



THE

VIETNAM VETERANS'

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

MARCH 2024



**ALSO
INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE**

- **DVA PLANS FOR HARMONISATION**
- **DVA AND THE 'BACKLOG' SCANDAL**
- **HARMONISATION AND FUNERAL BENEFITS**
- **VETERANS STORIES**

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claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA

Sadly, advancing age and illness amongst our volunteer staff means that our next issue may be delayed a little and the magazine's style may change a bit.

But what will not change is how much we love to publish your stories.

Keep them coming.



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

Welcome back to **John Ingram** with episode 8 of the story of the 'Vung Tau Ferry', HMAS Sydney.

Welcome back to valued contributor **Al Wood** telling of his attendance at a reunion of the Kiwi V3 Company (who served with 4RAR).

And welcome back to author, **Ray (Boris) O'Brien** who relates his story of the battle in Hobo Woods.

Keep those stories coming..



VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION of AUSTRALIA Inc.

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**Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and
Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW
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**Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland Branch
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MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging
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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. ■

SA STATE BRANCH PRESIDENT AWARDED OAM



Mr Malcolm Thiele OAM JP

Dear Mal,

On behalf of the Federation and its members I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate you on your award of the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division (OAM) within the Australian Honours Award, which was announced on Australia Day 26 January 2024.

We note that it was awarded to you for your services to Veterans and to the Community. Your voluntary work over many years with the Federation, in particular the South Australian Branch, in giving your all in your capacity as an Advocate to assist our vulnerable Veterans and their families and also the many other roles, including President, and activities you have undertaken for and on behalf of the Federation, and still do, since you commenced volunteer work with the Federation.

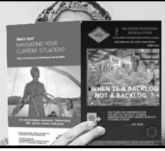
As you would know we rely on volunteers, like yourself, to take on the various tasks/ roles within the Federation to ensure that we are able to provide the timely and professional assistance to the Veterans' communities as we were established to do and as part of our Charter.

Your long term commitment as an Advocate and the other roles and activities you have undertaken for and on behalf of the Federation, much of which involved many additional hours of your own time, is very much appreciated by the Federation and its members, and of course those you have helped. It also reflects well on the Federation which is regarded as one of the leading and respected Ex-service Organisation (ESOs) in Australia.

You are certainly deserving of this Award and the Federation and its members are very proud of you. Please wear it with pride – “Well done that man”

Sincere regards,

William (Bill) Roberts OAM JP
National President



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Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs



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Will DVA's plan to harmonise the three compensation schemes actually leave some veterans worse off?

There are three schemes under which veterans may claim compensation for illness, injury and death.

These schemes were established at different times for different purposes.

Veterans are mostly eligible to claim under one of these schemes though many are eligible to submit claims to more than one.

Determining under which scheme or schemes a veteran should claim takes time; an unnecessary delay the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide identifies as possibly contributing to suicide.

The VVFA has, for years, been calling for the three schemes to be combined into one. The Productivity Commission made a similar recommendation over three years ago. But there was no substantial response from DVA until the recent Royal Commission intervention.

This is DVA's and the government's chance to produce a equitable and fair scheme with

simpler access and improved benefits.

In the last edition we expressed a fear that we would not see the details of the proposed new scheme before final government approval.

Happily, the Minister is releasing an 'exposure draft' for comment before he presents it to Cabinet.

The exposure draft is published on the DVA website and we are all invited to send in our comments.

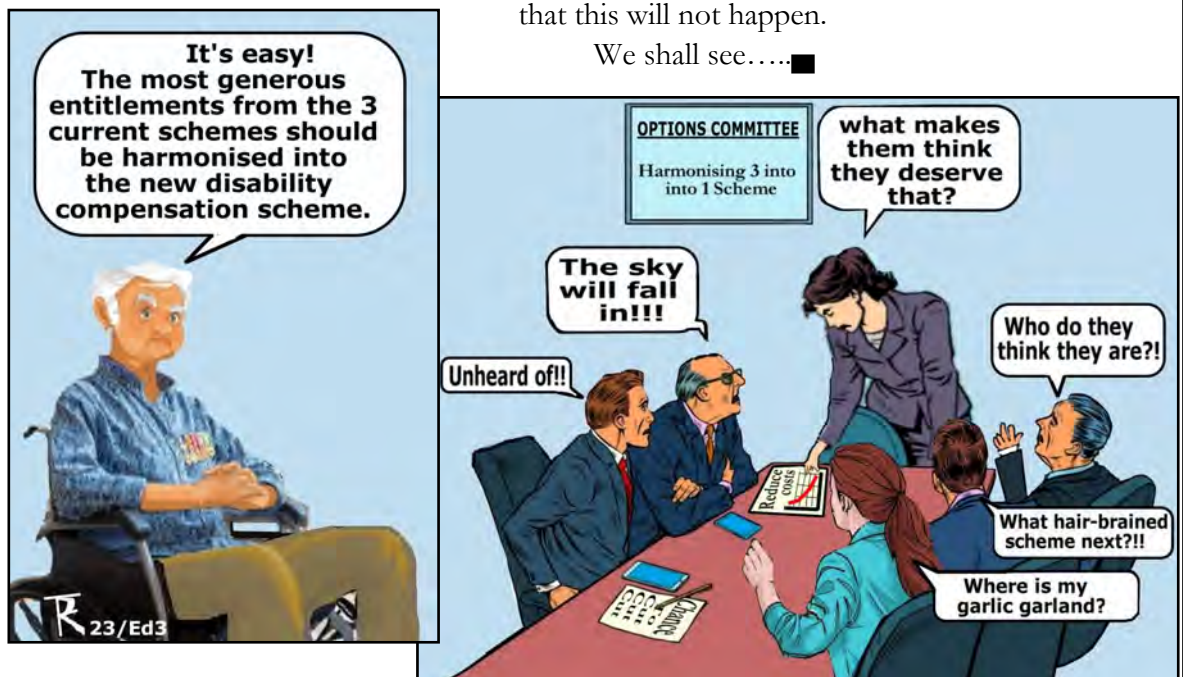
The VVFA will be making a submission after studying the complex legislation.

The Minister has given an assurance that those of us being compensated under current schemes will continue without change.

But Vietnam veterans may become sicker and apply for an upgrade to their pension under the new scheme. Some may apply for the equivalent of an EDA. The question is, will those new applicants be worse off than they would have been under the old schemes.

Sadly, DVA would not give an assurance that this will not happen.

We shall see.....■



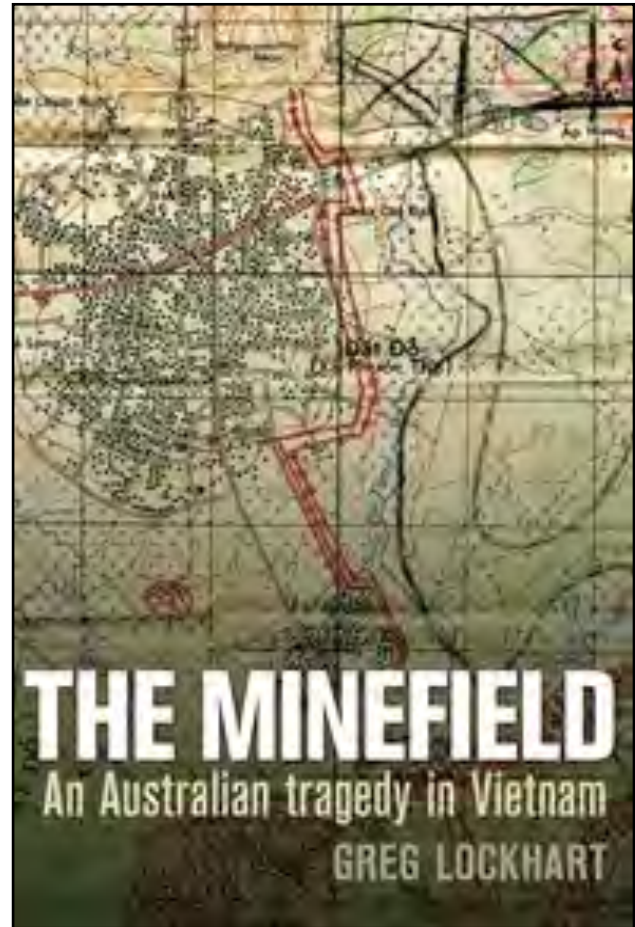
How could this disaster have happened?

Extract

Captain Paul Jones served in the Artillery Tactical Headquarters at Nui Dat in 1967:

‘By August-September 1967 there was a general concern around the HQ that mines were being lifted from the minefield. My understanding also was that Brigadier Graham shared the concern that mines were being lifted. I recall being asked to include likely approaches to the minefield in the Regiment’s H&I program.’

A week or so before Graham relinquished command of 19 October, he told a journalist: ‘Charlie may take some time to admit it, but he is virtually finished in Phuoc Tuy Province. He has lost the people and resources, and without these he cannot live.’ The 1ATF H&I program powerful verification that these were anxiety driven last words. Despite the confident tone of his remarks, he knew what was happening in the minefield.’



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





NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Hearing Aid Controversy

(and age *is* wearying us)

DVA provides hearing aids to eligible veterans.

It provides the same basic hearing aid that is free for eligible Centrelink civilians.

Many veterans over the years have found these hearing aids inadequate.

There have been many complaints, from the hearing aid's appearance to general inadequacy. But by far the most persistent complaint is their inability to handle background noise.

This complaint stems from the basic hearing aid's inability to fade out background conversations and music at restaurants, committee meetings, weddings and other gatherings.

Audiologists point out that there are higher level hearing aids that better handle background noise. These higher level hearing aids can have a better appearance (often smaller and less obvious) as well as, in some cases, having additional features such as better handling windy conditions.

Veterans, especially ESO officials who attend committee and other official events, have requested higher level hearing aids but have been refused. It seems only those with serious ear disease or injury are eligible.

What is most galling is that even a recommendation from a highly qualified ear-nose-and-throat specialist is not enough to sway DVA.

Of course we realise that hearing aids, especially the higher level variety, cost a lot. But that cost fades into insignificance compared to the cost to the health of so many veterans' including hearing difficulties, in fighting Australia's wars.

As part of compensation for hearing trauma caused in fighting Australia's wars, veterans, at least those with operational service, should be automatically eligible for hearing aids one level up from the basic (often larger and uglier) pensioner model and eligible for still higher levels on the recommendation of an appropriate medical specialist.

And on a sadder note.

Time marches on and our National Office group of loyal volunteer helpers are now between about 77 and 85. years old.

Death and illness are thinning our ranks and whilst we are still a vibrant organisation assisting with a couple of thousand veterans disability claims a year (sometimes with the help of paid staff), we shall have to make some changes to our magazine.

But we shall still be publishing our beloved Veterans Stories so keep sending them in. ■

Central Coast Vietnam Veterans say Farewell to NAMBUS

Eric Daniel – Hon. Secretary

The full story of it's last journey with many names and pictures is on the VVFA web-site
vvfa.org.au



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Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

HMAS SYDNEY: the bloody "American War" 1966-67



Here we have Part 8 of the story of HMAS Sydney told by one of the crew, John Ingram

(Part 8 tells of the blowing up of a Vietnamese fishing boat, the strange but true financial dealings of the 'Vung Tau Ferry', the arrival of a 'War Hero', politics, the fight for recognition and that secret operation.)

In war awful things happen; one incident in particular I witnessed was especially violent. SYDNEY was moored off Vung Tau on a typically hot, steamy day. I was on the flight deck taking in a few gulps of fresh air when a vintage USN "Fram 2" destroyer steamed by on picket duties. Her turrets were rotating as she closed in on a fishing boat maybe 15 metres in length. I could see small children playing midships on the nondescript vessel as it motored along seemingly innocently going about its business. When around a mile distant, the destroyer pulled away from the track of the fishing boat and at some 200 metres fired a shell into the wooden boat blowing it to smithereens. It seemed a senseless act of destruction. I've no idea whether the occupants were removed from their floating home beforehand. It was definitely not the way to win the hearts and minds of people. Violence begets violence and so the cycle continues. I often recall that cruel incident. An orange and black fireball, then flotsam on the murky waters.

Now for matters of a lighter nature involving money. Very significant amounts of Australian and select foreign currencies were

carried to pay sailors and soldiers their salaries and allowances and reimburse for expenses incurred. Cash was also required to pay traders while a huge, arcane "chequebook" measuring some 600mm by 300mm was carried to pay the really big bills overseas. This heavily scrolled "Bills of Exchange" written in a flowery language were a leftover from the Victorian era and designed to impress the unfortunate and confused recipient *"the Bearer, on behalf of Her Britannic Majesty and the Government of Australia, promises to pay"*

I tried to use one once to pay a trader for fresh provisions delivered ship-side. The Trader took one look at this monstrous cheque, had absolutely no idea what to do with it, then suggested he reduce the debt to a level within my authority to pay. This saving involved thousands of dollars at what was roughly a 50% discount. We all dined well on fresh tropical fruits and vegetables for the next 21 days! However, revenge for him was sweet in that his produce hadn't been treated for cockroach infestation. Upon the ship's return to Sydney, we had to have the entire ship fumigated to kill the pests.

Following an armed robbery involving a cash delivery to warships at Cockatoo Island, we in the SYDNEY were directed to ensure our money safes were securely mounted. We had two, one being of bank vault size and possibly weighing two tonnes abutting the Captain's Day cabin. It contained bulk bank notes and was only accessed weekly whereas the "ready use" safe was opened many times daily and commonly contained up to \$250,000. It was located in the Accounts Office. I arranged for a Shipwright to check the installation and within a matter of minutes he, with a single spanner, had removed the entire safe from the steel bulkhead. This safe had been positioned there 20 years previous with the nuts to the four bolts protruding into an insecure space. The safe, along with its significant monetary contents, could've been removed from the ship by two men with evil intent. It was an amazing design oversight.

On one return passage from South Vietnam to Sydney, I had in my official possession used Australian bank notes and coins worth in excess of one million pounds. This very significant sum was being repatriated from Singapore and Malaysia where it had accumulated in branches of the Commonwealth Bank. For security reasons only three persons on board knew of this repatriation of currency concurrent with the changeover to decimal currency in February 1966. At the time that was a lot of dosh and I was relieved to hand over to Bank officials on arrival in Sydney.

Also embarked was 5 RAR plus all of their equipment after completing a one-year tour of duty. These 600 men had to be paid their accrued pay in cash before arrival in Sydney. This required \$1,000,000 to be embarked via a clandestine operation. When the SYDNEY was off Moreton Bay a Wessex "chopper" was despatched pre-dawn to Eagle Farm Airport in Brisbane. Not even the three-man crew knew the nature of the operation such was the secrecy involved. In a

James Bond-like adventure the aircrew were told they'd be met by a civilian with his personal trunk and to return to the SYDNEY pronto. I greeted the Treasury official on the windy flight deck and the Wessex was "struck down" below by lift into "C" hangar.

In the meantime, I'd taken the somewhat over-awed Treasury civilian to the wardroom for breakfast. On completion he enquired where was his trunk? In the early morning excitement, we'd forgotten about his "personal trunk". No, it was not in the chopper, nor could we find it in the packed hangar spaces. Nor could we make an announcement over the ship's broadcast. Imagine his relief when we sited the trunk abandoned on

the flight deck aft with its contents safely intact! It was then placed under armed guard in the Accounts Office until distributed by Army personnel to their grateful recipients the following day.

Earlier I made mention of the Cargo Plan. No SYDNEY officers had experience with the preparation of such a plan. The RAN had access to a number of qualified merchant marine officers and these proved

invaluable. The ones we had in my time 1965-67 were members of the Reserve Executive branch, held Bridge Watchkeeping Certificates and therefore qualified to exercise command both in harbour and at sea.

One such officer, British born, was the "Cargo Officer" and proved to be an interesting character. A raconteur and "actor" he could tell tales rivalling those of Lawrence of Arabia. On our second deployment he managed to fly by QANTAS to Saigon joining the ship off Vung Tau. Officers were mustered in the Wardroom Mess to be briefed by him on the dis-embarkation plan for which he was responsible. In swaggered our Cargo Officer dressed in US combat fatigues with a revolver and ammunition belt slung around his middling girth. Not a straight face as we viewed this comical "Walter Mitty-like" war hero.

The strange arrival of a 'War Hero' acting as our new Cargo Officer



Craning & barging operation were performed day & night in all weather & tidal conditions in the fast-flowing waters despite threats of land-based mortar & swimmer/saboteur attacks by VC & NVA forces operating nearby.

To add insult to injury his plan didn't go well as the US military and their civil contractors were late in arrival with their "choppers", lighters and barges. One massive contract lighter was eventually positioned alongside by two tugs complete with a large front-end loader at one corner. Before it could be secured in the middle of the platform the lighter tipped causing the loader to settle on the very muddy harbour bed (from which it was eventually recovered).

