



THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA
SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

APRIL 2026

60 Years on....



- FORMER NSW PRESIDENT EARNS OAM
- HISTORICAL RECORD –60 YEARS ON
- VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS—PART D
- DVA INSPIRATION/RESPONSIBILITY

Next issue

July

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THIS ISSUE

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



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

SERVICES

DVA - Military Compensation

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

Asbestos - Dust Disease Tribunal claims.

Industry super claims - income protection - TPD appeals,

Coroner's inquests

claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA

TIPS ON BEGINNING YOUR STORY

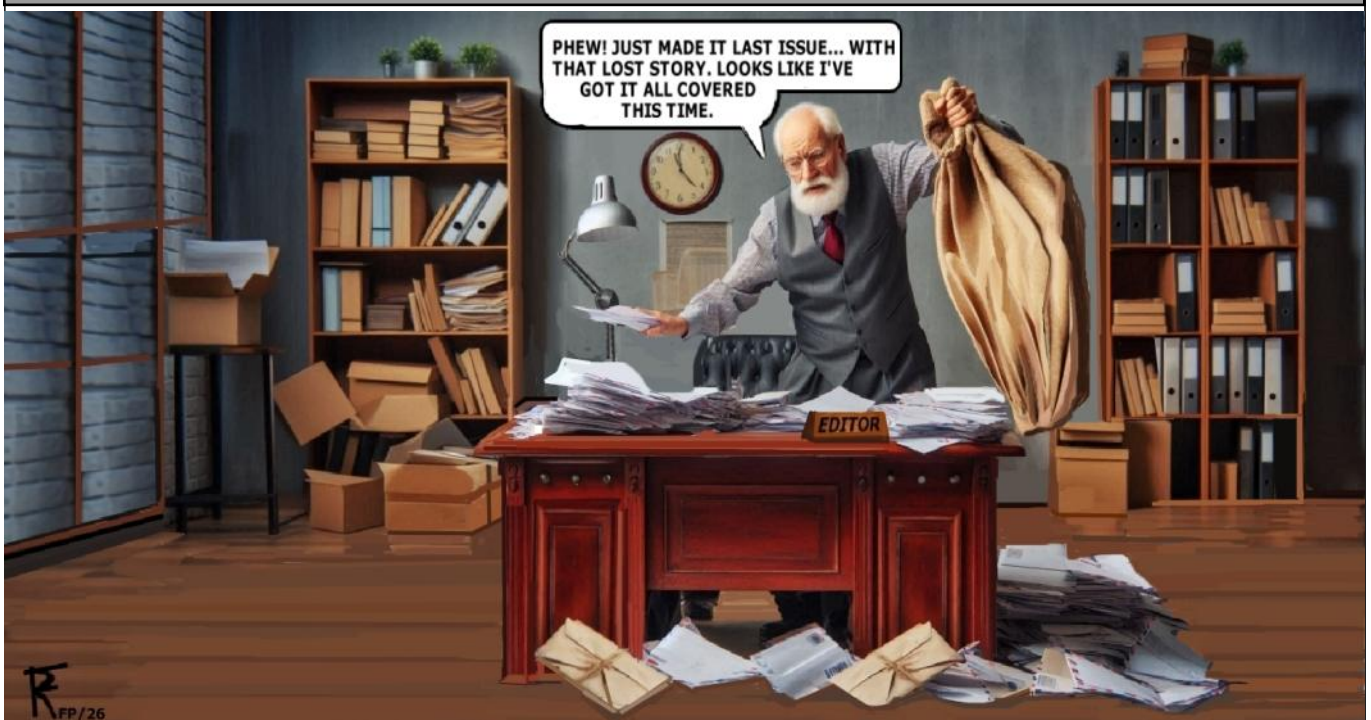
To begin a memoir, start by brainstorming significant experiences and themes you want to explore, and tell readers about.

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

Create a loose outline to structure your story.

Revise and re-write as you improve the narrative.

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



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

Welcome back to **John Ingram** with the last instalment episode 14 of the story of the 'Vung Tau Ferry', HMAS Sydney, and **Kel Robinson** continues with the history of the early days of the Vietnam Veterans movement, and supporters of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association. As well, **Boris O'Brien** returns with the final Part 2 of his story from the annals of B Coy 1 RAR in Vietnam.

Keep those stories coming..



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

Incorporating

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

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland Branch
Inc.**

Veteran Support Centre NQ Inc - Townsville

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

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Victorian Branch
Inc.**

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

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

Vietnam Veterans Federation Reps.

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

MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging
Advocacy
Success**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We thank you for your kind support. ■



FRANK COLE OAM
FORMER PRESIDENT—VVPPAA NSW
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT VVFA Inc
AWARDED OAM IN AUSTRALIA DAY
HONOURS LIST 2026

Dear Frank,

On behalf of the members of the “Vietnam Veterans’ Federation of Australia (WFA)” and its affiliate “Vietnam Veterans’ Peacekeepers Peacemakers Association of Australia, NSW Branch (VVPPAA)”, I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate you on being awarded the ‘Order of Australia Medal (OAM), General Division’, within the Australian Honours System, on Australia Day 2026.

This prestigious award is presented to those who have committed and given freely of their time to help others - mainly on a voluntary basis - who needed support within the general community and those of the Veterans’ Communities (including their families), above and beyond what would have been expected of

them.

Frank, you have committed to, and supported the VVFA/VVPPAA, as a volunteer, since 2003 and have undertaken a number of roles, tasks and activities for and on the behalf of the Organisation, since then.

Particularly as the Secretary of VVPPAA and later as the President (2015), and also the Senior Vice President of the Vietnam Veterans’ Federation of Australia (2018).

In all these roles/tasks/activities you excelled in your commitment, encouragement to others to maintain a professional standard in what they were undertaking and also the professional way you dealt with some very contentious issues and ‘trying’ circumstances - as we had come to expect from you over the years.

One of your greatest challenges was dealing with the Covid restrictions and how to manage the Office, its volunteers and paid staff to ensure that the Organisation could continue to provide professional Advocacy, welfare/wellbeing support in difficult circumstances, and thanks to your leadership we were able to continue to help and support our vulnerable veterans and their families as per normal despite the restrictions placed upon us.

Frank, you are not only respected and held in high regard by those who have known and worked with you within the Federation and those at DVA and other ESOs who have come in contact with you over the years, for your commitment, devotion, and enthusiasm in the support of the Veterans and their families in regards to the various entitlements under the Repatriation System.

We are aware of a number of service-related health problems from which you have suffered over the years and continue to suffer, the severity of which prevented you from continuing your role as the President of VVPPAA. We are sincerely appreciative and indebted to you for having undertaken the roles and tasks that you had despite your disabling health problems, we certainly hope and pray that these health problems will improve to a great extent.

What you have done for this Organisation since 2003, the loyalty, devotion and commitment to the efficient way that the Organisation was run and the professional and timely manner in which our Advocates, welfare/wellbeing officers provided their services, particularly during the Covid-19 period, under your strong leadership, continued the legacy of those before you and for that we are extremely grateful.

I personally am absolutely thrilled and delighted, and no doubt I speak for the other Federation members, that you had received this prestigious Award for your commitment to the Organisation and the help and support you have provided to the Veterans and their families in various ways - **You are certainly most deserving of this Award.**

We are all proud of you and please wear the Medal with pride. As they would say in the Military on occasions like this - “Well done that man”

Kind regards and Best Wishes,

Bill Roberts OAM

National President VVFA Inc

President VVPPAA NSW



NEWS HEADLINES

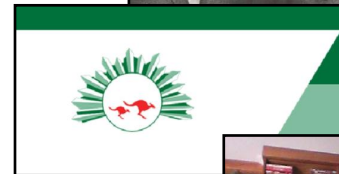
FRANK COLE OAM
Tribute to past NSW President and Federation
Snr Vice president, Honoured with an OAM
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The story of the lead up to August 18 1966
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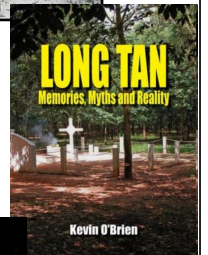
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PART 2 AND FINAL ARTICLE FROM 'BORIS'
A continuation of his story from last issue
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LONG TAN—MEMORIES, MYTHS & REALITIES
A book review from Greg Lockhart
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HMAS SYDNEY THE VUN TAU FERRY
The final episode from John Ingram
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HQ REUNION NOTICE—DETAILED OVERVIEW
Pacific Palms, NSW. Tiona Holiday Park
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NEWSLETTERS ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION ARE REQUIRED DURING FIRST WEEK OF MONTH PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION. APRIL ISSUE CLOSSES MARCH, JULY ISSUE CLOSSES JUNE, DECEMBER ISSUE CLOSSES NOVEMBER.

ADVERTISING CLOSSES 2 WEEKS EARLIER THAN ARTICLES.

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NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to another year. I want to begin by expressing my gratitude for the dedication, passion, and teamwork each of you brought to the organisation over the past year. Whether you are an employee or a volunteer, your contributions are the foundation of our success. As we step into the year ahead, I'm excited about the opportunities before us and confident that, together, we'll continue making a meaningful impact. Thank you for all you do, and here's to a positive and productive year ahead.

This year marks the continuation of the governments investments to strengthen services supporting veterans and their families, as can be witnessed in their announcements recently, and summarised in the article opposite. Our Editor, Bob, and DVA have combined to publish a report beginning on page 18, highlighting several areas of inspiration & responsibility that DVA have undertaken initiatives made possible by some of the governments' fiscal policies.

A reminder to those wishing to avail their children and grandchildren of veterans' scholarships, should read the information from the AVCAT advertisement on page 13, and their website www.avcat.org.au. And apply from August 18 2026, closing on 31st October 2026. While your thinking about it read some of the stories from other successful scholarship benefactors beginning on page 14, following the advert.

In recognition of the vital support of the RSLNSW Veterans Support Fund (VSF), we provide a listing of those contributing RSL NSW Sub-branches during 2025 on page 12. The funding we received in the latter part of 2025 was

very much appreciated and enabled the Association to employ a new Compensation Advocate and Wellbeing trainee. Further funding from VSF during 2026 will allow us to employ an additional compensation advocate.

Beginning on page 43, Greg Lockhart reviews the book 'Long Tan – Memories, Myths, and Reality' by Kevin O'Brien. Greg Lockhart is a Vietnam veteran and an historian. Formerly of ANU, he has produced five books and many essays. His memoir 'Weaving of Worlds: a Day on Île d'Yeu', is just published. One of his major contributions is the book 'The Minefield -An Australian tragedy in Vietnam', which is available from the Granville office. Check stocks first on (02) 9682 1788.

And, in closing, I would remind everyone that this year will mark the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, on 18th August. Be sure to assist in any way you can to make this day a deserved memorial service in your local community. Here in Sydney, we will endeavour to call upon our preferred social and service providers, as in previous years, at Bankstown Sports Club. More will be announced in our July issue and also on our website, www.vvfagranville.org.

Carry on the great work you do on behalf of your fellow veterans.

