



# THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

**DECEMBER 2019**



*Feature Article*

**NOT ONLY AGENT ORANGE**



# Not Only Agent Orange 1

IT was early 1982. The controversy over whether exposure to herbicides and insecticides in Vietnam had been harmful, was raging. A group of army officers and NCOs gathered at Army Office in Canberra to examine 30,000 files that had been raised in Vietnam during the war.

The group searched every file for references to the use of herbicides and insecticides.

Their findings were organized into a large document known as the Army Report. It was completed in May 1982.

But before it was presented to the Minister, it went, suspiciously, through the hands of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department made some changes without reference to the army office group and handed the changed report to the Minister in December 1982.

So there were now two Army Report, the original May version and the changed December version.

Access to the May version of the report was denied and nearly all existing copies destroyed.

Vietnam veterans historian, Dr John Mordike had been in charge of the Army Office group compiling the insecticide references. Some years ago, he obtained copies of both versions of the Army Report and compared them.

He discovered a disturbing fact.

The May version stated:

*'The concern, **that untrained personnel were apparently using toxic insecticides without any knowledge of concentrations, dilution factors, human toxicity factors and general safety precautions,** resulted in the intended publication in Routine Orders of information on safe insecticide practice.*



The Department changed this so that in the December version to read:

*'The 1 ATF Hygiene officers concern that practices for the use of toxic insecticides needed improvement resulted in the intended publication in Routine Orders of information on safe insecticide practice.'*

This December version of the Army Report was used by the Agent Orange Royal Commission, and quoted extensively in its final report in which it exonerated insecticide exposure.

But the Department of Veterans Affairs had deleted

the words **'that untrained personnel were apparently using toxic insecticides without any knowledge of concentrations, dilution factors, human toxicity factors and general safety precautions'**.

If the Royal Commission had read these words would they have exonerated the insecticides?

What we can say is that reading those words would probably have led to some searching questions.

So why would the Department of Veterans Affairs indulge in such a deception?

Perhaps one reason was that the original wording would have helped veterans' claims for medical treatment and compensation.

There is another twist. The person in charge of the Department's Vietnam Special Studies Group, the group charged with advising the Department on these chemical matters, was from the Department of Primary Industry, a department vociferous in its condemnation of those warning of the dangers of insecticides.

More later in this edition. ■



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- Neither is there any obligation to join our Federation although you would be welcome to do so.

Contact any of our Branches or Sub-Branched from the lists elsewhere in this Journal. Alternatively, visit our website, [www.vfa.org.au](http://www.vfa.org.au) and email from the lists included.

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



**Bumper holiday reading**

<p>Not Only Agent Orange 1. How the Department of Veterans Affairs deceived the Agent Orange Royal commission. <span style="float: right;">Page 1</span></p>	
<p>Not only Agent Orange 2. The whole story and how insecticides were lost and found again. <span style="float: right;">Page 8</span></p>	
<p>The President's Report says of the Productivity Commission recommendations: Still Waiting - government. considers the Productivity Commission Report. <span style="float: right;">Page 12</span></p>	
<p>A Memorial for our old foe. Many of you will remember or have heard about the enemy Local Force Battalion D445, some with bad memories but perhaps also some respect. <span style="float: right;">Page 16</span></p>	
<p>The Repatriation Commission claims it is much more centered on fairness to veterans — - but is it really? Its recent Model Litigant guidelines might give a clue. <span style="float: right;">Page 20</span></p>	
<p>Whale Rock. A secret hospital in Nicaragua for soldiers suffering PTSD. Just one of the intriguing revelations in this novel by Diana Plater <span style="float: right;">Page 22</span></p>	
<p>50 Cartons of Bud. The notorious B Company, 1RAR is at it again. Here's a veterans story we can all relate to. <span style="float: right;">Page 40</span></p>	
<p>The Luckiest Man Alive. A poem tells the story.. <span style="float: right;">Page 44</span></p>	
<p>4 RAR and our appointment with destiny. A story about a trip on the Vung Tau Ferry <span style="float: right;">Page 46</span></p>	
<p><b>A Veteran's Tears.</b> A sad poem about a visit to a nursing home. <span style="float: right;">Page 50</span></p>	
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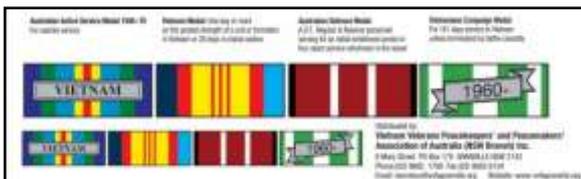
What Veterans Compensation scheme do you come under ? 58

## MERCHANDISE UPDATES

THE biggest news is about our stickers where we have embarked on a campaign to phase in the whole range of stickers to make them able to be inserted into single sized 'A4' envelopes. Some are already available at the new sizes and will become apparent when ordered.

There is also a new sticker available of the Regular digger ribbon range in a twin set similar to the 'Nasho' set. Perhaps this image may help.

Contact the Granville office and quote order



number 1500 to secure yours now.

Our merchandise is available for purchase on-line via the NSW website, [www.vvfagranville.org](http://www.vvfagranville.org). Also, many products are available from your nearest State Branch or Sub-Branch.

For further information contact the Granville office and request a hard copy of our Merchandise List be sent to you, if you are unable to find us on the net.

CALL ADMIN ON 02 9682 1788

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**LÔÔK**

## LOOKING FOR

We are looking for 223991 RE Sweedman. We have in our possession his Defence Force Service Medal together with its miniature. Should you know this man please have him contact Frank Cole in our Granville NSW office on 02 9682 1788 or email me [president@vfvagranville.org](mailto:president@vfvagranville.org) to enable us to return his medal to him.

*See page 62 for more notices.*



## FROM THE EDITORS DESK

The Productivity Commission has dishonored war veterans' service by recommending the Repatriation system become like civilian compensation systems.

Let's hope the politicians reading the PC report have more imagination and compassion.

While exposure to Agent Orange has won compensation for a multitude of cancers, it has taken the focus off the possible harm done to us by a drenching in insecticides.

It seems they were often misused and used in vast quantities, so lets have another look.

Good to see veterans sending in stories. We all love to read them.

It's time to check your Membership for 2020 If you're not sure contact your Branch or Sub-Branch to make sure you are financial for 2020 and/or beyond. Memberships are payable by 31 January, except if your Sate Branch has a different Fiscal year, in which case you need to know when your dues are payable.

As another year grinds to an inevitable end may I say hello and a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all our readers. Hope you enjoy the bumper issue thanks to the many contributors.

Ho...uh...Oh  
Has anyone  
seen a big  
red bag?



R 19X1

## MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging  
Advocacy  
Success**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*We thank you for your kind support.*

# LETTERS TO THE



# EDITOR

*I get a few comments, letters and emails about each issue, and thankfully no derogatory remarks so far. So here are just a few I found worth reprinting here with permission from the writers....ED*

Dear Editor,

Please don't have a royal commission into DVA. DVA is not perfect, but the alternative could be worse. We have a government that is more interested in money and DVA costs a lot. The government could easily put it out to tender. We could get a private workers compensation company looking after veterans. I have had dealings with them and they will fight harder than DVA. Veterans will get normal workers comp and nothing more. A pen pusher who gets a paper cut in the office will be treated the same as veteran who gets wounded by an IED on active service.

Thank You

Ian Brennan RAASC Vietnam 1971

The Editor

Dear Sir, thank you for publishing my poem in the July issue of The Newsletter.

I called the poem "The Soldier Dream", and I wrote it with all infantry and their support troops, New Zealand and Australian, who spent their tour on operations in Vietnam in mind. I suppose its an ANZAC poem in a way. We were after all ANZAC Battalions.

Our Vietnam experiences affected everyone who served there in different ways.

Personally I don't have any bad flashbacks but I don't think there isn't a day goes by when I don't think about Vietnam at some stage, in some way, mostly good things like music, a song, a laugh, a name, a sound, smell or taste.

Ah, for that after operation shower, clean gear, BBQ and the Landrover trailer full of ice and cold cans of beer and Goffas.

I enjoyed the Newsletter and its content. Keep the ink flowing.

Lest we Forget.

310415 Peter (Andy) Anderson

Whiskey 3 Company' 1 RNZIR

6 RAR (NZ) ANZAC Battalion. November 1969 - May 1970.

2 RAR (NZ) ANZAC Battalion. May 1970 - November 1970.

Regards, Andy.

*And lots of emails like this one....*

The Editor,

Thanks for the free Reunion notices in the past few issues, we appreciate it, and it has ensured a good rollup.

PS: Liked the veterans yarns too. Keep up the good work.

2/4/RAR Association.

*More letters to the editor can be found on page 26*

# NOT ONLY AGENT ORANGE 2

## The whole story

### With its twists and turns

(Nothing's simple)

#### How it began

IN the late 1970s, evidence was emerging from the United States that exposure to herbicides in Vietnam may have caused, and may cause in the future, cancer.

The Vietnam Veterans Association was formed from concerned veteran groups Australia wide.

Australian veterans were not only concerned about exposure to herbicides but also insecticides.

Herbicides were used to kill the forests and bush while insecticides were used to kill harmful insects. (see adjacent box for list of chemicals used).

Herbicides were combined to form agents such as Agent Orange, Blue, Purple and Green. Most heavily used was Agent Orange which was a mixture of 2,4,5-T with its contaminant of Dioxin (known to cause cancer) and 2,4-D. It was usually sprayed from the air but at times was distributed from the ground.

Insecticides were sprayed both from the air and fogged from the ground to cover Australian army bases at Nui Dat and Vung Tau. Their use was heavy and frequent.

Scientific advice to the VVAA was that exposure to many of these toxic chemicals, and mixtures of them, could cause cancer.

When the Department of Veterans Affairs rejected that exposure to these chemicals may cause cancer, the VVAA fought for and was granted, in 1983, a Royal Commission.

#### The Royal Commission

The Royal Commission concluded in its 1985 report that exposure to Agent Orange, under

#### **Herbicides included:**

**2,4,5-T (with its impurity Dioxin),  
2,4-D, Picloram, Diquat, Paraquat,  
Bromacil, Borate chlorate,  
Distillate/kerosene and Creosote.**

#### **Insecticides included:**

**Dieldrin, Lindane, Chlordane, DDT,  
Diazinon, Malathion, Diethyl  
toluamide and Dibutyl phthalate**

Repatriation law that gave war veterans the 'benefit of the doubt', was linked with Soft Tissue Sarcoma and non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Insecticides were exonerated.

The Department continued to reject chemical claims, even those for Soft Tissue Sarcoma and Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

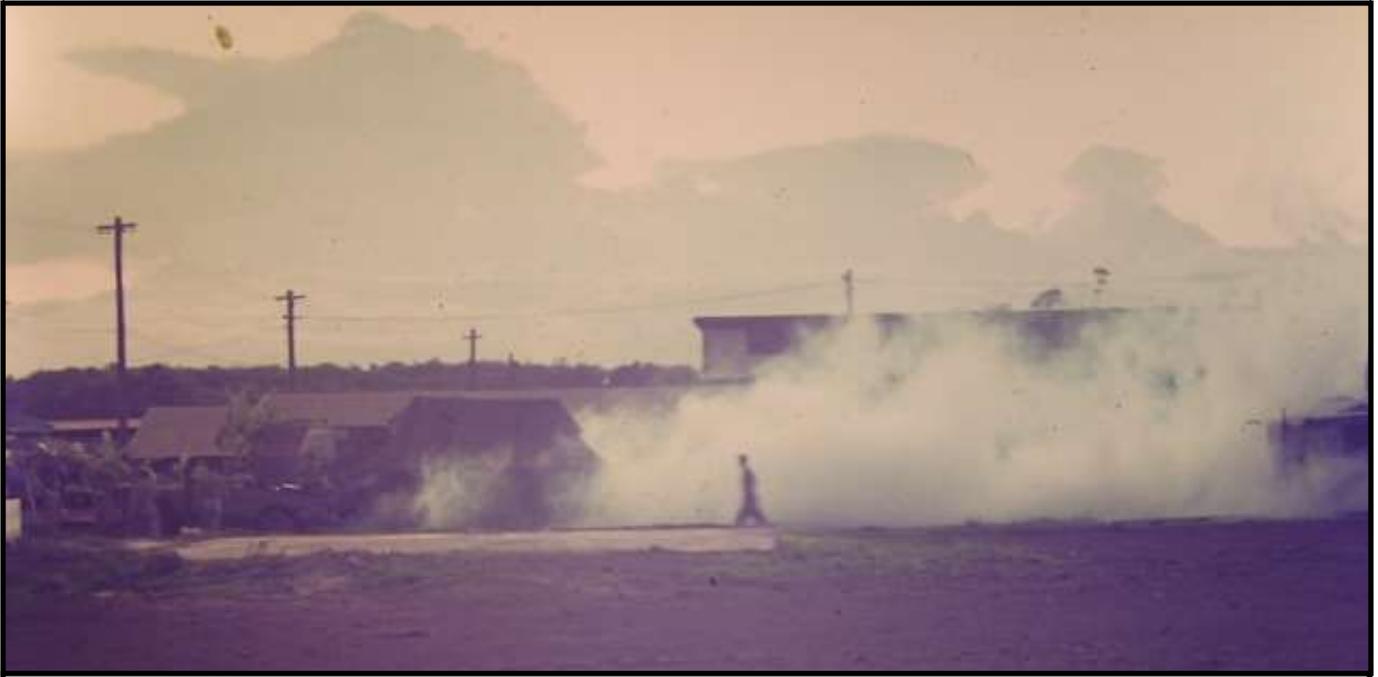
#### VVAA did not give up

The VVAA did not give up. Ted Warner of the Sale sub-branch began taking chemical exposure claims rejected by the Department to the appeals tribunals. He was soon joined by Tim McCombe.

Appeals went first to the Veterans Review Board where some dozen were eventually won.

By the late 80s appeals of Veterans Review Board decisions were being brought before the second level of appeal, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

In 1989 the case of Adrian Crisp, who had died of cancer of the nerve sheath, came before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.



### Fogging with insecticides

Evidence was given on the cancer causing properties of insecticides and mixtures of them as well as Agent Orange.

Chlordane was specially implicated.

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal found in Adrian Crisp's favour.

John Humffray died of cancer of the brain. His case was heard by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in 1991.

There was general agreement of the probability that John was exposed to a variety of insecticides. In particular, the Tribunal determined that he was probably exposed 'to a material degree' to pyrethrum, peperonylbutoxide, malathion, diazanon, DDT, chlordane and dieldrin

Experts argued that exposure to these chemicals and mixtures of them could have caused John's cancer.

The appeal was won.

Michael Schar suffered cancer of the pituitary gland.

His case was heard by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in 1991.

The case was won with evidence linking the cancer to Michael's exposure to the herbicides

Paraquat and Diquat.

In the same year, Tim McCombe sponsored the cases of Peter Edwards and Ken Kain, both of whom suffered from Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Evidence was presented that they received on a regular basis abnormal and excessive exposure to the insecticides malathion, diazinon, dieldrin, lindane chlordane and DDT ,the herbicides 2,4,-D, 2,4,5-T, picloram, cacodylic acid, creosote and diquat, and likely indirect exposure to the dioxin TCDD and assessed that it was enough to have caused both veterans' Hodgkin's lymphoma.

The evidence could not be demolished by the Department's experts so the case was won.

### The game changes

In 1993 the game changed.

The US Veterans Administration, following a report by the US Academy of Science, determined that certain cancers suffered by Vietnam veterans could be linked with their exposure to Agent Orange.

In 1994 in Australia the Repatriation Medical Authority was established. It investigated the causes of diseases such a cancer and listed



Fogging  
with  
insecticides

those causes in documents called Statements of Principle.

With the Repatriation Medical Authority mandating the causes of illnesses, the VVAA could no longer argue the causes of cancers before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

But all was not lost because the Repatriation Medical Authority accepted the US Veterans Administration list of Agent Orange caused cancers.

This list expanded over the years allowing for many Vietnam veterans' chemical-caused cancer claims to be accepted by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In this way the focus was taken off the cancer causing effects of insecticides.

### Insecticides in focus again

Vietnam veteran Dr John Mordike, in 1982, led the team examining 30,000 files raised in Vietnam for references to the use of insecticides. These references were used in helping to compile a document known as the Army Report.

Around 2011 John revisited the original documents.

In 2013, John produced a paper showing the extreme use of insecticides in Australian bases in Vietnam during the war. He also showed the probable misuse and lack of proper controls endangering those exposed

And he showed something more, as already

detailed in the article *Not Only Agent Orange 1*. He showed that this misuse and lack of proper controls which his team had included in the Army Report had been sabotaged before it was handed to the Minister and the Royal Commission.

The Department of Veterans Affairs had removed the following words from the Army Report : *'that untrained personnel were apparently using toxic insecticides without any knowledge of concentrations, dilution factors, human toxicity factors and general safety precautions'*.

That so much insecticide was delivered from both the air and ground and that it was delivered and misused by untrained operators means exposure was probably excessive and dangerous.

Combine this with new studies linking exposure to insecticides such as Malathion to various cancers, means we need to look again at the possible harm done to us.

We have recently succeeded in having the Repatriation Medical Authority agree to investigate any link between the cancers, acute myeloid leukaemia and malignant neoplasm of the lung and the insecticides dieldrin, chlordane, lindane, diazinon, malathion, and DDT.