Never camera shy and keen to publicise "his" war, our intrepid Cargo Officer sought aviation wrecks on the basis such items would prove valuable training aids at the Naval Air Station, HMAS ALBATROSS. The US Military had no shortage of wrecks and were willing to oblige. We embarked the bullet riddled carcass of a Huey-1B, which eventually found its way to the AWM in Canberra. But only after our "war hero" was photographed by the national media sitting at the shattered controls after our return to Sydney.



Operational Logistics Vung Tau. A barge alongside the SYDNEY. VERNON STURDEE and escort "lying" off.



Unloading by helo & LSTs VERNON STURDEE & HARRY CHAUVAL Light observation helo at Station 1 while troops on forard lift await collection by CH-47 Chinook for flight to Nui Dat

Politics' effects the crew and the fight for recognition

Many ships in the RAN in the 1960s had RN (Royal Navy) officers in their complements either on loan or exchange. We wore identical uniforms, served the same monarch and followed the same rules, disciplines and customs. In the SYDNEY we had RN personnel including our Gunnery Officer and the Captain's Secretary. But then the legal fraternity in Canberra started asking questions, induced by the fact Britain was a signatory to the five-nation council established by the UN to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the Vietnam War. Clearly it was not a "good look" having Britons engaged in hostilities in Vietnam. That meant RN officers were no longer posted to RAN ships deployed to Vietnam.

It was also deemed necessary to change the RAN ensign. In October 1967 the British White Ensign, so proudly flown by RAN ships since 1911, was replaced by the Australian White Ensign which incorporates the Southern Cross. A minor but visually significant matter.

Much has been said since the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War in relation to 'public perception' and how veterans were treated upon our return home. There's no simple, "one size fits all" answer of course. As a nation we were "war weary" and tired of the



British naval officers of the 1960s

media coverage of the incessant battles, casualties and destruction. The fact we'd been on the losing side meant politicians were only too eager to wash their hands of the whole, sad saga. National Service was "on the nose" and quickly abandoned so the Army could return to an "all-volunteer" service.

One of the few organisations which

actually formally acknowledged our involvement in Vietnam was the **City of Sydney** which arranged for a march by returning Defence Force personnel through city streets, including the salute to dignitaries assembled on the steps of the Town Hall. I had the privilege of leading the SYDNEY contingent: a distinct honour.

Within the ADF senior management structure there was conflict and inconsistency. I cite some examples of mal-administration which caused all kinds of issues.

In the case of “honours and awards” naval personnel who’d served in the SYDNEY and her escorts were denied the **Active Service Medal (Vietnam clasp)**, as well as any medal/s specifically related to service ashore in Vietnam or in designated waters (known commonly as the “Gun Line”). Even the **City of Sydney** acknowledged this gross anomaly and had minted a ribbon and medal which, of course, was not officially sanctioned by the Defence Department. Years later and after much public agitation the ADF, DVA and the government agreed to the award of the **Vietnam Logistic Support Medal** which was little more than a compromise, a grudging public recognition of our service. Decades later and after further political arm-bending, we were awarded the **Active Service Medal (Vietnam clasp)** to complement the Vietnam Logistics and Support Medal. By then so many rightful recipients were either dead or so angry at the Government and ADF they refused to wear them.

Another anomaly which applied right up until the First Iraq war, I believe, involved “pay and conditions of service”. In both the Malaysian Confrontation and Vietnam War RAN personnel weren’t eligible for any tax relief for prolonged periods overseas on “operational” service, when deployed to the Strategic Reserve or ANZUK forces for peace-keeping duties. In fact, when in harbour such as Hong Kong, Penang or Subic Bay during operational, official or recreational visits sailors were paid 50 cents per day allowance extra as “In Port Allowance”. This meant sailors were



Vietnam Logistic Support Medal

paid marginally more to be in a safe harbour than in a combat zone! Try explaining that logic to entitled sailors, yet that was an example of the remuneration nonsense that applied at the time. 55 years after the formation of the RAN in 1911 the Navy was still operating under a “pay bible” titled “**Interim**” Pay Instructions or IPIs for short.

What lay behind this Government inaction and delay was the potential cost to the “public purse”. By denying naval personnel their rightful

recognition would preclude medical coverage for illnesses attributed to or aggravated by “operational” or “warlike” service. The big unknown was the future impact of serious and/or potential terminal illnesses caused by “Agent Orange” and asbestos, the dreaded mesothelioma. Hence DVA fought for decades, not **for** the naval veteran, but to **deny** or **delay** treatment and

disability support, whenever and wherever possible.

In my case as a serving officer, I held a mistaken belief DVA was there to support the veteran with any health issues **service caused or aggravated**. I was soon to learn, along with all other entitled veterans, we had two opponents, one in Vietnam and the other, DVA..

A secret operation

Following SYDNEY’s mooring off Vung Tau on Captain Synnot’s first deployment he was briefed by the OIC of a small US Marine Corps Armed Junk squadron of locally requisitioned fishing boats tasked to provide harbour protection. I was called to the Bridge and out of earshot of other personnel introduced by the Captain to the Marine lieutenant. Captain Synnot advised I’d be the “liaison” officer to work with this USMC unit to enhance the safety of SYDNEY and escorts whenever in harbour. I had no idea what this role entailed or when my already extensive departmental and watchkeeping duties would permit. I could sense with so much happening elsewhere in and around the ship the captain just wanted me to show initiative and not delay him any longer. His concluding words were that discretion and secrecy were expected and this “conversation” had not occurred. In other words, I was on my own. Just get on with it!

That “initiative” required developing a working “relationship” with this unit, their then primitive riverine patrol craft and personnel. Whenever an opportunity arose, I’d take ashore with me fresh loaves of bread and bread rolls stuffed into a carry-all bag along with 6-12 bottles of VB beer (at my expense I hasten to add). These items were universally popular with both the USMC officers who commanded these small craft and their North Vietnamese crew members. Each time in harbour I’d re-acquaint with these personnel and do at least one day or night patrol (4-6 hours) in the open bay and into streams and rivulets. My RAN tropical uniforms of white shorts and shirt were totally inappropriate, so I’d need to change into US combat fatigues with black beret. Had I been captured explaining this clobber may well have been difficult but for me white uniform was a target all too tempting for sniper fire.



Fellow USMC & SVN officers following a night patrol



North Viet sailor removing Foster’s bottle cap with teeth

Each vessel was of timber and the engine a Chrysler diesel fitted midships around which was a deck-house in which the crew would sleep and eat. They wore the traditional “black pyjamas”. To demonstrate loyalty to the South regime each had tattooed over their hearts “Hate Communists”. This meant if caught by either the NVA or VC their heart would be gauged out while alive. These men, six to each boat, would man the 50-mm single canon in the bows and the 20 mm in the stern. There was no shielding or protection, just the wooden hull. Later in the war, purpose-built patrol craft were supplied but not in my time. Each vessel was skippered by a junior USMC officer and communication was maintained by a basic portable radio, rarely used as communications were known to be intercepted by the enemy. In the photo below a sailor is seen removing one of these portable radios lest it be stolen from the boat and used by the VC/NVA.

At night, irrespective of whether in harbour or on patrol, “off duty” Viet sailors would sleep in a lump in the deckhouse, lying across one another. This alarmed me initially as it appeared to my Western mind to have sexual connotations. Then it dawned, it was simply their way of keeping warm. Well, partly true: the real reason I soon learned was if one was disturbed for some reason, all immediately attended to their duties.

Beer was the international currency: Vietnamese love their beer. But one had to exercise caution and impose a limit of one 375ml bottle to two men on completion of a patrol. Warm beer, tired bodies and the need to maintain

alertness were not compatible. I retain visions of these young men removing the metal cap with their teeth. The warm beer would have them chattering and laughing and releasing pent-up tensions.

One dawn we investigated a water front village near Vung Tau following reports of gunfire and explosions overnight. We cautiously approached in the still air and eerie silence; wisps of smoke filtering through the vegetation. No dogs barking, no roosters crowing or kids playing at the water’s edge. The crew, with both cannons manned, were visibly agitated, sensing an ambush. As we neared the shoreline the ash of several burnt-out dwellings came into view; a dead animal in the muddy embankment: no sign whatsoever of any inhabitants. Had they fled, what had transpired? Should we go ashore and investigate?

Curiosity needs to be measured. The sailors were keen to assist these village people; fellow Catholics who’d fled the Communist North. I felt a great deal of relief when the skipper decided it was too dangerous to land: wire booby traps would’ve been laid he surmised and, in any case, there was no sign of human life. Later we learned not a single villager or animal had survived the brutal attack, attributed to local VC supporters. All had been shot or hacked to death and efforts made to incinerate evidence.

It appeared to me to be a localised dispute that had got out of hand as neighbouring villagers resented the resettlement of Catholic northerners on their traditional land. Nevertheless, it was a chilling reminder Australia had also invaded their country as part of the Allied Anti-Communist cause. ■



USMC armed “fishing” boat returning from night patrol With SVN Navy & USMC officers enjoying a well-earned liquid break-fast after a shower and changing into fresh clean day wear. Conditions onboard were very basic in 1966-67.



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Dear Editor,

Can any of you gentlemen tell me the whereabouts of Robert John GRIMSHAW who served with 8RAR as a private in Vietnam from 17 Nov 1969 to 13 Aug 1970.

He was a Victorian National Serviceman number 379253.

I am also a Victorian National Serviceman who served in Vung Tau with 2AOD in 1967-68.

I don't know Robert but a friend of mine I worked with in the ANZ Bank was a good mate of him many years ago & would like to catch up with him. His name is Bill Swan and his number is 0401 034 153. His email is williamswan46@southernphone.com.au Bill lives at Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.

I usually locate Veterans from my unit (I run the database) by going to the Electoral Office where you can access names & addresses state by state Australia wide. However I was shocked to learn today you cannot do this anymore. Each electoral office only allows you to access names from the local electorates. This will cause me major problems in the future as our Vets often move & forget to inform me.

Regards,

Stan Middleton OAM
67 Moore Mews
Pakenham Vic 3810

stanmid@bigpond.net.au
0424 326 399

9th January 2024

Dear Editor,

Re: letter by Ross Wood ex 5 RAR, Issue: December 2023

Ross mentions that he is the cousin of Pat Kennedy of Big Pretzel fame.

Well, Pat was a childhood friend of mine in Rose Bay in the 1950s. We lived around the corner from her family's house. On a visit to SA and later at a concert at the AWM we managed to catch up through the good agency of Jill Donaldson (married name) and also a former entertainer in Vietnam, in the US camps, I believe. Since then we have lost touch.

My Vietnam experiences were in safety and comfort onboard the aircraft carrier *Melbourne*.

My request to Ross is that he pass on our love and best wishes to Pat when next in contact.

Many thanks,

Chris and Eleanor Oyston

Editor's Note: The letter was passed on to Ross.

Dear Editor,

As usual, your December (2023) issue was up to your famous standards, and I read it from cover to cover.

What has caught my thoughts over recent issues are the articles covering the attempts by DVA to ignore the average Joe Veteran when it comes to divulging critical components of harmonising the ACTs governing those who serve and have served this country.

DVA was supposedly set up to assist veterans gain acceptance for service related injury, disease and death and to compensate them or their families. Assist being the operative word, not hinder us at every opportunity.

D M - Melbourne.

When is a backlog not a backlog?

On 19 December 2023 :DVA Secretary Alison Frame said: ' In September 2022 there was a peak of more than 45,000 claims in the backlog, I am pleased to say **as at November 2023, it's fallen to 12,554**'

The Minister for Veterans Affairs made as similar statement.

BUT WAS THIS STATEMENT CORRECT?

Just what is the 'backlog of claims', and how is it counted

The 'backlog of claims' is important. It influences how long veterans' disability claims take to process and finalise.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide identifies the long delays in processing veterans' disability claims as contributing to the risk of veteran suicide.

But just what defines the backlog.

Common sense would suggest that the backlog is the number of veterans' disability claims submitted to DVA that have not yet been finalised.

On November 30 2023 this number was 72,429.

That number was made up of 62, 875 claims allocated to determining officers for consideration and 12,554 not yet allocated.

DVA contends the backlog is just those 12,554 claims that have not yet been allocated to a determining office for processing.

But claims have either been finalised or they have not. It is irrelevant whether or not they are waiting for action in determining officers' in-trays.

The time to process claims as at 30 November 2023 was, depending on the type of claim, a-bit-either-side of a year; a dangerously long time.

Let's have plain speaking rather than bureaucratic manipulation of the meaning of words. The backlog at 30 November 2023 was 72,429 not 12, 554 and the time of processing claims is still dangerously long.

And the deceit goes on.



The DVA made the same tricky calculation for 31 December 2023. It states the backlog was reduced to 9,822 when the real figure was 75, 822 (worse than the previous month!).

And again, on 12 February 2024, DVA made the following claim:

‘Work continues to progress on the implementation of the Royal Commission’s Interim Report recommendations. This includes eliminating the claims backlog by 31 March 2024, which is currently close to being cleared.’

But claims submitted but not yet finalised on 31 January showed just how false this claim is.

There were 72,27 claims allocated to determining officers but not yet finalised and 3,697 claims not yet allocated to officers.

DVA is claiming that the backlog is only the 3,697 not yet allocated to determining officers.

But the real, honestly calculated backlog is the total of these, 75,973. It is actually worse than last month.

And, of course, the real test of the system is how long it takes from a claim being received by DVA till -it is finalised. That time still persists at the dangerous level of a-bit-either-side of a year. ■

FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Age has wearied us....**Age and sickness means a pause, then a refreshing and renewing of our magazine.**

The Vietnam Veterans Newsletter, proud descendant of its predecessor, Debrief, was borne from the birth of the Vietnam Veterans Federation in 1995. Since that time it has exposed government actions which would endanger the repatriation benefits of Australian veterans as well as campaigning for needed improvements.

What began, in earlier times, as an A5 broadsheet, evolved round 1998 into the current A4 format that you see today. Covers began to evolve too, to give a more vivid introduction to the magazines' contents. But the main thrust of our magazine, the promotion of better treatment of veterans, has never faltered in more than 25 years.

More recently we introduced stories from veterans, providing a valuable insight into veterans' lives during their Vietnam and other service. These stories have proved popular.

I am privileged to have been the editor and cartoonist since the September 2011 issue (with a short stint previous to that) carrying on the fine work of my predecessors Ken Tanswell, and Ian Morrison.

Over that entire period, much of the input, especially editorial, has come from the National Research Officer, Graham Walker AM. Another more recent contributor has been the VVFA's honorary historian Dr Greg Lockhart. Others who have contributed over the years include Phil Thompson OAM, Ray Fulton, Terry Loftus and Tim McCombe OAM, all ex-

servicemen and visionaries who fought the good fight on behalf of all veterans but sadly died much too early. Making a fine contribution too have been President's Reports often clarifying vital issues. Most recently we have been proud to publish episodes from award winning author Kel Robinson, who is researching the early history of the Vietnam veteran movement.

Over the decades we have reported on our organisation's campaigns for fair treatment on issues such as Agent Orange (now a list of cancers are accepted as linked to exposure), establishment of Counselling Centres (now Open Arms), fair indexation of the TPI and other veterans disability pensions (TPI pensioners are now better off by more than a tax and means-test-free \$6,000). And of course that's picking just a few of the scores of important even critical issue we have championed with our reporting.

In short, we have reported on governments and DVA's short comings without fear and without favouring any side of politics.

In recent issues we have focused on veteran suicide and DVA's delayed and lax response to it. In doing so we have pointed to our extensive reporting of government studies, especially the mortality study of 2006, showing shockingly elevated suicide rates amongst Vietnam veterans. It's all there in black and white. It was clearly the inevitable result of fighting a war. We knew it would likely happen again: why didn't DVA?



Whilst the VVFA continues full bore helping veterans with their compensation claims (partly by complementing our veteran volunteers with younger paid staff), some change in our magazine, is necessary.

So we will pause then refresh and renew.

The Editor
Bob Freshfield OAM
bobf@v vfagraville.org

More on that backlog

Here's how it works.

Your veterans disability pension claim goes to DVA. After a time it is allocated to what is called a Claims Support Officer. That officer's job is to collect all the required documents together then pass them on to a Determining Officer for judgement.

When the Claims Support Officer receives your claim he you and/or your Pension Officer and gives you 28 days to submit what documents you and your advocate are responsible for. These are often medical reports.

But it is not unusual for medical specialists, especially psychiatrists, to have a full book for several months.

Explaining this to the Claims Support Officer will get a reprieve for a while. But the officer will, after a period, make a second request. After a while, he may make a third request, regardless of the unavoidable waiting period for the medical appointment. A request for a further postponement may or may not get a favourable hearing.

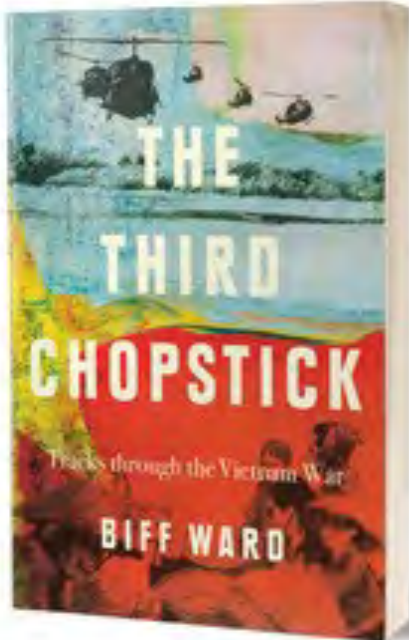
If sympathy has evaporated, the Claims Support Officer may pass on the incomplete file to a Determining Officer for a decision.