Bill Roberts OAM

National President VVFA

President VVPPAA NSW

DVA Updates for 2025–26: Key Points for the Veteran Community

The 2025–26 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) announced major new investments to strengthen services supporting veterans and their families. These initiatives focus on wellbeing, advocacy, integrity, and improved service delivery.

Major Funding Measures

- \$78M to establish a new Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing (operational 1 July 2026).
- \$203.1M to strengthen provider integrity, expand free veteran advocacy, combat fraud, and support the Institute of Veterans Advocacy (IVA).
- \$408.8M to maintain staff levels, cyber security, and digital capability.
- \$739.2M to enhance long-term health and wellbeing, including early intervention mental health support and a national PTSD treatment study.

Strengthening Advocacy and Provider Integrity

The Government will invest in reforms to protect veterans from unethical or fraudulent provider practices. Key actions include:

- Expanding DVA’s integrity workforce to 180 compliance staff.
- Updated legislation allowing stronger action on non-compliance.
- Increased monitoring of invoices and regulating harmful advocacy practices.
- More than **doubling funding for the BEST grants program from July 2026**, with new three-year grants for ESOs.

- Continued establishment of the Institute of Veterans Advocacy.

New Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing

Launching 1 July 2026, the new agency will:

- Focus on transition support, complex case management, and coordinated wellbeing services.
- Work closely with the Veteran Access Network, Open Arms, and Veterans’ and Families’ Hubs.
- Support key Royal Commission recommendations.

Health and Wellbeing Enhancements

A major investment of \$739.2M will:

- Prioritise early intervention and rehabilitation.
- Streamline claims processes through MyService.
- Establish a National Study on Treatment Effectiveness.
- Expand the mental health workforce, especially in Northern Australia.

Summarised from an email, and attached documents, received by the VVFA on 18 December 2025, from the ESORT. SECRETARIAT.

The documents in full are available on our website www.vvfa.org.au

SEE THE DVA ARTICLE ON PAGES 16,17
“INSPIRATION & RESPONSIBILITY”

Historical Record *60 years On*

Key Events Leading to the Establishment of 1ATF in Vietnam

60 Years Ago – Operation Marauder

From 1–8 January 1966, the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR), operating with the U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade, took part in Operation Marauder.

large rice caches. On January 5, one patrol made contact with a VC platoon in the vicinity of Hoa Khanh, but the enemy broke contact and fled.



US 173rd Airborne at LZ Wine 1-2 January 1966

This marked a significant early engagement for Australian forces during the Vietnam War and helped shape the commitment that followed.

Operation Marauder involved elements from 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment - USA, and 1 RAR- Australia, and C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 319th Artillery Regiment which included 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, who were deployed by air into Ba Tri airfield from Hậu Nghĩa Province, as well as a troop from Australia, Armour of Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop.

The Australians from 1 RAR also were engaged in extensive patrolling activity during the January 2–6 period. They made small, sporadic contact with the enemy in their sector, killing two VC. However, they also found an ammunition cache and several

26 January 1966 – Change of National Leadership

Harold Holt succeeded Sir Robert Menzies as Australia's Prime Minister, assuming responsibility for steering Australia's evolving role in Vietnam.



(L-R) Harold Holt, Robert Menzies

6 March 1966 – Expansion of Australia's Vietnam Commitment

Prime Minister Holt announced that Australia's contribution to the conflict in South Vietnam would increase to a 4,350-man task force, including conscripted national servicemen.

The formation would comprise:

- Two infantry battalions
- A Special Air Service Squadron
- Combat and logistic support units
- Eight RAAF No. 9 Squadron Iroquois helicopters.



Nui dat 1 ATF base from the air 1966



5 RAR lines on the beach at Vung Tau April 66

This new formation became known as the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF).

It was further supported by the establishment of 1 Australian Logistic Support Group (1 ALSG) at Vung Tau, marking the first deployment of Australian national servicemen to the Vietnam theatre.

24 May 1966 – 5 RAR Deployment

The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment deployed by helicopter from the 1ATF concentration area at Vung Tau to secure the future Task Force base at Nui Dat.

During this period, Private Errol Noack became the first national serviceman and the first 1ATF member to be killed by enemy action in Vietnam.

4 June 1966 – 1ATF Concentration Completed

By early June, the full concentration of the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat had been completed, setting the stage for major Australian operations in Phuoc Tuy Province leading up to August 1966.

During June 1966 6 RAR arrived to join 5 RAR at Nui Dat. 6 RAR carried out two major operations. The first operation was codenamed "Enoggera" and was focused upon clearing the village of Long Phuoc, while the second operation, "Hobart", was a search and destroy mission carried out over the course of five days. Several VC camps were destroyed in these operations and numerous caches of weapons and supplies uncovered, while 36 enemy casualties were inflicted.

Thus, the scene was set for one of Vietnams' major battles involving Australian troops. A story of courage, of fortunate events, and one that has endured for the last 60 years.

The Battle of Long Tan, 18th August 1966.



Congratulations To:

**NSW 2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
GIFT VOUCHER DRAW**

The following nameS have been randomly selected from all NSW Branch members who renewed their 2026 NSW Memberships by 31st January 2026.

- Keith McAuliffe Member number 317**
- Peter Page Member number 528**
- Van Tri Le Member number 1620**

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:

- \$1,800 Paul Turner
- \$1,000 Anonymous, James McGeachie
Anonymous, Brian (Tab) Hunter
Kevin Faust, Colin Robinson,
Warren Axford
- \$500 Gordon O'Brien, Bruce Cullen
Stephen Bunter, Geoffrey Jones
Peter Unwin, John McNeil
Anonymous, Jacqui & Shane Matthews
Adrian Starr, Christine Senini

- \$450 John McNeil
- \$400 Anonymous, Geoffrey Peattie
William Smith
- \$300 John Mogan, Hy Xuan Trinh
Garry Smyth, Dallas Mulhall OAM
Geoffrey Lopez, Henry Walker
Anonymous, Wesley Hindmarsh
- \$270 Anonymous, Philip Calvert
Ivan Waskin
- \$250 David Gibbs, Gary Chenhall
Alan Limn, Anthony Shephard
Wesley Hindmarsh
- \$220 Samuel Panarello
- \$212 Edward Davies
- \$200 Valerie Ekman, Peter Miller
Anonymous, Anthony Thomas
Brian Carney, John Stoker
Kerry Bee, Anonymous
David Evans, Phillip Inman
David Ashley, David Aitkin
Kevin Stewart, Brian Wood
Anonymous, Tania Edwards-Hackett
David Gilmer, Robert Allen
Hector Grant, Denis Nolan
Danny Hay, Charles Shay
Peter Brown, Colin Kelson
Patrick Gallagher

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.

And in recognition of the vital support of the RSLNSW Veterans Support Fund (VSF), with those contributing RSL Sub-branches listed on page 12.

A special mention to Darwin RSL who cover the costs of two Outreach trips for 2 Advocates, a year. We could not otherwise provide this service which receives welcome accolades after every visit, especially from the ADF members currently serving in remote areas.



PRESENTING CHEQUE FROM CAMPSIE/CHESTERHILL RSL LTD
(L-R) IVAN TILMOUTH DIRECTOR CAMPSIE RSL GROUP, BILL ROBERTS OAM PRESIDENT VVPPAA NSW, RON O'CONNOR JP SECRETARY VVPPAA NSW, AND GORDON BRIAN VICE PRESIDENT CAMPSIE RSL GROUP.

We extend special thanks for the generous Grant received from the Campsie RSL Club Ltd. Pictured presenting the cheque for the Grant to the Association from Campsie RSL Group are Vice President, Gordon Brian (L) and Director, Ivan Tilmouth (R) with the Grant being gratefully accepted by the Association's President, William ((Bill) Roberts OAM and Secretary, Ron O'Connor JP. (C l-r).

Ron O'Connor JP
National Secretary VVFA
Honorary Secretary VVPPAA NSW

NEWS UPDATE

HERE WE CATCH UP ON NEWS FROM PREVIOUS ISSUES

NSWRSL VSF DELIVERED

After the landmark decisions and agreements reached we received the funds in July 2025. Since then we have learnt that many more RSL Sub-Branches helped and contributed to the funds made available to us.

We publish that list below in recognition of those RSL Sub-Branches who support our Association and assist us to continue our valuable work for the veteran community, State wide. Those RSL Sub-Branches include:

Burwood RSL sub-Branch
Mortdale RSL sub-Branch
Castle Hill and District RSL sub-Branch
Kensington RSL sub-Branch
Penshurst RSL sub-Branch
Balgowlah/Seaforth/Clontarf RSL sub-Branch
Bass Hill RSL sub-Branch
Lane Cove RSL sub-Branch
Five Dock RSL sub-Branch
Newtown RSL sub-Branch
Chester Hill-Carramar RSL sub-Branch
Cumberland RSL sub-Branch
Bondi Junction/Waverley RSL sub-Branch
Smithfield RSL sub-Branch
Oberon RSL sub-Branch
Maroubra RSL sub-Branch
Merrylands RSL sub-Branch (Granville)
Merrylands RSL sub-Branch (Central Coast)
Mortdale RSL sub-Branch
Brighton Le Sands RSL sub-Branch
Narrabeen RSL sub-Branch
Bronte RSL sub-Branch
City of Blacktown RSL sub-Branch
City of Bankstown RSL sub-Branch
Bronte RSL sub-Branch

We fully realised all funds by mid-January 2026, in the way of employing a new Advocate into Compensation and Wellbeing training, through ATDP, and existing employed Advocates wages and support.

THAT BACKLOG

The terrible reports of the backlog of claims waiting to be completed by DVA, keeps getting lots of response from our readers, but nothing from DVA or the government, as usual. A paper on the matter was formerly passed to our president, for possible submission to EFTPOS.

There may be more on the matter in the editorial of this issue space permitting.

DVA and AI

The Editorial comment on the possible usage by DVA in applying AI algorithms and in determination of claims, remains to be both clarified and confirmed by DVA.

PARTNERS OF VETERANS (PVA)

Comment from within its membership was healthy and we received only one of dissent from a disgruntled former committee member which was passed on to the author.

Some remembered the joint mail-out with a flyer from PVA and this associations call for a Coral/Balmoral reunion. Such was the support and reciprocation, and cooperation between PVA, Sons and Daughters of Vietnam Veterans, and the VVPPAA NSW and VVFA.

TWO NEW COLUMNS

The recent introduction of the 'Advocates Corner', and 'Did you Know- Facts of Interest', while still in their infancy, have drawn some comment, and we hope that other entrants from interstate may be forthcoming in future issues.

Anyone wishing to catch up on previous issues are able to download a full coloured pdf file from our websites:

www.vvfa.org.au or www.vvfa granville.org



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

AVCAT SCHOLARSHIPS

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

\$4000-\$6000 a year, for 3 years

Eligibility: Australian residency or citizenship, child or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran, full-time tertiary student in 2026 enrolled in a minimum one-year course at uni, TAFE or an RTO and in receipt of, or eligible to receive, a means-tested Commonwealth educational benefit - Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, or Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) or Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS) in 2026.

