, throwing his arms and legs around wildly. Finally wrestling the sheets to the ground. Just then a security officer runs over, hearing the commotion. "What's going on here?" "I don't know, officer. But I think I just beat the crap out of a ghost."

I stumbled out of this party and started walking home. On the way, this guy staggers up to me all mangled like and bloodied. As he slumps to his knees he begs me to call him an ambulance. So I stooped over him and said. "Okay, you're an ambulance!"

A husband and wife were driving through NSW. As they approached Bulahdelah, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband asked the blonde waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly?" She leaned over the counter and said, "Huunggaariee Jaacksss."

JULY SOLUTION



The four nasty government bills

(How the government's unprecedented attack on veterans' disability and other Veterans Affairs pensions is being waged)

There are four nasty government bills before Parliament which, if passed, will, over time, drag Veterans Affairs pensions further and further behind community income standards.

You won't notice it at first because the half yearly indexation catch-ups will continue. But those catch-up will be reduced by the downgrading of indexation of the pensions and pauses in the indexation of mean-test-free areas and cut-off points. Part Service pensioners will suffer as deeming rates are downgraded.

But have no doubt, as time passes, these reduced catch-up payments will feed on themselves and accelerate the falling behind of your pension.

To achieve its desired degrading of Veterans Affairs pensions, the government has introduced four pieces of legislation into Parliament.

With the Coalition government having a majority in the House of Representatives, all four bills are expected to pass despite some opposition from Labor, the Greens and the Palmer United Party.

They must then go to the Senate where the government does not have a majority.

The odious bills are:

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 5) Bill 2014

- From 20 September 2017, the bill will ensure all Veterans Affairs pensions are indexed to the consumer price index only,

by removing benchmarking to the more favourable male-total-average-weekly-earnings and indexation to the more favourable pensioner-and-beneficiary-living-cost index.

- From 1 July 2017, there will be a pause of indexation for three years of the income-test-free areas for all Veterans Affairs pensions and the deeming thresholds for all income support payments.
- From 20 September 2017, veterans' entitlements income test deeming thresholds will be dramatically reduced to \$30,000 for single income support recipients, \$50,000 combined for pensioner couples, and \$25,000 for a member of a couple other than a pensioner couple.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Seniors Supplement Cessation) Bill 2014

- The measure will, from 20 September 2014, cease payment of the seniors supplement for holders of the Veterans' Affairs gold card.

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 4) Bill 2014

- From 1 January 2015, the bill will remove the three months' backdating of disability pensions under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 originally given in recognition of the uniqueness of military service.



How will each Senator vote?

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 6) Bill 2014

- Pauses indexation for three years from 1 July 2017 of the assets-test-free areas for all Veterans Affairs pensions.
- From 20 September 2014, renames the ‘clean energy supplement’, payable to Veterans Affairs pensioners, as the ‘energy supplement’, and permanently cease indexation of the payment.
- Military superannuation (DFRB/DFRDB/MSBS) to be newly included as income in the assessment for the Commonwealth seniors health card (with products purchased before 1 January 2015 by existing cardholders exempt from the new arrangements).

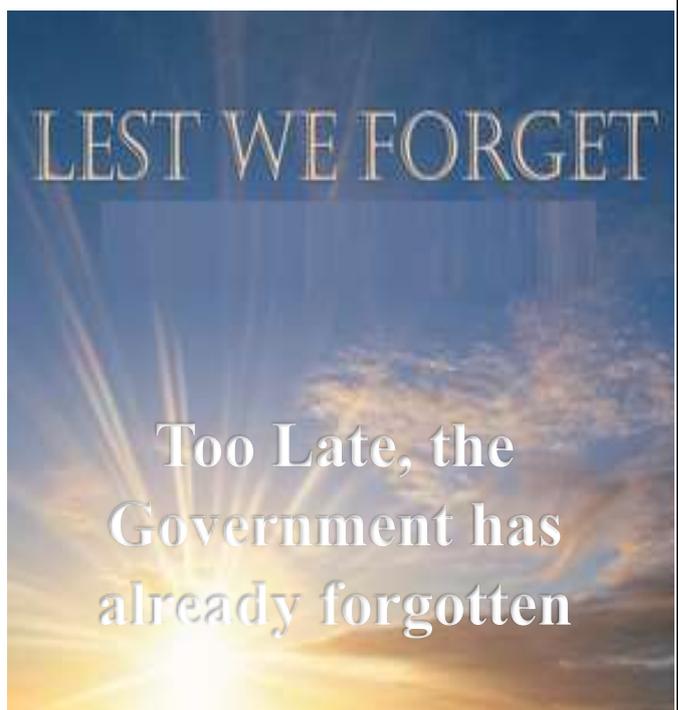
Just which Senators will vote in favour of degrading Veterans Affairs pensions and which will vote against this degrading is yet to be seen.

We believe the Greens and the Palmer United Party will vote against all the measures degrading Veterans Affairs pensions. We believe Labor will vote against most of them but, disappointingly, may vote in favour of some of the odious measures.

By the time you are reading this, the bills will probably have met their fate in the Senate.

Writing now (15 November 2014) we can only hope this unprecedented attack on the TPI, other veterans disability, war widows, and the equivalent younger veterans’ pensions as well as the Income Support Supplement, has been beaten back.

We shall be reporting in detail in the next edition of this magazine. ■



BRANCH LISTINGS NSW SUB-BRANCHES

BRANCH LISTINGS OTHER STATES



Last Post





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But each one, man by man, has won imperishable praise!