It seems that the political pressure to get claims finalised and thus reduce the backlog may, in some cases, eclipse the best deal for the veteran.

And there is another issue.

These demands should not be sent to an often sick and anxious claiming veteran. They should go only to his advocate. ■

Do you remember Ray Fulton?



Do you remember Ray Fulton?

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

This book, amongst other things, is about him.

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

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

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

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

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

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www.vvfagranville.org



Congratulations to all our winners NSW 2024 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS BY

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Mr Brian Hoare

31st January 2024. \$100 Bunnings Gift Vouchers

Kerry Waters OAM

Colin See

John Cicolini

Special thanks to all our members who have renewed, for your ongoing support of the Association in its work to assist our serving and ex service personnel and their families in need.

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

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

\$2,500 Anonymous

\$1,000 Amelia Jenkins, Garry Morton,
Brian Hunter, Kevin Faust,
Anonymous (2), Warren Axford,

\$540 Eric Tickner

\$500 Garry Smyth, Peter Unwin,
Stephen Bunter, John Mogan,
Anonymous, John MCNeil,
Wayne Adler

\$400 Bryan McVinish, , Henry Walker,
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\$310 John O'Shaughnessy

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Geoffrey Peattie, David Gibbs,
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\$270 Bruce Cullen

\$250 Ian Robinson, Richard Croall

\$210 Brian Wood, Terrance O'Donohue

\$200 Kevin Stewart, David Gilmer,
Robert Giveen, John Evans,
Brian Carney, Stephen Crotty,
Kevin Stewart, John Stoker,
Denis Nolan, Philip Lupton,
David Ashley, Sam Panarello,
Rowan Gillard, Colin Kelson,
Neville Lemon, Michael Butler,
Tony Shepherd.

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.

City of Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch

Ron O'Connor JP
Secretary
VVFA
VVPAA NSW.

Campaign to award *Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal* to Nashos who didn't, for one reason or another, complete 181 days in country

Dear Secretary,

Since 1996 I have been lobbying successive governments to fully recognise a cohort of men who were called up and lawfully completed their service in South Vietnam and through no fault of their own were sent home, with less than 181 days in country, for civilian reinstatement under the National Service Act (1964 as amended). They were under no obligation to extend their service.

The National President Mr William 'Bill' Roberts OAM, on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Federation, has been an ongoing supporter for many years and at my request has sent brilliant letters to the responsible Minister.

May I respectfully ask, if space permits, that the following be included in the next Newsletter please?

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Kind regards

Richard Barry OAM

6RAR SVN 1969.



“The Minister for Defence Personnel has declined to make a decision for some 2,500 National Servicemen from across the nation, who served less than 181 days in South Vietnam to be awarded the *Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal* (RVCM).

In recent months Defence Honours & Awards has revealed an amended interpretation regarding the eligibility criteria for the RVCM.

If you have been refused the RVCM (Or not yet applied), and have been officially diagnosed with war-caused PTSD, it might be worthwhile if you submit an application attaching any previous documentation including all medical reports. Without guarantee, cases will be considered individually on their merits.”

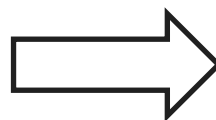


From the dusty archives

The story of the early days of the Vietnam veteran movement:

Who was involved and what happened

Next page



VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS

Article 11

The Early Vietnam Veterans Action Association

Context Is Everything – Part B

This article is the second instalment in a multi-part series looking at reasons why active supporters of the Association committed to the new organisation in very late 1979 and early 1980 i.e., in the Association's establishment period. More particularly, it completes a review of contemporary pointers to the harmful consequences of war-time chemical exposure.

“One of the most important aspects of the study of history is to understand the context in which a given set of events occurred. “– Jeffrey Grey, in Zombie Myths of Australian Military History

Media reports in late 1979/early 1980 on debate within local government bodies about the continuing use of 245-T (and on decisions to ban or suspend the chemical's use) would also have made veterans' chemical concerns seem more credible, just as similar debate had done during the Yarram and related controversies. [It's worth noting that the ongoing public campaign by Vietnam veterans to understand the consequences of chemical exposure served to further raise community consciousness of chemical dangers in the decades to come. It also focussed the thinking of councils and forestry bodies on the health consequences of pesticide use. Even in the establishment period a newspaper held Vietnam chemical exposure up as a cautionary tale and as something to be guarded against in the years ahead.]

Vietnam veterans who worked with defoliants after the war, would have noted the warnings displayed on these products and may have wondered, after local chemical controversies,

about the appropriate wartime use of these substances. Admittedly, this was a more likely occurrence after the media identified the chemicals used in Vietnam as ones including 2,4-D and, especially, 2,4,5-T. (Whenever the author is asked why it took so long after the war for veterans to air chemical concerns, he observes that veterans weren't routinely told what chemicals had been used in Vietnam, even when they were directly sprayed; the US General Accounting Office conceded in mid-December 1979 that Australian troops were even less likely to be informed of spraying than their poorly informed US counterparts. Domestic defoliant stories were thus unlikely to have rung alarm bells about wartime chemical exposure until both the symptoms of exposure and the common agents were identified.)

Disturbing US defoliant science not specifically related to Vietnam combatants' exposure had been reported on during the war and, though little-covered in the Australian media,

(Continued on page 29)

was occasionally referred to in the Association's establishment period.

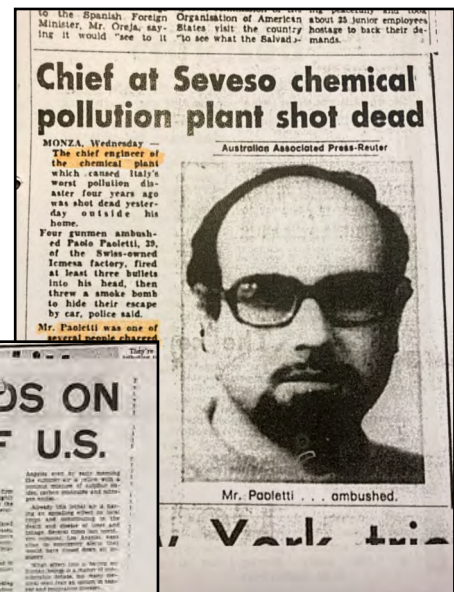
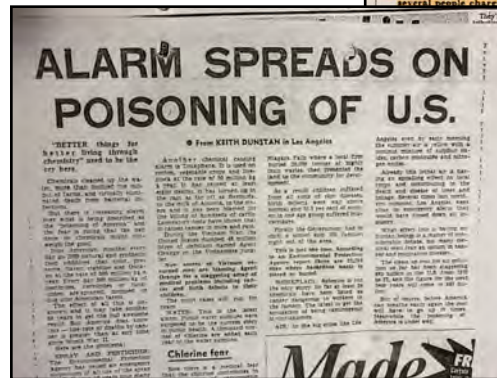
Newspaper reports of harms resulting from overseas (Western) domestic exposure to the Vietnam chemicals, and in particular to 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, were also a pointer to the dangers of the chemicals' use in Vietnam. As early as 1972, "The Sydney Morning Herald" reported on the deaths (mostly from cancer) of 5 Swedish workers using defoliants. Of particular note, though, were three later overseas events which would have been readily recalled in the establishment period. The first was a chemical factory explosion in July 1976 in Seveso, Italy, which saw the community exposed to large quantities of dioxin, with calamitous outcomes predicted.

The second was the closing down of the unfortunately named Love Canal suburb of Niagara in the United States (built on a chemical dump which was alleged in the late 1970s to have caused wide ranging illnesses, miscarriages and deformities). The third was a cluster of miscarriages in Oregon in the United States, referred to in the previous article in this series, said to be the result of forestry spraying of 2,4,5-T and prompting a ban on the use of the herbicide by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The original Seveso news stories rarely reminded readers that potential connections between the leaked substances and those used in Vietnam. The previously referred to "Four Corners" segment on Love Canal in April 1979 also made no mention of Vietnam connections. However, newspaper stories in March 1979 about the Oregon events did state that the same chemicals had been used in the Vietnam War.

Recollections in early 1980 of the Seveso incident would have been prompted by reports on the assassination of the chief engineer of the relevant factory. The Love Canal disaster could have been recalled when it was mentioned, as it was, in articles about chemical misuse in the US.

The Oregon miscarriage cluster was also recalled in these January 1980 articles



on US environmental poisoning.

Recalled reports on bans and restrictions on the use of 2,4,5-T and other pesticides in the US and other countries would also have been in some measure persuasive, especially when also reminding readers that herbicides had been used in Vietnam.

Perhaps the most influential pointer in the establishment period to likely war-time chemical harms was commentary on the likelihood of such harms by the principal scientific adviser to the Association, John Evans. Evans explained the complex science in simple terms, was generous with his time and expertise, and appeared to have little to gain – other than an enhanced profile – by assisting the Action Association. That he seemed to be appropriately qualified/knowledgeable was clear not only from his statements to the media and his previous employment as a CSIRO scientist, but from (mistaken) references to him as 'Dr Evans'. He'd enjoyed a high profile in media coverage of the Yarram saga and its aftermath and had shown at that time that he was not in the least afraid to contest the views of other experts, bureaucrats and politicians.

Evans accompanied McMinn on his interstate visits in the establishment period and sometimes attracted as much media attention as

the Association president did, as a result of his comments on the amounts and effects of chemicals used in Vietnam. His input gave real force to the Association's claims about likely chemical harms, especially when scientists in the establishment period rarely stepped up to dispute his views. Indeed, various scientific and medical experts agreed in the establishment period with his assessment of dioxin dangers, confirmed that veterans' harm claims warranted investigation or concluded that 2,4,5-T was likely to cause illnesses/deformities.

Ironically, the mid-1979 mockery of Australians worried about chemicals by the Federal Government's senior pesticides officer, Jack Snelson, may have encouraged some veterans' defoliant suspicions at the year's end; at a chemical industry seminar in May 1979 Snelson had described the opposition to chemicals (and 2,4,5-T in particular) as "powerful, vicious and well-organised" and made up of "a mixture of activists, axe-grinders, do-gooders, cranks, guilt complexes (sic), profiteers and vested interests". While such inflammatory language might have been expected of a politician, it was surprising, indeed, from a senior public servant and could well have been counter-productive. This is so, despite the emphasising of Snelson's technical expertise and apparent world standing in newspaper reports of the period.

The fact that scientific and medical experts in addition to John Evans were reported to be advising the Association in the establishment period also seemed to lend authority to veteran's chemical suspicions. In Victoria these experts included a visiting American biochemist and a local occupational health specialist. Such people, the thinking went, would not spend time assisting the organisation for free if its claims were fanciful.

Adding to impetus for misgivings about exposure were allegations publicised in the media that the Australian military had exposed previous cohorts of Australian servicemen to harmful substances. Vietnam veterans in early 1980 may have recalled the mid-1970s revelation that more

than



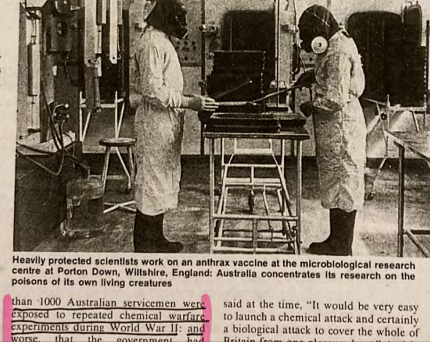
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Heavily protected scientists work on an anthrax vaccine at the microbiological research centre at Porton Down, Wiltshire, England: Australia concentrates its research on the poisons of its own living creatures

than 1000 Australian servicemen were exposed to repeated chemical warfare experiments during World War II and worse than the government had

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volunteers had been subjected to chemical warfare experiments in Townsville in WWII, with further experiments following in Innisfail, Proserpine and Grafton. (They may have noted, too, that compensation for injuries incurred in these experiments was reportedly denied to injured servicemen for three decades.)

They may also have recalled the chemical warfare waged by a small number of troops against locusts in western NSW in October 1973, by a much larger number of servicemen in Queensland in May 1974 and by an unknown number in South Australia in late 1979. More particularly, in the establishment period, Vietnam veterans were reminded that their predecessors and colleagues who'd served in Korea may also have been exposed to Agent Orange.

Newspaper readers in the establishment

(Continued on page 31)

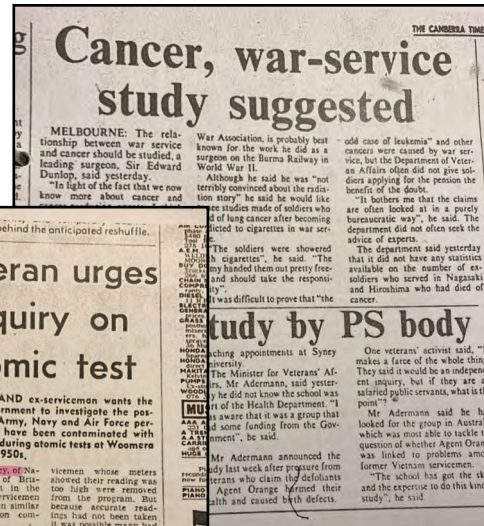
period were further reminded of the nuclear exposure of WW11 servicemen in Japan. The Korea South East Asia Forces Association had earlier expressed concerns about high rates of cancer-related deaths and illnesses amongst members who'd served in Japan but, when these concerns resurfaced in January 1980, they received more attention. This was because Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop called for a study of cancer and war service. Dunlop, though, expressed more interest in the incidence of lung cancer deaths than in radiation cancers. This was, he said, because the Army "showered" soldiers with cigarettes. He thereby identified yet another harm to which servicemen were exposed:

one highlighted also by stories on the marathon attempts of the widow of a WWII veteran – a

serviceman who'd died from lung cancer – to obtain a war widow's pension.

But veterans in early 1980 were even more likely to recall stories about servicemen's exposure to radiation during British nuclear tests at Maralinga in South Australia. This was principally because of previous reports on the experiences of Rick Johnstone, a witness to four Maralinga explosions, whose compensation difficulties seemed to serve as a warning to servicemen harmed in 'unconventional' ways. Stories about Johnstone had appeared with frequency in preceding years. That he needed to take legal action against the Commonwealth in order to be compensated for the harms he believed himself to have incurred was made clear in news reports. Peripheral stories about Maralinga – about the disputed history/legacy of the tests, inadequate security at the test sites and the return of plutonium and other waste to Britain – cemented Maralinga in the popular consciousness. Stories about the US Government's search for observers of its own nuclear tests and about related leukemia cases reminded Vietnam veterans that the US, too,

had a pre-



than 1000 Australian servicemen were exposed to repeated chemical warfare experiments during World War II; and worse, that the government had said at the time, "It would be very easy to launch a chemical attack and certainly a biological attack to cover the whole of Britain from one place."



Vietnam history of careless treatment of servicemen. Most particularly, though, Australian Vietnam veterans were reminded in the establishment period of Maralinga radiation concerns by a publicised call for an investigation into Australian servicemen's exposure.

The unfolding of these controversies involving the exposure of Australian servicemen to hidden dangers (which were only reluctantly and belatedly acknowledged) couldn't have made Vietnam veterans optimistic about their own circumstances. The incidents countered the view that the Australian Government and Army were

too competent and too careful to expose Vietnam diggers to avoidable harm.

Indeed, newspaper articles appearing in May 1978 on mistakes made in the prosecution of the war in Vietnam roundly discredited the view that the Army command was incapable of fatal blunders during the conflict. These articles were triggered by the release of a book by Major-General Alan Stretton titled “Soldier in a Storm”. Historically informed Vietnam veterans would place the egregious mistakes referred to by Stretton in a tradition going all the way back to the Dardanelles.

MP John Kerin’s 1978/9 questions in the Federal Parliament on Naval personnel’s exposure to asbestos, known to at least veterans within his electorate, would further have reminded Vietnam veterans that the exposure of military personnel to dangerous substances was not merely the stuff of distant history.

Some Vietnam veterans in early 1980 may have been aware, too, of RSL members’ earlier expressions of concern at formal League gatherings about Vietnam exposure to chemicals. This concern, whether articulated by pre-Vietnam diggers mindful of the failure to properly compensate gassed WWI veterans or voiced by Vietnam men who were troubled by chemical exposure, would have contributed to the view that there was something in chemical harm claims.

Later evidence of the exposure of pre-Vietnam servicemen to chemicals was to be more substantial but there was, by the late 1970s, sufficient material about Australian military carelessness with nasty substances to prompt a conclusion by Vietnam veterans that the military, having ‘poisoned’ soldiers before Vietnam, was perfectly capable of doing it again in Indochina.