**Applications open Vietnam Veterans' Day
18 August 2026
And close midnight 31 October 2026**

**Apply online at
avcat.org.au**



AVCAT

**VVPPAA
SCHOLARSHIP
REPORT
Annual Review 2025**

2022 Cohort

Scholar Updates and Thank You Notes
Nathan Miller — Bachelor of Social Work
Course Completion: December 2027
Scholarship Completion: December 2025
Graham Walker AM Scholarship

After a slow start to his tertiary studies in 2022, Nathan’s persistence and hard work have led him to where he finds himself now, heading into his final placement to complete his bachelor’s degree. He firmly believes a large part of his success has been the continued support from his sponsor. Nathan is extremely grateful for the support received. As his scholarship is now complete, he becomes a member of the AVCAT Alumni Network.

Thank You Note:

Dear VVPPAA

I am writing to express my gratitude for your generous support through the scholarship. Your contribution has had a profound impact on my life, both academically and personally, and I truly could not have reached this point without it.

Thanks to your support since 2022. I have now successfully completed all of my university topics, and have only my final placement remaining before I graduate. The financial assistance relieved a significant amount of pressure and allowed me to focus on my studies and professional development. Knowing I had your support behind me gave me the confidence and stability I needed to persevere during challenging times.

I am proud to share that I am currently working as a Family Advisor at Relationships Australia. This role has reinforced my passion for supporting

individuals and families, and it has strengthened my desire to work with the Navy once I am fully qualified or within the domestic and family violence sector from a health-focused perspective. Looking ahead, I hope to undertake further study, potentially completing a Master of Public Health, so I can advocate for and make a meaningful difference within marginalised communities.

I cannot thank AVCAT and VVPPAA enough for believing in me and supporting my journey. Your generosity has changed my life in ways I will always be grateful for, and I am committed to paying that support forward through my future work and advocacy, and social justice.

With most Warmest Regards
Nathan Miller
Proud AVCAT Scholar

2024 Cohort

Scholar Updates and Thank You Notes
Amara May Wright — Bachelor of Criminal Justice
Course Completion: December 2026
Phil Thompson OAM Scholarship

Amara has achieved excellent results in the last semester of 2025, once again receiving the Executive Deans Award for excellence. She remains committed and focussed as she enters her last year of her degree. Amara is very grateful for the support which relieves the financial pressure and continues to provide her with more time to focus on her studies.

Thank You Note:

Dear VVPPAA,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be one of your scholarship recipients. This scholarship has greatly reduced the financial pressure associated with university, particularly in relation to tuition and rent, and has allowed me to focus more fully on my studies. With one year remaining in my course, I am very grateful for the support you have provided, as it has had a meaningful impact on my academic progress.

This year, I achieved strong academic results, averaging distinctions and credits across all subjects. I was proud to receive my second Dean's Award in the first semester, which reflected the effort I have been able to put into my studies. Having financial stability has helped me remain focused and motivated, and I aim to maintain these results throughout my final year.

I have also improved my time management skills over the past year and now balance my workload more effectively. While I continue to develop these skills, my goal is to improve my organisation further by starting and completing assignments earlier, particularly during busy periods at the end of semester when assessments are often scheduled close together.

Thank you again for this opportunity. Your support has relieved financial stress and allowed me to prioritise my studies, maintain strong academic performance, and work confidently toward completing my degree.

Best regards,
Amara Wright.

2025 Cohort

Scholar Updates and Thank You Notes

Charles Adams — Diploma of Laboratory Technology (Pathology)

Course Completion: June 2026

Graham Walker AM Scholarship

Charles has successfully completed his first semester of his diploma after completing his Certificate IV in Laboratory Technology at the

beginning of the year. He feels he has formed good habits with the long commute to and from TAFE, using his time to revise where he can. Charles is extremely thankful for the scholarship and the support received, helping ease the financial burden.

Thank You Note:

Dear VVPPAA,

To those who it may concern within the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia and the Graham Walker AM Scholarship,

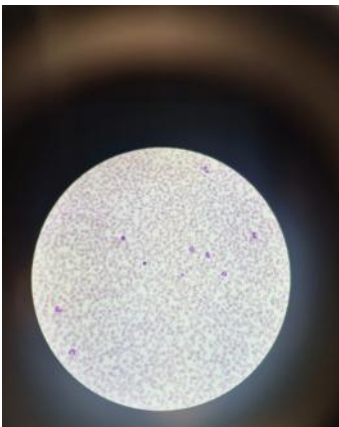
Thank you so much for your continued support in my academic journey, I am eternally grateful as it has enabled me to develop the knowledge and skills that will aid me in my adult and professional life. With the help of the scholarship, I have able to afford the tuition fees of my current course along with all the extra costs that come with it, for instance, travel, sustenance and the resources needed to study. During my current course, the diploma of laboratory technology (pathology), I have learnt an abundance about the field of pathology, the intricacies of human health and also the importance of the health care system. While some information is confronting at times, the knowledge that I will one day be able to work in the field and assist others puts me in an eager state to study. I have been academically successfully this year, passing all my units and assignments, this was no easy task as most some assignments had a passing mark of near 90%, requiring hours of study during the weeks prior to ensure my knowledge was up to industry standard. I am looking forward to the coming year of study and what it has to offer. My personal development for the year has been quite successful; I feel as if I have now fully settled into the business and stress of this new level of study. Truthfully, during my first semester, I found it difficult with the packed timetable and constant use of public transportation during peak hours, along with all the travel delays that would often delay me until late into the night getting home. But now I have adapted and realised that it was a part of the normal cycle of life in Sydney. I now utilise this time for the better, reading and studying where I can. In my free time I still exercise frequently and work with my local NSW Rural Fire Service. It is

(Continued on page 16)

with these extra-curricular activities that I am able to find peace and feel comfortable.

Again, thank you to all those involved who have enabled me to succeed in my academics with the help of this scholarship. I will do my utmost best with the hopes of one day using my skills to benefit the community. I hope everyone has a great, successful and healthy new year.

Kind regards,
Charles Adams



An example of blood analysis work completed during the semester.

Content

This report has been edited to remove personal and/or sensitive information in relation to the scholars.

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DVA INSPIRATION & RESPONSIBILITY

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) continues to demonstrate a strong and genuine commitment to improving the wellbeing of Australian veterans and their families. With the recent influx of federal government funding, DVA has been empowered to expand and enhance a broad range of initiatives designed to support veterans throughout every stage of their post-service lives. These actions reflect not only the findings of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, but also DVA's deep sense of responsibility to create meaningful, lasting change for those who have served.

The Royal Commission delivered 122 recommendations to the Governor-General on 9 September 2024, and since then DVA has moved swiftly and constructively to translate these insights into practical reforms. The department has taken proactive steps to streamline services, improve internal processes, and strengthen its capability to provide compassionate, consistent, and effective support. These efforts reflect a growing culture of empathy within the department—particularly among delegates and staff who work closely with veterans' claims and wellbeing matters.

Some key recommendations on the verge of full implementation include:

- **Recommendation 80:** DVA assuming primary responsibility for supporting members transitioning out of the ADF.
- **Recommendation 81:** Funding a program dedicated to supporting members' wellbeing during their transition to civilian life.
- **Recommendation 86:** Ongoing funding for Veterans' and Families' Hubs to ensure long-term community support.

- **Recommendation 87:** Establishing a new agency focused solely on veteran wellbeing.
- **Recommendation 89:** Creating a national peak body for ex-service organisations.

These initiatives highlight DVA's growing emphasis on prevention, continuity of care, and accessible community-based support.

More recently, the federal government approved substantial funding measures that reinforce DVA's forward-looking mission:

Enhancing the Health and Wellbeing of Veterans and Serving Members

An investment of **\$739.2 million over four years from 2025–26** (with further ongoing funding beyond 2030–31) has been allocated to strengthen prevention and rehabilitation services. This demonstrates a strong government endorsement of DVA's long-term strategy to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes.

Establishing the Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing

The Australian Government has committed **\$78 million over four years from 2025–26**, to establish a dedicated executive agency within DVA. Operating from **1 July 2026**, this agency will sharpen the national focus on veteran wellbeing and deliver on Recommendation 87 of the Royal Commission.

Additional commitments include:

- **\$38.9 million over three years from 2026–27** to strengthen the sustainability of Veterans' and Families' Hubs.

- **\$2.9 million over three years from 2026–27**, and ongoing annual funding, to support a cultural transition program assisting members as they move from military to civilian life.

Through this new agency, DVA will deliver enhanced case management, coordinated wellbeing services, concierge referrals, community connections, and a dedicated hotline. Importantly, it will assume full responsibility for transition support—addressing long-standing gaps and ensuring ADF members experience consistent, uninterrupted care as they leave service.

Consultation with the veteran community has been central to the agency’s design. Veterans consistently expressed the need for **local presence**, and DVA responded by ensuring the agency will be embedded within communities nationwide. Its collaboration with Veterans’ and Families’ Hubs will strengthen local support networks and help ensure these hubs remain viable in the long term.

The new cultural transition program will further assist members in building resilience, maintaining wellbeing, and navigating the social and professional challenges of adjusting to civilian life. Pilot programs will test and refine best-practice approaches in several locations, aligning with both the spirit and the intent of the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

At the operational level, DVA has already implemented internal practices aimed at deepening empathy and understanding among staff who work closely with veterans. Deputy Commissioner NSW & ACT Katrina Jocumsen has said,

“It’s been encouraging to see positive feedback coming through on the professionalism, empathy and responsiveness shown by our staff in supporting veterans and their families. At the same time, we remain committed to continually improving our services and client experience, and to learning from feedback to strengthen how we work.”