We shall keep you informed.■

John Mordike's paper, *Insecticide Deceit* is posted on the VVFA web-site: [vvfa.org.au](http://vvfa.org.au)

## NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT



### Vietnam Veterans Day

Our Sydney Vietnam Veterans' Day service and function was a great success thanks once again to the Bankstown District Sports Club who through their grants- in- kind assist keep the day affordable for all participants. Obviously, there was no cost involved for those attending the service only. The moving service was preceded by the playing of the National Anthems of Australia, New Zealand, the USA, South Korea and South Vietnam. The moving service was very well attended.

Raffles conducted on the day are very popular with all profits going to NSW Branch scholarships for the children and grand-children of current and former ADF personnel who are in necessitous or deserving circumstances. The camaraderie among the attendees was second to none.

### DVA claims

The prime aim of the Vietnam Veterans Federation, of which we are a part, is to service the needs of current and former members of the ADF, mainly in relation to their claims on DVA. The number of clients we assist with DVA claims through our Granville Veterans Support Centre continues to be high and is expected to be well in excess of 1500 for the calendar year 2019, more than double the number of any other ex-service organisation. Added to this are the efforts of our NSW sub-branches in processing their claims. The extremely high rate of success with these claims is a tribute to our Compensation Advocates and those who assist them. I am extremely proud of these persons most of whom are volunteers and are highly qualified with many years of experience.

### Funding

We can only perform these services if we have the finances to do so. Your membership is greatly valued by us with every cent going to assisting our clients in need. Many registered clubs provide us with donations and for that we are extremely grateful. Our finances continue to be professionally managed and will withstand any audit thanks to our Treasurer Bob Freshfield and our office manager Romina Betvardeh who are invaluable to the Granville office. Donations continue to be received from individuals and many registered clubs and RSL sub-branches. All such donations ensure that we continue to deliver highly valued services free of cost to the client. The Federal Government's BEST Funding scheme is a major donor subject to the ESO providing proof that we have assisted clients. All such information is required to be contained in a computer register and be available for scrutiny. This Association encourages Government to conduct audits of funding to ensure that it is distributed to genuine veterans causes.

### Outreach Program

Whilst our Outreach Manager Dennis Hanmer has been on sick leave for about one month his successes over the year have been commendable including a seven day visit to northern NSW. Additionally, our contracted Compensation Advocate has made two trips to Western Australia with the result of approx. 100 clients from the SASR and 80 from Garden Island. Our WA based Advocate also continues to have high success rates. Future Outreach trips are planned for Darwin in February. Membership subscriptions are not used to fund these trips.

Frank Cole  
NSW President

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# STILL WAITING GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT



### Still waiting

WE thought it a good idea at the time and we participated vigorously after a Senate Committee recommended the Productivity Commission enquire into the Department of Veterans Affairs.

We thought that the Productivity Commission would look at all aspects of the Department and recommend remedies and wholesale changes - and, to be fair, it did some of that. However, the Productivity Commission ignored the special and well established system of caring for disabled war veterans developed after the experience of World War I, World War II, Korea, Malaya, Malaysia, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan and decided to recommend a totally new system based on a civilian model of compensation.

The experience gained from those tragic conflicts and the promises made to veterans after them was seemingly ignored by the Productivity Commission which preferred options favoring cost savings.

Our Canberra Research Group analysed the Productivity Commission's final report and we sent the Federation's response to the Minister for

Veterans Affairs. That response is too long to publish in full in this magazine but can be found on our web-site: [vvfa.org.au](http://vvfa.org.au).

Unfortunately, our previous objections to the Productivity Commission's draft report have been ignored. But those objections still apply. They include the Productivity Commission wanting to reduce eligibility for the Gold Card; introduce a medical co-payment; tamper with the Veterans Review Board (when it is functioning well); do away with the Specialist Medical Review Council, (a body which has been so useful in righting bureaucratic wrongs). And so on.

Our response concludes:

**'The report overall recommends many changes that reduce entitlements for future ADF members. While the Productivity Commission accepts that 'defence service is unique' many recommendations revert to a civilian model of rehabilitation and compensation that are not grounded in beneficial legislation, and that do not reflect the unique nature of ADF service.'**

Also

The National VVFA endorses completely the response of the combined ESOs of South Australia to the Productivity Commission's report. The Federation agrees in principle and substance with the submission's conclusion that:



**What have they got to complain about. If it's good enough for Public Servants, then it's good enough for that lot.**



'We cannot help but observe that the aim of the Productivity Commission Report is to cut costs. That is a justifiable, responsible objective. However, such change must be carefully evaluated against the impact the proposed changes will have on those who offer their lives in the service of our nation and their families. As attractive as it may seem, the attempt to mould our existing veteran's support system into a civilian scheme of workers' compensation is fraught with practical and moral risk.'

We are still waiting for the Government's response to the Commission's conclusions and recommendations.

### So what SHOULD the government be considering

It is disappointing that the Productivity Commission should make recommendations that would reduce benefits to veterans and their families and that the Government should even consider those recommendations.

Our position is that the Government should concentrate on fixing the many obvious and longstanding failings in the Repatriation system, including the following issues:

- Amend MRCA (the legislation for younger veterans) to remove the requirement for a claimed condition to be 'permanent and stable'

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Continued)

before compensation can be paid. This requirement was a legacy from the old Commonwealth Compensation Act, which was for civilians. The Productivity Commission has conceded that Military Service is unique hence it should not have civilian conditions imposed;

- If injured veterans receiving compensation wish to try a return to work they should be encouraged to do so. However they should have the safety net of returning to the same level of compensation if they are unable to stay at work, without having to prove why they could not continue to work;
- The Gold card should not be denied to future veterans. Remember it was originally issued only because Repatriation hospitals were closed down. The Gold card should also be issued to the spouses and partners of veterans at the same time as a veteran receives one. They have earned a Gold card for their devotion and care to their veterans;
- The earned income of the spouses of TPI pensioners should not be included in means testing for the Service Pension. The present **means testing of the spouse's other income** makes a TPI household getting a little ahead, including buying a house, almost impossible;

And;

- Use only one SOP for VEA and MRCA i.e. the reasonable hypothesis one. This will ensure that like injuries are treated equally. For example injuries in a helicopter crash in Australia and injuries in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan may well be the same.

It is these and similar issues, raised many times by the Federation in various submissions, that the government should be looking at closely rather than the less beneficial recommendations of the Productivity Commission. ■

## Current delays in DVA processing compensation claims is increasing suicide risk

HOW often have we heard DVA and Ministers promise a speed up of claims processing?

**The answer is: 'often'.**

And why has this been a continuing issue?

Because sick veterans waiting for their claims to be decided are under considerable stress.

This is particularly true of those unable to work.

The longer the sick veterans have to wait, the greater the stress — anxiety in veterans who are already suffering high levels of war caused anxiety, can rise to dangerous levels.

The Jesse Bird suicide is a case in point.

In the past promises to cut down claims processing times have sometimes been honoured in the short run. Inevitably however, when the spotlight moves to other issues, the processing times have lapsed back to unreasonable lengths.

In the wake of the recent Senate enquiry into veteran suicide and the Jesse Bird scandal, more promises were made.

It seems this time there has not been even a short term honouring of the promise.

Claims received by DVA are being held in a queue for 5 months before being assigned to determining officers. And of course, the process will take another few months to complete.

It is not uncommon for claims to take nine months or even a year to determined.

**Clearing backlogs is not 'rocket science'.**

For heavens sake DVA, get on with it because these delays are increasing the likelihood of suicides. ■



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

*Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.*

**2020 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!**

Dear Member

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

Members of our various State Branches and sub branches should receive membership renewal notices from their respective organisations. NSW membership subscription renewal forms for 2020 have already been sent out to NSW Branch members under separate cover by the Granville office. In the event you do not receive a form in the mail you can use the Membership Renewal form included in this Newsletter or the one available on our web site at [www.vvfagranville.org](http://www.vvfagranville.org)

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

Once again we are offering all members of the NSW Branch, who renew by 30 January 2020, the chance to enter into the draw to win 1 of 3, \$100.00 gift vouchers from Bunnings Hardware. So get your application in quickly to ensure you don't miss out on this great opportunity. Cheques and money orders from NSW Branch members can be made payable to **VVPPAA NSW**.

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

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

We look forward to receiving your renewal for 2020 and thank you for your on-going support of the Association.

National/NSW State Secretary  
VVFA Inc./VVPPAA NSW

# Memorial for our old Foe

D445 was the Peoples Liberation Army Forces (Viet Cong) battalion that was raised and fought in Phuoc Tuy Province.

A report by Ernie Chamberlain

A memorial for D445 VC Local Force Battalion has been included in Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu Province budget and planning documents for several years. D445 strength in August 1966 was 392 - but was down to 157 in September 1971 when I ATF began to withdraw from Phuoc Tuy. At that time, D445 was 'dispersed' into three companies and attached to the VC districts - until NVA reinforcements arrived in May 1972.'

On 22 July 2015, a Committee determined that the D445 Memorial would be built on a two-hectare site in Bà Rịa City adjacent to the Province

Administrative Offices and the Public Security Headquarters. In early April 2017, a meeting of the Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu People's Council in Vũng Tàu discussed the planned D445 Battalion Monument – and a model was displayed (see below).

'Post-Liberation', from mid-1975, D445 and other Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN) elements were engaged in operations to destroy the Saigon regime's 'remnants' in Phuoc Tuy, Long Khanh, and Vung Tau. Later in 1975, they fought the Khmer Rouge (KR) in the 'South-West Border War' - and subsequently from December



1978, for about a decade, fought in Cambodia ‘proper’ on their ‘International Duty’. (See photo below of D445 soldiers posing beside a Cambodian temple near Santuk Kongphongthom ie Kompong Thom area.



So, there are probably some ‘younger’ ‘post-American War’ D445 veterans who will be able to attend the unveiling of their ‘socialist-realism’ monument.

Interestingly, on ‘monuments’, Wikipedia notes: ‘Today, arguably the only countries still focused on these aesthetic principles of ‘socialist realism’ are North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam’.

In early 2018, officials in Vũng Tàu again discussed the ‘Heroes’ Park’ and the ‘D445 Battalion Monument’ as listed in the program to 2020

A sketch/plan of the planned D445 Monument and the Heroes’ Park was displayed at the meeting (see below).



However, plans for the D445 Battalion appear to be making only very slow progress. At a meeting on 11 July 2019, the Province People’s Committee promulgated the regulations for the submission of “sketches” for the proposed monument - but with no clear deadlines.

**PS. Ernie Chamberlain’s 2016 book on D445 is free-to-read on the Internet at : <https://www.scribd.com/doc/306536690/The-Viet-Cong-D445-Battalion-Their-Story-and-the-Battle-of-Long-Tan>**

## CROWEATERS CORNER



Lots of things have happened since our last note to the National Magazine. Firstly, we had a very successful memorial service for Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral with a lot of people attending headed by our Patron His Excellency Hieu Van Le, Governor of South Australia Federal and State politicians and Federal candidates and local dignitaries. Being close to the Federal election we had a few more politicians and candidates attending which made the day including Senator Reynolds, the Minister for Defence Industries.

We have had an Open Weekend at Camp Andrew Russell our Bush retreat at Alawoona for people to come and explore what we have to offer there. It was a great couple of days and we got a couple of new members out of it and a lot of “word of mouth” publicity which augers well for the future. If anyone from interstate is interested in staying there, please contact Bob Haslett on 0429166186 for more information. Everybody is welcome. (See photos)

On Vietnam Veterans Day we held our annual reflection service at the Vietnam War Memorial. The service was attended by His Excellency, the Governor of South Australia, Hieu van Le and the Premier of South Australia, Mr Stephen Marshall, along with about 40 other brave souls who braved the elements. The rain was reminiscent of that which occurred during the battle. (See photos)

Members of our Glass Fusion, Lead Lighting, VORG, Quilting, Sewing and Card Making groups continue to provide an interest to our members and partners who wish to learn about

or do something a little different.

The VVF in S.A. have contributed to a bursary at the Sacred Heart College in memory of one of their old students, Michael Herbert, who was a pilot who went missing in action after his aircraft crashed in Vietnam. Michael and his Navigator were the last two Australians MIA to come home. This bursary will be presented to a student each year with the first recipient receiving it in February 2020. An interesting fact about this school is that they had 61 ex-students who served in Vietnam, three of whom died, one Navy, one Army and one Air Force and another Air Force pilot who perished was operating out of Ubon in Thailand.

Our wonderful; quilting ladies continue to support homeless veterans in the Andrew Russell Veteran Living centre by making them quilts. These quilts are very well received and used by these homeless veterans. The ladies make 25 quilts each year for the centre and we appreciate their generosity and all the hard work and time that goes into their manufacture.

**Our monthly BBQ's continue to be popular and are well attended by members.**

I have enclosed some pictures from the Long Tan Reflection service and Camp Andrew Russell for those who are interested.

*(See next page...ed.)*

Mal Thiele  
President



# How Fair Dinkum is the Repatriation Commission about being a Model Litigant?

(Hint: not very)

THE Repatriation Commission has recently been making noises about ‘veteran centred’ reforms, and claiming they want to actually listen to those in the veteran community who have experience and knowledge.

Of course, we’ve heard and seen all this before but perhaps this time something may come of it, if only because the government got such a kicking over the Senate report on suicide and the Jesse Bird tragedy.

We certainly hope they are serious.

But the reforms haven’t got off to a good start.

When the government is on one side of a legal dispute, it is required to act as what is called a ‘Model Litigant’.

This means that, in DVA’s case, it must act honestly and fairly in its legal disputes with veterans before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

It has, in the past, not always done so.

It has often brought in big-gun external barristers to face under-resourced veterans.

That has simply been ‘not fair’.

Most recently, DVA has advised that it has a new, fairer, Model Litigant policy.

## ‘The Policy

*The Commissions will not seek to be represented by Counsel in cases where an applicant is:*

- · *Self-represented, or*
- · *Represented (only) by an ex-service*

## Repatriation Commission/Department of Veterans Affairs

The three person Repatriation Commission advises the Minister for Veterans Affairs on Repatriation policy.

The Department of Veterans Affairs implements that policy when approved by the Minister.

The head of the Commission and the head of the Department are the same person.

So one is not independent of the other.

Speaking of one is to speak of both.

*organisation or pension advocate.*

*In such cases the Commissions may seek to be represented by:*

- · *a Departmental advocate, or*
- · *a solicitor from DVA’s legal panel.’*

Sounds good doesn’t it.

Perhaps DVA really wants to ‘level the playing field’ and give veterans a fair go.

Sadly, when we read the exceptions in the ‘fine print’ to these reasonable guidelines we see that there is really no effort to be fair.

## Exceptions to the policy

*The Principal Legal Advisor may authorise the*



*use of Counsel where there is a compelling reason, including but not limited to the following...*

The exceptions then listed are not just a few, they are numerous and wide ranging. But note that ‘exceptions’ are not limited to this wide ranging list; the Principle Legal Officer can bring in the big-gun Barristers ‘where there is a compelling reason’. That ‘reason’ is entirely up to the Principle Legal Officer.

That means any veteran could be weasel-worded into being an ‘exception’.

And when the big-guns are brought in to face the veteran at the appeals tribunal, will DVA follow the Model Litigant rules and act honestly and fairly?

To play ‘fair’, DVA would have to ensure the veteran has legal resources equal to those made available to DVA by the big-gun law firm.

And it’s not just us saying that.

One of the listed ‘exceptions’ concerns the Legal Service Direction 2017. One of its sections clearly states the requirement for fairness:

*‘...acting in the Commonwealth’s financial*

*interest to defend fully and firmly claims brought against the Commonwealth where a defence is properly available...’ (emphasis added)*

Legal resources are provided to the veteran by State Legal Aid organisations. They have various rules and requirements. If a State Legal Aid service will not finance a veteran’s case or does not provide legal resources equivalent to the big-gun law firm’s, does DVA ensure that the veteran’s defence is properly available so that the contest is fair?

Contrary to the impression it might hope to make with its new, ‘improved’ Model Litigant guidelines, DVA does not step in to ensure equity.

The same unfair situation remains. DVA has just spiced up its guidelines with a few deceptive words.

DVA and the Repatriation Commission will have to do better if it will have us believe its rhetoric about ‘veteran centric’ reforms is not just hot air. ■

“While there I heard a rumour about a military hospital using unusual methods to treat soldiers for what was then known as war neurosis.”

## A Novel by Diana Plater

(based on her experience in Nicaragua)

The story which led to my novel, *Whale Rock*, began many years ago when I was living and reporting from Nicaragua, covering the Sandinista revolution in the mid-1980s. I was a young journalist who had always been interested in politics, and after interviewing one of the women revolutionaries who was visiting Australia I packed my bags, learnt Spanish and went to Nicaragua to live for a year.

It was tough – but much more so for the locals than the journalists and “internationalistas”, who flocked there to pick coffee and help the revolution. There was an economic embargo imposed by the US government, who did not like the idea of a leftist revolution in their own backyard. Later it was revealed that then President Ronald Reagan was also funding the Contras in their war against the Sandinistas.

While there I heard a rumour about a military hospital using unusual methods to treat soldiers for what was then known as war neurosis. The term PTSD hadn’t yet been universally adopted.

I had become interested in the subject of trauma, or in this case, the psychological effects of war when meeting former soldiers there who were

suffering from it. A Nicaraguan psychotherapist explained the Sandinistas – as did the Contras -- wanted people to believe that none of their soldiers would be traumatised for they were “fighting for the fatherland”. Thus the secrecy behind the hospital.

I wanted to tell some of this story in *Whale Rock* as a series of traumatic flashbacks experienced by Rafael, a Nicaraguan former soldier who has lived in Australia for more than 20 years.

Here I have witnessed the impact of the traumatic policies that led to the Stolen Generations. My character, Colin, is based on the Aboriginal people I know and love.