Reports in the establishment period on the contemporaneous use of chemical warfare agents in Afghanistan and other places, reminded veterans that chemical warfare was not just an issue from the distant past. Slightly earlier reports of the military use of chemical weapons in Laos would also have reminded Vietnam veterans of

the widespread use of such agents.

Also adding to early 1980 misgivings about the effects of war-time chemical exposure would have been a realisation that Australian Governments, like those in other Western nations, had failed to exercise control over substances and devices dangerous to the civilian population. Like governments elsewhere, Australian Governments in effect forced the public to assume the risks associated with the use of dangerous substances and devices, instead of investigating the safety of these things, and then regulating access/use as appropriate.

Most pertinent to the Vietnam veterans’ story were the widely publicised historical concerns about the safety of agricultural chemicals. Concerns in relation to 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D have already been explored in this series of articles; the most notable other concerns had been about the pesticide DDT. The DDT story is too long and complex to be covered here but misgivings about the use of the chemical were aired in the Federal Parliament in the early 1950s and reemerged in the mid-1960s, increasing with fears about US bans on ‘tainted’ Australian beef and dairy exports. These commercially driven fears, eventually fuelled by the US’s rejection of shipments of Australian beef, finally resulted in significant restrictions by State Governments on the use of DDT in the mid to late 1980s. The important point to be noted here is that by the beginning of the Association’s establishment period the DDT controversy had raged for years (with a highpoint in 1972) and had added to community apprehensions about the use of agricultural chemicals. Veterans in early 1980 could not help being sceptical about claims that the Vietnam chemicals were harmless when a long history of Australian concern about the use of DDT had not (yet) resulted in restricted access.

Concerns had also been expressed in public about other agriculture products. Detection of the wheat fungicide hexachlorobenzene (HCB), reported in the media as responsible for deaths and illness overseas, was the subject of news

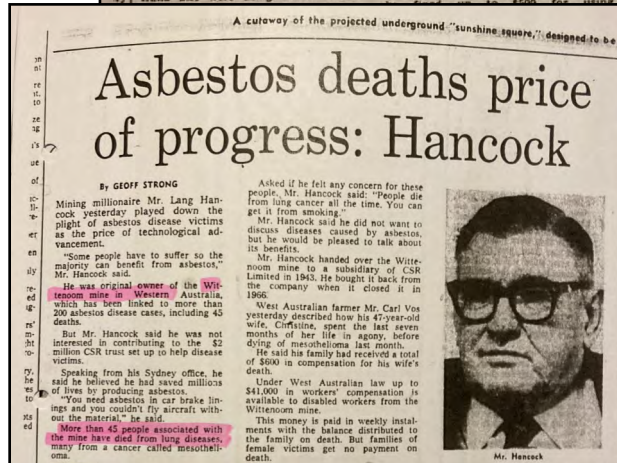
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stories in 1972. The nasty effects on animals and humans of the insecticides dichlorvos and maldison, used to combat weevils in wheat, were the subject of Sydney reports in late 1976. Chlordane and heptachlor (use temporarily suspended in the US) were the subject of a NSW inquiry at the end of 1977. By mid-1978 concern was expressed about the continued use in Australia of a range of agricultural chemicals which, like 2,4,5-T had been banned elsewhere or were under review overseas. In early 1979 the spraying of aboriginal cotton workers with insecticide at Narrabri was well publicised and would have contributed to a view that agricultural employers were quite capable of exposing workers (and, by implication, soldiers) to potentially harmful chemicals.

Shortly before the establishment period, the herbicide Nitrofen was withdrawn from sale. In the establishment period, itself, the media publicised a Riverina herbicide scare and then a pesticide threat to drinking supplies from Albury to Adelaide. These would have brought to mind previous incidents involving the careless handling of agricultural chemicals and could have fuelled veterans' fears.

In the establishment period in NSW there was a more pointed reminder about the dangers of chemical use: the release of a Government warning about the need for proper handling of pesticides; one newspaper report on the warning stated that "More than 15 people were admitted to NSW hospitals with pesticide poisoning during the spray season last year."

There was a flood of news stories in the 1970s about the harmful nature of a wide range of other chemicals, ranging from lead and cadmium



to mercury. Some of these stories were about the intentional dumping or releasing of these substances. Concerns about air and other pollution, and, in particular, about the poisoning

of Cockburn Sound in WA, combined a number of chemical concerns, but there was widespread publicity, too, about the detection of single toxic chemicals (including dioxin) in other places, and about related harms.

Cadmium was in the news in the establishment period owing to its discovery in the coating of children's toys. Lead poisoning was in the headlines in the same period after a Federal Government report predicted a 30% increase in lead levels in the human body by the end of the century (unless steps were taken to reduce such levels in vehicle fuel). The medical problems caused by air pollution were also in the news.

Warranting special mention is the significant publicity given in the 1970s to the dangers of occupational and domestic exposure to asbestos – dangers which included asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma: all incurable and known about for decades. Stories were published about the incidence (and likely incidence) of cancers among workers and their families at Wittenoom's (abandoned) blue asbestos mine. There were stories, too, about fears for miners and residents at a white asbestos mine in Barraba NSW and about

asbestos-linked cancers among past users of certain superseded welding products. A sequence of reports appeared in early 1978 about the dangers faced by VicRail staff removing blue asbestos from Melbourne trams. Further articles appeared about belated financial assistance to Wittenoom victims, other workplace (including office) asbestos concerns/illnesses, and Lang Hancock's uncaring view of asbestos deaths (along with reports on related matters). Slightly before the establishment period there were articles on litigation by mesothelioma and asbestosis victims, asbestos dumping at tips in Victoria and NSW, differing views on the future of the Barraba mine, and increases in NSW asbestos-related lung cancer and mesothelioma cases. It's worth noting that misgivings about the safety of fibreglass, the material which was to largely replace asbestos as building insulation, were reported in the media at least as early as March 1979, not long after at least one story about the unexpected prevalence in the US of cancer-causing PCBs (polychlorinated biphenals).

All of the above chemical and mineral stories fed community concerns about the use of and effects of chemicals – concerns from which Vietnam veterans and their families could hardly be immune.

Community apprehensions associated with pharmaceutical and related products from the late 1960s onwards ranged from those with the contraceptive pill (centring on birth defects and cancers), with tranquillisers and sleeping pills (various effects, including cancer), with anabolic steroids (various effects, again, including cancer), with hormone pregnancy tests (birth defects), with the blood thinner, warfarin (more birth defects) and the blood pressure medication, reserpine (thought to cause cancer). Also problematic were common pain medications (thought to cause cancer and kidney disease), certain chemotherapy drugs (thought to cause birth defects), tampons (causal of toxic shock syndrome) and various products containing hexachlorophene (allegedly causing brain lesions). Significant media attention



was also drawn at the end of the decade to the morning sickness drugs Debendox/Bendectin (alleged to cause birth defects; US litigation reported in the establishment period) and diethylstilbestrol or D.E.S. (causal of delayed genital cancers in the children of women prescribed the drug, and the subject of a warning article in the establishment period). This publicity followed stories early in the decade about thalidomide (mostly about the delayed compensation of the 30 Australian victims, but also about the achievements of one victim in the establishment period). While there were, in the 1970s, frequent articles about pharmacy-related dangers (mostly identified overseas and appearing not to unduly trouble local drug bureaucrats) there were also, as indicated above, reports on drug bans and withdrawals, including one withdrawal in the establishment period to remind of pharmaceutical risks. In November 1979, just before the establishment period there were reports on the banning of two brands of contraceptive pills, while in September there were

(Continued on page 35)

reports on a federal Government ban on a wide range of cold treatments and sedatives containing methapyrilene (thought to cause cancer); this ban was to be the prelude to tighter access to certain pain medications – compound analgesics, including Bex, Vincents, Aspro and Disprin – thought to cause kidney disease. Less frequently, there were reports in the 1970s on deaths – usually overseas – from prescribed drugs. Occasionally there were even stories about drug companies providing ‘unreliable’ test data in order to have their products approved. Veterans in December 1979/early 1980 recalling these different pharmacy-related reports could hardly be blamed for scepticism about official statements to the effect that they had little to fear from chemicals used in Vietnam.

There were numerous news stories about dangerous devices in the 1970s. In the establishment period they ranged from ones to do with the IUD (a type of contraceptive thought to cause cancer) and air conditioning (causing the recently identified Legionnaires Disease) to ones about VDTs (computer screens thought to emit unhealthy levels of radiation).

The many stories referred to above about things thought or proven to be harmful prompted perceptions of governments as uncaring or, at best, as incompetent. These stories fed into the early 1980s Vietnam chemical exposure narrative. To the extent that the reports involved businesses in the development and sale of harmful products, or in the (at best) careless disposal of harmful substances, they prompted perceptions of business as grasping, immoral or uncaring ... views which once again fed into the Vietnam chemical exposure narrative.

But even more significantly, the many stories about harmful substances and devices encouraged a view of science, at a time before the precautionary principle, as having proceeded too quickly or as being out control. This was so notwithstanding useful advances in medicine and related fields. These perceptions were encouraged in the establishment period by reports of work in

the controversial areas of genetics and human reproduction. The notion of science as more a cause of harm than wonderment yet again fed into the Vietnam narrative. (This ‘bad science’ thinking will be familiar to readers as a component of the recent anti-vax response to covid vaccination programs.)

It might seem that some of the stories referred to above as contributing to a suspicion of governments, business and science had little to do with the specific interest of active early VVAA members in the harmful effects of chemicals used in Vietnam. It may also be argued that the author has ‘cherry picked’ newspaper reports to create a view of chemical perceptions in the late 1970s i.e., to substantiate a negative view that could just as readily be created from media reports in any time. **However, the author argues that the extraordinary volume of reports about harms – a result of there being little effective regulation of dangerous things in the 1970s – created a climate of chemical suspicion that would have disposed veterans to believing that chemicals were the cause of health problems and disabilities, even without most of the other pointers to the dangers of wartime chemical exposure.**

The suspicion of Governments, business and science was made worse by an extraordinary range and variety of media stories in the late 1970s on accidents with harmful substances, both at home and overseas. These included reports on a large number of nuclear accidents (which came as a particular surprise to the author, who recalled only the original Three Mile Island incident).

In the establishment period there were stories on the consequences of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident for nearby residents, the loss of radioactive phials at a Canberra garbage dump, historical radium releases in the NT’s Rum Jungle, nuclear fuel missing from a Tennessee nuclear plant and the likely consequences of shipping accidents when transporting spent nuclear fuel to Britain. Also reported was a US Government study predicting a worse nuclear



accident than the Three Mile Island one, unless “fundamental changes ... [were] made to the nuclear industry”. Further, in the establishment period an account of a junior US newspaper reporter’s too-easy access to the control room of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant was published. On 12 February 1980 another radioactive leak at Three Mile Island was reported, as were cooling system defects necessitating the closure of a British power station. An increased incidence of thyroid conditions in babies near Three Miles Island was thereafter reported, as were another French nuclear test in the Pacific and the US search for remote storage facilities for dangerous nuclear waste.

Stories predicting a nuclear doom and otherwise emphasising nuclear dangers also contributed to notions of ‘dangerous science’ and of science as having escaped government control. In the establishment period there were sobering reports – bearing in mind the number of nuclear accidents in preceding years – about keen competition between four Australian jurisdictions to host a nuclear enrichment plant.

Throughout the 1970s there had been

numerous reports on other overseas chemical spills, fires, leaks and dumping. Of particular relevance to Vietnam veterans was the previously mentioned accident at Seveso, in Italy, involving, as it did, the chemical impurity dioxin. (As previously mentioned, veterans were reminded of the Seveso incident in the establishment period by reports about the murder of the chemical plant manager.) Most Australians would have been unaware before the establishment period of even earlier accidents involving 2,4,5-T, including a 1949 explosion at a chemical plant in West Virginia and accidents in West Germany in 1953 and 1954. However, an article published in February 1980, and probably syndicated, provided that history. Veterans were reminded in the establishment period, too, of the Love Canal debacle, mentioned earlier, which encompassed health problems resembling the alleged Vietnam chemical ones.

In the period between the end of 1979 and the end of February 1980, reported Australian accidents included a hydrochloric acid leak in New England, a chlorine gas explosion in Sydney and an LPG gas leak in Queanbeyan. These reports were preceded by a story revealing experts’ fears that increased blood and pancreas cancer cases in the Blue Mountains of NSW were the result of leaking stores of a WWII chemical agent (phosgene gas) or 2,4,5-T exposure. In the 18 months before that, there had been stories about a chemical-driven evacuation in the Melbourne CBD, the loss of herbicide drums off the back of a truck in suburban Melbourne, fume discharges and 2,4-D/2,4,5-T leaks on separate occasions from a chemical plant in Melbourne; and the near contamination of Sydney’s water supply by 20 tonnes of herbicide following a bridge collapse outside the city. Also in this period were reports on the leaking of a dangerous gas from a factory in Sydney, the storage of leaking WWII depth charges in Melbourne, the hospitalisation of people after exposure to a fungicide dust being transported in Western Sydney, the loss of

(Continued on page 37)

Deadly chemical lost in suburbs

A truck driver lost 17 drums of dangerous herbicide in Melbourne yesterday — and people from three cars were seen picking up the load.

Police warned that the drums should be handled only with protective clothing.

The herbicide, powdered Lorsean 50, can be absorbed through the skin and into the bloodstream. It also gives off toxic fumes and will cause eye irritation.

The driver was making a delivery to Dow Chemical (Australia) Ltd. in Kororoit Creek Road, Altona, yesterday afternoon when he noticed the drums were missing.

He retraced his journey to the corner of Somerville Road and Hyde Street in Yarraville.

A service station attendant told the driver he saw people from three cars — a black Fairlane taxi, a yellow Torana and a brown Mazda — collect the four-kilogram drums.

Police said the drums were white with green and plastic linings. Lorsean 50 was printed on green plastic linings.

NEW BRISBANE GAS DANGER

BRISBANE. — Police sealed off a large section of the inner city yesterday after the threat of a gas explosion.

Several business premises in the area were evacuated.

Police erected barricades when leaking gas was traced through manhole openings.

Government and Gas Company officials traced the main concentration of gas to two areas.

Gas from a leaking eight-inch main entered the air conditioning plant of a Commonwealth Bank and could be smelt throughout the building.

The second leak was de-

scribed by a Gas Company official as a "100 per cent explosive reading."

Police used loud-hailers to direct people away from the area and also enforced a no-smoking ban.

The gas threat area yesterday was near where a chain of explosions fatally injured a girl and injured 39 other people last Friday.

Gas Company officials opened all manholes in the area to allow leaking gas to dissipate.

radioactive parcels from a truck in Sydney, the escape of chemical fumes in a factory fire in Sydney, a gas explosion in the Sydney CBD, leaking hydrogen cylinders on a Sydney highway, and an explosion in a petrol refinery in Geelong. (These reports, chanced upon by the author, are probably a small subset of the number that would be identified by a systematic search, but would again have countered the idea that Governments protected citizens from harmful substances.)

As a significant proportion of the exposure incidents referred to in preceding pages of this article were employment-related, it was inevitable that there should be occasional stories before the

establishment period on the dangers posed by chemicals, generally, to workers (rather than on particular incidents). An article in August 1979 on President Carter's response to the incidence of chemical harms in American workplaces — he established a toxic substances strategy committee — reported officials' call for more regulation of chemicals and a statement that cancer causing agents in the workplace were responsible for between 20% and 38% of cancer deaths.

Media reports of the sorts mentioned above countered the idea that Governments routinely protected citizens from harm; by implication, reports about chemical and other harms in the general community countered the view that war-time governments would only have employed chemicals in Vietnam if they'd been certain of their safety.

Conclusion About Pointers To Vietnam Chemical Harms

Any combination of the wide range of pointers mentioned above and in the previous article in this series would have contributed to suspicions about the dangers arising from Vietnam War chemical exposure. Collectively, they could not have been less than extraordinarily compelling. To suggest to the author, as a couple of veterans have done, that their colleagues' chemical concerns in the early 1980s were deluded imaginings or the result of unthinking adoption of a US cause (something discussed in the next instalment in this series) ignores the context described above: one in which it would be difficult not to entertain suspicions of Vietnam War chemicals.

While it is true that there was, in early 1980, no conclusive proof of a link between chemical exposure and the health or behavioural problems of troubled Vietnam veterans — and little publicly-known scientific support for the views of the few veterans who claimed with certainty that their wide-ranging health problems were caused by chemical exposure — there were, as indicated above, many pointers to possible or likely harm.