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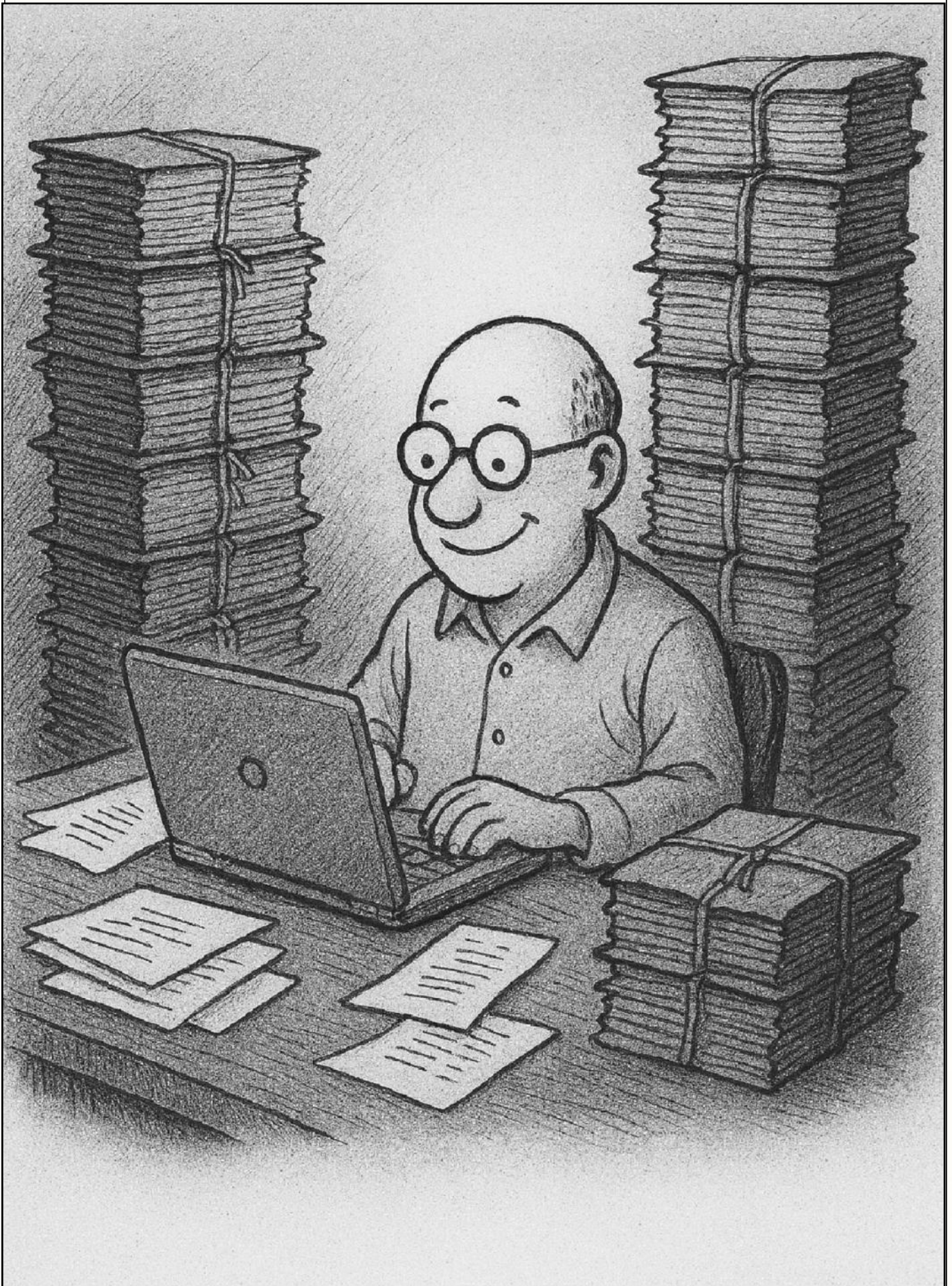
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VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS

Article 16

The First Six Months of the Association's Existence

Part D – State Branches

This article is the last of four outlining and commenting on events in the important first half year of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association (afterwards to be the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, the predecessor of the Federation).

It looks, in particular, at State Branches and related events.

“Historians can only be as good as their sources” – a common remark about the writing of history. “... the files are often silent.

One of the main causes of this can be found in that great robber of history, the telephone” – Paul Hasluck, commenting in 1951 on researching Government records.

It will be recalled that Holt McMinn and Bernie Szapeil's announced intention to form an association of Vietnam veterans in mid-December 1979 precipitated action in most State and Territory capital cities. Small groups of veterans came together to share information, provide mutual support and decide on action. They wanted to better understand the implications of chemical exposure (including the incidence of health problems and child deformities) and seek compensation for any harms arising from that exposure.

Large numbers of veterans and family members often attended subsequent public meetings to be briefed by key Association figures on the national organisation's plans and relevant science. Some attendees committed to membership.

At those large meetings a State body was usually established – office bearers were installed – and some general goals were agreed. Activities in the following months weren't constrained or necessitated by a national constitution or an organisational policy framework but were

determined more by the interests, capabilities, available time and (personal) financial resources of the office-bearers, noting that lobbying and agitation at the national level were functions largely taken on by the inaugural National President, Holt McMinn. (He was assisted by various professionals: most notably by the Victorian scientist John Evans, the Queensland solicitor Bill McMillan and the Federal MP Clyde Holding.)

Even though State organisations in that initial six months were left to decide for themselves where their efforts would be directed, they mostly settled into a predictable mix of activities, including those aimed at making themselves viable (by filling committee positions, communicating with members, hosting social events and raising funds), at supporting McMillan's US class action efforts (by relaying information, and distributing and collecting forms of various sorts), at otherwise assembling data (on the incidence of suicides, illnesses, miscarriages and child health problems), at raising the media profile of the Branch (usually a matter of the President commenting on national developments) and at aiding veterans and families

(Continued on page 22)

in difficulty (by actions ranging from the defusing of dangerous situations to the encouraging of recourse to external welfare services). The author deduces that it was the last of these activities – and especially the provision of crisis support and pastoral care by veterans for veterans and their families, drawing on professional assistance where available – which convinced early officials that their Branches had an important purpose.

Even in the first six months, though, when State officials were settling into their roles and accustoming themselves to the limitations of tiny budgets and volunteer workforces, there were opportunities to pursue matters which individuals thought to be important. Thus it was that Mike Boland, in the guise of ACT Branch Secretary, continued his pursuit of various reforms to the repatriation system not directly related to chemical harms. So it was, too, that important NSW figures, Gary and Sandra Adams, and Jim Wares, sought in various ways to alert the community to the dangers inherent in the continuing use of agricultural chemicals; Adams and Phil Thompson also devised a presentation based on John Evans' chemical science which they were to deliver from the middle of the year, to make members of ex-service organisations and the public aware of chemical risks (while seeking support for the Association).

Many of these activities left footprints but major problems nonetheless confront historians trying to piece together the early history of the various State and Territory Branches. There are few surviving national records from 1980, and records relating to the early activities of State officials are both thin on the ground and, often being undated, are unable to be situated in time, even if signed. Some important documents are incomplete. Documents for national purposes which might have included pointers to early State activities – documents like minutes of the first (May 1980) National Congress – may never have existed. The few State newsletters and publications from the first half-year are of limited assistance, owing to their brevity, and "Debrief", with its (at best) sporadic roundup of Branches' news, did not appear until

August 1980.

The telephone proved itself, in these early years, to be a highly effective robber of Association history. The fact that early Association leaders were more prone to picking up their phones than writing letters is understandable, bearing in mind the part-time nature of their duties, their sometimes limited written skills, and their other obligations. The huge phone bills which prominent early figures sometimes struggled to pay (or later felt that the Commonwealth should pay) make clear their reliance on spoken communication.

To make matters still worse, the principal participants in most events have passed away, been otherwise uncontactable or – understandably, after nearly half a century – been insufficiently specific in their recollections to advance the narrative. In addition, some materials of potential assistance – especially sound and video recordings – have not survived in good condition and, in the case of NSW recordings, could not be restored by a technical expert.

The historian is consequently left with a jigsaw puzzle, most of whose pieces were never created, have been lost or are damaged. Some of the gaps in the puzzle are, it's true, able to be part-filled by newspaper reports (relied on heavily in this article), but press coverage of Vietnam veteran matters in 1980 was typically patchy and was often limited to national or international stories, after an initial focus on local veterans and their families. Reports in other media, with the exception of some ABC radio and TV materials, have not been retained or are, if existent, hard to locate.

Thus it is that missing information is a significant problem for anyone attempting to write a history of the Association before at least the second half of 1981. Sadly (but some would say "justly"), the architects of this evidentiary problem have been, in later decades, foremost among its victims; the earliest Association officials – who pre-date even the 45 year participation in the Australian veterans' movement of Graham Walker – have, because of poor record keeping and archiving,

never been written about in a rigorous way. This has been despite an almost unremitting national enthusiasm for stories about serviceman battlers and victims. Most of the earliest officeholders were forgotten within a few years, with their achievements eclipsed by those of their successors, and their sacrifices unrecalled by later members.

But there are reasons other than the poor quality and scarcity of historical sources for the overlooking of the earliest Branch events in later commentaries on the Association.

Firstly, a seemingly acceptable summary of early events existed for later commentators to draw on. This account of how the Association came to exist and of its early activities (contained in the first edition of Debrief in August 1980) seemed relatively straightforward and plausible to external commentators, and was, in addition, written by a participant in early NSW events. The account was persuasively ‘democratic’, pleasingly organic and soon became the dominant narrative. It also seemed, by being authoritative and publicly undisputed, to not require testing or revisiting. (And anyway, who in the early Association really cared if, when there was pressing work to be done, this account wasn’t entirely accurate... and if it forged links between events which were something of a stretch?) Its acceptance had the added benefit, too, of permitting some early disappointments, which would have detracted from the idea of a national organisation, to be kept from view.

Secondly, a later tendency in some quarters to disparage the leadership of inaugural National President, Holt McMinn, and downplay the importance of early branches other than NSW, has had the effect of obscuring all Association efforts (including, ironically, those in NSW) prior to the national presidency of Phil Thompson. Historians, so this thinking went, didn’t need to focus on early State events.

Thirdly, the cult of personality which, over time, grew up around Phil Thompson also served to peg the effective beginning of the Association history at the point of his formal assumption of the

national presidency, with unfortunate consequences for those who came before. Thompson’s winning personality, his lengthy time in office (as NSW and then National President), his mostly stoic acceptance of illness and his tragic death — have resulted in him overshadowing less engaging or shorter-tenured contemporaries.

Fourthly, certain Association-claimed victories had, by coming to fruition in the Thompson presidency, also distracted attention from the earliest Association achievements.

Fifthly and finally, a “reputational” matter had discouraged rigorous research into early Association events. Historians have preferred to gloss over early events so as to not engage with a prominent early Association official whose testimony has been in various ways problematic. The author engaged with this veteran and, while finding most of his testimony useful, treated some of his recollections, particularly when unverifiable or contestable, with the historian’s customary caution.

In the interest of transparency, it needs to be stated here that the veteran’s unrelenting dissatisfaction with historians’ work on the early Association extended in 2025 to encompass the previous articles in this sequence and, specifically, to encompass their focus on events at the national level in which the veteran was little involved.

Despite the veteran’s strongly put criticisms, the author has tried, below, to provide a fair account of the part played by him in his Branch in the first half of 1980, noting (a) that developments leading up to the formal establishment of Association Branches are covered in earlier articles and (b) that a proportion of undated events referred to in related interviews (and in undated papers in various repositories) are likely to have taken place later in 1980 or in early 1981.

The Victorian Branch

It will be recalled that various important events for the founding of the Association took place in

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Victoria after reports about veterans' health problems and child deformities appeared in the media (see the article on the establishment of the Victorian Branch earlier in this series): on 20 December 1979, it was reported that Bernie Szapiel and Holt McMinn were trying to establish an association.

Media coverage of this story encouraged concerned veterans in various states and territories to make contact with Szapiel, resulting in the interstate gathering of veterans on 4 January 1980. The 10 January meeting (at which national positions were allocated) also took place in Melbourne.

The first major local event was the convening of a public meeting of Victorian veterans and others at Anzac House on 2 February 1980, apparently at the invitation of Victorian RSL President Bruce Ruxton. (see earlier article). This meeting was reported as being attended by more than 200 veterans and their wives but no clear or detailed account of what took place has been discovered by the author. Committee positions were doubtless filled at or around this time but the names of officeholders are not known.