Another character, Vesna, has also been traumatised, covering the war in Kosovo while the main character, Shannon, too is shattered by her grief, as is her estranged husband, Tom. Their son, Maxie, feels their pain but doesn’t understand it.

When a labourer plunges to his death on a building site opposite Shannon’s café the characters must all confront their secrets. Setting the story in Sydney’s Tamarama allowed me to highlight an exquisite Indigenous engraving of a

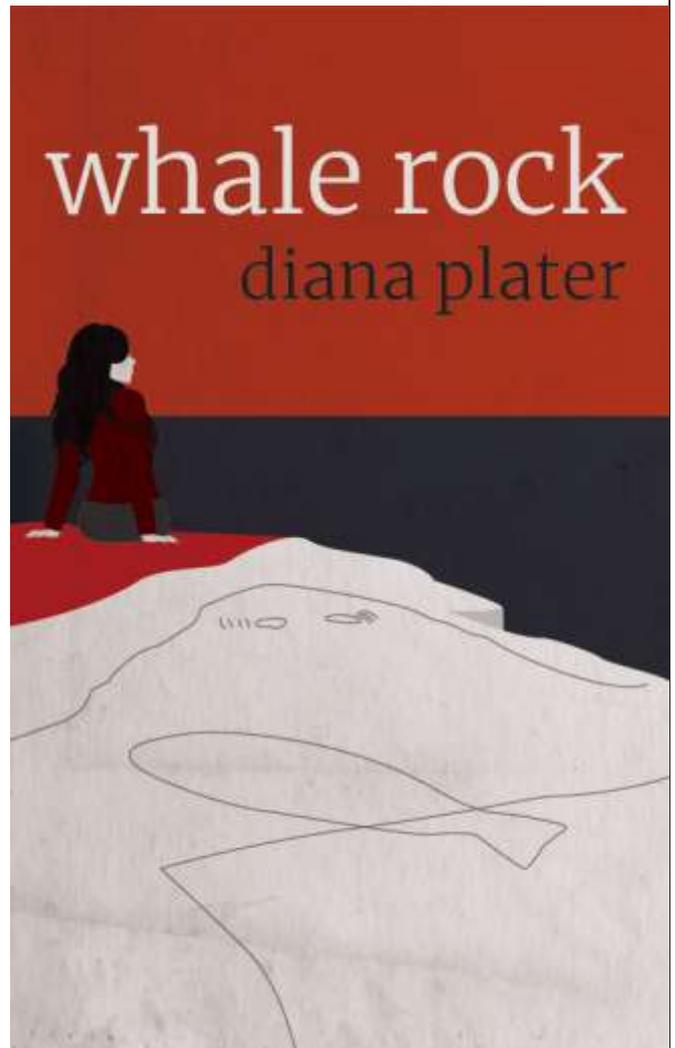
"Sandinistas – as did the Contras -- wanted people to believe that none of their soldiers would be traumatised for they were “fighting for the fatherland”. Thus the secrecy behind the hospital."

whale and her baby whale, which overlooks the ocean below. The whale rock has deep meaning for Shannon, and of course Colin, and gradually becomes significant to all the characters.

It has been said that grief and trauma are powerful triggers of character-based flashbacks, and a situation, sight or smell might trigger suppressed memories of the past.

We have of course come to know much more about this phenomenon since the Vietnam War, and the willingness of veterans to later speak out about their memories. (It took many years and an interview with a PhD candidate for my father to talk about the psychological effects of his World War Two experiences.) The willingness of a new generation of veterans to talk may have given non-combatants a new understanding of an old phenomenon and so contributed to its wider exploitation in fiction.

People who have gone through these experiences often have the best senses of humour – even if dark and often cynical – and compassion for their fellow beings. They have deeply inspired me to write the intertwining stories that form *Whale Rock*.



This is a novel which I feel captures the zeitgeist. It is about Australia today and the serious issues we are pondering – immigration, Indigenous issues, the state of the media, politics, the environment. But it's also about love and friendship – and dancing – told with dollops of dark humour! I hope readers will laugh –and cry -- along with the characters but finish the book with hope for the future. ■

*Whale Rock* is available at:

<https://themoshshop.com.au/collections/new-releases/products/whale-rock-by-diana-plater;>

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/924932>

<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B07NYHWNTR>  
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07NYHWNTR>  
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1922261416>

## VICTORIA STATE REPORT



Due to circumstances this will be a rather brief report due mainly to our very limited number of volunteers and people available to handle pension matters. Iris Cargill is pretty much the pensions department as well as everything else. Jackie Morris is doing Med Doc research and MRCA applications with both doing DRCA and VEA and with the work that Janifer does in research and editing our newsletter they are doing an average 16 pension applications with another 8-10 requests per month. These people are doing great work with the limited space in the office and two days a week office time. I am doing what is needed in an out of office situation due to the fact that my health (knees, back, residue of two strokes and other responsibilities.. On top of that, the bride and I were away for the month of September.

We had a Timor and a Vietnam veteran in Bowder House for a short moment but as I write this (October 30) the Timor bloke has been given the BIG A due to his abusive attitude and language towards our people and it was found that he was drinking alcohol in the house which is in contravention of house rules AND using drugs (with a syringe located in his room which still had blood in it. We did have a third veteran who only spent the one night but decided it was not to his liking and he moved out after that one night. He was an ex Major so he might think different to the usual diggers.

I am not sure why we are having problems with the younger veterans but, somehow, they do not seem to have the same mind set as we older blokes. From a failing memory I think that we have had problems with the behaviour of several of these younger blokes with their drinking in the facility, behaviour, theft, damage and drugs. It is a very different attitude to what we would consider as acceptable. It just seems that the more we try to help who we can so many of them have no regard to honour or integrity and I am getting bloody sick of it so from now on we are going to be extremely careful of who we reach out to assist.

On October 26 several of us, 12 in all, gathered at the home of Iris Cargill to put together 400 Care Packages to send off to our troops deployed overseas and these are expected to be distributed in the various theatres on or by Christmas. They are extremely well received by the troops and we often hear that allied troops quartered with ours appreciate the little things our men and women share with them. Tim Tams seem to be valued currency for swapping purposes.

As most of you may have seen in our newsletter or heard, we conducted a very successful Vietnam Veterans Day service on August 16<sup>th</sup> at the Christian College in Highton, held on that day due to the school time table. A service we have been doing for quite a number of years now is growing in good reputation and getting larger each year. We are so fortunate to be able to entice extremely interesting and interesting guest speakers to the service and more and more veterans are attending.

I will be representing the branch at the Melbourne memorial service for Remembrance Day at The Shrine on November 11 even though I get a little 'touchy' at these things as it seems they are excuses for "some" to feed their ego's and sense of self importance and if, like me, you do not have a high profile you don't count in the minds of some. BUT, bugger them, I am there as a veteran to pay MY respects to those that served our country so well and hope I represent my branch well in that endeavour.

Well, I said this would be short and I have reached the end of it. As this is going to be the last report before the end of the year, on behalf of us down here, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the executive and ALL members of our Federation a safe, peaceful Christmas and New Year season. May you spend some time with family and loved ones and enjoy good health in the next year.

John Arnold.

Victoria State President

## ACT BRANCH REPORT



### General

The Veterans Support Centre, (VCS), continues to provide good service to our members and to our Advocacy and Wellbeing Clients. Numbers in all areas, have seen small increases in our numbers both in claims and in clients. We have also increased our membership to just on 500 recently.

Recent changes to the site include: an upgrade to our security system funded by a donation from one of our members; upgrades to our IT system including new desktop boxes and rationalisation of the scope of the system. We have been fortunate to get into the software provided for not for profit organisations and this has been a saving.

### Advocacy

Our organisation still has 15 Advocates at various levels of expertise and qualifications. All Advocates are being encouraged to complete the Continuing Professional Development on-line and attendance sessions in order to remain current and competent in any changes in procedures. The main challenge it seems is the availability of mentors to progress development. Year to date we have acted on over 1100 claims covering all Acts of the military compensation schemes, over 20 resolution and appeals, and 30 Outreach (ADR) calls.

Responses to member claims seems to be varied. Some appear to move through the system quite quickly while others sometimes take an age. We are currently looking at establishing quarterly review workshops with the Advocates to: determine if there are cases that have extended response times; determine how Advocates are managing the on-going Continual Professional Development responsibility; and to assess how the mentoring task is being managed. We will work with the Regional Manager in this exercise.

### Wellbeing Advocate

Our single part-time Wellbeing Advocate continues to provide support to some of our members who are struggling to cope with changes in their life style. The services being provided to members continues to expand, unfortunately, as we only have one person with the skills to manage this task. Cooperation with

DVA is really making a positive outcome to many of these activities and this is most appreciated. However, we have still managed Welfare visits, Housing/Accommodation assists, Crisis action, Counselling, and Bereavement/Funeral aid.

### BEST Grant

I have been advised that the BEST Grant allocations have been concluded and that the funds will be available soon. The time taken to complete the allocation, and then the disbursement of the funds, continues to be a challenge in terms of cash flow especially for staff wages.

### Other Items

Food Van. The Centre is currently obtaining quotes for a replacement Food Van. The current unit is reaching its end of life and as the Food Van is a significant contributor to our running costs we want it to continue to operate. The activities that we have attended have been well received by patrons and continue to supplement our meagre finances.

ACT Government Grants. In the last ACT Budget, the VSC was given \$35 000 per year for the next 3 years. The Minister for Veterans, Gordon Ramsay, MLA, presented a Deed of Agreement to the VSC on the 15<sup>th</sup> October which provided the formal agreement for the grant.

Bus trips. These continue to be popular with the members and since the last report we have been to the Museum of Historical Fairground Carousels and mobile organs in Bowral, the Airshow in Temora, and a paddle steamer trip and lunch at Jamistown.

Tuesday BBO lunch. These have been an element of the VSC for many years and are still well attended by members. We have the privilege of having an ex-Navy chef in our team and an excellent galley/kitchen created by our members.

Ward Gainey MIEAust JP  
President VV&VF (ACT) Inc

## LETTERS TO THE



## EDITOR

### 2

*Posted as requested through TPI Association.*

*Grosvenor Family Biodynamics  
Farm Gorton Drive,  
Mystic Park 3519*

Mandy and Rick Grosvenor own and run a certified biodynamic (chemical free) fruit farm at Kangaroo Lake which is between Kerang and Swan Hill in north west Victoria. They have available a self-contained cabin that they would like to offer respite accommodation to Returned Service personnel who may need somewhere restful to recover for a variety of reasons.

The farm is 47 acres in size and being right beside the lake is a very peaceful place to be, with extensive walking tracks, and is a popular fishing spot.

The cabin measures approx. 8m x 5m; has its own bathroom, kitchen, queen size bed & soon to be installed 2 bunk beds, air conditioning, heating, and driveway. It's completely lockable, safe and private. It does have 2 steps (with handrails), but once inside is completely level.

Although people staying would be self-contained, Mandy and Rick are more than happy for them to pop inside for a coffee and some company when they need it, they also have a very friendly dog who would never say no to a walk if the person felt like company, and a couple of fenced paddocks if they just want to go and play with a ball or frisbee with him. There is also a large shed with lots of tools, and they are happy if people want to potter in there to avoid boredom.

There is no local public transport, but they are happy to assist with taking them to the supermarket or chemist as required. Please note: November to March on some days during harvest time gas fired scatter guns are used to scare away birds in a non-lethal manner and that if hearing what sounds like gunfire would hinder your recovery, it may be better to come at a different time of year. They are not used every day, only when the bird population tries to consume the farm's income. They nickname them sharefarmers.

There is no cost to rent the cabin only a contribution of \$10 per week towards the electricity bill. For bookings and further inquiries please contact Mandy and Rick, 0414 620 803

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/GrosvenorFamilyBiodynamics](http://www.facebook.com/GrosvenorFamilyBiodynamics)

*The Editor,*

*There have been many calls for a Royal Commission into veteran suicide. Parliamentary and expert-body reviews, and a body of published, peer-reviewed, academic studies over many years have identified factors that contribute to veteran suicide.*

*A Royal Commission, with necessarily broad terms of reference to satisfy everyone, may well add knowledge, and will certainly give voice to veterans. But . . . it will also add another lengthy delay before delivering recommendations, and then maybe, just maybe, consequent action.*

*Better, surely, to pressure DVA regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 Senate committee report on suicide, and better to focus on rigorous evaluation of the ADF Suicide Prevention Program, and the DVA Open Arms suicide prevention training. Such evaluation will result in the continuous improvement and expansion of those necessary programs; expansion that is necessary for veterans, and their families.*

*The reviews have been done, the academic research has been done, the political rhetoric has been done. What's needed now is committed leadership, and resource support, from both the ADF and DVA.*

*John Godwin*

*ACT*



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

*Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.*

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

**2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc, will be held at the Merrylands RSL Club 10.30am Saturday, 26th May 2020.

AGENDA

- Opening of Meeting by the Chairman
- Apologies
- Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2019
- Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2019
- President's Report**
- Treasurer's Report**
- Secretary's Report**
- Membership Report
- Appointment of Association Auditors
- Life Membership proposals
- Other Business by leave of the Chairman
- Close of Meeting

NB: The NSW Branch Constitution requires elections to be held biennially. The next election will be held in 2021.

Any items for General Business must be in the hands of the Secretary by close of business on Tuesday, 5th May 2020.

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2021.

Ron O'Connor JP  
Hon. Secretary  
NSW Branch

## PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

### Dealing with being asset rich and cash poor

Reverse mortgages are promoted as a means to helping retirees with living expenses, however the downside is that equity may be eroded over time.

Given longer life expectancies, the rising cost of living and the property boom, more and more retirees find themselves in a position of been asset rich and cash poor.

One option is to downsize to a less expensive home allowing for an additional \$300,000 to be contributed towards Superannuation under certain circumstances but again this can also have its disadvantages. For example: If they are receiving a part age pension now, converting an exempt asset – the family home – to an assessable asset such as cash or shares could mean a severely reduced pension or even total loss of the pension. To make matters worse, the cost of moving from one home to another is probably close to \$100,000, which is a large loss of capital unless the move is absolutely essential. As a result, many retirees take the reasonable view that they are better off to battle along in their present home which, if history is any guide, should continue to give them a reasonable tax-free capital gain.

A reverse mortgage is probably the next thing that comes to mind, but these are becoming difficult to get as banks tighten their lending criteria due to the adverse publicity they have received from the royal commission. In any event, taking out a reverse mortgage involves making some significant decisions. If you take a fixed rate there may be hefty exit fees down the track and if you take a variable rate you could suddenly find yourself in strife if property prices fall when interest rates rise again.

Enter the Pension Loans Scheme: a type of reverse mortgage offered by the federal government. It has been around for years, but was hardly used. However, the terms were improved in the last federal budget and it should now take off in popularity.

The new rules came into effect from July 1, 2019. From that date a couple on the full age pension could receive an additional \$684.10 a fortnight (\$17,786.60 a year) between them by way of this loan. It would be paid fortnightly, like the pension, and the interest rate would be a very reasonable 5.25%. The loan can be repaid on demand without penalty, but it would be reasonable to expect that repayment will come from the eventual sale of the family home.

The amount a part age pensioner will be able to borrow will be the difference between the amount of the age pension they receive and 150% of the maximum rate of age pension. For example, if a couple received an age pension of \$800 a fortnight between them, they would be eligible to draw an additional \$1,252 a fortnight (\$32,552 a year) under the proposed system.

The Pension Loans Scheme will be available to non-pensioners too. A self-funded retiree couple will be able to draw 150% of the maximum rate of pension, or up to \$2,052 a fortnight, combined.

Even though borrowing money under this scheme may solve a short-term cash problem, remember that the essence of a reverse mortgage is that no interest or principal repayments are made on the loan, so it increases faster and faster. The government is aware of this, and as part of the set-up will require a valuation from a licensed valuer on the house which will be used as security for the loan. There will be no cost to the applicant for this.

Furthermore, the amount of the cumulative loan debt that can be accrued will be limited based on a number of factors, including the pensioner's age and their equity in the secured asset. This maximum cumulative loan amount available will be recalculated every 12 months.

That's a welcome move. Think about a self-funded couple who borrowed the maximum loan of \$53,352 a year via fortnightly draw-downs. In just 10 years the debt would be nearly \$700,000 and in 15 years a staggering \$1.2 million. A reverse mortgage is like a strong drug – good in small doses in the right circumstances.

As always and for decisions of this nature you should sit down with a suitably qualified financial adviser to work through your individual circumstances and consider the most appropriate solution for your needs.

To discuss further or to arrange a time to review your current financial position please contact Paul Messerschmidt at PSK on 0414 811 777, 02 9895 8800 or [paulm@psk.com.au](mailto:paulm@psk.com.au)

Disclaimer: Article first published by The Sydney Morning Herald on 7 June 2018. Provided by Paul Messerschmidt of PSK Financial Services.

PSK Financial Services Group Pty Ltd (ABN 24 134 987 205) and Paul Messerschmidt are Authorised Representatives of Charter Financial Planning Ltd (AFSL 234666), Australian Financial services Licensee and Australian Credit Licensee

Information contained in this article is general in nature. It does not take into account your objectives, needs or financial situation. You need to consider your financial situation before making any decisions based on this information. ■



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At PSK Financial Services our key focus is to guide you through life's financial challenges and our promise is to help you achieve financial peace of mind.