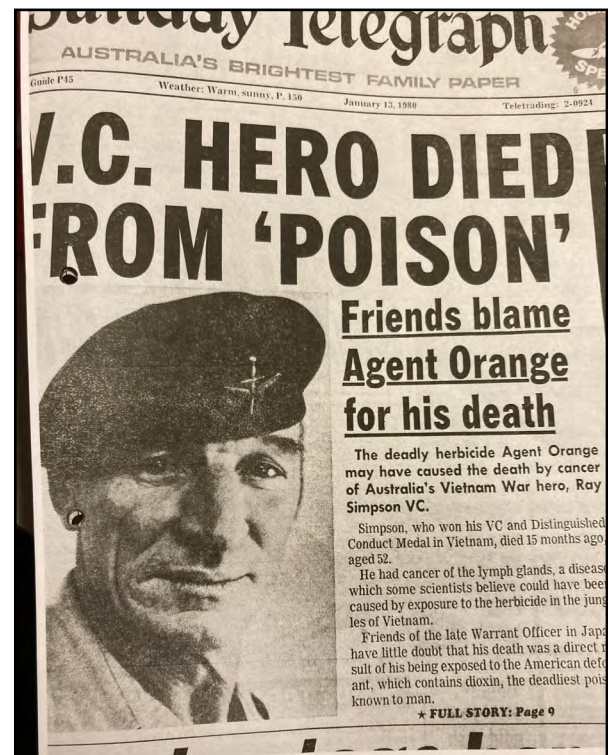
Clearly Attractive Aspects of the Chemical Explanation

It is appropriate to note here that some aspects of the chemical explanation for the health problems of veterans and their families made that explanation an attractive one. It can't be denied that there was something enticingly impersonal or external about the nature of the explanation ie that the cause of harms was neither the veterans' conduct nor, in the case of birth defects, a result of genetics or maternal misadventure. Who, when dealing with inexplicable illness, isn't relieved by the pinpointing of a cause?

The unknown extent of the effects of exposure, in concert with limited community discussion about the effects of war on earlier generations of veterans, meant that chemicals could be held to account, even in the establishment period, for a very broad range of unexplained symptoms. These symptoms comprised those of a behavioural and physiological nature and included most of the attributes of the time-honoured therapy for damaging war experiences i.e., the drowning of sorrows. By being remarkably symptom-inclusive, the chemical harm argument, regardless of any inherent merits, had the potential to divert attention from individual-specific causes of particular conditions. (It was to the Association's credit in the initial years of its operation that it did not lose sight of other underlying causes of veterans' difficulties and acted to deal with them e.g., by providing emergency assistance (including crisis intervention and legal/medical/welfare agency referrals) and in-house counselling services, by pushing for Commonwealth funded counselling, by urging more/improved DVA support for veterans and their families (including increased access to medical and hospital services.)

The media undoubtedly assisted.

Mention has already been made in this series of the almost sensational, harm affirming way in which the media described the Vietnam defoliants and, in particular, the 2,4,5-T contaminant, dioxin. The media, though, provided the most ambitious chemical harm claims with credibility just by running stories about them. Stories about birth



defects and child illnesses in veterans' families tapped into deep rooted contemporary concerns (either created by the media or reflected by them) about harms to the unborn and to infants. These reports, like the veteran cancer stories that soon followed, tapped, as previously stated, into community anxieties — once again, fuelled and/or reflected by the media — about unrestrained science, careless or duplicitous governments and unprincipled businesses.

The various veteran harm stories from the establishment period continued a history of articles which, by portraying Vietnam veterans as deserving of sympathy (for various reasons), made chemical poisoning seem like just another unsurprising misfortune to befall an ill-fated cohort.

Lazy or intentionally sensational headlines, especially ones transforming suspicions about chemical harm into firmly held beliefs, also played a subtly persuasive function. There were numerous stories in the establishment period, including one about the earlier death of Ray Simpson VC, with headlines that 'firmed up' mere doubts.

(Continued on page 39)

Whether journalists and editors ran ‘Agent Orange’ stories because they understood community guilt about the post-war indifference to Vietnam service or because the stories were easily sensationalised and tapped into pre-existent community anxieties, the coverage inevitably fuelled apprehensions.

Belief in the Likelihood of Chemical Harms Was Not Enough

But a belief that chemicals were responsible or probably responsible for the health and other problems of Vietnam veterans couldn’t, by itself, be an impetus to form an organisation. Indeed, there were other actions that individuals could and did take on reaching the conclusion that their health might have been harmed by wartime chemical exposure. These actions ranged from contacting the media (as Gary Adams and Bernie Szapiel had earlier done), calling for Government action (as Adams, John Harper, Szapiel and Jim Wares had done) and approaching the RSL (as Szapiel and McMinn had done), to lodging a compensation claim (as a handful of veterans had done before the establishment period). These actions could include asking an MP to make enquiries or highlight the issue, as at least one veteran — probably Norm Robertson — had asked John Kerin to do in 1978. Deciding to organise, though, was a response of a quite different order.

The next instalment in this series examines the motivation to organise and to set up a Vietnam veteran-specific entity. It looks at broader reasons why active members committed to the Action Association in early 1980 and examines some of the reasons advanced by academics for the establishment of the Association. ■

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

The aim of “VVAA History Drafts” is to inform readers about progress made with the



Association’s history and encourage people who have relevant extra information to contact the writer. Readers with additional information can contact Kel at vvhistory99@gmail.com. A copy of this article with sources cited is available from the author. Readers taking issue with the content of this article are encouraged to contact Kel.

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Editor’s note:

The publication of this magazine is being paused because of illness amongst our aging volunteers.

Kel Robinson’s ongoing series will be published on the VVFA web-site.

What's In your garage?



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

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

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

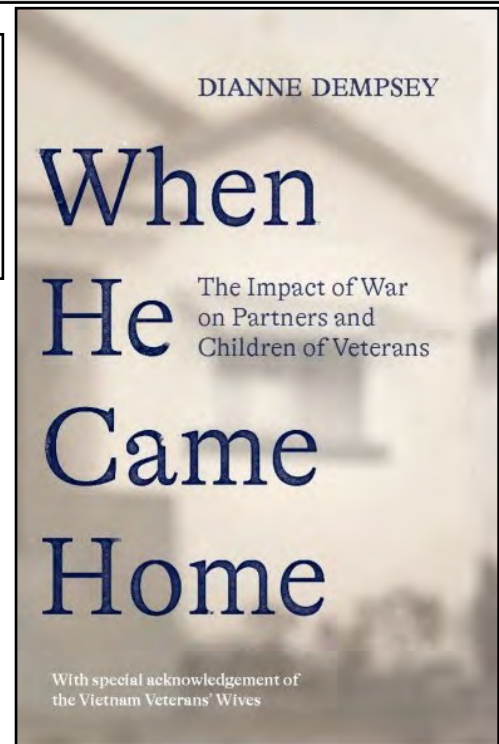
If you have these or any other documents from the Dec 79 to mid-1981 period, Kel is keen to hear from you. Please email him at vvhistory99@gmail.com

How did our families cope when we came home?

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

Extract

Despite the counselling service to of my children don't talk to each other. I find it very sad. One daughter has changed her name. I believe she wants to divorce herself form our family but emotionally she finds that difficult. Her reflection on her childhood is biased towards the problems of her upbringing. She explains to me that we were lacking in empathy towards her. She said to me once — when you weren't around Dad was very hard on me..■



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**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., will be held at the **Veterans Support Centre, 8 Mary Street Granville 10.30am, Wednesday, 15th May 2024.**

AGENDA

Opening of Meeting by the Chairman

Apologies

Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2023

Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2023

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Membership Report

Changes to Constitution

Appointment of Association Auditors

Appointment of Association Legal Representatives

Appointment of Insurer

Appointment of Life Members

Other Business by leave of the Chairman

Close of Meeting.

Any items for General Business **must** be in the hands of the Secretary by close of business on **Thursday, 18th April 2024.**

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2024.

Ron O'Connor

Hon. Secretary

NSW Branch



DRAFT PROPOSAL TO VARY THE NSW BRANCH CONSTITUTION

Delete Clause (4) in Paragraph 19 – Compilation and Membership of Committee

“Clause (4) states, the President shall not hold office in or be employed by any other veterans or ex-service organisations”

Reason for deletion

It is considered the clause is restrictive and unwarranted

TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE NSW BRANCH AGM 15 MAY 2024.

Blue Ryan once reminded us:

The sad truth is that we must not only campaign for badly needed entitlements but also fight to defend those we already have.



**NSW STATE BRANCH & BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB
ARE COMBINING ONCE AGAIN TO HOST THE 2024
SYDNEY VIETNAM VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATIVE
SERVICE AND CELEBRATION
TO BE HELD IN THE SPORTS CLUB GRAND BALLROOM
SUNDAY 18 AUGUST 2024**

The Event Organisers and Bankstown Sports Club administration wish to confirm that this event is subject to all NSW government COVID-19 related restrictions and regulations that are or may be in place at the time of the planned event.

It is hoped that this major event will take place as planned and that we may all come together once more to share our memories and rekindle old mateships. The usual itinerary of service will take place as in previous years and we remind intending parties of the following format:

0900hrs **Doors open. Meet & Greet at the Grand Ballroom entry hall.**

Bar opens 0900hrs to 1015hrs (at the discretion of management) and closed for the Commemorative Service.

1030hrs **Memorial Service with Guest Speaker**
(Service scheduled for approximately 40 to 45 minutes)

1150hrs **Entrance to Grand Ballroom & function proper**

1200hrs **Entertainment will be provided by special guest artist/s with music of our genre**

Admission: **\$50.00 each. You may wish to book a table of 8 persons.**

Accommodation at the Mercure Hotel, Bankstown, adjacent to the Sports Club is to be by private consultation, and the rates offered will be advised. Breakfast at your own volition. Make sure you mention this Function when making your booking. Contact the Mercure Bankstown booking on (02) 8111 7100, or book on-line and quote this event.

Any further enquiries, and to book your table/ticket can be made by contacting the Granville office.

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

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

PORKY'S PEOPLE

An Illustrated History of the Seventh Battalion

The Royal Australian Regiment

First Tour of Duty

South Vietnam 1967-68

ISBN: 978-098751113-3

Compiled, written, and typeset by Karl Metcalf



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

7RAR Association

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to order

email Athony Keech

porky_seven@bigpond.com

About Porky's People

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

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

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

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

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

John Paget
7RAR 20 Apr 1967-26 Apr 1968



An Australian sapper inspects a Viet Cong tunnel discovered during Operation Crimp, South Vietnam 1966

In early 1966 1RAR was involved in Operation Crimp (8-14 January). This was a search-and-destroy operation in the Hobo Woods, north of Saigon.

During Crimp, 1RAR uncovered the Cu Chi tunnel complex. A search of the tunnels resulted in the capture of thousands of documents, weapons and supplies. (courtesy AWM)

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

THE BIG "E" SAVES THE DAY

**The battle in the Hobo Woods
through the eyes and ears of Ray (Boris) O'Brien
(1 RAR AND 4 RAR Vietnam)**

B Company, (B Coy) 1RAR, early 60's. The Company has just received a new Company Second in Command (2IC) . His name is Captain John Essex-Clark. Previously he served 13 years with the Rhodesian SAS, fighting in Rhodesia and Belgian Congo, as well as in Malaya serving with the Gurkhas. A fully professional officer, he is very well liked by everyone in B Coy. He is also an excellent Rugby player. The Company gives him the nickname of 'The Big E'.

January 1966, the 'Big E' is now a Major and is the 1 RAR Operations Officer. We have been in Vietnam about 7 months and are preparing to go on another Operation (Op) with US 173rd Brigade tomorrow. It's a new year, 6 Platoon has received a new Platoon Commander and it's a new Op tomorrow 8 January 1966.

6 Platoon have had our ups and downs so far, with a few going home Wounded-in-Action (WIA), but cross fingers, no one has been Killed-in-Action (KIA). On 7th, a day before the Operation is to begin, Major Essex Clark goes to look at the planned Landing Zone (LZ) we are using tomorrow, something he does before every Operation. He takes a US Chopper and does a recce of the LZ called June.

Flying low and fast over the area some things he notices about the LZ are very dodgy; unattended fields of crops, no farmers, no rubber trees workers, trees surrounding the LZ with no leaves, piles of overturned soil that could be



L: Major Essex-Clark, R: Captain Bob Hill
commanding the APCs (later awarded an MC)

weapons pits, et cetera. This could mean the area has been taken over by a large force of Viet Cong (VC) occupying a defensive positions surrounding the intended LZ.

In this Operation, 1RAR is going to the Hobo Woods, 4km west of the Iron Triangle, which is a heavily defended VC area, and an area the South Vietnamese army (ARVN) troops have not been near for over 3 years. It is the Head Quarters (HQ) of the Viet Cong (VC) controlling all their military operations in Saigon and surrounding areas. Two US battalions, the 1st 503 and the 2nd 503, are heading to the north of the woods and a third



B52 strike on the Hobo Woods area

battalion, 1 RAR, will be in the south as a blocking force.

B Coy, 1 RAR (my Company) is going to be on the first 'Slick', (being a squad of about 10 choppers).

Meanwhile, Major Essex-Clark goes to the US Command HQ and raises his doubts about LZ June. He finds out that the US have not done a recce by air, they just picked the LZ by looking at a map. The arguments become more and more heated and it is only when the Brigade Commander joins in the argument that Essex-Clark's doubts win the day. The LZ is changed to another, with less trees, is more open, larger, and less



US choppers, ready to go

suspicious.

The ARVN HQ in Saigon is not to be told about the change to the (new) LZ because it is suspected that the HQ is riddled with VC spies. Indeed, we have heard of a couple of US battalions landing at an LZ, being welcomed by accurate, hostile fire, indicating the VC knew they were coming.

The next day 8 January, B Coy take off to commence Operation Crimp. Half-way to June the chopper pilot tells us the LZ has been changed. We are now going to LZ March, 3Km short of LZ June. B Coy is to secure the LZ then



1RAR arriving at LZ March

(Continued on page 49)

move to the east and spread out to make room for the rest of the battalion.

We land. After checking out the LZ then moving east into the rubber trees, two US Gunships, unaware of the LZ changes, come down and start to brass us up, thinking we were retreating VC. M60 rounds hitting all around not very happy Aussie soldiers. Fortunately, they must have been the worst shots in the US Army, as no one was hit, thank god (though some went very close).

I am onto our Company HQ by radio telling them about us getting shot at, as is the 5 Platoon signalman. Our Platoon Sergeant, Merv Kirby, throws two smoke grenades, and takes his orange marker panels out of his big pack and races down to the LZ, waving the panels at the gunships. Private Bob Cross, (Mister X), one of our platoon M60 gunners, comes running to our HQ area and says if those f*##ing gunships came back for a second go he would fire back with his M60.

That was an understandable reaction But all of us around Platoon HQ yell at 'Mister X' and told him no he won't because 'if you do they will call in more of their gunship mates and hit us with their bloody rockets'. The two gunships came back around again but veer off. Maybe radio, smoke grenades, or the marker panels save us from a second attack.

Mister X was the best M60 gunner I saw in my two tours. On an Op before Christmas he fired a short burst with his gun over 300 metres, and hit a retreating VC, excellent shooting.

Some of the Companies are sorting themselves out in the LZ when the third slick with the Battalion Head Quarters (BHQ) group are landing. With the HQ group is the Commanding Officer (CO) of 5 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) John Warr, who like the Big E, was a former member of B Coy 1 RAR. He was the Officer Commanding our company for a time before being promoted and posted out of the battalion. His nickname is 'Wingie'.

'Wingie' must think he is in Vietnam on

holidays. He is wearing his lightweight summer polyesters, peak cap, black walking shoes and carrying a brief-case.

Whilst this was happening, the US Artillery, who also were not told of the LZ change, decides to lob a few rounds onto our new LZ, walking them towards the Battalion HQ area. People watching all this said it was like a group of headless chooks running around in circles trying to find cover from the artillery rounds.

The Big E gets on the blower and gives a serve to the Artillery; the rounds stop. But, a few hours later, when BHQ is settling in, nine more rounds are fired, landing near their position. This time Major Essex-Clark pays the Artillery a visit. Gigantic backside kicking.

The Battalion has landed and we are all waiting for the two US battalions to start moving. We are given the order to move out with B Coy heading eastward, D Coy north (up the middle), and C Coy westward. A Coy is staying with BHQ in reserve.

We have been taking sniper fire since we arrived.

We are ordered to move out towards a village on the banks of the Saigon River and look out for a bunker between us and the village trenches. D Coy is moving forward towards the original LZ June. 4 Platoon, in front of our platoon, has a contact and, as the company moves forward, we come across an Aussie Medic giving aid to a wounded VC, shot by 4 Platoon. The VC is obviously in a bad way. 'Doc, he hasn't got long to live', we say.. He replies 'I know but it is my job, friend or foe, to try and save them'. The VC had taken two SLR rounds to his chest and he died a short time later.

We had not travelled far when one of our scouts calls out to 'run and take cover'. What's going on!. A big explosion occurs on our right flank. 'Is everyone OK? What was that' we ask. One of the section scouts tells us he saw a single large branch moving in a tree, an artillery shell wrapped in wire with a wire leading off to the side. Maybe the wire was jerked by a VC soldier to set it

off.

Now not only are we checking our arcs of fire, but also looking for lone shaking branches in the trees. We tell Company HQ (CHQ) about the booby-trap. Twenty metres more, another one, this time it's a cluster of grenades joined together by wire, and a wire leading off to the side. Another explosion, but still no one wounded. Ten metres on and our right section M60 opens up. One VC seen diving down behind a small size anthill, maybe into a weapons pit.