Each has won a glorious grave - not that sepulchre of earth wherein they lie, but the living tomb of everlasting remembrance wherein their glory is enshrined. Remembrance that will live on the lips, that will blossom in the deeds of their countrymen the world over. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of heroes. Monuments may rise and tablets be set up to them in their own land, but on far-off shores there is an abiding memorial that no pen or chisel has traced; it is graven, not on stone or brass, but on the living heart of humanity. Take these men for your example. Like them, remember that prosperity can be only for the free, that *freedom* is the sure possession of those alone who have courage to defend it.

Pericles

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

OPERATION Life



REGISTER NOW!!

Phone Veterans and Veterans Counselling Service
on 1800 011 046 or 9761 5000

Operation *Life* workshops' emphasis is on suicide prevention - they aim to help members of the veteran community to recognise someone who might be having thoughts of suicide and to link them in with appropriate help. There are three types of workshops:

- Suicide alertness for everyone: (*Safetalk*) - half day presentation.
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: (*ASIST*) - Two-day skills training
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Tune-up: (*ASIST Tune Up*) - half day refresher workshop

Workshops are open to people who are concerned about veterans, their family, friends or mates in the veteran community. Welfare, pension officers and other helpers from ex-service organisations and the veteran community are encouraged to attend



Veterans & Veterans Families Counselling Service
A service founded by Vietnam Veterans

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES	SMASH REPAIRS	BATTERIES	FLOOR COVERINGS
<p>CARNEEDS Pty Ltd 152 Parramatta Rd STANMORE Prptr: Robert Stenta Ph: 9519 1441 10% discount On mechanical repairs & competitive prices on tyres and batteries. To all Vietnam Veterans Federation Members.</p> <hr/> <p>DO YOU KNOW ANY BUSINESS OFFERING DISCOUNTS FOR VETERANS. THEY COULD ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE !!</p> <hr/> <p>MALCOLM MOTORS Automotive Service Specialist All mechanical repairs & servicing. 15% Discount for members on services and repairs. JOE CARE 603-605 Parramatta Rd Leichhardt NSW MTA Lic. # 42198</p>	 <p>Wreck-A-Mended Smash Repairs Unit 1, 20 Bosci Rd Ingleburn NSW 02 9605 9008 Ask for Alan Tell them you are a member and they will send us a donation Ask for Alan Tell them you are a member and they will send us a donation.</p>	 <p>POWER PRODUCTS For all your power needs BATTERIES SOLAR POWER INVERTERS GENERATORS <i>Motor Cycle battery specialists</i> Russell is offering 15% discount to VVF Members on Batteries . 5% on Solar products, Inverters & Chargers 10% 3/3 Sovereign Pl Sth Windsor Ph: (02) 4577 7761 Fax: (02) 4577 7768 Motor Cycle Accessories Supermarket</p>	 <p>Waratah Floor Coverings 473 Burwood Rd BELMORE Ph: (02) 9759 6511 Ask for Special Rate</p>
	<p>YOUR FREE ADVERT FREE ADS</p> <p>HERE!! ENQUIRE AT 0421 690 959 <i>CONDITIONS APPLY</i></p>	<p>MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES</p> <p>Head Office. 321 Parramatta Rd Auburn NSW (02) 9648 1400 www.mcas.com.au CITY: 9261 5182. LIVERPOOL: 9601 8276. CARINGBAH 9574 5100 PENRITH 4737 6100 10% Discount except helmets and tyres BRIDGESTONE Tyres & Complete Auto Servicing.</p>	<p>MOTELS</p>  <p>Golden Chain Motor Inn Ltd Ph: 1800 023 966</p> <p>Must have Golden Chain Card Its Free When You Call The Number Above And Ask Present your Federation membership card and ask for a "Golden Link" card to be issued. There is a 10% discount on room rates Australia wide</p>
	<p>EXHAUST SYSTEMS</p>  <p>Menai Mufflers Unit 4/788 Old Illawarra Rd MENAI Ph: (02) 9541 4720 20% Discount Balmain Radiator Centre Mark Borghonzian 22d Crystal St ROZELLE Ph: (02) 9818 4920 Mbl: 0419 417 206 10% Discount</p>	<p>TYRES</p>  <p>10% discount to members (not current specials) 223 Woodville Rd Merrylands NSW 02 9897 1002 Mon-Fri 8-5 Sat 8:30-12:30</p>	<p>BATTERIES</p> <p>Ashfield Battery Centre 110 FREDERICK STREET ASHFIELD, NSW, 2131 02 9798-6166 GEORGE KAWAUCHI (owner) We sell: CAR, TRUCK, MARINE, DEEP CYCLE, GOLF CART, MOBILITY, MOTOR CYCLE BATTERIES. CHARGERS, SOLAR PANELS, BOOSTER CABLES, FUSES, GLOBES, INVERTERS, TERMINALS, BATTERY BOXES. OPEN FROM: 9am - 5-30pm Mon-Fri OPEN SAT FROM: 9.30am-3.30pm Closed Sundays and public holidays. 10% Discount to veterans</p>
<p>TRAILERS TOWBARS BULLBARS</p>  <p>Fastfit Bullbars & Towbars Trailer sales and spares-side steps Bike beacons-Custom work 65 St Hilliers Road AUBURN Ph: (02) 9749 1209 10% Discount on products</p>			