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Areas of advice:

- DVA/Centrelink strategies
- Superannuation
- Retirement planning
- Aged Care
- Investment
- Estate planning

For any questions regarding your financial situation please contact

Paul Messerschmidt  
MFinPlan, GradDipFinPlan  
Partner and Senior Financial Adviser

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Level 4, 3 Horwood Place,  
Parramatta NSW 2150  
M 0414 811 777 | P (02) 9895 8800  
E paulm@psk.com.au





## Operation AGILA 2020

### The Australian Operation Damon Reunion

This event will be the first formal reunion for personnel who served in Southern Rhodesia as a part of Operation Agila 25 December 1979 to 05 March 1980. The Australian Contingent **operation was named Operation Damon. We will celebrate the operation's success as a mission** being the first large force to be deployed on operations since the Vietnam War. It may also reach those of us who have not been seen or heard of for some time.

Is there a better way to catch up with old mates and possibly meet some new ones?

### SO WHO IS IT FOR?

Those who were a member of Operation Agila or had an extended role connected to this Mission. The Kedron Wavell RSL and the greater Brisbane is a great place to be over the designated March weekend. Of course if you were involved in the Mission and are from another friendly country you would also be most welcome!

**WHEN** 6, 7, 8 March 2020

**WHERE?** Kedron Wavell RSL

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

There'll be plenty to see and do over the weekend.

Activities include

Meet and Greet Friday evening 6 March 2020

Traditional Memorial Service TBA

Reunion Dinner Saturday evening 7 March 2020

Recovery Breakfast Sunday morning 8 March 2020

Plenty of free time to take in the sights or possibly a tour in and around Brisbane city.

*The reunion will formally conclude at 12 noon, 8<sup>th</sup> March*

### MORE DETAILS

Further details will be distributed late 2019 providing plenty of planning time for all and will include accommodation details, some expected costs and contact details.

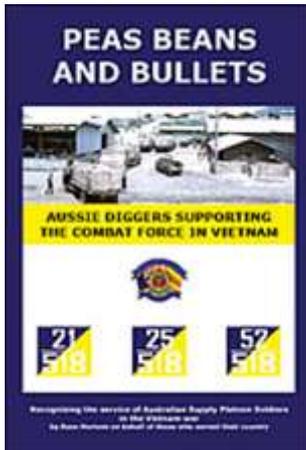
Organising Committee CCMF 2020:

Dick Clarke Mob 0468 947 929 Email: [ulyssess39371@gmail.com](mailto:ulyssess39371@gmail.com)

Les Norton Mob:0404 812 423 Email: [Lesnorton0@gmail.com](mailto:Lesnorton0@gmail.com)

A reunion registration form will be distributed at a later date so please put these dates into your calendar and let your mates know.

## BOOKS FOR SALE AT GRANVILLE



Peas, Beans and Bullets – Aussie soldiers supporting the combat force in Vietnam

By Russ Morison, 118 pp, \$30 plus \$5 PH

Peas, Beans and Bullets tells the story through reminiscences and photos of the dedicated men of the three supply units that kept Australian soldiers fed and replenished in South Vietnam.

The author, Russ Morison, served with 25 Sup Pl in Vietnam from May 1969 to April 1970. He is co-founder of the RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association, and until recently was its secretary. He spent two thirds of his career in the Army, and the remainder as a public servant with the RAAF and Navy.

Peas, Beans and Bullets presents photos and stories about how they overcame quite adverse conditions to get the job done – the climate, very basic facilities and the vagaries of the supply system were often the least of the challenges – from the early days until their departure in 1971. It tells about the American to Australian supply chain, feast or famine; the ‘Cowless Dairy’ and others. This Vietnam logistic cameo provides an accurate insight into life in their war zone.

Members can purchase a copy from the Granville Office and your support will guarantee a \$5.00 retainer that will go toward assisting other veterans. To order your copy email or phone Admin at Granville: [accounts@vfvgranville.org](mailto:accounts@vfvgranville.org) or (02) 9682 1788. (Not available through our online shop).

Special offer from our own Admin Manager/Author, Romina Betvardeh. Members ordering a copy through the Granville Office will guarantee a sales based retainer go towards veterans assistance. To order your copy email or phone Admin at Granville: [accounts@vfvgranville.org](mailto:accounts@vfvgranville.org) or (02) 9682 1788. (Not available through our online shop).

I Was Chosen by a Gift

August 19, 2019 by William

When helping a random man on the street Sandy never thought her life will change for ever. But months later the man found her and gave her an ancient old looking gift. An un-normal gift found its way to Sandy. Worried and concerned she returned the gift to the man but mysteriously the gift found its way back to Sandy.

A story full of challenges and magic, where the powerful bully the weak and the rich press down on those less fortunate without being aware that the cycle of life is vicious and it will turn its wheels against them.

Editor: Inspiring Publishers

Romina Betvardeh takes you on a journey to a fantasy world, but is it any different to ours? Why not find out in her exciting book, ***I Was Chosen by a Gift***’

Member only price \$25.00 + \$5.00 PH.

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## **"Fringe Benefits and Lost Opportunities – Vets We Forget"**

As some of you may have seen on television on 4 November, the Minister for DVA, Mr Darren Chester was in the Media spruiking the net effect of *The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant*.

In DVA's words it:

*Serves to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the contribution of veterans and their families. The Covenant is supported by the Veteran Card, Lapel Pin and Oath. These provide the opportunity for Australians to identify veterans when they are not in uniform or wearing their medals, and offer respect to them and their family.*

*Employers, businesses, local community groups and the broader Australian public are able to commit their support for the Covenant. The Covenant provides the framework that enables veterans and their families to better connect with their community.*

Now it's down to business – that is those who will provide the discount and the Veterans' who sign up for the Card.

Depending on which media outlet you watched, some report the initiative as largely a positive thing to provide immediate savings to Veterans' i.e. the financial aspect was the most relevant. Some reported the recognition by the Government for Veterans' service, irrespective of the type and length of service. These days, 1 day in ADF service is enough to be eligible for the Veterans Card, the lapel and the Oath.

Other media outlets commented on how many businesses have actually taken up the offer to provide Veterans with a discount and, how many Veterans would register for eligibility to receive the card and request discounts. That is, it appeared to suggest that Aussie Veterans unlike, say the US Veterans were less likely to want to stand up and shout out they are Veterans and deserve beneficial treatment, discounts and

recognition.

Maybe some may say that is the Aussie way, but maybe the different generation of Veterans and those with say Operational service in the Middle East, may or may not want to be identified to get a discount.

The background to the Covenant is tied to the Government seeking to achieve, through an Act of Parliament what was essentially summarised to be "Beneficial" recognition of Veterans.

That is, whilst lapel pins would be part of this, a discount card would form the beneficial (financial) side of things, and Parliament made an "Oath" that essentially, in this author's view, pays lip service to the Beneficial treatment of Veterans when measured by how to administer or create "Beneficial Legislation" that was Veteran, and not DVA Centric.

In many ways it has been a lost opportunity for the Government to devise an Act of Parliament that was uniquely and significantly "beneficial" to Veterans; one that would have a substantial beneficial effect as to how DVA claims are determined in a timely and efficient way i.e. to provide financial support to Veterans, their family and dependents.

There has been a lost opportunity to iron out the "anomalies" between the different Acts and administer Veterans' benefits by truly importing a "beneficial" approach to the legislation and, show how this Government stands out from others when it comes to, "putting Veterans first".

### ***Recognising Veterans' – Denying the Problems***

**AUSTRALIAN VETERANS' RECOGNITION (PUTTING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES FIRST) ACT (CWLTH) 2019**

This Act had its origins initially as a “Covenant” (Schedule 1) proposed by the *Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA)*, with their Patron being the Honorable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Rtd) seeking to enshrine, “*the unique nature of military service and support Veterans and their families*”.

The Covenant was adopted into legislation, together with a package, “*designed to provide recognition to Veterans and their families*”.

Why did the Government need legislation to achieve this, when the reality is, they (and previous Governments from the Blue or Red team) have failed through the Veterans’ legislation and its administration by DVA to reasonably and properly compensate Veterans?

Interestingly, in the DFWA Journal, *Camaraderie* (Vol.50 NO 2) in July 2019, they questioned whether DVA were, “*Fit for Purpose?*”, borrowing a phrase from the Productivity Commission’s final report dated 2 July 2019.

The DFWA noted that DVA, while proposing the Act were refusing to release the late 2018 report by Phoenix Australia into the “*Mental Health impacts of Compensation Claims Assessment recesses on Claimants and their Families*” (“*Phoenix 2018 report*”).

This report was the subject of an article by Sean Parnell in the “*The Australian*” on 29 April 2019 and was timely given the Jesse Bird Inquest was about to commence in May 2019.

The pledge by the Government to further assist Veterans whilst denying the release of the Phoenix report that may be of great assistance to the Victorian Coroner investigating the role both DVA and Defence played in Jesse Bird’s suicide was curious.

Furthermore, the public support generated by Julie-Ann Finney, mother of the late Veteran, David Finney and her call for a Royal Commission into Veterans’ suicide that the DVA Minister and Government has been denied as being unnecessary and a lawyer fest. That doesn’t seem to stop DVA engaging lawyers and paying them millions to fight Veterans in court to deny benefits but, I guess that is a different use of lawyers on the public purse and for a different cause that DVA think is reasonable.

Running parallel with the Government, “*Putting Veterans’ first*” was to ensure the call for a Royal

Commission into DVA was put last. The priority is to engage in more reviews with ESORT members and ESO’s, while defending the DVA scheme as being **Fit for Purpose**” despite what the PC report found in July 2019.

You can understand DVA needing to get their priorities right as there is nothing like self-survival to keep a public servant, from the Secretary down focused on ‘getting the job done’.

### *Timing is Everything*

Obviously, the Government could have implemented the Pin, Veterans’ Card and Oath without an Act of Parliament.

The timing is rather odd given such a gesture could have been done to say, mark the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April 2018. The DFWA Covenant proposal (without an Act) was well known to the Government at that time and could have been the recognition of Veterans with this important Centenary commemoration.

The positive gesture of the Pin, Card and Covenant through an Act of parliament masks the fact that DVA, via the Government, need to “Act” beneficially through their positive response to the Productivity Commission (“PC”) report.

This Government should do what their Liberal predecessors promised in 2004 before Parliament when the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Ms Dana Vale, in her Second speech regarding the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Bill 2004* that was to be;

“*...the best of both the existing schemes*” (being the *Veterans’ Entitlement Act 1986* and the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*)”.

### ***It’s More than Discount Cards....***

The ability to garnish more industry and business to support for the Veterans’ card may have been enhanced through the Prime Minister and DVA convening a **Veterans’ Summit** and including Business, Industry Sector representatives, the Business Council of Australia, the ACTU and interested parties to “Put Veterans’ first”.

Positive discrimination of Veterans can take many forms and can include ensuring Veterans are offered priority employment, including flexible employment to take into account any

underlying medical conditions arising from their service.

You do not need an Act to positively engage and promote this huge pool of underutilised, often ignored people in our society, and to give them a chance to regain or maintain employment.

The Insurance Council of Australia should also pledge that their members stop discriminating against Veterans by deducting money for Total Permanent Disability (TPD) and Income protection policies. These are worthless policies when a Veteran tries to work and after say 2 or more years ceases due to their “service-related” injuries to only have their claims rejected due to ‘pre-existing’ or “War caused’ conditions.

If the Government really want to ‘Put Veterans First’ why not forego some of their own tax revenue and give Veterans GST exemptions instead of going to Businesses and asking them to do ‘their bit’ and give discounts.

Acting beneficially means granting Veterans’ with Operational or War service a Gold Card: not just when they hit 50 or 80 impairment points.

The Government knows the cost of everything and then claims to appreciate the value of a Veterans service by expecting others to act ‘beneficially’.

So, rather than support the Act as most members of Parliament did, or risk being branded “Anti Veteran”, perhaps it could have been deferred to determine first whether the Government responds, ‘beneficially’ to the PC Report and implements positive and meaningful changes that assist Veterans’ and their families.

In the meantime, the Government could have sent the lapel pins, Veterans’ Cards and the Oath by putting the Veteran’s First and politics second while we read their (beneficial) response to the PC report.

***THE VETERANS’ FIRST AND LAST-  
READ: THE FINE PRINT***

It is worth reading the Act that came into effect on 22 October 2019 to gauge the extent of what the Government, with DVA steering the Bill, achieved and what fell by the wayside while, “Putting Veterans’ First”.

***Section 10- “All Care - No Liability”***

The Act is small and with only 10 sections, it finishes where the issue of beneficiality starts; In Section 10. The Act does NOT create any positive liability, Obligation Right against anyone. (i.e. the Government, DVA, the Courts or Tribunals, when dealing with Veterans and legal issues and liabilities).

There is the potential and unintended consequence that the Act reinforces the opposite, whereby the Courts must NOT take an argument as to the nature of Veterans legislation as being beneficial into account by virtue of Section 10. Interestingly Workers compensation by it’s nature is deemed, ‘beneficial legislation’.

There is little point to ‘enshrine’ and recognise rights of these kind if they do not correspond to rights and recognition within legislation, if this Section specifically allows Decision makers to disregard the beneficial nature of this Act to ‘recognise and respect Veterans’.

Section 7(2)(c) requiring, or perhaps reminding DVA delegates to act., “honestly, ethically with integrity... in accordance with Objects of the Act, and may be in response to the very publicly embarrassing case of Martin Rollins, and what the ABC 7.30 Report exposed DVA deleting policy to, “win at all costs”, and deny basic income support for a reasonable period while he was recovering from spinal surgery.

This requirement by DVA delegates as to how they must conduct themselves should be at the core of every public servant, especially those entrusted to administer Veterans’ legislation.

What does Section 10 inform us is, if there is a breach of honesty, ethics and integrity, there is no recourse as this Act does not create rights; it is purely a public relations exercise.

***Section 1 - Recognise Families***

The disparity between VEA, MRCA and DRCA in regards to Veterans Spouses’ carer entitlements is one area DVA should remedy to be beneficial toward families. It can be achieved by not narrowing policy (as opposed to applying beneficial legislation to enhance and inform their policy) that denies Veteran’s Spouses to be paid the full entitlement for the Attendant Care and Home Help allowance under the DRC Act and MRC Act.

It is the difference between \$129.80 a fortnight (Centrelink) or up to \$450 a week for the Attendant care and/or Household service payment. It is reasonable in some cases for the Veterans' spouse to be paid Both payments and at the highest i.e. combined \$900 a week.

Many Spouses, the prevalence being woman, end up becoming a full time carer to support their Veteran partners as a result of their injuries and forsake employment, superannuation and opportunity to engage in meaningful work. For most spouses, they are directed to Centrelink and subject to a means test, and "may" be paid as a Carer for a rate far less than what the MRC Act and DRC Act provide.

Why not amend the policy and apply the existing eligibility and pay the entitlements "beneficially", as opposed to the narrow focus of only paying spouses 'in exceptional circumstances'?

Remaining sections include the *Role of Business Community, Access to Employment Health Etcetera*, amongst others that are or can be applied through the current Acts.

*Section 4- Defines Veterans under DRC Act / MRC Act / VE Act.*

This potentially excludes those who can be defined as Veterans or members of the ADF.

For example, if the ADF use Australian civilians as interpreters in Operational service, they become ineligible to be recognised and receive benefits such medical treatment and other entitlements.

This may be history repeating itself like the SEATO Doctors and Nurses who provided assistance to the Australian campaign during the Vietnam war and have only recently been recognised for their contribution and able to access DVA entitlements, like the Gold card, for what are essentially war caused conditions.

*Section 7- Beneficial legislation*

The existing Veterans legislation already requires DVA to act essentially, "in accordance with equity, good consciences and the substantial merits of the claim without regard to legal technicality". That is, to apply the legislation "beneficially".

The number of Senate reviews including the "Constant Battle" and the PC report, clearly articulate the failure of DVA to undertake its existing legislative function - Why does this Act need to (again) remind DVA to act according to beneficial legislation?

A Veteran who dies of a stroke or heart attack in the workplace pre 1 July 2004 is under the DRCA and it means the Widow will have the right to receive compensation including death benefits, support for eligible children, funeral expenses and so on.

The same death arising after 1 July 2004 is governed by SoP's, so the same condition and circumstances do not mean the death occurred 'while serving'. Therefore, the claim is likely to be denied unless stringent SoP factors apply.

The same applies to claims for injury and disease, and DVA have the opportunity to consider these circumstances and override the SoP in the application of their charter, and 'act beneficially'. This has never, or rarely ever occurred.

There should be support from Government to the many (positive) recommendations from Senate reviews and the anticipated and positive response by DVA to the PC report with meaningful outcomes as a measure of the real commitment to Veterans' and their families.

What we have seen however is DVA refusing to agree to positive time limits to make (or be deemed to have denied) claims, override their own narrow SoP's to the benefit of Veterans', litigate against Veterans through panel law firms while Veterans have recourse to Advocates or in limited cases, Legal Aid, and read down legislation to create "Policy" to deny Spouses' payments for the attendant care and household services they provide but are rarely compensated for their free 'services to Veterans'".

Beneficial Legislation – It's about what the Government Does – Not what they say they will do for Veterans' – Otherwise it's just more Spin than beneficial outcomes for those it is meant to serve.