Our M60 gun fires again into the area, a grenade is thrown, explodes, two scouts go over to check the dead VC, but no dead VC, no blood trail, no weapons pit, just a tunnel entrance. Must have been the VC pulling the booby-trap wires then takes off down the tunnel. We throw another grenade down the tunnel to help him on his way and radio CHQ to tell them we have found a tunnel.

Another 20 metres further on we notice a large US main meal ration can sticking out of the ground a few inches. We check for booby-traps, because on an Operation last year we had dramas with booby-traps. One of our section commanders, Corporal Terry Loftus, and his Forward Scout, Ross Mangano were blown up by a M26 grenade trip wire. Ross lost a leg and Terry was wounded but returned to the platoon after treatment.

No booby-traps, so Sergeant Kirby drops a smoke grenade into the can, and it drops away out of sight. 10 minutes later purple smoke is seen coming up out of about 7 or 8 similar holes throughout our platoon area. They are air holes into a tunnel complex we are standing over. We tell CHQ.

Moving along a short time later we hear this gigantic explosion from our left rear. The OC (Officer Commanding) B Company 'Blackjack', was leading CHQ members passed a thick clump of bamboo when a mortar or artillery shell, hanging from a tree, was detonated, and all of the members of CHQ were blown off their feet, wounding the OC, a Corporal and a Private.

Worst of all, the Company's Artillery Forward Observer, took the main blast in his chest and was mortally wounded. Our Company 2nd in Command, Captain Peter Arnison goes to help but the Artillery captain passes away.

Later on that day, 4 Platoon are patrolling in the same area near the large clump of bamboo when a sniper shoots and killed one of our M60 gunners. The VC fires one round, kills our gunner, then goes down a hole and takes off. The rest of the day we move forward, being shot at by snipers and having contacts with small groups of VC, who are coming out of small holes and tunnel entrances, and getting away after firing quick, short, bursts of gunfire.

D Company arrived at the original destination, LZ June, and a platoon commander, noticing 1 RAR members over to his right and left of his position, assumes the area in front has been cleared. A fatal mistake. They cut across the clearing into the tree line to save time, where water had washed out a track like a creek bed and as the sections move into the open they are fired upon by automatic weapons from a hidden bunker.

When the contact ends there are two Aussies killed and six wounded. One of the wounded is the Platoon Commander another is Corporal Ron Smith both with bad wounds.

Major Mike Naughton, the Aussie Medical Officer at the Saigon Military Hospital had been operating for hours on a high number of wounded. While taking a break he hears a cursing Aussie voice down the hall. He sees Corporal Smith has shocking life threatening injuries. Major Naughton operates on Corporal Smith, then turns his mind to the queue of other urgent cases.

[In 1987, twenty-one years later, Corporal Ron Smith and his wife, while at a 1 RAR Reunion, introduced themselves to Mike Naughton.]

Night time, the CO 1 RAR, Colonel Preece, orders all the Companies to move closer together, with less gaps and no M60s were to fire unless being overrun. We were to throw grenades

(Continued on page 51)



One of the bunkers covering LZ June

McGregor had terrible news the previous day when notified of the Artillery officer's death by the booby-trap. They were in the same class at the Royal Military College, Duntroon for 4 years and he was Captain McGregor's best mate.

The first bunker area the Tunnel Rats investigate is the D Company one, covering the original LZ June.

After finally getting into the bunker, which is covered with spent shells from the day before, they find a

instead. Throughout that night digging sounds, women and kids crying and voices could be heard and there is movement from beneath the ground. There is tension among the diggers. VC popping up everywhere.

A C Company gunner was warned a patrol was about to come in through his gun position and to keep a watch out for them. There is a trench just outside of the gun pit.

There is movement in the zig-zag trench, but because of its depth, the gun group can only see the bobbing of bush hats in a row. A squad of VC turns the corner out of the trench. The gun fires, leading VC killed, others wounded, the remaining VC grab their wounded and bolt.

Someone says that 1 RAR was sitting on a human anthill.

Day 2. 3 Field Engineer Troop, led by Captain Alex McGregor, (later MC), became the first Tunnel Rats to go to work; four groups of six, one group per rifle company. Captain



View from a bunker overlooking LZ June

tunnel system which runs right around the landing zone to other bunkers overlooking it. It is obvious that if 1 RAR had landed at LZ June, we would have been in deep trouble, and scores of us (likely) killed in action. The bunkers have excellent, interlocking, fields of vision over the complete landing zone; no-where to hide if you were a digger getting off a chopper. Later, from VC captured documents, it was discovered that the VC HQ had 4 days warning that an Operation was on the way.

In any case, the VC knew the usual pattern

of a US attack.

First stage; B52 bomb strike, blow the crap out of everything. When the first bombs fall the VC go into the 4 and 5 level tunnels and wait out the large bombardment without injury. Second stage; Artillery bombardment. Same again, blow up everything. Third stage; Gunships with rockets, shoot anything



Weapons and ammo from the tunnels



Captured documents

that moves. Fourth stage; troops in choppers arrive.

As well as the four day warning of our Operation, the US Radio Detection Unit picked up a radio message from Saigon which said, 'The paratroopers and the Aussies have just taken off'. That would mean the VC leaving their tunnels on levels 4 and 5 and go into the bunkers, trenches, and sniper posts in the trees, and wait for 1 RAR to arrive. Thank god Major Essex-Clark won the arguments with the US brass, or we would have been made mince meat by those waiting in the bunkers and trenches and by the snipers.

The 'Big E' saved the day!

Over the next couple of days we do the same thing, patrolling, search and destroy, contacts, trying to stay awake at night. Sounds, movement, crying, digging, all stay the same. The Tunnel Rats are doing a magnificent job. Every one of these soldiers should receive bravery medals for the work they do. Down a dark tunnel with a torch, gas mask, bayonet and pistol, not knowing what was around the next corner, booby-trap, wild dog, VC, anything.

The Tunnel Rats are now finding lots of tunnels and heaps of equipment, weapons, ammo, and hundreds of documents. Photo albums containing photos of young girls, good looking, names and addresses, probably Bar Girls in Saigon or Cho Lon. One of our Company digs up two brand new typewriters still wrapped in clear plastic. Four Chicom 12.7mm Anti-Aircraft heavy machine guns, two with tripod and sights, are also dragged out of a tunnel.

Day 4. Our Platoon is going on another patrol and whilst moving out we notice, on our left, the Tunnel Rats and some members of our B Coy, all digging at a frantic rate. It looks like the ginger-beers have found another tunnel in our Company area. It wasn't until we returned from

(Continued on page 53)



Captured weapon from tunnel

patrol that we were told that one of the Tunnel Rats had a problem in a newly found tunnel, and they were trying to dig him out, but he had passed away. He was well liked by all, and a lead-by-example kind of soldier. One of our B Coy soldiers, Jim Daly, was Mentioned-in-Dispatches (MID) for his efforts in trying to save the engineer's life.

It's December 1965 and 1 RAR has lost 112 members for various reasons including KIA, WIA and sickness. These members are being replaced by members from other Infantry Battalions within Australia. For one whole tour of 13 months we only have all Regular soldiers. An Army decision?

Some of these soldiers, maybe, are not up to scratch for different reasons.

One night, on sentry duty, a corporal saw someone crawling near his area on hands and knees. Because everyone was on-edge, the corporal challenged the crawling person, but no answer came from requests to 'Halt, who goes there', so the Corporal shot and killed the crawling soldier, who was, in fact, the newest member of his section, with only two days on

Ops. Another reinforcement went outside of his platoon area without his weapon and was



Tunnel Rat with captured sniper rifle

killed by two VC.

A new soldier was going on Gun-picquet and when he got to the gun he told the off-going sentry that he stepped over a sleeping VC on the track from his hutchie to the gun position. The off-going sentry, thinking he was joining in a joke, asked the new re-enforcement (reo) why he hadn't shot the VC. The new gunner then picked up the gun, turned it around, facing toward the Company area and fired a sustained burst throughout the sleeping Company lines, including hitting the 'sleeping VC'.

The off-going sentry hit the new gunner in the head with his rifle to get him to stop firing. The 'sleeping VC' was a Private Eddie Pinoli of D Coy, who had rolled onto the track while asleep. Eddie had taken a few rounds into his body, and only for a switched on signaller (Sig), and a very

brave US Chopper pilot flying in the dark and taking Eddie to Saigon Hospital, he may have died.

[In 1968, two years later, I am a Corporal Instructor at 1RTB Kapooka, and Eddie was posted to the main Q Store, as a store man. I had known Eddie since Holsworthy days. We had a chat for a while, he was still not 100%, but nothing could change his lifelong jovial attitude to life, a top guy.]

Day 6. Up to 17kms of tunnels have been mapped out in the 1 RAR area. Sappers doing excellent jobs, tape measures and compass, one tunnel system has 5 levels, even a surgical hospital. When the supply of ammo and documents begins to slow, the US Brass want to leave. The CO 1 RAR wants to remain so that the Tunnel Rats can blow up more tunnels.

There are still snipers and contacts with squads of VC. A platoon hears a woman crying and investigates, and are fired on by several automatic weapons, wounding two Aussie soldiers.

The US brass win the argument and we are told to leave and fight another day. Snipers were still giving us crap. A D coy soldier was waiting for a chopper to go back to base, and a few shots rang out hitting the soldier in the temple, killing him.

January 14, 1 RAR is airlifted back to Bien Hoa. 1 RAR has eight KIA and 30 WIA. 1st and 2nd 503 Bn US lose 15 KIA and 72 WIA. The VC KIAs (counted) is 128, probable 190. 500 suspects are detained and one VC soldier surrenders.

All I can say is; 'The Big-E' saved the day.

In 1979 I was posted to University of NSW in Sydney, Training WO2. The CO was Colonel Sandy McGregor MC, the RSM was WO1 Ron Pincott (The Grey Ghost), who was CSM of D Coy at 'Crimp'. He led a D Coy Support Section



Tunnel Rats at work blowing up tunnels

assault on one of the LZ June bunkers. The Tunnel Rats would hold their Annual Reunion at the depot until Sandy moved on.

The same time I went as a Umpire for those end of year exercises in North Queensland. I had to go to the Land Warfare Centre for Umpire briefing, and while talking to two Officers outside a lecture room, I was poked in the back. When I turned around it was the bloody 'Big E'. Quick chat. He had to go and give the opening address.

The other Officers asked me who is that officer and I replied, 'Our Boss, Chief Umpire, Brigadier Essex-Clark, and he doesn't take any crap'. They asked where I knew him from, and I told them we played Rugby together, early 60s in 1 RAR. I could have said the Big E saved the day, but I left it for another time. ■

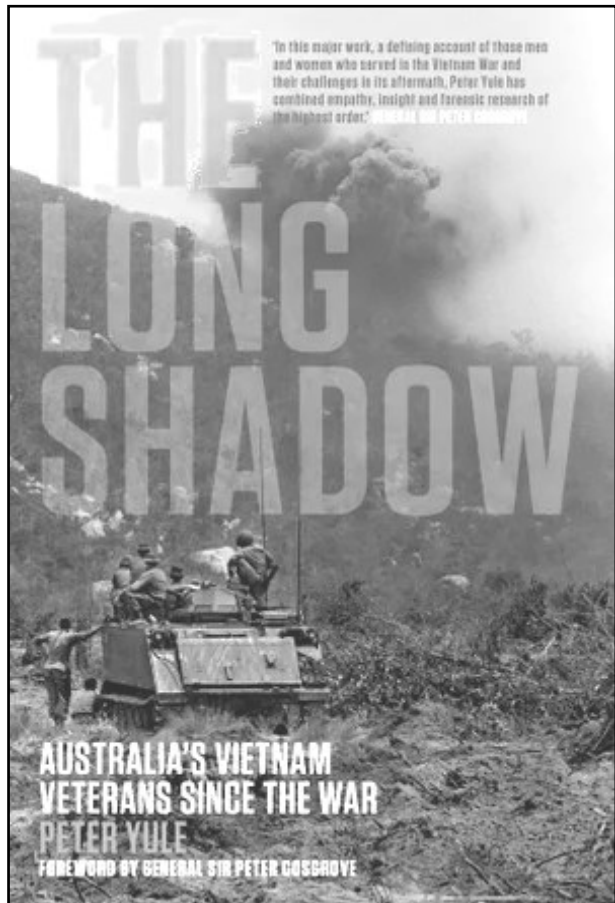


VC suspects

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

Extract

In Professor Smith's eyes the credibility of the *Evatt Report* was established by the glowing endorsement it received from Sir Richard Doll, regarded as the world's leading epidemiologist since his work in the 1950s linking smoking with lung cancer. Doll's praise for Evatt's work, however, was given in 1985, and took no account of the later studies that increased the level of uncertainty surrounding possible links between herbicides and cancer. Further, Smith either did not know, or chose not to state, that Doll was being paid a retainer by Monsanto at the time he endorsed the *Evatt Report*.



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

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Invitation to TPIs



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

Access to our well-being officer who can provide info on personal, financial and pension issues

Receive copies of our quarterly magazine, 'Salute' by post or email and an annual booklet on concessions available to TPIs and families.

Receive a regular electronic e-newsletter as well as other TPI news updates.

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

Be able to attend scheduled regional meetings and enjoy camaraderie with fellow TPIs afterwards.

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

Have your interests and welfare represented in Canberra.

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

.....

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

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

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REUNION: 21-25 November 2024

HEADQUARTERS 1st AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE AND D&E Platoon

Discovery Hahndorf Resort, Hahndorf, SA.

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war from 1965 – 1972 has had a lasting impact on all the servicemen and women who served. HQ1ATF and its sub-unit Defence and Employment (D&E) Platoon, the longest continually serving Infantry Platoon in South Vietnam, served from 1966 – 1972 and encountered much enemy action during those years.

Each two years HQ1ATF Association holds a reunion and 2024 will remember 53 years since we closed the gates of Nui Dat. This four day event is an important part of the Association's efforts in the healing process which is achieved through the continual networking of members and also importantly their partners and carers. With objectives to improve health and well-being and to reduce social isolation, the biennial reunion plays a significant role.

The Commemorative Lunch will be held on Saturday 23 November 2024 at the Training Depot, Torrens Parade Ground. **The lunch will be preceded by a Dedication Service at the Pathway of Honour, (Adelaide War Memorial) where our own Memorial will be unveiled. After the Commemorative lunch, our Commemorative service will be held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Torrens Parade Ground, Adelaide...**

Both the Dedication Service and the Commemorative service will be open to the public.

For details contact:

John Verhelst: 0437212121 or jeverhelst@gmail.com

www.hq1atf.org



PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

Aged Care – What you ought to know

Most people want to remain independent throughout retirement and to stay in control of where and how they live. But your ability to do so may depend on your health and physical well-being. As we age, some things become harder to do on our own.

If your ability to live independently starts to decline and you need help with daily living activities such as cooking, cleaning and personal care, you may need to move into residential care.

Tip: Residential aged care should not be confused with retirement villages which are independent living options and operate under very different fee structures

The costs for residential care are divided into three categories:



The daily care fees can be up to \$112,840 per year, but a large portion is paid by the government. The contribution you would pay is between \$19,239 and \$47,578 depending on your financial means (as assessed by the Department of Human Services - DHS).

For most people however, the biggest concern is how to pay the large amounts quoted for a room. These range from around \$100,000 to \$2 million but will commonly be between \$400,000 - \$600,000. These lump sum payments are called Refundable Accommodation Deposits – RADs.

Seeking financial advice on what options you have for payment and funding strategies may help to minimise your stress. Let's examine some of the facts around accommodation payments.

Fact 1 – this is not lost money

The first thing to know about RADs (paid since 1 July 2014) is that they are fully refundable when you leave care, unless you allow the service provider to deduct other fees to help with your cashflow.

Repayment is also guaranteed by the Federal Government if paid to an approved provider – an important thing to check when you are selecting a care provider.

Fact 2 – you don't have to pay the lump sum

Accommodation payments are quoted as a lump sum but are also converted to an equivalent Daily Accommodation Payment (DAP). The interest rate used for this conversion is currently 4.01% (for entry from 1 April 2021– 30 June 2021).

For example, a RAD of \$400,000 is converted to a DAP of \$43.95 per day.

If you accept a place in a residential service, you can choose whether to pay the full RAD, the full DAP or any combination of the two. You don't need to make this choice until 28 days after moving into care and the service is not able to pressure you to choose any particular option.

Fact 3 – even if you have less assets than the published RAD it may be affordable

If you don't have enough assets to pay the RAD the first step may be to see if you qualify for government concessions as a low-means resident – this would require your share of assessable assets to be less than \$173 075.20.

If you don't qualify you will need to find a way to fund the full accommodation payment requested by the service. If you don't have enough assets, paying a part RAD and part DAP may help, but only if you have surplus cashflow to pay the DAP.

One further strategy option is to pay as much of the RAD as you can afford and then instruct the service provider to take the DAP (on the unpaid amount) out of the RAD you have paid.

This option leaves your income to meet daily care fees and living expenses but reduces the RAD refunded when you leave. This can help you fund the accommodation payment to access the care you need.