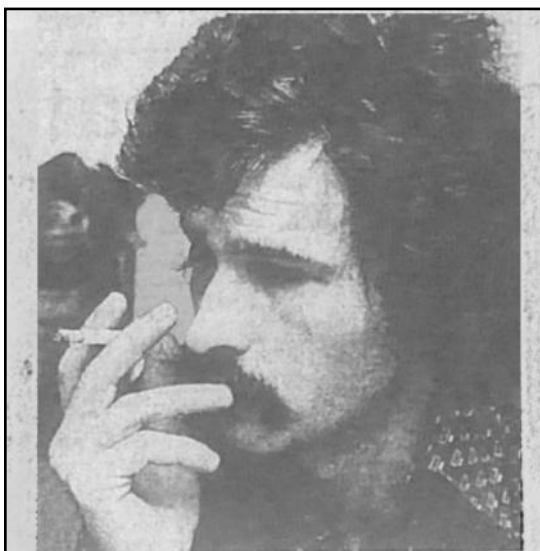
Bernie Szapiel was referred to in various newspaper articles early in the year as the Victorian President but was probably hospitalised in January and unlikely to have been well enough to steer the new Branch for long; Garry Hamilton succeeded him as State President.

It is known that the early Victorian headquarters was at 140 King Street, adjacent to the office of the Branch solicitor, David Teed, but

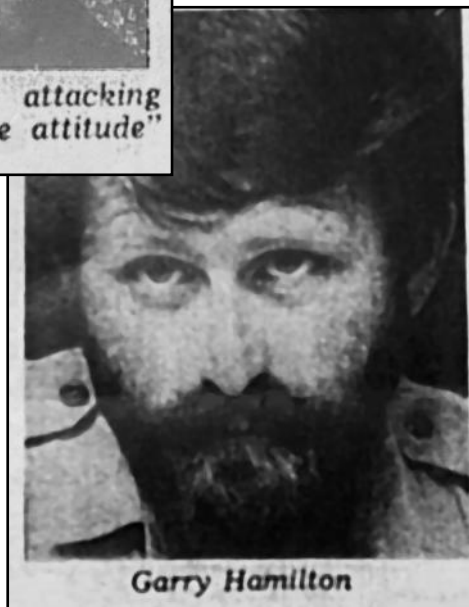
moved in May to a Melbourne landmark, the Nicholas Building in Swanston Street. It is known that veterans were assisted with claims at these locations, that a monthly newsletter commenced in April and that veterans Tim Hirland and Dirk Van Neuren – both trained social workers – provided welfare assistance via an “action line” staffed by office manager, Billie Mannion.

Garry Hamilton was a signatory to Holt McMinn's mid-February press release criticising Minister Adremann's information sources and made an independent foray into the national sphere in early April; he argued in the media that the Federal Government's refusal to grant the Association an independent inquiry was a muzzling of Vietnam veterans that was inconsistent with their wartime mission in defence of free speech. At the same time an

astounding article appeared in *The Age*,



Mr. Bernard Szapiel: attacking Government's "negative attitude"



Garry Hamilton

backgrounding the whole Vietnam chemical issue in Australia, describing the difficulties experienced by Vietnam veterans and including modest information on the Association's welfare aims; making an already poignant story all the more moving was description of the tragedy endured by Hamilton and his partner. In concert with that article the Victorian Branch wrote a sophisticated,

measured letter – addressee unspecified when tabled in the House of Representatives – arguing for a judicial inquiry and remaking McMinn’s earlier request for \$500K or \$2.5M for welfare funding (as well as for money to prepare a judicial inquiry case).

While it may be thought that good relations between the Victorian Branch and the State Branch of the RSL in the first half of the year ‘explain’ pro-Vietnam veteran motions put to the League National Executive in this period (and account for other positive Victorian initiatives), scrutiny of RSL State Branch records reveals that these actions are mostly the work of RSL sub-branches and, occasionally, of Victorian RSL President, Bruce Ruxton.

As will be seen in the next instalment in this series the Victorian Branch in the second half of the year would, under a new President, David Harris, go on to expand its counselling and repatriation advocacy services – the latter being the first provided by a State Branch – and would use its legal sub-committee (comprised of Vietnam veteran solicitors) for advice on governance and other matters. It would implement, too, an innovative way of deciding on local directions and of making use of members’ skills and abilities.

The NSW Branch

Mention was made in an earlier article of the important initial New South Wales events, including the appearance of local veterans (most importantly, Jim Wares) in the media in the second half of December 1979; the collating by Wares, in the same period, of information on veteran/family members’ infirmities and child deformities; the convening of a small meeting by Gary Adams and Wares at the Castle Hill RSL Club on 27 December 1980 (able to be described as the very first formal Association meeting); the attendance of New South Wales representatives at the 4 January multi-state meeting in Melbourne; the participation of Wares in the 10 January Melbourne meeting which allocated national positions in the new organisation; and the public meeting at the Dural Country Club on 23 January 1980 (at which an initial branch committee

was installed).

There would appear to have been little difficulty in filling Committee positions at the last mentioned gathering. An undated document – a kind of holding response to correspondence received – which is evidently from early in 1980, lists Wares as President, Robert Ford as Vice-President, Maurie Gillick as Junior Vice-President, Gary Adams as Secretary, Robert Hopper as Treasurer, and other members as Phil Thompson, Carla McCallum, John Stanford, John Wright and Arnold Lockrey (names spelled here just as they appeared in the original document).

In an organisational sense the most important subsequent event in the 6 month period under consideration was without doubt the Branch Committee’s acceptance of Secretary Adams’ offer to work full-time without pay for the branch. As someone devoting himself on a voluntary full-time basis to the cause – and with an articulate and keenly supportive wife to assist his efforts – Adams was consequently positioned to determine what work the branch would do (to the extent that he wasn’t responding to the crises and opportunities that came his way) and to determine who he would and wouldn’t work with.

Adding to the influence he enjoyed as a result of the provision of his (and Sandra’s) labour was his situating of the Branch office (such as it was at that time) at his employment-tied house in Dural and his acceptance of National President Holt McMinn’s offer to be National Secretary – a position which required little special effort but saw him included in briefing letters from the likes of Bill McMillan, the National Solicitor.

Precisely when Adams’ offer to run the Association was made and accepted is unclear. Acceptance of the offer logically preceded, though, a move by his family from the housing provided by his supportive employer, J E Allen Pty Ltd (aka John Allen Motors), to a rented property in Tooradin Place, Pennant Hills. Sandra Adams

(Continued on page 26)

indicated to the author that this move took place in around April 1980.

Before the move to Pennant Hills, with Adams in full-time employment, with Sandra working as a TAFE teacher, and with three young children to look after, time to devote to Association activities had to have been at a premium. This said, it's inevitable that some crisis support was provided from the outset. The inaugural edition of the branch newsletter (prepared in mid-February 1980) was doubtless produced at Dural. Committee meetings were probably also held there. To the extent that the welfare funding proposal put to the NSW Government in this period (see previous instalments on the founding of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service) required discussion, that, too probably happened at Dural (noting the attempt to hand a proposal to the NSW Premier, Neville Wran, on Anzac Day 1980). But even if the wide range of aims agreed at the initial (27 December 1979) gathering had been endorsed by the subsequent (23 January 1980) meeting – thereby providing Adams with a ready-made plan of action – the time he had to devote to Association activities at Dural was necessarily limited.

Once at Tooradin Place and no longer in paid employment, he had the time and space in which to pursue a broader range of tasks and to host the professional welfare services initially delivered by professional welfare worker Carla McCallum (wife of veteran Peter McCallum).

Adams was soon joined in his expanded activities (including crisis interventions) by Phil Thompson who appears to have been a member of the initial New South Wales committee and was,

like Adams, not distracted from Association work by employment.

It is clear from author interviews that the Adams duo and Thompson formed a tight working unit in this period. That Gary Adams and Thompson should soon see little merit in Jim



Gary Adams, his wife Sandra and their youngest child, Kerri, outside their Pennant Hills command post. Scientific and medical evidence to support its case. Confidential until leaked to the Melbourne news. 100,000 offspring has be

Wares continuing in his role as Branch President was in some way unsurprising; Wares was known to be a good media performer and was, by virtue of his successful employment, unable to spend his days on Association activities. He may have seemed, too, to be more focused on compensation for the deformed children of veterans than on compensation for veterans' afflictions.

The commonly advanced account for Wares' departure – that Adams

objected to the housing of veterans' records on the premises of Wares' Liberal Party-connected employer and persuaded him to go – doesn't ring quite true. And this is not just because IPEC (Wares employer) was owned by an entrepreneur who'd broken with the Liberal Party years before over the military commitment to Vietnam and had, via the new parties he'd created, been an ongoing thorn in the conservatives' side. Other explanations, still featuring a confrontation between Adams and Wares, are more convincing.

It's appropriate to recall at this point that Wares, in addition to being the initial leader in NSW, brought important logic to early publicity about the health problems being experienced by veterans and their families. He did this by methodically determining the incidence (frequency) of veterans' and families' medical conditions, including child deformities.

Ware's departure buoyed the Thompson/Adams partnership and, after a month, saw Thompson replace the reluctant interim president, Rob Ford; it also provided the two men with the confidence (a) to attend the May Congress of the New South Wales Branch of the RSL (where they

were allegedly well received) and (b) to indicate to attendees at the Action



Gary Adams and Phil Thompson

Association's own

(inaugural) 'national conference' in May, that they were keen to run the national organisation.

It seems that a significant fillip to the confidence of the Adams/Thompson duo, going forward, was the alleged endorsement of the New South Wales Branch by the Victorian scientist, John Evans, who had impressed Adams as far back as the early January meeting in Melbourne. In discussion with the author Adams recalled Evans's claim that the New South Wales branch was "leading the way", a claim paraphrased in the only surviving minutes of a NSW Committee meeting from the first half of 1980: the record of the 31 May 1980 meeting.

By the middle of the year, Thompson and Adams could claim some hard-won expertise in dealing with the electronic media, could claim to have acquired useful scientific knowledge and could truthfully assert that they'd aided Bill McMillan's US class action initiatives (by disseminating information and by distributing and

collecting forms of various sorts). They had acquired some experience in the conduct of meetings (having run a surprising range of Association gatherings at ex-service clubs) and had even made tentative efforts to raise funding beyond membership subscriptions. They had developed the

earlier mentioned presentation on war-time chemical exposure and its consequences. Most importantly, though, they could claim extensive experience in the crisis intervention, police liaison and hospital visiting activities which, along with Carla

McCallum's counselling, was the most impactful work of the Branch. By contrast, social efforts had been less successful and the Branch hadn't been involved in manoeuvres at the federal level to secure an independent chemical inquiry, apart from Ware's public support for the McMinn mid-February press release (mentioned above). Similarly, the Branch hadn't, in these initial months been much involved in jousting with the RSL National Executive, focussing instead on cordial relations with RSL sub-branches and clubs (relied on for funding and big meeting venues).