Greg Isolani  
KCI LAWYERS  
4 November 2019

## FROM THE SECRETARY



\$400	Brian Wood
\$300	Garry Smyth Dallas Mulhall OAM
\$260	Peter Cochrane
\$200	Richard Hannigan Harry Ford Elton Robinson Anthony Wynd Frank Curphey Ray Henderson Anonymous David Gilmer Peter Tierney

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

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

\$3,000	Greg Isolani
\$1,000	Mark Milne Anonymous Brian Hunter
\$500	Arthur Keller Ian Taylor Geoffrey Peattie

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

**Ron O'Connor**  
Secretary





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

*Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.*

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STREET ADDRESS

SUBURB/TOWN	STATE	POST CODE
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HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	OTHER PHONE
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EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]

SERVICE NUMBER	SERVICE UNIT	O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE
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NEXT OF KIN	RELATIONSHIP	CONTACT PHONE [NOK]
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ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
MEMBERSHIPS SUBS	(YEARS)	@\$30.00 PER YEAR	\$
DONATION	(AMOUNT ONLY)		\$
RAFFLE TICKET/s		@\$2.00 EACH	\$
MERCHANDISE			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
Stock item numbers and prices are available on line and from branches. Also page 44,45.		<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b>	\$

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**CREDIT CARD DETAILS** (Mastercard or VISA only)  
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 EXPIRY DATE TRANSACTION AMOUNT SIGNATURE

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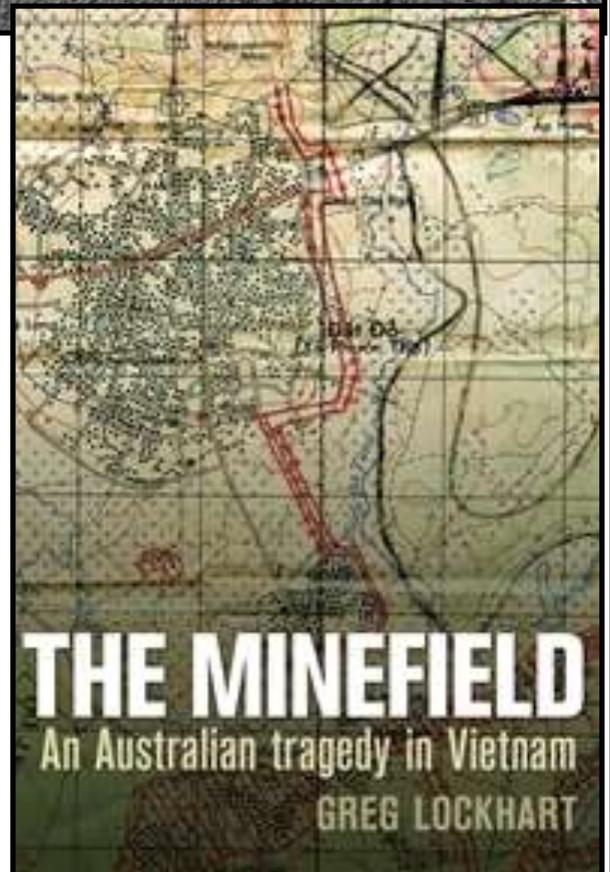
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COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):	BANK SHEET ENTRY BY (PRINT):

## The Minefield

Extract from the book

Two aspects of this offensive mining require immediate emphasis. First, the lightly armed guerillas who conducted the campaign realized one of the classic conditions of guerilla war when they depended on weapons they picked up on the battlefield, in this case from the 1ATF 'barrier minefield', to provide their principal strike weapons against 1ATF. Second, to employ these M16 mines offensively, the local guerillas were dependent on what might be described as 'wrap-around surveillance' of the Australians in order to anticipate their moves and to mine the ground in advance of them. Often, in fact, the mines moved around; they were relifted and replanted in attempts to catch moving patrols. Before M16 mines from the Australian minefield were thus used to great effect, however, Australian's strike battalions had to enter the district, as they did for the first time in any concerted way in May 1969. ■



Dr Greg Lockhart is a Vietnam veteran, having served with AATTV.

He is an eminent historian whose work has been widely acknowledged.

His writing of this excellent book came from the VVFA's concern that it knew very little about the Minefield when dealing with veterans damaged by their contact with it.

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# Bumper Holiday Reading Edition

## Our Stories

On the following pages are stories sent in by our Vietnam veteran readers.

And a marvelous story of an Australian civilian doctor and teacher who worked in Vietnam during the war

Do you have a story you would like to share?

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

## 50 CARTONS OF BUD

By Ray 'Boris' O'Brien

6pl B coy 1 RAR War Zone "D" Vietnam

IT is now one week before Christmas '65. B Company 1 RAR has been in country for nearly 7 months. Looking back at our early days, when we arrived in June, the Company has transformed into a well oiled fighting machine. Our (6) Platoon had the second contact of the Battalion on 7 July just a few hours after a Platoon of D Company had the first.



Ray (Boris) O'Brien 6 Platoon Sig  
B Company 1 RAR 1965-66

After the contact finished and we 'dusted-off' two of our severely wounded, we began to realise that we were not now out the back of

Holswothy training for combat, but we were now in combat. We needed to switch on 24/7. One of our WIAs was Lance Corporal Dave Munday, who lost a leg during the firefight with Viet Cong, but still gave fire control orders to his section whilst seriously wounded. Dave was awarded the Military Medal for his actions and remained in the Army for 20 years.

Private Ross Mangano, one of our forward scouts, thought he was wounded in his back but it turned out a can of peaches in his bum-pack had got shot. Ross also lost a leg later on in his tour, to a grenade trip wire trap. The Platoon continued on with a handful of wounded in action, but, touch wood, no-one killed in action.

Later, we are now on Operations in War Zone "D", and being led by platoon sergeant, Sgt Merv Kirby, a great soldier of the old school, and a fantastic bloke. Before Merv retired from the Army he was RSM Land Warfare Centre Canungra. Our original platoon commander, 2nd Lieutenant Peter Sibree, only served 5 months with us before going home to Australia.

I was the Platoon Signaler of 6 Platoon, call sign two three. We were patrolling along when I received a coded message. I asked Merv to halt the Platoon for a few minutes whilst I decoded the message. Very good news, I was going on R&R



(Top left) Cpl Kenny Phipps-Spt Coy MFC, (L-R) Boris, Pte Trevor Veale-6 PI, Cpl Dave Haines-6PI, Cpl Jock Bennett-6 PI.

next day to Bangkok. We needed to find a suitable landing zone, (LZ), as a chopper was the only way to take me back to Base Camp at Bien Hoa.

We found the LZ and I gave my Radio, spare battery and codes, with a quick ten minute lecture on how to use the codes, to the new platoon signaller, and with only my Owen Machine Carbine as companion I awaited the USA chopper. Getting loads of crap from the Platoon until I waved them goodbye from the chopper. Back at Bien Hoa base, the B company orderly room clerk tells me one of my best mates, Pte Kevin O'Kane ('Okey') of 5 Platoon, was coming to Bangkok with me. Excellent news.

I go to 5 Platoon lines, which was about 300 metres from 6 Platoon, have a chat with 'Okey', and we decided to go to the US Bakery, which was also a sly-grog-shop for the Yanks, and have a few cold ones to celebrate our Christmas in Bangkok. I tell 'Okey' to pick me up in half an hour as I still had gear to put away etc.

When I arrived back at my tent, Platoon

HQ, I saw a soldier walking down the track from Company HQ. He had so much gear with him I couldn't believe it. I asked him did he want a hand with his gear. No he says, he was looking for 6 Platoon. I told him I was from 6 Platoon, and thinking he was a Reinforcement for a section, told him he should go to Cpl Haines Section as they were short of Diggers. This soldier looked like a 14 year old cadet. He then told me he isn't going to any Section, he was the new Platoon Commander for 6 Platoon. Great. I showed the new boss our tent, his bed space and table etc., and I am saved by Okey arriving. As we are walking to the Bakery Okey asked who the new soldier was. New Boss I says. Looks 16 says Okey. 14 I says.

To get to the Bakery you walk down the main road out of the Battalion area and you have to pass through a D Company gun-pit. We tell the sentries we are Okey and Boris from B Company, on our way to the Bakery for a while, so tell the

next lot of sentries we are coming back. They tell us the 'Return Tax' is half a dozen. Okay we say.

The Bakery is about 2 kilometres through the US lines, and when we arrive there are about 10 US soldiers sitting around having a beer or two. Okey and I join in and after a short while we become best of buddies, all talking crap. One of the bakers is a giant, huge and black, so Okey and I start calling him 'Sonny' after ex-heavyweight boxing champion, Sonny Liston. At the start he kept looking at us funny, but we became friends, Okey, I and Sonny.

After a couple more beers, Sonny, now our best mate, asks us do we want any extra beer for Christmas. We tell him we will be in Bangkok for Christmas, but thanks anyway. The Sergeant in charge of the Bakery came over and sits with us and tells us about all the surplus beer in Saigon. The Christmas rations arrived with an extra shipload of beer and all Units could get more than double their usual ration. So now the Bakery Sergeant asked us if we wanted any extra beer. How would we get it back to the Battalion, and how much would it cost us, we asked them. You can have 50 cartons of Budweiser Beer for 10 dollars, and we will drive you back to the battalion in one of our trucks.

Because our Company is out on Operations and only Rear-Detail is in camp, we have nowhere to store 50 cartons whilst in Bangkok, and with me having a new platoon commander, we couldn't leave it in 6 Platoon lines. We ask the Bakery Sergeant does he know anyone in 1 RAR. He replies he knows Corporal Hank Snow of C Company. Okey and I nearly fall over. Hank Snow is a 1 RAR legend, and everyone has a Hank Snow Story, mine is about Hank's twin .38cal pistols. A classic.

Hank's father was an Inspector of Police in Newcastle and he convinced Hank to join the

NSW Mounted Police. Didn't last long; "Wasn't going to be a batman to a bloody horse", said Hank. We asked the Baker when was the last time he had seen Hank. He says yesterday, he didn't go bush as he has an injured leg, and he knew his tent in C Company because he had drove him back yesterday afternoon.

We paid the baker \$10 for our 50 cartons of Bud, had a few more beers and decided it was time to go back to the Company area. Sonny, the Sergeant, Okey and I load our beers onto their truck and drive back to the Battalion area. The D Company gun-pit stop us, we tell them it's Okey and Boris from B Company with two US soldiers in the truck. Instead of our 'Return-Tax' of half a dozen we give them one carton of beer. 'Mums the word okay'. Very happy gun-pit.

We tell the Bakery Sergeant to drop us off at the start of B Company area, and to tell Hank that Boris and Okey own the beers, could he mind them until the New Year, our secret, and he could have four cartoons for his troubles. We got dropped off and the truck continued up the main road to C Company.

As Okey and I are walking through the Company HQ area we pass the Communications tent. Staff Sergeant Tim Tyler, (I think he was a Korean veteran), in charge of the Rear-Detail group, sees us and calls us into his tent. Okey's 5 Platoon Sergeant, Sgt Tom Prosser is also in the tent and they start grilling us about where have we been etc., etc. We tell them we have been to the Bakery for 2 hours.

After about 20 minutes of grilling we are about to leave when all of a sudden one of the tent flaps is opened and in walks the Bakery Sergeant. He starts telling Okey and I that he had handed over the beer to Hank who told him to tell us that the New Year pick-up was fine and thanks for the 4 cartons. Then the Bakery Sergeant says goodbye



L-R: PTE JEFF PORTER (WIA) M60 GUNNER 6 PL B Coy & RAY (BORIS) O'BRIEN  
DAY LEAVE IN SAIGON 1965

and takes off. Now both Tim and Tom are asking us who the hell was that, and the grilling started again. Bloody big mouth Yank. Why did he come back to the tent.

Okey and I tell our story about the 50 cartons. We are now given options. Option 1 Keep the beers and not go to Bangkok tomorrow or, Option 2 Donate the beers to the Company Christmas Party and go to Bangkok. We told them to keep the beers for the Company Christmas Party, and Okey and I were off to Bangers. Next morning I say goodbye to my new Platoon Commander. Okey and I get on the early trucks into Saigon and fly to Bangkok with a planeload of Yanks.

Our days in Bangkok became a haze, maybe from loss of memory or something else. We went to the Thai kickboxing one night, had a few winning bets, and our cab driver told us if you raised two fingers like the Churchill salute, up yours, you got tow very large bottles of Thai beer for not much money. Beer was okay.

One day we even went to the movies to see "Help" with the Fab Four, Ringo and crew. When the funny parts came on only Okey and I laughed. When the stupid or very dumb parts came on the rest of the movie goers laughed. Crazy Asians. Christmas day was spent in a Thai nightclub with a group of Yanks who were staying in our hotel. Everyone trying to out-bullshit one another.

Okey and I had a great holiday in Bangkok, but it was time to leave and go back to Vietnam. On the plane back to Saigon I sat next to a marine, asking the normal questions, as you do of one another. I told him Okey and I had to wait in Saigon until 3 o'clock in the afternoon as the trucks back to Bien Hoa couldn't leave any later because the VC might ambush along the highway. The marine told me if we wanted to stay in Saigon for an extra days leave, (AWOL), you tell them in base camp the plane broke down in Bangkok and it took an extra day to get new parts, 'all us marines use that story'.

When I asked Okey did he have any more

money, nil, I had a 20 pound note in my wallet, and with decimal currency yet to come in February 1966, it was still legal tender. So we took the marines advice, cashed the 20 pounds in at the Saigon PX, (Postal Exchange), and we had another days 'Leave' in Saigon. Okey got \$60 dollars US for my 20 pound note.

When we arrived back at Bien Hoa the following afternoon and reported to B Company Orderly Room the Corporal asked why we were a day late. We told him the spare parts story, "Never heard that one before, OK, take off to your platoon lines. Walking back along the track I saw my SP mate Trevor, and asked him how many Budweiser's did he have at the Christmas Party. Trevor tells us 'We didn't have any Yank beers, only Aussie.' Strange I thought. When I got back to my Platoon HQ tent, my tent-mate, Tony Brennan -'Hipshot', was there, and I asked him the same question. 'No, we had Fosters'.

Sergeant Kirby, also in the tent, says. 'We had stacks of Budweiser's at the Sergeants Mess Christmas Party. Why are you asking about who had what beers?' No reason Sergeant I replied. Lesson learnt - Don't trust any Sergeants with your beers.

Merv takes me aside and says now that you have finished your holiday you need to switch on again, as we are going out on 'Ops' again in a few days, 8<sup>th</sup> January, going to HO BO Woods. It's a battalion Op, air mobile assault and B Company is on the first stick in. And we walked into those bloody tunnels. Here we go again!

Boris.

## The Luckiest Man Alive

Photos from the War Memorial



Nine members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 6RAR. By the end of Operation Bribie three of these young men were dead and five had been wounded. Only one emerged from the battle unscathed. Image courtesy of J. O'Halloran. [AWM P02452.002]



The wreckage of an Australian APC after Operation Bribie. The driver was killed and the crew commander wounded when it was struck by fire from a recoilless rifle. Unable to recover the APC during the battle the Australians set it alight. Returning to the scene the following day Australian troops found that an enemy soldier had daubed obscenities in blood on the vehicle's side. [AWM P02060.042]

## THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE

[Dedicated to 'Luckiest Man Alive' - 1200606 LCpl Vic Otway]  
[5 Platoon Bravo Company Sixth Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment [6RAR]

The Luckiest man alive today  
Is a man from Company B  
He spent a night of pure hell  
After the battle of Hoi My  
They thought they were dead and had no  
hope  
So pulled back to regroup in the North  
Then opened up with 50 cals  
And fired for all they were worth  
Then out of the night the bombers came  
And jets screamed in with Napalm  
Artillery and mortars did their share  
The Cong could not escape harm  
Came the next day they came in to see  
If all was quiet in the hive  
There came a shout of shock and joy  
"Good God there's one man alive"  
He spent the night in a mortar bomb hole  
Wounded in both legs and shocked  
Without a weapon of any kind  
His own could not be cocked  
They bought him out and gave him a smoke  
And with a smile he said "I'm okay"  
To all the men who carried him out  
He said—I guess it's my lucky day"  
Yes the man who fought the Cong on that  
day  
And spent a night in hell and fear  
Will go back home and tell his friends  
How he almost wasn't here  
Nearly every man said a prayer that night  
For the man in the mortar bomb hole  
It shows what a little faith can do  
And what a Prayer can do for the soul

Dave Clark

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

## 4RAR and our appointment with destiny

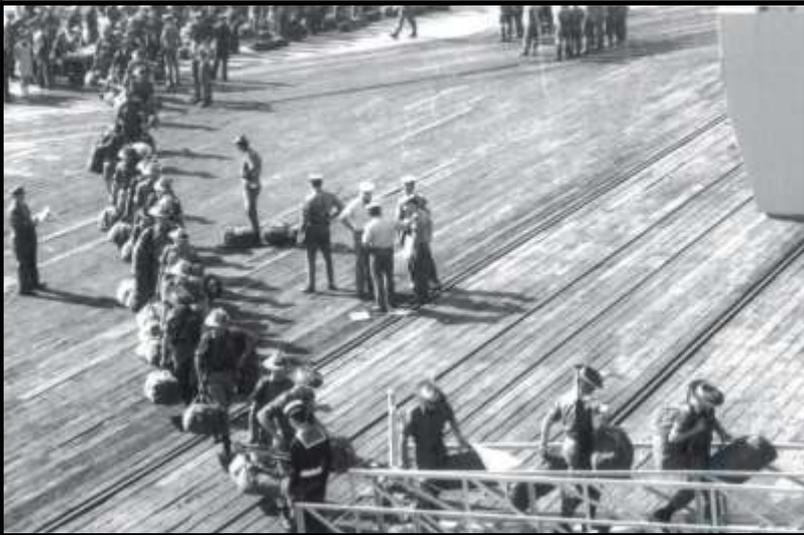
by Al Wood

### Part 1

CAME our last day in Brisbane before departure, Monday 20 May 1968, and I, with some mates and our partners, went along to the Land's Office Hotel that evening for one last "bash". and that was literally what eventuated. Our troop-transport, the ex-aircraft-carrier HMAS SYDNEY, had arrived in port that day, and a fair number of its crew were also in attendance at the crowded Land's Office beer-garden, all sitting at tables covered with glasses and jugs of beer, and taking in the on-stage singer's floor-show. I don't know who or what started it, but it was on, the annual Army v Navy "game". The very first bar-room brawl I'd ever seen or been a part of. The singing continued for a time, and I remember the female vocalist up on stage swaying out of the path of airborne jugs and glasses as she continued on with her number. We had to eventually leave though, as we had our girls with us, and did the right thing by them and got them away, but in hindsight, would have loved to have taken part just once in one of

these legendary altercations. Everybody there on this eve of our embarkation must have been a bit tense, and it wouldn't have taken much for it to have triggered-off. Must have been some sore heads and sundry other parts next morning, I'm sure.