Example

Bert is moving into residential care. He is a widower on the full age pension with a home worth \$420,000 and \$20,000 in the bank. The service he and his family have chosen is asking for a RAD of \$530,000 (or \$58.23 per day).

Bert is worried that he cannot afford a place in this service without asking his children for help. He sought advice on his options and decided to take the advice to:

Sell his home (with \$20,000 of sales costs)

Use the net sale proceeds to pay a \$400,000 RAD, leaving a DAP of \$14.28 per day on the remaining \$130,000

Instruct the service provider to deduct the DAP each month from his RAD

This leaves his \$24,770 age pension to cover his daily care fees of \$21,743 per year (this includes the basic daily fee and the means-tested care fee) plus some personal expenses. His DAP is deducted from his RAD leaving Bert financially self-sufficient and keeping a \$20,000 cash reserve to meet other expenses.

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

Paul Messerschmidt (Partner) MFinPlan

PSK Private Wealth

0414 811 777

(02) 8365 8333

paulm@psk.com.au

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Reunions

I attended the reunion of New Zealand V3 Company who served with 4RAR Here's how it went.

By Al Wood

V3 Marae – Napier. NZ (2023)

So glad my wife Barbara & I persevered in attending the recent Kiwi V3 Company catch-up in Napier, situated on the east coast of the north island of NZ. This seaside-town arose from the ashes & rubble left by the devastating earthquake of early 1931, to become what must surely be the most attractive little 'art-deco' town in NZ, if not the world. As we all grow older, & some members are 'falling-out', this particular reunion lasted just 3 days, & began at the end of October. This was the 2nd attempt at this gathering, (called *Marae* in Maori) after the original dates were set for last March, only to be blown & flooded away by destruction caused by the mighty *Cyclone Gabrielle*. Napier is such a lovely, lovely place.

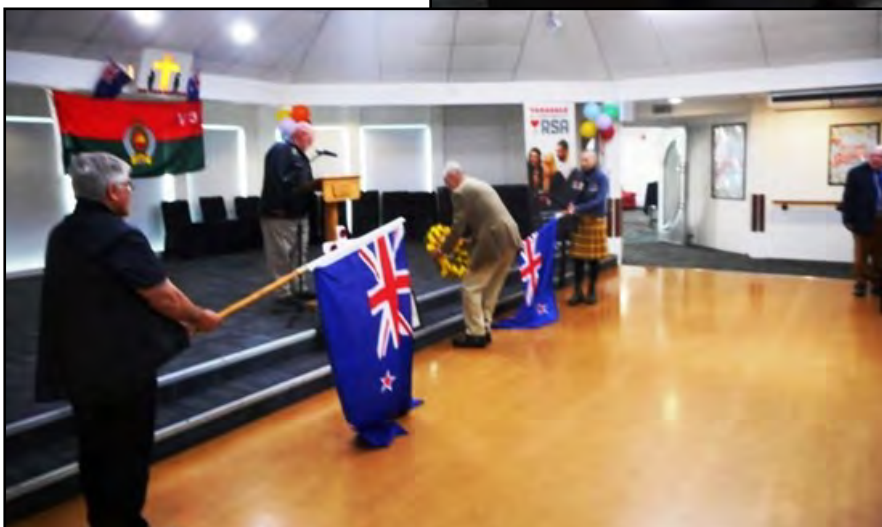
This would have to have been about my 8th attendance at such an occasion in New Zealand since 2008, but once again, I believe I could have to have been the lone Aussie member of the old 4RAR to attend such an occasion, but, after all, these guys were VERY much a part of us, & made us designated as the ANZAC Battalion, indeed a proud title. As usual, Barbara & I were made most very welcome to join them.

Myself, having served in the 4RAR Tracker platoon in SVN back in 1968-9, our canine dog teams, alongside our 3 Labrador dogs Milo,

Trajan, & Marcus, experienced much courage & comradeship with our Kiwi companions. In fact, in mid-November 1968, I was part of our small canine team on that fateful morning when V3 suffered a number of casualties, including their own Don Bensemman, who paid the supreme sacrifice. I will never forget that day.

Approx. 30-40 members of the old V3 attended, many of them accompanied, as I also was, by our partners. Our accommodation was just a 10min. walk away from the venue. Meals were served by the local Taradale RSA (RSL in Australia), & a wreath-laying ceremony was arranged by the local V3 members. Due to inclement weather, the ceremony had to be held indoors at the club. Only 2 wreaths were laid, one for the V3 organisation itself, & one by me, on behalf of our own 4RAR Association (QLD branch), which was much appreciated by those who attended the service.

When it came time for photos of the V3 members being taken, it was an honour for me to be asked to join them for the 'takes'. Obviously, a member of 4RAR was deemed to be part of them also. It's a pity that there were, & are, not more Aussie members of the old 4RAR, to come along 'across the ditch' & intermingle, including their partners, & maybe even some of their younger family members. Next occasion is planned for early 2025, & we'd love so much to again be there. ■





Reunions & Notices

RAN 27th Stevenson Division 1969 55th Anniversary.

Date: 1 Apr 2024

Location: Glenelg, SA

As time is marching on without some of us, we would love to see any JR's who may not have been contacted to date.

Contact: Jurgen 'Yogi' Andt
Phone: 0409 699 053
Email: js.andt@bigpond.com

RAAF VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOC. NSW

OPEN INVITATION

Date: 25 March 2024

Location: Sydney NSW

All RAAF veterans who served in Vietnam and marching at the Sydney ANZAC Day march

Are invited to join us for "Refreshments" afterwards.

Register your interest, at no cost, with RAAF VVA NSW by email: raafvvansw@gmail.com and include name, rank, service number, mustering cat., unit in Vietnam and dates of service.

Graham Christian
Co-Ordinator

RAAF Apprentices 1974 - 28 Scorpions

Date: 25 Apr 2024

Location: Wagga Wagga, NSW

Planning is in progress for our intake's 50th anniversary event in 2024. All 28 Scorpions and their partners are welcome. Exact date and details to follow.

Expressions of interest through Facebook - 28 Scorpions or email.

Contact details

Name: Chris Nielsen
Phone: 0403 943 029
chris.nielsen@live.com.au

60 Year Reunion 19th VM Army Apprentices

Date: 23-26 April.

Location: Possibly the Sunshine Coast, QLD

All intakes welcome. Those interested, please call Pete Culnane on 0439 726 100 or Peter Leslie (below). Looking for contact details for Gavin Bicknell, Johnny Broomfield, Lloyd Ellem, Lionel Houston and Frank Mazurek.

Contact details

Name: Peter Leslie
Phone: 0413 620 945
Email: pete128@outlook.com

All RAAF Apprentice intakes 1948 - 1993

Date: 25 Apr 2024

22-28 April (Anzac week). All
Location: Wagga Wagga, NSW

members and partners are encouraged to attend the 76th Anniversary. Contact Martin Holland on 0499 229 911 or mholland@electriciansplus.com.au
Contact details
Name: Terry Gould
Phone: 0419 146 688
terrygould66@outlook.com
https://
www.raafapprentices.com.au

Australian Army Aviation Unit

Date: 26 Apr 2024

Location: Brisbane (venue TBA)
QLD

The biggest reunion since the invention of the helicopter. Any Corps, any Service. If you worked at one of our Units, you're invited. Visit the website to register your interest.

Contact details

Name: Kerry Ellem
aaavn.reunion.2024@gmail.com
https://www.aaavn-reunion.org/

HMAS Nirimba reunion

Date: 13 May 2024

Location: Hunter Valley, NSW
13-17 May 2024. The January and July Intakes of 1964 are holding a 60th reunion - Meet & Greet and Formal Dinner. Accommodation available at the venue, Mercure Hunter Valley Gardens. If you would like to attend with your partner, please contact the below. glenfriedrich924@gmail.com or kchay@bigpond.net.au
Contact details
Glen Friedrich or Keith Chay
0407 917 827 or 0447 169 610

Australian Army Training Team – Iraq (AATT-I)

Date: 24 May 2024

Location: Kedron-Wavell Services Club (KWSC), Brisbane, QLD
24-26 May 2024. Full details are available on the AATT-I Facebook page.
Contact details
Name: Rocky McKelvie
Phone: 0419 679 378
secretaryaatti@optusnet.com.au
Website: Facebook: AATT-I
Association Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/armytrainingteamsaustralia/>

RAAF Comms Reunion

Date: 25 May 2024

2pm - 9pm. All Comms Location: Brisbane, QLD
Mustering's (both ex and serving, plus partners) are invited to attend our yearly Djinnang Association reunion. If you are interested, please head to our website for all relevant information. Please add your name to the list if you are attending, so we can organise finger food.
Contact details
Name: Gail McDermott (Secretary – Djinnang Association)
Website: <https://djinnang.com/>

21ST UNOPAA reunion

Date: 27 May 2024

27-31 May 2024.
Location: Darwin,
NT Branch of the United Nations and Overseas Policing Assn of Australia is hosting a reunion for all serving or retired State/Territory and Federal Police, including partners, who have served in any of the UN or other Peacekeeping Missions since 1964. There is no requirement to be a member of the association. East Timor members especially welcome.
Reunion details
Contact details
Name: Allan Mitchell
Phone: 0417 804 546
darwinreunion2024@gmail.com

9th Intake HMAS Leeuwin 60 Year reunion

Date: 4 Jul 2024

Location: Ballina, NSW
If you are interested or know of anyone who was in the 9th Intake, please contact me. Reunion will be held from 4 - 7 July 2024.
Contact details
Name: Allan James Watt
Phone: 0402 749 582
Email: jakknco@bigpond.net.au

B Company 2RAR Veterans, 2nd tour 1970-71

Date: 16 Aug 2024

Location: Rainbow Bay, Gold Coast, QLD
16-21 August 2024. All veterans and partners of Bravo Company are invited to attend.
Contact details
Name: Philip Burke
Phone: 0412 739 435
Email: reunion24@familia.com.au



VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING

NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE (VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE)

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

NEW SOUTH WALES**VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE**

VVPPAA NSW Inc.
 8 Mary St PO Box 170
 Granville NSW 2142
 Ph: (02) 9682 1788
 Fax: (02) 9682 6134
www.vvdfagranville.org
secretary@vdfagranville.org
 President: TBA
 Secretary: Ron O'Connor JP
 Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1600

CENTRAL COAST

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

CENTRAL WEST

7 March St
 Orange NSW 2800
 President: Lindsay Wright
 (02) 6362 5959
 Secretary: Warren Willis
 Mob 0447 066 996
warren.willis@bigpond.com

CLARENCE VALLEY

PO Box 137
 Grafton 2460
 Ph: (02) 6649 4186
 President: Ron Shoebridge
 Secretary: Lorraine Burt OAM
newsouthwalespva@gmail.com
 Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700
 Mob 0419 201 788
helen_kop@bigpond.com

EUROBODALLA

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

GREAT LAKES

Unit 3, 80-82 Kularoo Drive
 Forster, 2428
 Office: 0480 283 744
vvaglforster@gmail.com
 President: Derek Hinde
 Secretary: Paul Dawson
 0413 886 265
 Hours: Mon & Thur 1000-1300

HASTINGS MANNING MACLEAY

PO Box 5330
 Port Macquarie 2444
 Office at Wauchope RSL Sub-Branch
 Office Ph: (02) 6581 5230
 Advocate only: (02) 6581 5509
Vets614@gmail.com
 President: Bill Wagner
 Secretary: Jill Opie
 Hours: 1000-1330 Tue, Wed, Fri.

ILLAWARRA

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

MUDGEE & DISTRICTS

Inglis St, Railway Station
 PO Box 511 Mudgee NSW 2850
 Ph: (02) 6372 7740
secretary@vdfamudgee.org
 President: Ken Atkinson
 Mob 0428 246 147
 Secretary: TBA
 Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed 9:30-3:30

NEWCASTLE & HUNTER

17 Tyrrell St., PO Box 288
 Wallsend 2287
 Ph: (02) 4951 2666
nclvets@bigpond.net.au
 President: TBA
 Secretary: Dave Hansen
 Hours: Mon, Thu 0900-1300

RIVERINA

PO Box 7120
 Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
 President: **John Ploenges**
 Ph. (02) 6922 9766
 Secretary: **Ralph J Todd**
 Mb: 0457 258 891
 Email: ralphthodd@bigpond.com

SHOALHAVEN

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

SOUTH WEST SLOPES**VIETNAM VETERANS INC.**

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

TAYLORS ARM

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

WENTWORTH-COOMEALLA**Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat**

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

VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING

VVPPAA (NSW BRANCH)**ZONE REPS****FAR SOUTH COAST****Gary Berman**

Bega RSL SB

Ph: 6493 0449

Mob 0409 888 248

gandsberman@bigpond.com

VICTORIA**VVF Victorian Branch Inc**

ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 167

Newcomb Vic 3219

3 Hewat Drive

Highton Vic 3216

President: **John Arnold OAM**

johnarnold@iinet.net.au

Secretary: **Iris Cargill JP**

Mob 0488 053 973

ritscargill@yahoo.com

Mon - Wed 0900 -1400

VIC SUB – BRANCHES**Hamilton: Bill Garrett**

0438 722 144

Grampians: Ron Jensen

0409 023 487

Respite Housing For Veterans in need

Bowder Veterans Housing

160 Coppards Rd Whittington 3219.

03 5248 0996

ACT STATE BRANCH**VV&VF ACT Inc**

9 Burkitt Street, Page. 2614

Veterans Support Centre Belconnen

Ph: 02 6255 1599

office@vscact.org.au

www.vvfact.org.au

President: **Ward Gainey JP**Secretary: **Leanne Connor****QUEENSLAND****VVF Queensland Branch Inc.**

18 Leagues Club Drive

PO Box 2817

Nerang Business Centre

Nerang Qld 4211

Ph: 07 5578 2233

Fax: 07 5578 2822

State President: **Peter Handy JP**

Mob 0448 195 020

president@vvfqld.com

State Sec/Treas: **Peter Cameron OAM**

Mob 0408 276 044

treasurer@vvfqld.com

www.vvfqld.com

VVF Brisbane/Gold Coast of Australia**Regional Sub-Branch Inc.**

18 Leagues Club Drive

PO Box 368

Nerang Qld 4211

Ph: 07 5502 2836

admin@vietnamveterans.net.au

President: **Andy Bryson**

Mob 0424 476 027

Secretary/Treasurer: **Peter Cameron OAM**

Mob 0408 276 044

TOWNSVILLE**Veteran Support Centre NQ Inc****TOWNSVILLE**

PO Box 280, Garbutt East

JC Butler Bldg

1 Charters Towers Rd

Townsville, 4814

Ph: 07 4772 4655

secretary@vsctsv.org.au

President: **Ian Bowron**Secretary: **Kayla Mastalerz****ACT STATE BRANCH****VV&VF ACT Inc**

9 Burkitt Street, Page. 2614

Veterans Support Centre Belconnen

Ph: 02 6255 1599

office@vscact.org.au

www.vvfact.org.au

President: **Ward Gainey JP**Secretary: **Leanne Connor****SOUTH AUSTRALIA****VVF South Australia Branch Inc.**

The Yerbury Centre

Unit 1, 31-39 Norfolk Rd

Marion SA 5043

Ph: 08 8296 2411

Mon – Thur 1000 – 1500hrs

vvfsa@tpg.com.au

http://vvfsa.org.au

President: **Mal Thiele OAM JP**Secretary: **Don Cochrane****SA ZONE REPS****BROKEN HILL****Des Kennedy**

M: 0412 458 054

MILITARY MUSEUM**BUBLACOWIE**Welfare Officer: **Chris Soar**

Mobs 0448 994 561/0428 377 287

Ph: 08 8853 4379

REPS**ALICE SPRINGS AREA****Alan Wilkes****KATHERINE AREA****Scott Landers****WESTERN AUSTRALIA****VVFA WA Branch**

30 Cornish Ave

Woodvale WA 6026

Ph 08 9409 6682

vvfawabbranch@gmail.com

TASMANIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY MEMBERS**WANTING ADVOCACY SERVICES ARE ASKED TO CONTACT****THE OUTREACH PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR AT GRANVILLE****Mr Dennis Hanmer OAM on 02 9672 1788**

Currently in the ADF, Transitioning, a younger Veteran?

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

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

The Tour by Paul Hugo Zaat - 8 RAR '69-'70

We left our shores in '69, not knowing our fate at the time.

We were young and spirited, full of life.

This journey of ours would lead to strife.

The day had come to say goodbye, from airports and wharves the flag did fly.

Family and friends showed us much love, with tears in their eyes they looked above.

As the jets flew past, with such a roar.

Would it be the last time they saw, their sons, brothers, fathers leaving for war?

As distance gathered between them and us, we looked at each other "Why all the fuss?!"

Heading to a land far away, to an unknown war to this day.

The Reg's, the Nasho's together as one, carrying their packs and a brand-new gun.

After days at sea and hours in the air, we finally arrived glad to be there.

Looking in amazement with what we saw, this was the beginning of our tour.