In the second half of the year Adams' and Thompson's work would continue, with increasing numbers of experts attracted to the cause, and with their chemical presentations continuing so as to increase grass-roots RSL (if not public) support for the compensation call. They would also engineer a masterstroke which would at once cement New South Wales control of the national organisation in

(Continued on page 28)

the years ahead, and, ironically, play a major part in the sundering of the organisation more than a decade later.

The Queensland Branch

Part of the Queensland story was told in Instalment 3 of this series (on the founding of the Association, nationally), as it was a Queenslander, John Harper, who, on the 18th of December 1979, appeared in The Australian calling for an organisation to help Vietnam veterans and their families obtain compensation for chemical harms from the Australian and US Governments. His had been, in a way, the very first organising call.

Instalment 3 of this series (including detail on the establishment of the Queensland Branch), referred to Harper's post-Christmas calls in The Courier-Mail for other ex-servicemen with deformed children to get in touch with him and noted reportage on the health misfortunes of the families of the three Fulton brothers, Ken, Barry and Peter. Later articles kept the chemical exposure issue alive in The Courier-Mail in the days leading up to the inaugural state meeting on Sunday 20 January 1980. Those articles included one on the Brisbane solicitor, Bill McMillan (even at this stage a significant contributor to Association affairs) and one of a now almost legendary nature in which the (then) Queensland President of the KSEAFA (soon

to be VVAA Queensland Branch President), Graham Bell, was reported as classing politicians who withheld unqualified support from chemical-affected veterans as "enemy".



Nearly 200 people were reported in The Courier-Mail as having attended the 20 January 1980 meeting (which preceded the equivalent Sydney meeting by three days). Minutes contained in VVAA files, providing a more detailed account, revealed that attendees were addressed by McMillan, Harper, McMinn and Evans before the appointment/election of office bearers. The mechanics of election/appointment are not in all cases clear, but it seems that Harper's nomination for the role of president was not contested, that Zev Ben-Avri became Vice-President, that Ian McDowell became Treasurer and that other Committee members were Rick Antley, Gavin Kemp and A. A Vonk, with the

Secretary's position unfilled. A note indicates that some of these individuals had previously constituted an interim executive; it is therefore more than likely that a small meeting of some sort preceded this 20 January 1980 one).

Soon after the 20 January gathering inaugural meeting the new Branch contemplated involvement in genetic testing. A progress report by Harper to Queensland members a short while later noted that "nearly three hundred veterans are registered in the Brisbane Metropolitan area alone."



THE FULTON FAMILY

While McMillan and US class action matters were occasionally in the news in the following months, and aspects of the longstanding controversy about links between local defoliant use and deformities surfaced from time to time, the views of the Queensland Branch on these and national/international developments seems not have been sought. John Harper nonetheless appeared in *The Courier-Mail* on 30 March, revealing (among other things) that 300 of the 400 veterans who'd contacted him had children with disabilities; this doubtless played a part in encouraging the veteran-sympathetic stance of a *Courier-Mail* editorial on 2 April. Later in the same month Harper, under the pretext of thanking two retired Lieutenant-Colonels for publicly supporting the Association, pointed out the similarities in the poor post-war treatment of WW1 diggers and the Vietnam men. Still later, at a time when the harms to atomic veterans were of more interest to the media, Harper reminded readers of the *Courier-Mail* of the plight of children with deformities and then of the health problems of veterans.

A separate group, Veterans Family Support, had been established by the wives of Vietnam veterans shortly before but this did not mean that Queensland Branch officials were relieved of welfare obligations. An indication of the telephone welfare and communication work undertaken by

Harper was included in the Queensland report in the initial edition of *Debrief*, which noted that: "John and Heather Harper had virtually no time for themselves for several months; their phone rang hot at all hours of the day and night as veterans sought help." Also noted in that first report was the convening of a general meeting on 1 June and the election of new State President Graham Bell (known at this point for his scathing McMinn-like March criticism of RSL officials).

The South Australian Branch

Little is known of the conduct of the early South Australian Branch following events outlined in the earlier article on beginnings in Adelaide – events which mostly featured in the city's major newspaper, *The Advertiser*. Reports there included ones on the efforts of Wendy Rowney to gather information on deformities (to present to the Government), her contact with Victorian Association figures, and her conclusion that more than half of the veterans who'd approached her had children with birth defects. Stories then featured Peter Keech's evidence of spraying concerns, the forming of a local steering committee and then, on 17 February 1980, the holding of a large inaugural meeting.

The Minutes of that important initial meeting reveal that Holt McMinn (National President), Bill McMillan (National Solicitor) and John Evans (National Scientific Adviser) all spoke. There was extensive questioning of McMillan and Evans, and all committee positions were filled (with Peter Keech as President, Trevor Munce as Vice President, Christine Munce as Secretary, Wendy Rowney as Treasurer and Kevin Rowney, Ken Stephens, Sandie Klose, John Klose, Ray Behrendt, Jill Sparrow and Jo Von Stanke as committee members (all names spelled as listed)).

More than one hundred veterans were subsequently reported to be joining the US Class action but coverage in *The Advertiser* of local Association matters ceased at this stage, even though there were stories on national developments

(Continued on page 30)



Meeting in North Adelaide

which could have included local input. Any additional journalistic effort to cover chemical matters seems to have been focussed on community apprehensions about a proposed Dow plant at Redcliff. Additional coverage of veterans issues was mostly focused on atomic veterans concerns and their separate quest for compensation.

For information on developments between the inaugural Adelaide meeting and the end of June 1980 the author has had to draw on the South Australian report in the first (August 1980) issue of Debrief. In this report Peter Keech observed that (a) there were 100 veteran members and a further 200 on the mailing distribution list; (b) fundraising activities had enjoyed success; (c) a sub-branch had been formed at Mt Gambier; and (d) official Branch headquarters had been established at the Klose family home in Modbury “to give information and assistance to veterans on any problems they might have.”

The Northern Territory Branch

Early events in the Northern Territory were outlined in an earlier instalment in this series. Most significantly, a story on page 1 of The Northern Territory News stated that, as a result of agitation by Carl Bouwman and other veterans, “the Vietnam Veterans Association and the RSL launched a joint move this week to set up a local Agent Orange Committee, similar to those being set up in other states.” In the earlier referred to February 1980 summary of national developments by Queensland President John Harper, mention was made of contact between Harper and Frank Alcorta from the NT.

Debrief reported later in the year that an initial Darwin meeting had been held in January, after coverage of Agent Orange developments in the media, and that office bearers had been elected in February; Alastair Henderson was elected President, with Alcorta elected as Secretary.

The branch was reported to have 50 members by August: an impressive number bearing in mind the size of the local population. It was noted that NT VVAA members were given significant assistance by the RSL to get organised and that their branch remained a sub-committee of the RSL.

Nothing else is known of NT developments except that the welfare burden fell there, just as it did elsewhere, on the shoulders of local leaders. Branch Secretary Alcorta was reported in an undated newspaper article, reproduced in Debrief, as having spoken often to a veteran who, on 8 June 1980, had murdered his young de facto wife before committing suicide.

The ACT Branch

The beginnings of the Association in the ACT were described in an earlier instalment and followed a customary path: media stories focussing on the concerns and illnesses of local veterans appeared before details were published of a veteran willing to be the contact point for men hoping to form a local Branch. That veteran, Mike

Boland, had a history of determined agitation for improved repatriation conditions, independent of the RSL, even to the point of proposing a separate organisation for that purpose.

The Canberra Times reported that “about 25 people attended a meeting on [15 January] ... to form a Canberra Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association” but revealed nothing about outcomes until a late January story confirmed the existence of the local branch; it noted an Association call for talks with the Minister for Veterans Affairs “to discuss repatriation payments to war veterans”. Mike Boland, described as the Secretary of the new branch, appeared at this point to have neatly combined the Association’s concern for veterans’ chemical problems with his own mostly procedural or legislative concerns.

Off to an energetic official start, Boland was in The Age on 1 February, condemning the Government’s inquiry and was locally advertised as an interviewee with William Keys on a community radio program to be aired on 4 February. He was in inter-state news, again, a few days after that interview, lamenting the apparent reversal of the repatriation onus of proof for chemically affected veterans, and touting a national forum on the repatriation system to be held later in the month – an event which seems not to have taken place.

References exist in newspaper articles and in correspondence to deputations from the ACT Branch meeting local politicians at the end of February; they confirm that Boland wasn’t, at this point, a one-man Branch (sic). However, some local veterans were evidently dissatisfied with representation via the Association, as moves were foreshadowed in March to morph the new entity into a sub-branch of the ACT RSL and then, when that didn’t come about, for the ACT RSL to establish a special sub-branch “for veterans of Vietnam and other conflicts in South-east Asia.”

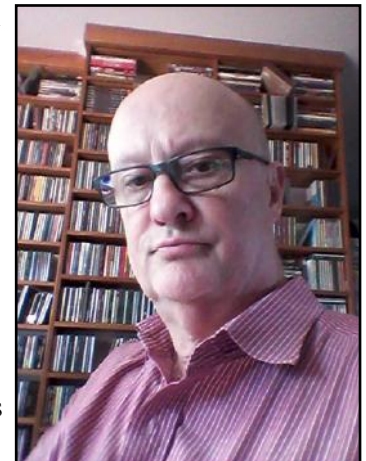
Boland’s representations as a VVAA Branch official may well have continued in the second quarter of the year but there were no reports in The Canberra Times of these or any other activities; it

wouldn’t be surprising to learn that the Branch (such as it was) wasn’t operational in any real sense in that second quarter. Its nominal endorsement of Boland’s comprehensive August 1980 paper on repatriation reforms was probably a well-intentioned puff, rather than a matter of fact. (The special difficulties likely to have been experienced by an ACT-based component of the Association in the period under consideration were numerous and were explored in the original article on the ACT in this series).

The August 1980 edition of Debrief contained no mention of an ACT Branch. One appeared not to be operative, again, until March 1981.

The next instalment in this series reviews developments in the second half of the Association’s initial year ie the second half of 1980.

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



The aim of “VVAA History Drafts” is to inform readers about progress made with the organisation’s history and encourage people with relevant additional information to assist in improving the text.

Readers with extra information about Association Branches in the first half of 1980 can contact Kel at vvhistory99@gmail.com.

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FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Argument for Improved Service Delivery by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

1. Overview of Current Claims on Hand

As at the end of January 2026, the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) had 93,657 claims on hand. Of these, 65,828 were allocated to an officer for processing, while 27,829 remained unallocated. This represents an increase of 8,119 claims since the end of August 2025. 'Claims on hand' refers to the total backlog, regardless of whether they have been assigned to a decision-maker.

2. Processing Times by Claim Type

DVA's January 31st data shows lengthy processing times across all major claim types. The following table summarises the reconstructed data:

Average Calendar days to completion.