Tuesday 21 May arrived, our Big Day. We were up early and on parade out on the battalion parade-ground with full kit straight after breakfast, awaiting the convoy of trucks to take us through the city and down to Hamilton Wharf. My parents and siblings had driven up from Sydney, and with my new girlfriend, were there to see me off. Goodbyes were said at ship-side down on the wharf, and boarding made for our send-off under a sunny Brisbane sky. The SYDNEY turned around out in mid-stream with a band ashore playing "will you no come back again" and other "suitable" numbers, and as we set off down-river toward the open-sea, every ship's whistle and siren on the river was sounding off a haunting farewell.



Continued next page

Most of us still lined the flight-deck 'til well down-river and out of sight. With such mixed emotions, I bet there was the odd "speck of dust" in the eye with not a few of us, and a large lump in the throat. What awaited us?

*The following are extracts of letters written home from aboard the troop-carrier (former aircraft-carrier) HMAS SYDNEY, en-route to Vietnam, and upon our arrival "in-country".*

***"Somewhere in the Coral Sea" – 23 May '68***

Well, we've been at sea nearly 2 days now. This letter will be taken off at Manus Is. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, (Sat.). We are supposed to drop anchor here for a day to a day and a half while the ship replenishes supplies of food, water and fuel, and we're going ashore for some Army v Navy competitions like footy, boxing, volleyball, etc. We should reach Vietnam on either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. In the meantime I think I'll sleep on the deck where it's cool instead of in a hammock, because it's too cramped in one of these. I'll probably spend a night in one though just for curiosity's sake, but it's comfortable enough lying on a thin mattress and pillow with a bush blanket around me. The only trouble is that on the first night out I was sleeping very peacefully, when suddenly I had someone stumbling all over me in the dark. I hope they don't make a practice of making a track straight across me and my bed every night.

Where I am sitting (on the deck outside our hoochie), all one can see is water, water, water, all the way to the horizon. The blue of the water is absolutely beautiful, and is broken occasionally by a porpoise breaking surface or a few flying-fish. About ½ a mile to port, (my side of the ship), is the destroyer-escort HMAS Anzac, which we picked up on our first night out. What navy in the world would dare attack us, what with our 6 Ack-Ack guns, and one 4.2" naval gun, it's barrel stuffed with a wooden block. All I can say is it's lucky the Viet Cong don't possess a navy.-----

***"Somewhere in the New Guinea, New Britain Area."- 24 May '68***

As I write this we are passing the coast of what we

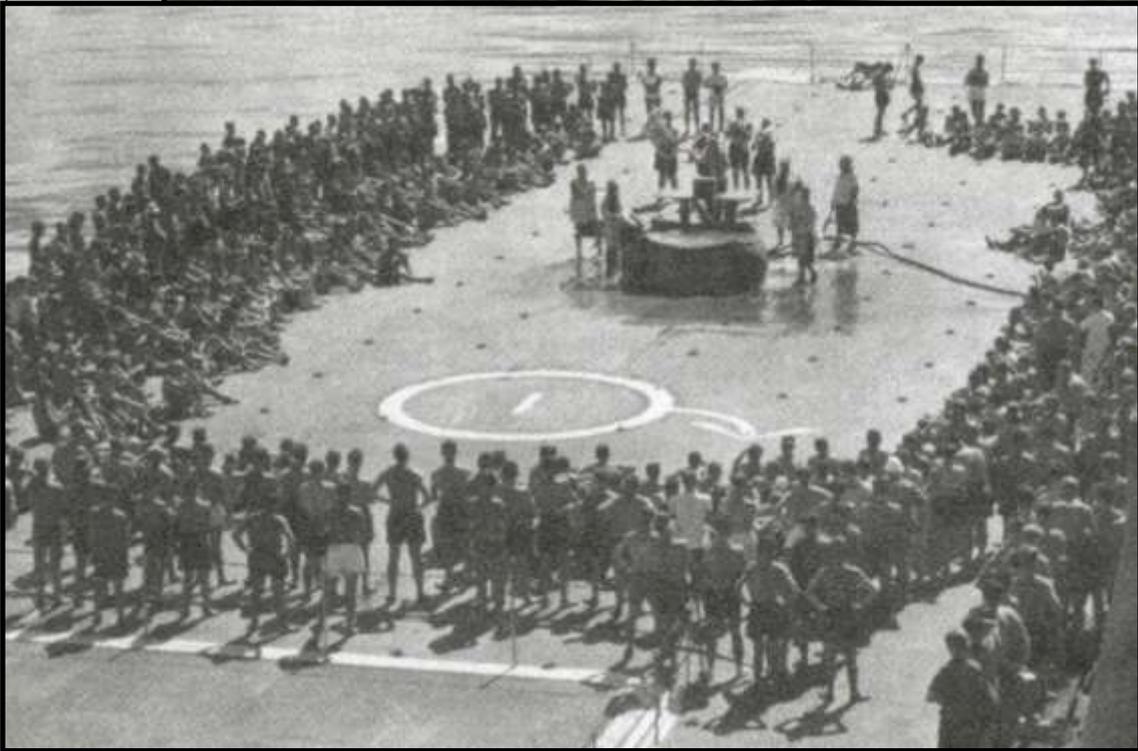
think is New Britain, so what I said yesterday about being off Nth. Old. is pure rubbish. We must have been crossing the Timor Sea. The land we now see is rather hazy but is only some 8-10 miles away off the port (left) side and is extremely steep and high. In fact the mountains look as though they slope straight into the sea. To think that at this very moment we are probably being watched by hundreds and even thousands of beady little eyes attached to head-hunting axes and cannibal's knives. We've also passed quite a few small green coral islands in the past day, some with shipwrecks on the sands.

This morning it was quite dull and dismal, with steady rain falling, although it was by no means cold. Everything looked grey- the sea, the sky, the "Anzac" a mile or so off our port side, and you'd be surprised just how this rain calmed the sea. There was just a swell on the surface, with no whitecaps whatsoever. Now though, (3.30pm), it has cleared up considerably, and although it's still overcast, it's quite pleasant. It's all quite tropical really, me sitting here on the deck outside our quarters dressed only in shorts and boots while Hawaiian-style music is played over the intercom. (Ahh, what a life.)

You should see my hair, or what there is of it. Yesterday I went to the barber's and told him to "go to town" on my hair. He did. Now it's only about ¼ to ½" long all over. Almost a "Yul Brynner" look. I don't know if it will be cut quite as short again but it seems that since I got mine cut, quite a few others are getting in on the act, even several who laughed when I first had mine done. Anyway, it's more practical, being cooler and easier to look after. They call me "Curly" now, a la "The 3 Stooges".

You wouldn't notice it here, but between this sentence and the last has been a break of about 10-15 mins., while I rushed away for "beer parade"(1 x 26oz can of good old Sydney Resch's, for 20c per man). Along with my own, I was lucky enough today to get another can off a fella who didn't feel like it today.

Guess what! It doesn't really take 4 nights to



**Crossing the Line**

get used to hammocks. I slept in one last night for the first time and slept like a log. It's something akin to a cradle really, because with the roll of the ship we are rocked to sleep. I'll stick with a hammock from here on. Last night as I "hit the hay" our "Sea Daddy", (the sailor who shows us the ropes), played his guitar-flamenco, which he says is the only way to play.

Next Sunday afternoon we will be welcoming King Neptune aboard for the "Crossing of the Line" ceremony. In this we

"pollywogs", who have never crossed the equator, will be initiated as "shellbacks" or old salts. Tomorrow when we arrive at Manus Is. We have been warned about the natives. They reckon we will be besieged by natives selling fruit and wooden goods, but that the carvings will be of poor quality and very dear. As mail is taken off tomorrow for the last time before we arrive in South Vietnam, you won't get any more mail 'til next week. ■

TO BE CONTINUED in next edition

## THE VETERAN'S TEARS

I recall the day I met him, when I went to read my poem  
About the Anzac spirit, at the district veterans home  
He was sitting in the corner, medals on his chest  
But from his haunting memories. He would never rest.

He beckoned me to join him and I sat beside his chair  
In tones he spoke so softly, his eyes a vacant stare  
He said "I'm grateful for your visit and the way you make words rhyme  
Having listened to your story, it's time to tell you mine.

I was barely nineteen years of age, when I donned my jungle greens  
I never had a second thought, it was all part of my genes  
Pop served on the Western Front, Dad Kokoda Track  
I had no inhibitions, 'cause they all made it back.

I found myself at Nui Dat, boarding choppers at first light  
If I practiced all I'd learned, I thought that I'd be right  
But all the courses I had done, didn't seem to count  
Trudging through the paddy fields and the casualties began to mount.

After twelve months they sent me home and I saw how life had changed  
As if everything I valued, had all been rearranged  
Friends had turned against me, for going to that war  
So I embarked on the Vung Tau Ferry and went off for a second tour.

It seemed the conflict would never end, Long Tan was two years gone  
Tet should have meant a ceasefire, but the firefights still dragged on  
We were from many units, fulfilling our own role  
We wore different coloured lanyards, but we only had one goal.

The enemy fell upon us and all that I can say  
These were no peasant farmers, they were regular NVA  
They nearly over ran us, at Coral and Balmoral  
And when we finally drove them off, there was no victors' laurel.

I came home in the dead of night and they sent me on my way  
I wished I had of joined my mates, laying buried in the clay  
I drifted as a homeless drunk, no one shed a tear  
Until the Salvos dried me out and I found myself in here.

*(Continued on page 51)*



A nurse observed this tortured soul as he began to cry  
And said "I think that he has had enough, it is time to say goodbye  
So thank you for your visit and for listening to what he said"  
And she wheeled him quietly sobbing, to the sanctuary of his bed.

TOMAS HAMILTON 12SEP17

# Story of an Australian civilian doctor and teacher in the Vietnam war zone

John and Elsie Whitehall

## Vet the Volunteers

By John Whitehall (son)

MUM and Dad served in Vietnam in '67. I guess lots of couples met during the war but my folks were already married. They got hitched in October '66 and were in-country the following February. Maybe they took a different set of vows.

Someone tried to stop them, of course.

Here's Mum's response from '67, in the *Daily Mirror* <sup>(1)</sup>:

*Husband and wife teams are not allowed to go to Vietnam but in this case we filled two jobs...one for a teacher and one for a doctor.*

Mum was an experienced kindergarten teacher tasked to provide care for the growing number of orphaned children and displaced families. Dad was an inexperienced doctor. A resident in Sydney hospital, he was as green to medicine as he and mum were in a war zone.

Their story got attention:

*Help for refugees: Young couple go to Vietnam* <sup>(2)</sup>  
*Medical aid is needed* <sup>(3)</sup>

One headline reads as if building to a punchline:

*A story of a doctor, his wife, a high school teacher and a Frenchman...* <sup>(4)</sup>

Mum and Dad arrived in Saigon for briefing and explored the outskirts on a Honda scooter. It was understood that jaunts out of the city weren't safe; Saigon was 'secure' but never without threat. The Tet Offensive was only months away. On one outing, Dad dropped the bike and slogged into the mud. Mum, alighted from her elegant sidesaddle, skipped onto the road and, upon seeing her husband OK, joined the locals' laughter.

I stood with them fifty years later, with my family, overlooking the Saigon River from the terrace of the Majestic Hotel. They'd dined there

back when the ambience of ordnance came with the food. They were posted to Cai Be, 80 miles southwest of Saigon. Now a popular floating ground, it was then a hamlet outside a small US outpost. Their first evening, the soldiers fired a test round from their battery. They weren't warned, of course, and reacted according to plan.

The troops treated them to dinner and a film. Mum recalls glancing from the screen and looking through the window. Expecting darkness, she saw silhouettes; shrouded faces. Some of the villagers had gathered; watching. They watched Fu Manchu and the atmosphere, an officer admitted later, had everyone feeling flighty.

There were follow-up stories about their progress in-country:

*Death, despair, starvation* <sup>(5)</sup>

*Couple Sleep With Gun Under Pillow: A young Chester Hill couple in South Vietnam sleep with a gun under their pillows and a supply of flares are at hand to call for help if the Vietcong attack... The couple are not far from the war zone - at night they see helicopters and the flashes of exploding ammunition from their windows.* <sup>(6)</sup>

The war zone was defined by the Vietcong, including my parents' flat, on the banks of the Delta. Dad worked in a USAID clinic thirty kilometres south. The road to My Tho had a stretch where the tree-line provided a wide view of the road meandering through the rice crops. During the night, the VC used trees to block this section of road and maybe wire it. It was vulnerable; hit several times. On the laconic advice of an officer, Dad secured sandbags under the seats of their Kombi.

One morning, a command-detonated mine made a crater from a public bus. Dad got through

Wednesday, May 17, 1967.

THE TORCH

# COUPLE SLEEP WITH GUN UNDER PILLOW

A young Chester Hill couple in South Vietnam sleep with a gun under their pillows and a supply of flares are at hand to call for help if the Vietcong attack.

Dr. John Whitehall, 25, and his wife Elsie, 27, went to Vietnam 13 weeks ago under the auspices of the World Council of Churches.

Both members of Chester Hill Baptist Church, they were married there in October.

Dr. Whitehall went to give medical aid to civilians and his wife to teach small children.

After some weeks in Saigon learning some Vietnamese, they went 30 miles north-west to Cai Be in the Mekong Delta, which

but neither was long on the walls and in corners and friends and relatives in

passively a skilled program of operations through the glassless windows.

The doctor administered local anaesthetics.

The couple had no time to clean the whole hospital. Although it has only about 12 patients it could

take 50 if staff was available, but

it went to the family camped if they re-

fresh are the equi-

best at 800 each and when Mrs. Whitehall bought two litres of orange juice, she was hurried to find they cost 80c each.

Improved foods are available at American Army canteens, but Australian civilians cannot use them, whatever job they are doing in Vietnam.

Dr. Whitehall has a horse near the hospital, but it, too, is in need of cleaning and has few circumstances apart from a refrigerator.

The couple are receiving about \$400 a month for their work, a big drop from their former incomes.

Dr. Whitehall has always wanted to serve in an undeveloped country, however, and the couple had intentions from England, where they had been deciding on Vietnam.

After consultations with authorities in Saigon and Geneva, they joined the World Council of Churches team.

Two other Chester Hill Baptist Church members also went to Vietnam in the team — Brian Raymond of Virgil Avenue, who is at Cai Be on the coast north of Saigon, and David Peace, who returned after six months because of his father's serious illness.

Commenting on a recent letter to a metropolitan paper from the Inter-Church Aid Service appealing for money to help the couple, Mrs. Walker said:

"I don't think they need money."

"That is too good without trying to help them up the hospital and nurse patients."

The service official said that apart from the Army doctors in the country, there are only 300 Vietnamese doctors in a population of 18 million.

The vast majority of people are born, live and die without medical attention.

The average life expectancy is 35 years.



Dr. John Whitehall and his wife Elsie, who have to keep a gun under their pillow for protection, pictured shortly before they left for Vietnam, where Dr. Whitehall is the only doctor for about 100,000 people. The couple came from Chester Hill.

# Death, despair, starvation

By GEOFFREY MURRAY

A FEW weeks ago I flew from Saigon to Tuy Hoa, 250 miles away on the coast of war-ravaged Vietnam, to one of the worst

campes for refugees I have ever seen.

I had been told the day before by officials in Saigon that I would find conditions at the camp "extremely difficult." It was a meagre understatement. In many ways with leaking roofs, 1,000 refugees, mainly children, girls, women and very old men, are facing starvation. They have no latrines. Their only water comes from two shallow wells.

These people have been living like that for more than a year. The small tentment grounds they were given by the Government when they fled from their Vietcong-held villages were spent a long time ago. Now they face death from hunger and the diseases that go with it.

## Five deaths

The week before I landed at Tuy Hoa there had been five deaths in the camp. One case of suspected plague has been reported, but so far nothing has been done to locate the victims. Now, after 12 months, has any respiratory team arrived to test these people's needs?

By day they sit outside their shacks, huddled on a sandy floor, with their faces turned to the shade. Tension is written in deep lines on their faces. Even the children are listless and weeping.

This is the camp where the first team included by the East Asia Christian Confer-

Even now Tuy Hoa bears all the marks of a "gold rush" town. Its population has jumped from 20,000 to 50,000. During October there were, it was believed, 15,000 new refugees streaming to the province, but no one knows exactly where they were.

Only 15 miles from the town there is a redoubtable Vietcong stronghold set in caves among the hills. It was pointed out to me as we approached the landing field. So far it appears to be bomb proof.

Although Tuy Hoa is a "secure area," there are incidents almost nightly along its perimeter.

I drove out to the refugees' smudged camp on the far side of the river, which threads Tuy Hoa. As we skidded through the mud I came to the protesters' complex which straddles up to the camp boundary. In contrast to the refugees' hovels, the buildings are sturdily built with gleaming sheets of aluminium and are gaily decorated with signs and pictures.