As we moved to our base at Nui Dat, armoured vehicles to our back.

The war was near it could be seen; I heard a bang the truck did lean.

"How close was that?!" my mate did say, his safety re-assured without delay.

On arrival at Base Nui Dat, settled into my new flat.

Metal bed, metal locker, this old tent was a real shocker!

Wooden pallets for the floor, mouldy sandbags around the wall.

Home from home let's not complain, the mud, the heat and continuous rain.

14 days in country the task at hand, operations in Phuoc Tuy over a vast land.

The initial patrols were 5 days long, the Hamlets, the bunkers around Hao Long.

Protecting the farmers during the day, ambushing at night without delay.

Six months in country and operations grew long, five weeks at a time chasing Viet Cong.

Day after day the hardships abound, the killing and wounding, the shouting out loud.

Patrols continue around Xuyen Moc and Dat Do, the pain and suffering of mates I know.

Back in the lines another op complete at last a beer in my hand and weight off my feet.

It doesn't last long that's for sure, 10 days later back for more.

As the months go on nothing has changed, home soon hopefully can be arranged.

With casualties mounting and unrest at home, this television war can't leave us alone.

11 months in my tour I lost mate after mate, 18 in total, this war I do hate.

The day has come the news is here, 350 days in country and the end is near!

Finally, to leave this god forsaken place, the excitement could be seen on everyone's face.

We had served our "country" as requested, we fought and toiled and never rested.

By air and sea, we left for home, together as one and never alone.

We were brothers in arms to say the least, the mates we lost,

May they rest in peace.

On arrival home no words (of war) were spoken, some battered, some bruised with spirits broken.

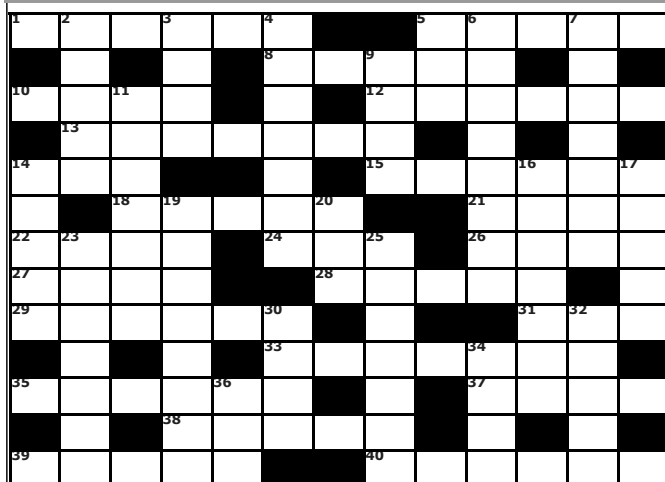
Family and friends gave us support, with little knowledge of the war we fought.

With pain and anger in my heart, I longed for the day and a fresh new start.

Lest we forget.

"To live in the present, negates the past."

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

1. Rise up
5. Even
8. Imply
10. Periods of time
12. Makes fit
13. Beseech
14. Limb
15. Brought out
18. Elevators
21. Italian city
22. Relative to
24. Dry wine
26. Level
27. Transmit
28. Concise
29. Motor
31. Golf aid
33. Begged
35. Couch type
37. Prepare text
38. Occurrence
39. Apart
40. Quieten down

DOWN

2. Frolic
3. Compass point
4. Orders
5. In front
6. Deletions
7. Utmost
9. Lot
11. Fishing
14. Hire
16. Desired
17. Thick
19. Impeached
20. Congeal
23. Dogs homes
25. Joins together
30. Sword
32. Decree
34. Feat
36. First woman

SOLUTION AVAILABLE
UPON REQUEST TO THE
EDITOR bobf@vfvfagnville.org

DECEMBER 2023 SOLUTION



THE UNKNOWN COMIC

I found out what causes dry skin. A towel.

A woman walks into a pharmacy one day and says to the pharmacist, "I'd like a poison that'll kill my husband but make it look like he died of natural causes." The pharmacist says, "Ma'am, not only can I not do that for you, I'm going to have to call the police and report you." The woman removes something from her pocket and hands it to him. He looks at it and discovers that it's a picture of her husband making love to the pharmacist's wife. The pharmacist says, "Oh, you should have told me you had a prescription."

Two children ordered their mother to stay in bed one Mother's Day morning. As she lay there looking forward to breakfast in bed, the smell of bacon floated up from the kitchen. But after a good long wait she finally went downstairs to investigate. She found them both sitting at the table eating bacon and eggs. "As a surprise for Mother's Day," one explained, "we decided to cook our own breakfast."

The other day I was having a convo with the grandson telling him about the old days, when he remarked that we didn't have so many problems with diseases back then. I was about to mention them all when I thought better and just said. "Nope". Then he asked what did we use for safe sex. So I told him. "A wedding ring".

I remember an earlier occasion when the Grandson lost me in Kmart. I could hear him yelling. "Grandpa!", but as he was getting closer I didn't bother answering. He raved on a bit more yelling and sounding a bit agitated, but then found me in the toy section, and rushed up yelling that 'Someone could have kidnapped me', I told him I wasn't worried because they'd soon bring him back.

It's impossible to hum while holding your nose. Come on, who just tried it.

I heard that a well balanced horse is stable.

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



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

JUST CALL 1800 011 046

If overseas call +61 8 8241 4546

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service

FORMERLY KNOWN AS



**Call
24/7**

A service founded by Vietnam veterans



1300 924 522

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

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

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

Our programs

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

91 Milton Street,
Ashfield NSW 2131

&

7 Blake Street,
Kogarah NSW 2217



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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

1 JAN—31 DEC

Website: www.vvfagranville.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

SURNAME		FIRST NAME		SECOND NAME	
STREET ADDRESS					
SUBURB/TOWN			STATE		POST CODE
HOME PHONE		MOBILE PHONE		OTHER PHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]					
SERVICE NUMBER		SERVICE UNIT		O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE	
NEXT OF KIN		RELATIONSHIP		CONTACT PHONE [NOK]	
ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE		TOTAL	
MEMBERSHIPS SUBS	(YEARS)	@\$30.00 PER YEAR		\$	
DONATION	(AMOUNT ONLY)			\$	
RAFFLE TICKET/s		@\$2.00 EACH		\$	
MERCHANDISE					
				\$	
				\$	
				\$	
				\$	
				\$	
Contact Granville for Stock item lists numbers and prices		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		\$	
PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD (Tick one only) CASH ___ CHEQUE ___ MONEY ORDER ___ CREDIT CARD ___					
CREDIT CARD DETAILS (Mastercard or VISA only)					
CARD HOLDER NAME [PRINT]			CREDITCARD NUMBER		
EXPIRY DATE		AMOUNT CONFIRMED		CARD HOLDER SIGNATURE	
(Mnth/Yr)	/	\$			
All cheques and money orders payable to VVPPAA NSW Branch Inc. Mail to PO Box 170 Granville, NSW 2142 Credit Card payments may be phoned in to (02) 9682 1788 Mon-Fri 9:30am – 3pm.					
OFFICE USE ONLY					
MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT DATE:			DONATION RECEIPT DATE:		
MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT N ^o :			DONATION RECEIPT N ^o :		
MEMBERSHIP CARD NUMBER:			COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):		
COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):			BANK SHEET ENTRY BY (PRINT):		

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

--	--	--

OLD DETAILS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

OLD ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

NEW DETAILS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

NEW ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Complete all sections and post to:

The Secretary
VVPAA NSW
PO Box 170
Granville
NSW 2142

OFFICE USE ONLY**MEMBERSHIP REGISTRY****DETAILS CHANGED****DATE:** ____/____/____**INITIALS:** _____

VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

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

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

Please print clearly

VETERANS DETAILS

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SERVICE NUMBER

--	--	--

SVN UNIT/S

TOUR DATES

--	--

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

--

SR Service Related

UNK Unknown

S Suicide

O Other)

DATE OF DEATH (If known)

LOCATION AT TIME OF DEATH

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

YOUR NAME

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

SIGNATURE

--	--	--

RETURN FORM TO: The Welfare Officer

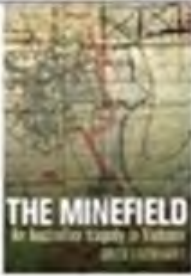
VVPPAA NSW Branch
PO Box 170
Granville NSW 2142

Phone: 02 9682 1788
Fax : 02 9682 6134
Email: secretary@vvfagranville.org

MERCHANDISE LIST

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE\$		ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE\$
1101	NSW PLAQUE	50.00		1403	LAPEL PIN ARMY	8.00
1103	NSW BADGE	10.00		1405	LAPEL PIN RAAF	8.00
1105	NSW STICKER	6.00		1406	LAPEL PIN CROSS	8.00
1106	NSW PEN	7.00		1500	STICKER TWIN SET REG	7.00
1107	RED PEN VVFA	8.00		1501	STICKER REGULAR	7.00
1108	NSW STUBBY HOLDER	8.00		1502	STICKER NASHO	7.00
1109	STUBBY HOLDER TRICOLOR	10.00		1503	STICKER DAMN PROUD	5.00
1111	VVFA GREEN CAP	22.00		1504	STICKER LOVE or LEAVE	5.00
1112	VVFA BLUE CAP	22.00		1505	STICKER PROUDLY	5.00
1113	VVFA WHITE CAP	22.00		1506	STICKER SUPPORT	7.00
1114	VVFA BLACK CAP	22.00		1507	STICKER TWIN SET NASHO	7.00
1116	PLATE SURROUND SML	12.50		1508	STICKER SUPPORT NAVY	7.00
1120	RED Mr GADGET	8.00		1509	STICKER NAVY VETERAN	7.00
1121	RED NOTEBOOK/PEN	8.00		1510	STICKER SUPPORT ARMY	7.00
1122	RED COOLER TOTE	14.00		1511	STICKER ARMY VETERAN	7.00
1125	KEYRING NAVY	8.00		1512	STICKER SUPPORT RAAF	7.00
1126	KEYRING ARMY	8.00		1513	STICKER RAAF VETERAN	7.00
1127	KEYRING RAR	10.00		1514	STICKER AFGHAN VETERAN	5.00
1128	KEYRING AIRFORCE	8.00		1515	STICKER IRAQ VETERAN	5.00
1129	KEYRING VVFA	9.00		1516	STICKER SOMALIA VETERAN	5.00
1130	LANYARD	10.00		1517	STICKER TIMOR VETERAN	5.00
1201	THE MINEFIELD BOOK	45.00		1518	STICKER SUPPORT/THANK	5.00
1308,9,12	ALL BUCKLES as shown	35.00		BOOKS	ON SALE ON LINE & AT THE	OFFICE
1401	LAPEL PIN RAN	5.00		3440	HOW TO RESEARCH AND HONOUR RETURNED	39.00
1402	LAPEL PIN ENSIGN	5.00		3442	THE THIRD CHOPSTICK	35.00

MERCHANDISE IMAGES

 1101	 1103	 1105	 1106	 1107	 1201		
 1108	 1109						
 1111	 1112	 1113	 1114		 1116		
 1120	 1121	 1122	 1125	 1126	 1127	 1128	
 1129	 1130	 1308	 1309		 1312		
 1401	 1402	 1403	 1405	 1406	 1411	 3440	 3442
 1500	 1501	 1507	 1502		 1503		
 1504	 1505	 1506	 1508		 1509		
 1510	 1511	 1512	 1513				
 1515	 1516	 1517	 1518				

**BUY AS A SET
THE RED TREBLE!**

FOR A SHORT TIME ONLY



1120



1121



1122

\$25.00

MERCHANDISE SUMMER SPECIALS

**ONLY WHILE STOCKS LAST
ALSO AVAILABLE ON LINE**

<http://www.vvfagranville.org> and select "SHOP" button

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE AU\$
3301	BUCKLE VETERAN	15.00
3302	BUCKLE VET RAR	15.00
3120	TIE BAR VV	8.00
3133	KRING ARMY AVI	6.00
3134	KRING RAE	6.00
3140	KRING RAAC	6.00
3141	KRING RAEME	6.00
3401	PIN RAR	6.00
2402	PIN MAP REGULAR	6.00
3404	PIN MAP VETERAN	6.00
3406	PIN VIETNAM VET	6.00
3407	PIN SLOUCH BRNZ	6.00
3408	PIN SLOUCH COL	6.00
3412	PIN 'Vietnam' Chopper	6.00
3420	CAP (black) 62-75 V	22.00
3500	PEN/TORCH GIFT SET BOXED	10.00



**GRAB 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT !!
ROSE GOLD DIAMOND GIFT SET & THANK YOU
BOX
ORDER # 3500 \$10.00 + PH.**

MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TOWN:

STATE:

PC:

PHONE:

ALT PHONE:

EMAIL:

ITEM N ^o .	DESCRIPTION	PRICE ea	QTY	TOTAL
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
		\$		\$
XXXXXX	POSTAGE & HANDLING	\$		\$
XXXXXX	RAFFLE TICKET/S	\$ 2.00		\$
XXXXXX	DONATION AMOUNT	XXXXXX	XXXX	\$
XXXXXX	TOTAL ORDER VALUE	XXXXXX	XXXX	\$

DELIVERY ADDRESS:

(IF DIFFERENT TO ABOVE)

PAYMENT METHOD M/CARD VISA (Cross out card type that does not apply)

NAME ON CARD:

CARD NUMBER:

EXPIRY DATE:

/

APPROVED AMOUNT: \$

SIGNATURE & DATE:

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 recognise someone who might be thinking of suicide, and link them with appropriate assistance. There are 3 types of workshops

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

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

FORMERLY

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service





Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
R58581	LTO	PR	MCSHANE	HMAS Melbourne/Sydney(7)	24/9/23	24/9/42
R58188	PODM	DH	TOMLINSON	HMAS Sydney(2)	18/12/23	13/4/44
R54445	M1stC	RL	FUNSTON	HMAS Hobart	13/1/24	1/3/40
R62134	LEM	N	MACDONALD	HMAS Vendetta/Anzac	26/3/23	28/9/45
27465	WO2	SR	GIBBS	VISIT/HQAFV	27/9/23	7/5/28
2791830	PTE	GP	O'BRIEN	HQ 1ALSG	4/2/23	5/1/48
2782168	PTE	CR	PERRIN	1ARU/HQ 1ATF	7/12/23	17/6/45
2791215	PTE	RM	KOFFEL	85 TRAN PL	13/9/23	21/4/48
2789492	PTE	BT	BETTS	86 TRAN PL	18/2/24	3/2/47
242998	SGT	BB	NICOLL	1ATF HQLAD	23/12/22	26/10/40
1201307	SIG	RJ	ENDICOTT	104 SIG SQD	3/8/23	25/9/49
2243018	MAJ	TE	HALL	2BTNCMF ON DET 6RAR	26/10/23	7/10/33
214471	CPL	AG	LIMN	17CONSTSQD/2AOD	29/1/24	24/11/40
2785451	TRP	MG	McHATTON	ASQD 3CAV REGT	10/6/21	25/6/46
3797142	BMDR	TJ	HINCH	32 SMALL SHIPS SQD	29/7/23	28/3/49
2788040	SPR	DJR	LUTTON	32 SMALL SHIPS SQD	13/12/23	11/10/45
2781990	SPR	PJ	TIERNEY	32 SMALL SHIPS SQD	1/10/23	29/3/45



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
215340	CAPT	CE	LEGGETT	1 RAR/1 SAS SQD	19/6/23	8/6/44
2794153	PTE	GT	McDONALD	1 ARU/2 RAR	19/11/23	18/10/48
216912	CPL	LS	KAMINSKI	2 RAR (2)	15/12/23	16/7/45
2794122	PTE	LS	HANA	3 RAR	26/3/23	14/3/45
2787789	PTE	EA	MORLEY	4 RAR	19/2/24	3/2/47
2781700	PTE	NJ	GRIMES CG Commendation for Gallantry – Long Tan	6 RAR	29/9/23	4/2/45
2790762	PTE	CJ	BROADHEAD	7 RAR	29/4/23	24/6/48
2785018	PTE	JG	WARD	1 ARU/7 RAR	9/10/23	3/1/46
1734817	PTE	BR	BLACK	8 RAR	13/9/23	10/9/47
1734770	PTE	MG	OVENDEN	8 RAR	9/1/24	19/7/47
61609	PTE	J	ACKERLEY	5 RAR/8 RAR	2/9/23	21/10/46
3796316	PTE	J	MAWKES	1 ARU/8 RAR	11/12/23	24/11/48
218562	LCPL	LF	HARVEY	8 RAR	22/11/23	9/12/44
218175	LCPL	I	DALES	8 RAR	9/11/23	12/2/44



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
A19198	CPL	GT	BARNETT	35 SQN	26/8/22	16/11/36
SPECIAL NOTICES						
57012	LT	JH	SKIPPER MC	KOREA- 1 RAR 28 BCIB	24/8/23	23/4/30
VOLUNT	EER	S	ROWSELL	LIFE MEMBER VVAA VVFA	20/10/22	22/9/29

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

PLEASE NOTE

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

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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