Average Calendar days		
Claim Type	TTTP 30/9/24	TTTP 31/1/26
MRCA IL	306	339
DRCA IL	482	450
VEA Disability Compensation Payment	523	457
MRCA PI	222	219
DRCA PI	322	400
MRCA and DRCA IP	68	90
War widow(er)'s pension	103	109

3. Trend Analysis

From September 2024 to November 2025, the days taken to complete claims increased across all Acts and claim types, but 2. This confirms that DVA's overall processing efficiency has declined despite recent public statements to the contrary.

4. Misleading Public Characterisation of 'Backlog Clearance'

DVA has publicly stated that the claims backlog has been cleared. However, this refers only to the 42,000 claims recognised by the Royal Commission in August 2022. The current 92,554 claims on hand represent an ongoing and significant backlog that continues to grow.

Statements like the 'backlog ceases to exist' because a claim has been allocated to a delegate, and referring to only "unallocated" claims as 'backlog', is purely propaganda and serves no purpose.

5. Analysis of Backlog Clearance Rate

It took until 30 November 2025 to clear the 41,799 claims identified by the Royal Commission—1,187 days after August 2022. Based on this rate and exponential smoothing, it would take approximately 2,564 days (around seven years) to return to three-month claim processing timeframes.

6. Conclusion

The evidence shows worsening processing times, increasing claim volumes, and misleading public messaging about backlog status. DVA requires urgent reform, increased staffing,

improved workflow management, and transparent reporting to deliver timely outcomes for veterans.

There are suspicions among Advocates and ESOs, that AI is being used to determine more recent claims, and in the hands of unskilled, inexperienced CSOs, the data collection for successful algorithms to predict outcomes for claims is questionable.

If and when AI is to be used by DVA to predict possible claims decisions, then all algorithms must be transparent and referred to an independent, public agency, to analyse and test design of predicted possible outcomes weighted in the claimants favour. This is critical for those attempting to use the DVA MyService portal, and such algorithms in use must be available for ESOs to examine and assess.

There is no doubt that claims delays by DVA has contributed to the worsening of veterans mental health, and is one of the most causal contributors of veteran and ADF member suicides.

7. Recommendations and Solutions

The consideration of throwing more staff levels at DVA, even with the influx of 400 new trainees has made seemingly very little differences in claim timetables, and could even have influenced a slow down in processes due to the need for more Team Leaders required to oversee each decision the new CSO's are making.

The danger of trying to align older claims with the new 'harmonised' Veterans ACT come July will impact heavily on both DVA CSO's and ESO's alike, creating yet another delay in process times. The seemingly endless backlog drain on resources could act like a conduit where accepted timetables for all claims will blow out to years, not months, to process.

DVA work diligently to attempt to clear as many old claims, some going back 2 or more years, before July. One way to breach this almost impossible timeline is to create temporary processes to allow the older claims pass through unhindered with such claims given priority for settlement in the claimants favour.

All outstanding claims, being more than 200 days on hand, covered by the VEA Act, be settled in the claimants favour without exception, and such claimants be granted the Gold Card for all medical conditions, if impairment points minimums are reached. As well, partners of such veterans to obtain a Gold Card for all medical conditions upon the death of a veteran, and with immediate effect, if the veteran dies before the claim has been, settled.

All claims covered under MRCA and DRCA Acts, being of 400 + Days on hand, be settled in the claimants favour without exception, and such claimants be granted the Gold Card for all medical conditions, or its equivalent at the current Acts applicable rates.

Those claimants aged 70 or over with qualifying service and service pensioners with at least 30 impairment points, with another claim unprocessed on hand, being considered, be granted the Gold Card for all medical conditions, and all claims considered complete and conditions accepted.

Why it takes more than 100 + days to process a War Widows claim, and why such claims are even necessary is beyond comprehension, and flies in the face of DVA recent comments in relation to the anniversary of the War Widows Guild, and the 2006 survey Veterans, War Widows and their Carers.

A refinement of claims processing to speed up those of more than 400 + days on hand at DVA would secure a significant drop in backlog figures, and more importantly, give DVA the proper acknowledgement of serviceability, and a sense of commitment toward veterans.

While acknowledging that DVA has witnessed a growth in claims to process, it should remain that forecasts of possible increases were greatly underestimated, in the wake of the plethora of royal commissions, enquiries, and its own surveys, as well as, reports from ESOs, that it was to be expected.

In the same breath, we should also acknowledge that some (few) Advocates at ESOs could be contributing to claims processing by lodging incomplete claim forms, a lack of medical evidence, in an effort to clear their own increase in

(Continued on page 34)

veterans applications. As well the MyService portal, and PRODA formats leave a lot to be decided, are difficult to traverse, and cause disgruntled users to refer to manual lodgement through an ESO.

All claims on hand submitted prior to requirements and changes, such as evidence collecting, and the MyService Portal commissioning date. Must be processed at conditions concurrent when the original claims were submitted, and not assessed under current guidelines.

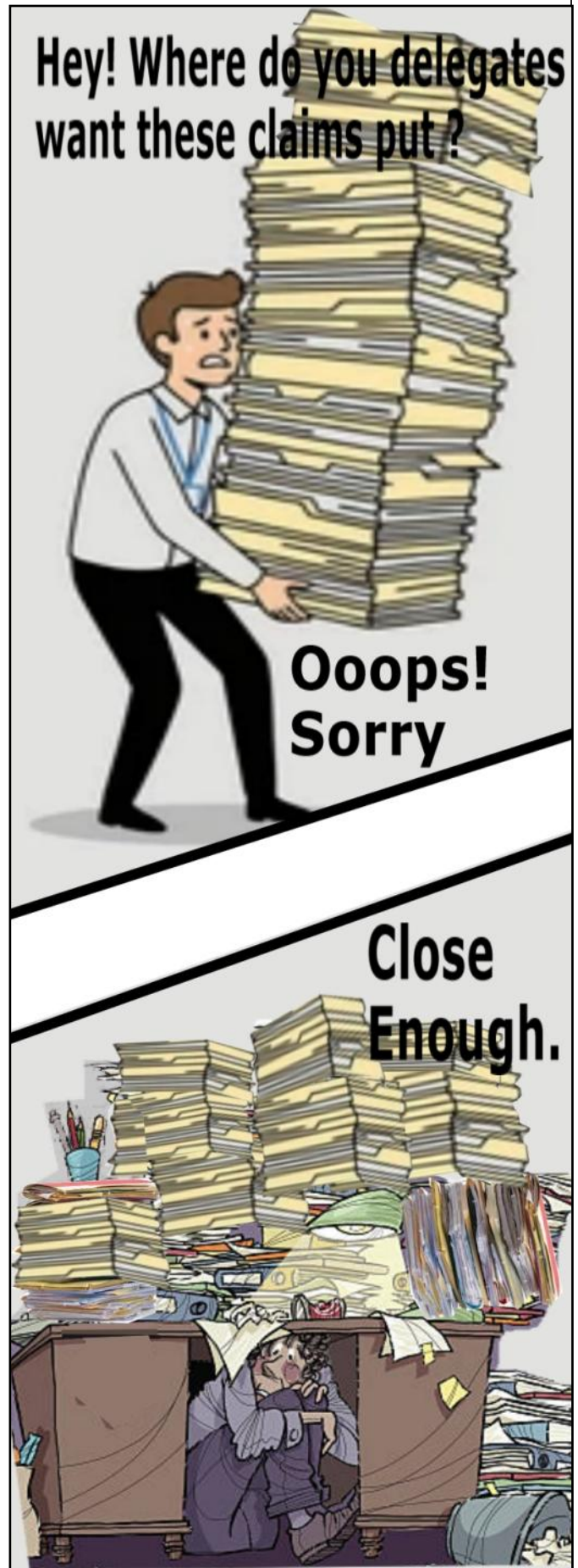
8. Closing comment

The evidence presented underscores the pressing need for decisive, coordinated action to restore the integrity and effectiveness of the claims system within the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The current trajectory—marked by prolonged delays, resource strain, and inconsistent public messaging—demonstrates that existing approaches are not delivering the standard of service veterans and their families rightfully expect.

Recent developments to establish a new Agency for Veteran and Family Wellbeing should include DVA adopting practical, transparent, and veteran centered solutions. Prioritising the clearance of long standing claims, advocating for fair and consistent decision making frameworks, and ensuring accountability in the adoption of emerging technologies such as AI will not only reduce systemic pressure within DVA but also substantially improve the lived experience of veterans navigating the claims process.

This moment represents an opportunity to drive reforms that restore trust, minimise harm, and reinforce the Government's duty of care to those who have served. With clear direction and strong collaboration, DVA should be encouraged to deliver a claims system that is timely, equitable, and aligned with the wellbeing of veterans—the very purpose for which the system exists.

Editor.





New car assistance

We have received a few emails about the following and appreciate the feedback from anyone who uses our adverts from the last page. (80).

One such email selected, and in no way do we assume any responsibility for those commenting on this service.

My name is 'Ian' and I am a member of VVPPA, Central Coast.

I was recently preparing to purchase a new car and I remembered an Ad in the July 25 edition of the VVF Newsletter for carhelper.com.au.

This group can get good deals, for a small service fee, on new cars for those of us who are TPI.

I contacted James and he was able to get me an outstanding deal on a new Subaru Forester.

I suggest anyone looking for a new car to contact carhelper before buying.

Yours,
'Ian'

And from the back page we include James' contact details:

*Contact James Whitbourn
Motoring journalist &
new car buyer's advocate
james@carhelper.com.au
0403 892 897*

*Service cost of \$165 reduced
to \$110 for members of VVPPAA NSW*

Dear Editor,

Like the addition of the Advocates case study page and the Facts of Interest page, too. Some of us older diggers, sometimes we forget, and these pages help to jog the grey matter a bit.

Keep up the great work, Bob, and the rest of the gang at Granville. You mean a lot to veterans seeking truth in reporting, and not to mention the work and hours your volunteers and Advocates do on behalf of the rest of us.

'Wally'.

New advertisement

Some might notice a new advertiser on the inside back cover. We received an email and attached advert sample, after which we saw merit in Moe's affinity with veterans.

Following in part is Moe's initial contact with us:

"Dear Editor,

I hope this message finds you well and I write to you on behalf of our Veteran community and their families living with chronic kidney disease.

In particular, I have been encouraged to reach out to yourself and the VVFA Inc directly from one of our patients who is a Vietnam Veteran Gold Card Holder – 'V', — who required Dialysis support and who we have assisted. Believing more can be done regarding information about additional health services available to those living with kidney disease and requiring lifesaving/prolonging dialysis treatment, particularly Vietnam Veterans living with kidney disease. Typically, patients on dialysis need to attend hospital 3-4 days per week for 5 hour treatments ongoing.

difference to the Veteran community living with kidney disease and requiring dialysis treatment.

Kind regards,
Moe Khodragha"

We carried this article briefly on page 9 of our December issue, along with a draft advert for an intended campaign. The advert will carry over the next three issues, and continue as long as Dialysis Australia wish to support our Federation.

Moe has kindly included a feature article, which can be found on page 17.

VETERANS STORIES

From our December issue, we continue Boris' story...