Because of the refugees' terrible poverty, the girls in the camp are under an almost irresistible temptation to work in the protesters' complex, which has no medical or other supervision. Some of the protesters are said to earn more money than the salary of the provincial governor.

## Sick bay

In the camp a small sick

## New council for Epping

SIR.—No doubt a certain amount of sympathy may be felt for the people of central Epping in their efforts to overcome the economic straits of the Homebush Council, to join the Councils of the area. However, that is not good reason why residents of other surrounding council areas should be sacrificed to their economic straits.

It is quite obvious to most of us living in this area that no newly constituted municipality, with all its duplication of local government needs and consequent higher overheads, could operate cheaply at much higher rates than those levied by the Parramatta City Council and apart from these necessary higher rates, numerous ratepayers who are unable to complete the whole of payment of rates in the Parramatta area would be inconvenienced by any change.

The feeling of the Parramatta residents may be gauged by the fact that in a recent election of 1966 by the voters about 80 per cent of the voters indicated not only signed a petition of protest, but were also included in their condemnation of the whole proposition.

The most significant element of the Government's scheme, however, is its alternative proposal to amalgamate this section of the area, in which we are

an hour earlier, as had a US mechanised unit; a legitimate target. The Vietcong, winning hearts and minds their way, chose the bus. Dad drove around the crater later that afternoon, thinking about the sandbags.

When they couldn't take the Kombi, they'd ride a helicopter or board a gunboat. They rode

Hueys into the Parrots Beak and further into Cambodia. They motored up the delta. On one muddy water mission, their crew's sister boat was fresh from being ambushed. Allied troops, they said, were usually polite kids but this crew had nothing but eyes and weapons at the banks. They

(Continued on page 54)



were spooked. They were at war.

During their stay in Cai Be, a VC flag appeared across the river. Instead of lowering the flag with the artillery piece, someone from the base decided to capture it, like a game on scout camp; an impressively stupid act in any conflict. He presented the flag to the newlyweds.

From Cai Be they were posted to a coastal village 250 miles northeast of Saigon. Geoffrey Murray, AAP-Reuters correspondent, described the refugee camp in Tuy Hoa:

*In rusty tin huts...1800 refugees, mainly children, girls, women and very old men, are facing starvation...no latrines...water comes from two shallow wells...The week before I landed...five deaths in the camp...the first team...is to bring help and...hope for the people.'*

My folks arrived in Tuy Hoa one month later. As in most of South Vietnam in '67, it was infiltrated:

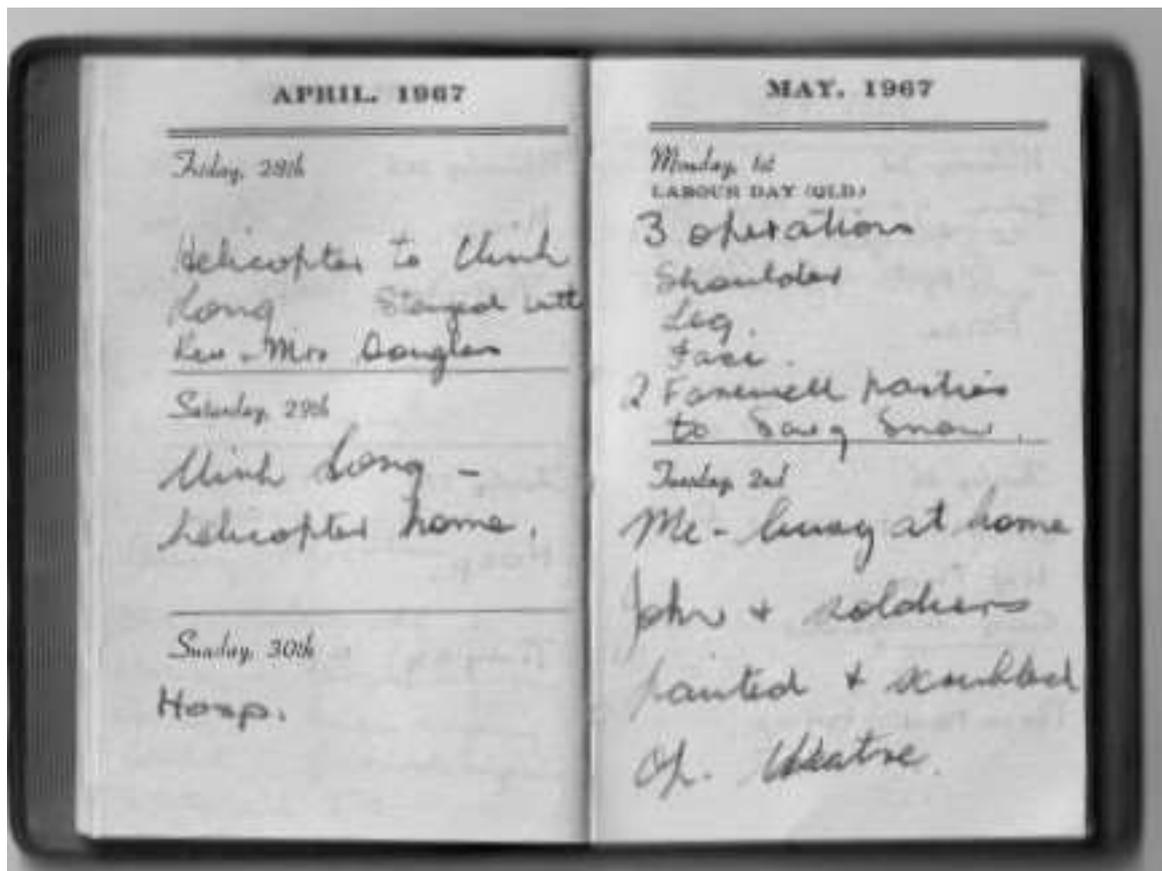
*Only 15 miles from the town there is a redoubtable Vietcong stronghold set in caves...So far it appears to be bomb-proof...Although Tuy Hoa is a 'secure area', there are incidents almost*

*nightly... (7)*

The refugee camp backed against a US base, from which a corrugation of brothel bars had grown. My folks joined the small group of aid workers. They got around in a Land Rover plucked from retirement. The gearstick kept popping out. The 4WD wouldn't engage. It was prone to getting bogged outside the camp, providing laughter for the congregation in the corrugation.

Dad was driving outside town with a mate named Hansen, a volunteer plumber. They were crossing a one-way bridge, nearing the far bank, when the lead APC of a US armoured column clattered onto the bridge and blocked them. Training the barrel of his 50-calibre on the dodgy Rover, over the engine noise, the Gunner screamed at them to back up.

Hansen jumped from the Rover and began tapping on the latch of the APC, wanting words with the boss about bridge etiquette. The Gunner, thrown by the appearance of two audacious Aussie civilians cruising the boondocks, consulted with someone from under the lid. Encouraged, he



retrained the gun on the Rover and screamed for Dad to back up or he would open fire. It was, Dad said, a tense reverse, steering one-hand, eyes both sides and leaning on the gearstick with the other to keep it in its box.

Dad recently reflected upon the work they'd done in Vietnam: not as effective as it might've been. But hindsight's measurement of effect is inaccurate; parallax error. There are more accurate measures. Vietnam was a series of firsts for my folks. For Mum, first time overseas. Dad had never seen a mother hook an ascaris worm from her child's nostril, there's a first, nor met a child calmed by stroking his pet sewer rat <sup>(8)</sup>. First landmine victim. First bullet wound. First war. And mum pregnant; first baby.

Anecdotes and numbers help but how can you measure the effect of a married couple, surely mankind's most successful unit, showing up to help in a war zone? It's difficult to quantify an act of goodwill but selfless acts are rarely unnoticed.

There's a book by Dr Marshall Barr. <sup>(9)</sup> Then Major, he volunteered for twelve months in Citizen Military Force (CMF). He met my folks:

*The most extraordinary visitors we ever had were a young Australian missionary couple who appeared completely out of the blue. John was a doctor working alone in a clinic near the Cambodian border. He had no x-ray, no IV equipment and few drugs. The nearest hospital was 40 kilometres away through VC-infested jungle. He and Elsie had tried to get to Saigon for a few days break and had ended up at Vung Tau airfield. Somebody sensible had delivered them to 8 Field Ambulance. John had been treating a lot of war injuries, no questions asked. He was worried about how to drain chest wounds and keep them drained...A one-way system is needed, to let blood out and stop air getting in. He had none of the usual equipment, which would not survive the journey anyway. A simpler device, less liable to damage, was the Heimlich flutter valve, but he had none of those either.*

*I tried some experiments...a decapitated condom attached to a short piece of tubing...a serviceable valve. Blood flowed out, the collapsed rubber stopped air getting in. We donated the missionary doctor a gross of contraceptives.*

*(Continued on page 56)*

*John and Elsie went back to their mission all gratitude, if a little embarrassed by the large box added to their baggage. They assured us they would be safe at their isolated clinic, although Elsie was pregnant and they had not decided what to do about her confinement. We never saw or heard of them again.* (p186-187)

Mum actually planned to deliver my sister at 4th Evac, Vung Tau and there was some discussion about a mission in a village named Bon Me Thuot. But red tape bound white bandages and my folks went home. They felt stymied by the chasm dividing goodwill and human ill, such as when a fracas boiled up between surgeons from a Civil-Action-Group. They were performing a lumbar puncture for an abdominal wound and the patient began to panic. Dad recalled the bewilderment in the patient's eyes when one of the surgeons, maybe trying to stun him, took a swing and missed, landing the punch on his colleague's face, the surgeons then ducking and weaving around their pleading, bleeding patient; flailing and failing. During Tet, only months later, the volunteers of Bon Me Thuot were executed. (11)

My folks then lived in South Africa. Then Rhodesia. In 1975, Dad turned back to Vietnam. Several declassified US Department of State documents (10) mention the controversial evacuation, Operation New Life, of 330 orphans to Los Angeles from Saigon via Guam AFB, including a compliment from Henry Kissinger:

*Please thank volunteers for their goodwill.*

Canberra had offered assistance to Washington but was declined. Unsurprisingly, Washington cabled Canberra a few days later, the mission understaffed, out of hand and needing help. Anyone who's been in the air with a child could've foreseen problems in a 747 strapped full of babies. As a parent, it's the stuff of nightmares.

Then Dad was involved in the only RAAF hijack in history, lumbering into Darwin after a fat humanitarian Caribou hop from Dili. You can watch it on DVD. (12) The RAAF were good-humoured; no charges laid. Then my folks went to war in Lebanon with their five children. Then the Phillipines with six, where Dad's work had him consulting with the Pentagon. Then Mexico. El Salvador. Sri Lanka. Madagascar. Papua New Guinea. Bangladesh. And my parents, as a unit, are still active at 80 and 78. Please Google it. It's

important...

What causes such extraordinary commitment? I've cherrypicked some of their own words because, surely, after all they've done, they deserve to be able to answer for themselves. Mum, in *The Australian*, 1967:

*Both of us feel we can do something useful.* (13)

Dad after 50 years of medicine:

*Marriage is now described as a 'partnership' with meaning as imprecise as practice. Legally, the word may imply 'contribution of capital in a joint venture', socially, 'association with another in the same action' and recreationally, 'collaboration of two people who dance together' (presumable until the music stops). Biblically...it is two becoming 'one flesh', not merely in mutual love, but for the broader pursuit of 'His' purposes. It is not an association, a venture, or a whirl, but an amalgamation of emotion and mind that extends to eternal realms. Such a marriage to Elsie has been foundational for me. The Bible also alludes to a marriage as a 'house' and everyone knows that there are foundations and useless decorations! If anyone in our marriage and family could be defined as the foundation, it would not be me!* (14)

Do Mum and Dad qualify as Vietnam Veterans? You decide...

## References

- 1 *Daily Mirror*, Tuesday, January 24, 1967 p7
- 2 *Ibid*
- 3 Geoffrey Murray. *Death, Despair, Starvation*. Unlabelled newspaper clipping from 1967 (cited)
- 4 *The Australian*, Wednesday, January 25, 1967 p3
- 5 Geoffrey Murray. *Death, Despair, Starvation*. Unlabelled newspaper clipping from 1967 (cited)
- 6 *The Torch*, Wednesday, May 17, 1967
- 7 Geoffrey Murray. *Death, Despair, Starvation*. Unlabelled newspaper clipping from 1967 (cited)
- 8 Whitehall, John. (2009). *Plague in a time of war: an experience in South Vietnam*. The Medical journal of Australia. 191. 671-3. 10.5694/j.1326-5377.2009.tb03376.x.
- 9 Barr, Marshall. *Surgery, Sand and Saigon Tea: An Australian Army Doctor in Vietnam*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2001. P186-187
- 10 US Department of State declassified Document numbers: 1975CANBER02634, 1975MANILA05669, 1975STATE103959, 1975CANBER02766, 1975CANBER02888, 1975STATE108554, 1975CANBER03113, 1975CANBER03756, 1975CANBER03772, 1975CANBER02634, 1975MANILA05669, 1975STATE103959, 1975CANBER02766, 1975STATE10844
- 11 <https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/archives/downloads/vietnam-today/vietnam-today-1968-summer.pdf>
- 12 *Untold Stories of the RAAF Caribou*. © 2015 Lace Productions. All Rights Reserved.
- 13 *The Australian*, Wednesday, January 25, 1967 p3
- 14 *Doctors' Lives: Sydney Medical Graduates of 1966*. The Svengali Press, Sydney, 2015. P395



## WHAT VETERANS' COMPENSATION SCHEME DO YOU COME UNDER?

### A TIMELY REMINDER

All members and ex-serving members of Australian Defence Forces (ADF) are entitled to certain rights under Australian Acts of Parliament, that define those rights and the conditions under which they are enabled.

Parliament considers that if a member or past member of the ADF is killed, wounded, suffers injury or disease in the performance of their duty, then the government has due diligence to compensate the member or his family, in the case of death.

With the passage of time since WW1 there have been several Acts governing the entitlements of ADF personnel, so that today we have essentially 3 Acts under which those personnel may make claim for disability or disease that derives because of their service.

### VETERANS ENTITLEMENT ACT - VEA

The Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) covers service in wartime and certain operational deployments, as well as certain peacetime service between 7 December 1972 – 30 June 2004. For peacetime service eligibility, a member who had not **completed a qualifying period of three years'** service prior to 7 April 1994 is not covered under the VEA, unless they were medically discharged. **British nuclear test defence service during the 1950's and 1960's in Australia is also covered when the relevant criteria are met.**

If you have an injury or disease arising out of, or aggravated by, a period of full-time service when you were covered under the VEA, you may be eligible for a disability pension and medical treatment. You may also be eligible for compensation under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) for the same disability and, if so, any compensation payable is offset against your pension.

Depending on a successful claim, payments include *TPI-Special Rate Pension*, or a percentage *Disability Pension* according to rated body impairment. The claimant may also be eligible for a full or part age pension equivalent through DVA unaffected by the Disability Pension amount. Payments are periodic (fortnightly) payments according to the rate assessed.

### MILITARY REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION Act 2004 - MRCA

This Act provides rehabilitation and compensation coverage for the following members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who served on or after 1 July 2004:

All members of the Permanent Forces; All members of the Reserve Forces; Cadets and Officers, including instructors of Cadets; Persons who hold an honorary rank or appointment in the ADF and who perform acts at the request or direction of the Defence Force; Persons who perform acts at the request or direction of the Defence Force as an accredited representative of a registered charity; Persons who are receiving assistance under the Career Transition Assistance Scheme (established under section 58B of the Defence Act 1903) and who perform acts in connection with the scheme; and Other people declared in writing by the Minister for Defence to be members of the ADF.

For those making claims under MRCA there are 4 conditions under which payment is made depending on a rating of body impairment for each claim accepted. These are *Permanent Impairment Compensation, Incapacity Payments, Special Rate Disability Pension, and Compensation following death*. Payments are periodic (fortnightly) payments according to the rate assessed.



**SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA)**

This Act provides similar rehabilitation and compensation to that provided under the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA), for injuries and diseases suffered as a result of peacetime and peacekeeping service up to and including 30 June 2004 and operational service between 7 April 1994 and 30 June 2004.

*Permanent Impairment* compensation in the form of a lump sum is paid for the functional loss, pain and suffering and the lifestyle effects from injury or disease accepted as related to your DRCA service. It is assessed as a percentage of whole person impairment using part 2 (Defence-Related Claims for Permanent Impairment) of the Guide to the Assessment of the Degree of Permanent Impairment.

*Incapacity payments* are periodic compensation for economic loss similar to the

payments under MRCA. These payments are generally taxable as they are income-related payments.

*Compensation following death:* Dependents of deceased members may be entitled to: a lump sum payment; an additional death benefit (ADB) in the form of a lump sum payable to the spouse **under the Defence Act 1903 where the member's death occurred after 10 June 1997;** a further lump sum for each dependent child (payable under the Defence Act 1903) is made to the spouse if they have responsibility for their care (payment goes directly to a child aged 18 years and over); and reimbursement for the cost of obtaining financial advice when an ADB has been paid under the Defence Act 1903.

*You should not attempt to traverse a claims activation, at your own instigation, without first contacting a qualified Compensation Advocate familiar with most, or all of the Acts listed above.*

# CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

--	--	--

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

OLD ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

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

NEW ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

*Complete all sections and post to:*

**The Secretary  
VVPAA NSW  
PO Box 170  
Granville  
NSW 2142**

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

# VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc has for many years maintained records of the deaths of Vietnam Veterans and the cause of death if known. This has proved invaluable regarding the health standards of Vietnam Veterans when compared to the general public.

We seek your assistance in reporting the death of Vietnam Veterans, past or recent, to allow the Federation to expand and preserve it's record base.

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

*Please print clearly*

*VETERANS DETAILS*

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	SERVICE NUMBER
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SVN UNIT/S	TOUR DATES
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

SR Service Related      UNK Unknown      S Suicide      O Other )

DATE OF DEATH (If known)	LOCATION AT TIME OF DEATH
<input type="text"/>	(TOWN) <input type="text"/> (STATE) <input type="text"/>

YOUR NAME

SUBURB/TOWN	STATE	POST CODE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	SIGNATURE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETURN FORM TO: The Welfare Officer  
 VVPPAA NSW Branch  
 PO Box 170  
 Granville NSW 2142

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

# REUNIONS & NOTICES

# REUNIONS & NOTICES



**AVCAT**

# SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR THE CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN  
OF AUSTRALIAN VETERANS

**The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust** is a national independent charity helping the children and grandchildren of ex-service men and women to a better future through tertiary education. Through the generous support of the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, ex-service organisations, corporate sponsors and private donors, we provide scholarships which assist recipients to obtain the tertiary qualification they need for their chosen career.

One of the scholarships administered by AVCAT is the VVPPAA Scholarship, specifically available for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans. Our proud association has seen many successful recipients achieve tertiary qualifications and reach their goals, that erstwhile may not have been available to them. We hope to continue this proud heritage long into the future with your help. It is through your generous support of this organization, and valued donations, that we keep the hopes of children alive.



*Some of our recent recipients and successful achievers in their chosen fields*

**"It means the world to me that someone I don't know cares about my education and believes I have potential."**

2014 Recipient

2019 scholarships open in August 2018 and close at the end of October 2018. See below for more.

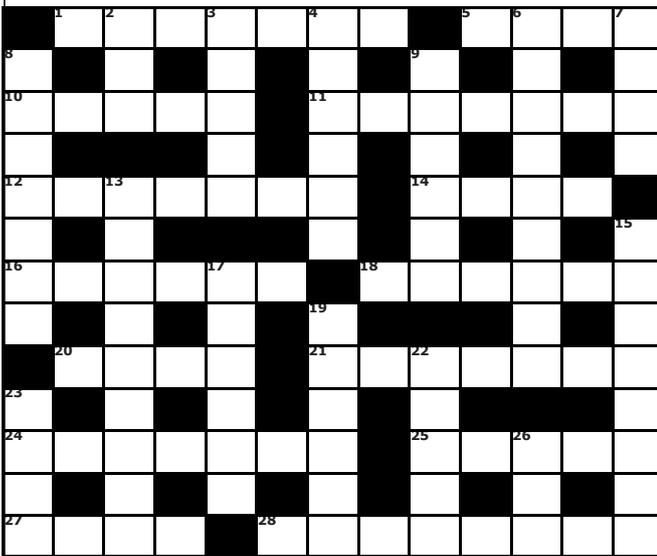
***"Without the scholarship, achieving my goals would be almost impossible. The financial support has provided me the opportunity to study and without your support I would simply not be in the position I am in today, and for that I will be forever grateful".*** Recent recipient.

You are eligible to apply for a scholarship with AVCAT if you answer yes to the following questions:

- Are you a child or a grandchild of an Australian veteran? A veteran is a person who has rendered service as a member of the Australian Defence Force.
- Are you an Australian citizen or permanent resident?
- Are you enrolled, or planning to enroll, in tertiary studies for a minimum of one year?
- Will you be studying full-time next year?
- Are you or will you be eligible for Centrelink's Youth Allowance?
- Are you under 25 years of age?

To apply you should contact AVCAT and request to be added to the expressions of interest register.  
Phone: 02 9213 7999      Web: [avcat@dva.gov.au](mailto:avcat@dva.gov.au)      PO Box K978 Haymarket, NSW 1240

# CROSSWORD CORNER



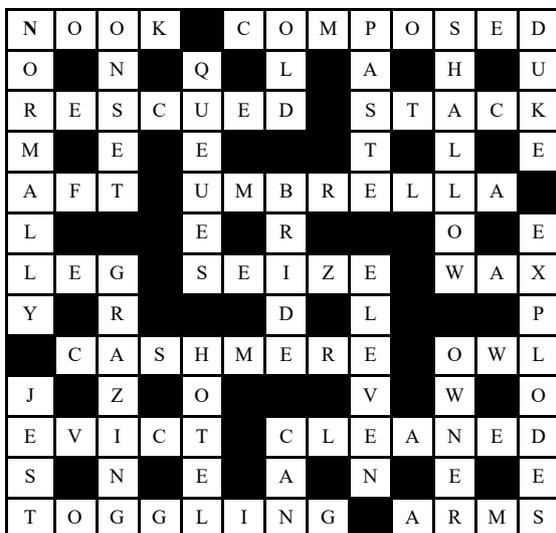
**ACROSS**

- 1. Sloping text
- 5. Reverberate
- 10. Belonged to
- 11. Time away
- 12. Very ultra
- 14. Flat
- 16. Nil
- 18. Amend, fix
- 20. Decorated cake
- 21. Epistles
- 24. Tableware
- 25. More times
- 27. Created
- 28. Took as own

**DOWN**

- 2. Light brown
- 3. Ski cabin
- 4. Small temple
- 6. Govt. nominee
- 7. Unlock
- 8. Anybody
- 9. Guess motive
- 13. Abridged
- 15. Deleting
- 17. Concealed
- 19. Played role
- 22. Squad
- 23. Trick
- 26. Apex

**JULY 2019 SOLUTION**



# THE UNKNOWN COMIC

The little girl has been playing with Dad all day, using water for pretend tea, and serving it up to Dad several times. It was all so sweet for the Dad as it had been a while since he had the chance to be with his sweet little daughter.

When Mum arrives home, she is smiling sweetly when her proud husband shows off what they have been doing most of the day as daughter brings out yet another serving of tea in the tiny cups, and Dad drinks it down. Mum puts the shopping on the kitchen bench then asks, "Has it ever occurred to you that the only place she can reach to get water is from the old loo out back."

The elderly couple are on holiday and are at church when the wife leans over and whispers, "I just let rip with the longest silent fart I've ever done, hope it doesn't smell, I'd be so embarrassed."

The husband replies, "Well it's just as well we're among strangers. First off, when we leave here we'll go and get some new batteries for your hearing aids. Then, next week when we get back home I'll see if we can get you into a specialist about your sense of smell."

An Australian sergeant got seconded to a US army base, for cultural integration. When he arrived, most of the men were away sweeping a neighbouring region. But a Security Patrol still guarding the base was out close by when it came under unexpected and intense attack. All remaining men were ordered out to relieve the Patrol, so the Australian grabbed his weapons and gear.

The Captain addressed the Company: "Men, reports are we're out-numbered six to one. Do not get separated from the corps. It is imperative we succeed before dark." About four hours into the furious firefight, the Captain and his Company rounded into a ravine and came across the Australian lying in a shady spot, relaxing under his hat. "Soldier, \*what\* in hell do you think you are doing?" The Aussie pushes back his hat, and says: "Well, Cap, it's like this: I already got my six."

## Please consider leaving a bequest in your will

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Operation Life



### Register Now!!

CALL 1800 011 046



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

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

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

FORMERLY



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



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

**JUST CALL 1800 011 046**

**If overseas call +61 8 8241 4546**

**FORMERLY KNOWN AS**



Call  
24/7

**A service founded by Vietnam veterans**



1300 924 522

Our programs

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

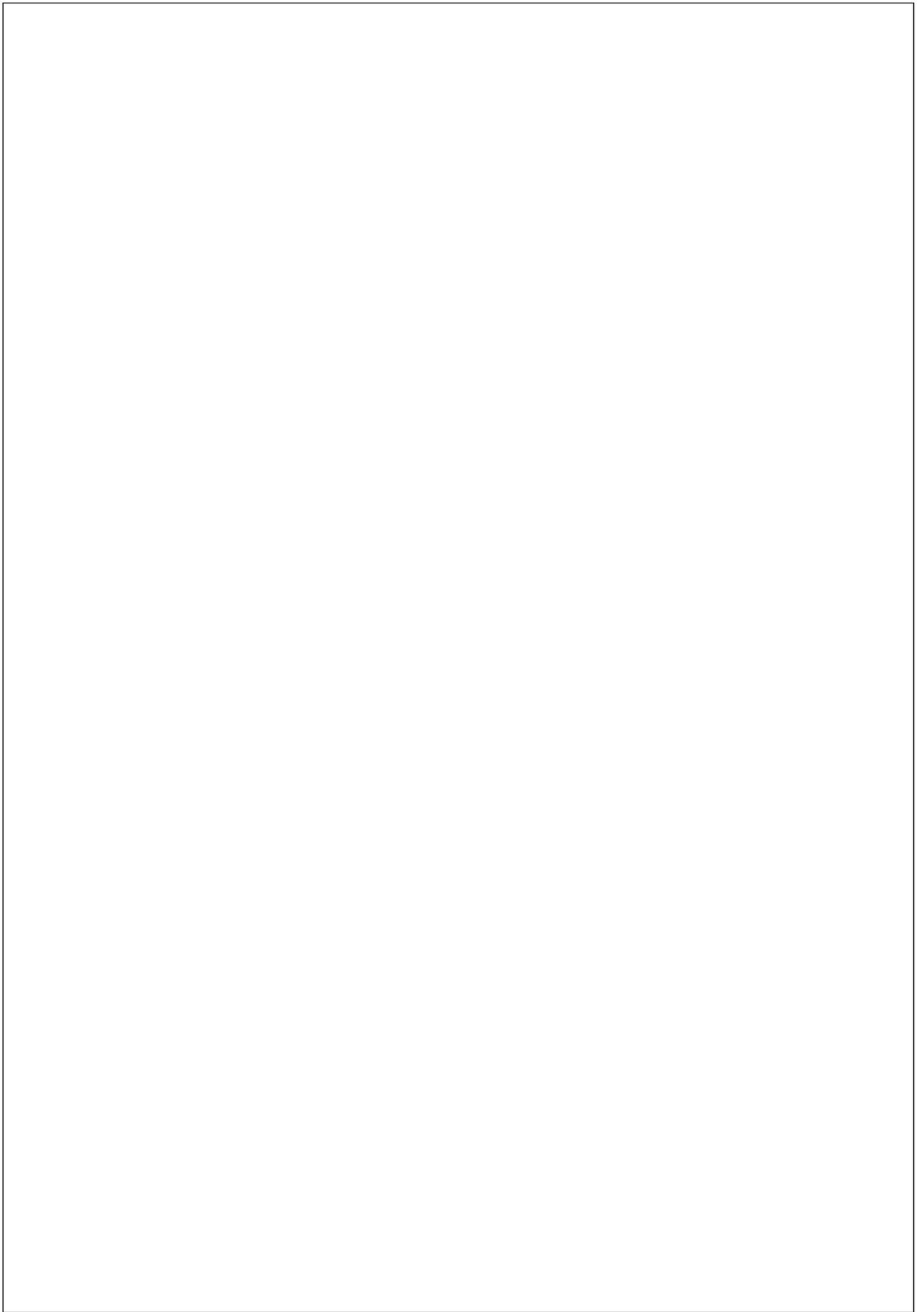
Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah provide compassionate care for those in need of psychiatric help. The goal of the hospitals is to provide positive outcomes, not only for our patients with a mental illness but also for their family and carers. As centres of excellence within Wesley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

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

## BRANCH LISTINGS NSW SUB-BRANCHES

## BRANCH LISTINGS OTHER STATES





1969 – IN A FAR OFF PLACE

The flag's been raised, the anthem played, we've sung our last refrain  
 And I have finally made it here, to stand before your name  
 It's been fifty years or so, since you in battle fell  
 Whether the pain will ever ease, only time will tell

We were both called up together, barely out of teens  
 When we embarked we looked the part, slouch hat and jungle greens  
 The veterans all had told us, just what lay ahead  
 We sat there captivated, by every word they said

The great unwashed saw us off, with their hoots and boos and jeers  
 But all we could remember, was our loved ones tears  
 We'd throw a party when we got back and paint the old town red  
 But sadly that for some of you, we'd have a wake instead

And that hippy girl with the banner stating, "Make love not war"  
 Well I married her and soon found out, what the sign was for  
 With all our kids and grandkids, how our family has grown  
 Little did she realise, she'd have a regiment of her own

We slogged through the mud and rain, remembering what the sergeant said  
 "There's only two types of soldier son, there's the quick and there's the dead"  
 Our Lieutenant trained at Scheyville, a bit young but he was keen  
 A natural born leader, the best we'd ever seen

We had to let our hair down, we were all on the same team  
 So we went and found a shady bar, just to let off steam  
 We were drinking and yahooin and making a right din  
 Having such a good time, then the Provo's all stormed in

We figured if they caught us, we'd be on the mat  
 But you have to get up early, snare a tunnel rat  
 We knew every hidden passage, as we set off at great pace  
 To another off limits bar, in another off limits place

The Yanks they landed on the moon and went for their lunar roam  
 We were counting down the wakeys, till the day that we'd go home  
 Yet despite the hardships, our loyalty did not lag  
 For three generations, we'd proudly served the flag

In a village known as Binh Ba, the enemy made a stand  
 Backed by armour, artillery and gunships, we fought hand to hand  
 Those who were to follow us, would recall our deeds with awe  
 Operation Hammer, now the stuff of lore

But life can be a fickle thing, when you trip a jumping jack  
 I wish I could have escorted you, on the Herk brought you back  
 We stood there empty hearted, in humidity and the rain  
 As we recalled all the mates, we'd not see again

Now you are just a weathered name, on a small town monument  
 A fitting simple tribute, to the sweat and blood you spent  
 Maybe we'll meet in a far off place and work out what it was about  
 And if we do, my dear old mate, it will be my bloody shout

TOMAS HAMILTON 28 AUG 18



# Last Post





# Last Post





## Last Post



*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

### PLEASE NOTE

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

# MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES	SMASH REPAIRS	BATTERIES	FLOOR COVERINGS							
<p><b>CARNEEDS Pty Ltd</b> 152 Parramatta Rd STANMORE Prptr: Robert Stenta Ph: 9519 1441 <b>10% discount</b> <b>On mechanical repairs &amp; competitive prices on tyres and batteries.</b> To all Vietnam Veterans Federation Members.</p> <p><b>MALCOLM MOTORS</b> Automotive Service Specialist. All mechanical repairs &amp; servicing. <b>15% Discount for members on services and repairs.</b> <b>JOE CARE</b> 603-605 Parramatta Rd Leichhardt NSW MTA Lic. # 42198</p>	<p><b>Wreck-A-Mended Smash Repairs</b> Unit 1, 20 Bosci Rd Ingleburn NSW 02 9605 9008 <b>Ask for Alan</b> Tell them you are a member and they will send us a donation</p>	<p><b>POWER PRODUCTS</b> For all your power needs</p> <p><b>BATTERIES SOLAR POWER INVERTERS GENERATORS</b></p> <p><i>Motor Cycle battery specialists</i></p> <p>Russell is offering 15% discount to VVF Members on Batteries . 5% on Solar products, Inverters &amp; Chargers 10%</p> <p>3/3 Sovereign Pl Sth Windsor Ph: (02) 4577 7761 Fax: (02) 4577 7768</p> <p><b>Ashfield Battery Centre</b> 110 FREDERICK STREET ASHFIELD, NSW, 2131 02 9798-6166 GEORGE KAWAUCHI (owner) <b>We sell:</b> 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. <b>10% Discount to veterans</b></p>	<p><b>Waratah Floor Coverings</b> 473 Burwood Rd BELMORE Ph: (02) 9759 6511 <b>Ask for Special Rate</b></p>	<p><b>TRAILERS TOWBARS BULLBARS</b></p> <p><b>Fastfit Bullbars &amp; Towbars</b> Trailer sales and spares-side steps Bike beacons-Custom work 65 St Hilliers Road AUBURN Ph: (02) 9749 1209 <b>10% Discount on products</b></p>	<p><b>MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES</b></p> <p><b>Motor Cycle Accessories Supermarket</b> Head Office. 321 Parramatta Rd Auburn NSW (02) 9648 1400 www.mcas.com.au</p> <p><b>CITY:</b> 9261 5182. <b>LIVERPOOL:</b> 9601 8276. <b>CARINGBAH</b> 9574 5100 <b>PENRITH</b> 4737 6100</p> <p><b>10% Discount except helmets and tyres</b></p>	<p><b>MOTELS</b></p> <p><b>Golden Chain Motor Inn Ltd</b> 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.</p> <p>There is a <b>10% discount</b> on room rates <b>Australia wide</b></p>	<p><b>TRAVEL TRANSFERS</b></p> <p>GROUP TRANSFER Airport or Cruise Terminals All Tours, All Services 15% DISCOUNT FOR VETERANS For Bookings call: Michael Viet (02) 9723 2262 0404 754 899</p>	<p><b>EXHAUST SYSTEMS</b></p> <p><b>Menai Mufflers</b> Unit 4/788 Old Illawarra Rd MENAI Ph: (02) 9541 4720 <b>20% Discount</b></p> <p><b>Balmain Radiator Centre</b> <b>Mark Borghonzian</b> 22d Crystal St ROZELLE Ph: (02) 9818 4920 Mbl: 0419 417 206 <b>10% Discount</b></p>	<p><b>TYRES</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>BRIDGESTONE</b> Tyres &amp; Complete Auto Servicing. 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><b>PLEASE REPORT ALL INSTANCES OF BREACHES TO OFFERED DISCOUNTS</b></p>
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