Overview:

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

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

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



THE BOYS OF COMPANY "B" (PART 2)

by

Ray ("Boris") O'Brien

6 Platoon Sig

B Coy 1 RAR

1965-66



READ ON

Other than Pat Burgess, we also had another Reporter from the ABC and BBC, Don Simmons, who came out on Operations with the 'Scungees'. Don had covered Asian wars for years, and he lived in Saigon. One of our Ops we caught a "farmer" in a fire free zone. The farmer could not speak English and none of us could understand him.

After a few rounds were fired at him, all missing, he began to call out in French. Don could speak fluent French, and yelled at us to stop firing at the suspect and Don then went to him with both speaking French. After the conversation Don told our PL Comd that it was 50/50 farmer or VC. I was going to call a Yank chopper but the PL Comd we would wait until tomorrow morning as it was getting dark and we still had to move into our night location.

Next morning, after 'standdown', Don had another brief talk with the 'farmer' and within 5 minutes Don tells me, "Boris, call the chopper, He is VC". About 5 minutes later we could hear the chopper approaching, and VC starts to panic. Don explains that last night in conversation the suspect says he had 2 buffalo grazing, but this morning he had changed his story to 3 buffalo. As Don said, farmers do not make mistakes with how many buffalo they own. Don got on the chopper with the prisoner and says he will see us in a couple of weeks. He was going back to Saigon.

This was the last Op that our PL Comd, Lt Peter Sibree had with us. When we got back to base camp, he went over to the Officers Mess. Next morning Sergeant (Sgt) Merv Kirby, our PL Sgt., informs us he is now the new commander of 6 PL, until we get a replacement from Aussie. He was our PL Comd until the end of December 1965. Lt Peter Sibree had only completed about 5 months.

We learnt much later that Sibree was awarded a Medal for Gallantry for the capture of 'The Farmer'. The next time we saw Don Simmons we asked him about the "Farmer", and we were informed that our farmer turned out to be *only* The

Commander of all the VC in that region. He was checking on all the VC units in the area when we captured him. When asked what happened to him, Don reported that unfortunately he met the fate of most VC collaborators when handed over to the 'White Mice' or ARVN troops. He was given the famous one way helicopter ride over the ocean and chucked out.

October '65 and B Coy members were very pissed off, as the BN had done 45 days on Ops without a break. When we arrived back at camp we got a good surprise. WO2 'Dasher', now with the AATTV, paid us a visit. No R n R leave back to Aussie or to Hong Kong or anywhere else for him. He came to see his old platoon mates, and stayed 2 days. There were lots of old stories swapped, a great 2 days for the 'Scungees'.

On 14th November '65, Don Simmons paid us an early visit and asked Merv Kirby if he could speak to the whole platoon. We all stood around our PL HQ tent area, and Don told us the terrible news. 'Dasher' and another WO2 from AATTV were KIA yesterday up north. Don had read the Contact Report and said that for his actions 'Dasher' would be awarded the Victoria Cross (VC). A sad day the platoon.

Late December with 6 PL on Ops, I received a radio message that one of our platoon has to find a Landing Zone (LZ) ASAP, as there is a chopper on the way to pick him up. When I decode the message it's for a digger to go on Rest and Recouperation (RnR), it's me. Great messages. I told Merv that 'Elvis' has his old job back, as I have to get to an LZ fast, as I'm off to Thailand for RnR.

I copped lots of crap from the lads, and I said, "Up yours! I'll be thinking of you all tomorrow in a Bangkok bar". There was more good news when I got back to CHQ. I find out that one of my best mates 'Okey' O'Kane was going with me.

(Continued on page 38)



**Landing Zone 'March' and another enemy bunker
Operation 'Crimp'**

We had a great RnR, and returned back to Base on 7th January '66. Merv tells me to 'switch on' as we were going on Ops tomorrow with B Coy first in by Chopper. Operation Crimp. The bloody tunnels at Cu Chi awaited us.

Halfway to the intended LZ the helicopter pilot tells us the LZ has been changed. Major Essex-Clark, the 1 RAR Ops Officer saved our lives that day. The VC in the tunnels, 1,000s of them, had been operating out of the tunnel systems, and been there since 1960. They had 4 days warning notice that the 173rd were coming. Spies in ARVN HQ in Saigon had alerted the VC.

Even with bombardment by B-52 bombers, artillery strikes, and attacks by gun-ship helicopters, it made no difference. The VC just stayed in the lower levels of the tunnels. Our Engineers ('Gingerbeers'), all should have received (bravery) medals for their actions. The place was riddled with snipers, tunnels, booby-traps, and was a very scary place. At the end of Operation Crimp Aussie casualties included 8 KIA and 30 WIA.

There were more operations over the next few months, with names such as, Silver City, Denver, Abiline and a "scary" Rolling Stone. On 22nd February 173rd, US Engineers, US 1st Infantry Brigade, (1IB) on a road security operation to

protect the US Engineers who were repairing a main roadway. The Yanks, Engineers and 1IB covered one side of the highway with 1 RAR on the other in a rubber plantation.

The US forces had hardly any protection. No barbed wire or weapons pits, not many sentries posted. Radios were blasting out music, and the soldiers were generally very noisy, and at night, lots of lights and noise. On the same day, 22nd February, Maj Essex-Clark warned the US soldiers that a air-sighting of around 2,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) are travelling at a fast pace toward their location, and to get well prepared.

1 RAR received orders to dig in, prepare weapons pits, as trouble could be on the way. Hells bells, 2000 NVA. B Coy OC Maj 'Blackjack' McFarlane decided to put a standing patrol with radio, for early warning, on the left front of our platoon. Section head, private Wally Brunalli and his patrol headed out about 4 O'clock, and we waved as they passed through the rubber plantation where we were.

'Hipshot' and I didn't really dig a weapons pit, but we moved about an inch of soil. Giant regrets later on. About 8 O'clock that night 'Hippy' and I see these lights appear to our front left, near the

standing patrol location. Alarm bells rang in my head. More lights placed on the back of rubber trees, not facing the US Troops, but facing back towards 1 RAR. US troops would not have seen them as they were facing the wrong way.

Doing the maths quickly, as more lights appeared. About 50-60 lights with the going ratio about 5 VC to 1 light, that meant about 250-300 NVA. From the standing patrol position came a burst of M60, about a hundred rounds of sustained fire could be heard, then next thing we could see shapes bolting back to our company lines. The standing patrol came in.

Then the proverbial hit the fan, for the US troops, 2000 NVA start their assault on the Infantry and Engineer area. The battle rages all night until about 8 O'clock next morning. Whilst the battle was on 'Hippy' and I now regretted having no weapons pit, so to speak. Every rubber tree within our company area had been riddled or destroyed by enemy and US fire, including by the tank canister rounds fired point blank into the NVA assault. That stirred them up.



**US APC HIT BY NVA MORTAR ROUND
OPERATION ROLLING STONE**

About 10 O'clock I went into the company area to get a new battery for my radio, and Jim Daly, who was the M60 machine gunner with the Standing Patrol, was sitting against a rubber tree, and I asked him how he was going. He told me he wasn't very good. He said the patrol commander 'Wally' told Jim that when the VC get close, he was to open up with M60, then they were to bolt for it back to Camp.

Jim continued. "When this dark shape reached out and grabbed the barrel of my M60, I thought it was time to open up, so I gave them the whole 100 round belt in 1 burst, then we took off back to CHQ."

My good mate, Bill Williams, (A mad Collingwood supporter), in 5 PL got a message from CHQ to go with his Section and to take their ground sheets with them, and meet some US troops on the road, out front. When they arrived the road was littered with dead NVA bodies and lots of body parts, arms legs, etc.

Bill and the section were to assist the US to pick up the body parts and dead bodies and to move them into a large bomb crater, which then became an NVA grave site. In total Bill and those with him along with the US troops picked up 179 dead NVA bodies and parts.

Wally Brunalli, a Private (PTE) in charge of the Standing Patrol, received the Military Medal (MM) for his leadership during the battle. US troops lost 11 KIA and 72 WIA. NVA KIA remained unknown. I RAR casualties was 2 wounded.

(Continued on page 40)



NVA CAPTURED WEAPONS DURING OP ROLLING STONE FEBRUARY '66

Captured NVA said they had marched 25 kilometres to attack the 'soft' Americans. Their 2,000 also included women and children who were forced to carry the NVA's gear and some weapons. Our last Operation, Silver City, included patrolling and ambushing around a LZ with 173rd Brigade. In our 13 months 1 RAR lost 23 KIA, 130 WIA.

173rd Airborne thought they would be home for Christmas '66. Wrong!. They stayed on for another 6 years. They suffered 1533 KIA and 6,000 WIA. B Coy 1 RAR 6PL, the 'Scungees' had nil KIA, and a few WIA including 2 who lost legs. Maybe we can put that down to 'Dasher' Wheatley's lessons or maybe we were just plain lucky. I hope 'Hippy' rings me again in 2035, "Boris, it's 70 years since we sailed to Vietnam".

'BORIS' (RAY O'BRIEN)

**VIETNAM! IS NOW A LONG,
LONG TIME AGO, PABLO!**

A water bottle nestling in your 'dixie' cup, chafing
your hip,

The stridulation of weaver ant's nests disturbed,

The pungent whiff of a hexamine tablet burning
under a brew,

Close humidity causing greens to cling to 'prickly-
heated' skin

A rifle held over sweat-wet webbing as you watch,
anticipating!

Defenceless against the acrid smells which
demanded silence from your foot-falls,

And the needs of that 'grunt' in front and behind
you for his tomorrows,

And the accuracy with which you receive and
deliver silent signals of danger.

.....
Far now, are thoughts and concerns about R&R,
the softness of fresh sheets:

Security!

As, increasingly, more have become etched names
on memorials, or in dreams,

While the world that overlooks you, still screams-
out for the Peace and Laughter

You sought to defend, as best you could.

.....
Sadly!

Graeme Foley
3 RAR 67-68

ADVOCATES CORNER



HERE WE ASK ADVOCATES TO REPORT ON SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDIES ON CLAIMS MADE TO DVA, AND WELLBEING POINTS OF INTEREST. KEEP THOSE SAMPLES ROLLING IN FROM ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

From

Dennis Hanmer OAM

Vice President VVPPAA NSW

Senior Compensation Advocate

Outreach Coordinator

My client was a senior Chief Petty Officer Chief Bosun's Mate on HMAS COONAWARRA and was my point of contact for all of the Defence Bases in the NT, and was responsible for informing his Army and Airforce counterparts of our arrival dates and the venues we were conducting our interviews and lodging claims

November 2022 he requested I lodge a claim on his behalf as he had never lodged a claim before and had several injuries linked to his service and wanted to use the Base Medical Officer as his GP, the claim was lodged and three months after lodgment he contacted me and advised the Base MO had retired due to burnout and no other MO on base wanted to assist him

I approached our GP -Veteran Medical, and she was happy to assist and became the GP for his DVA claims arranging MRIs ,full medical examinations (found a number of medical issues to add to his current claim), months later my client advised me he had been granted a Commission as a Naval Officer and had been posted O/S in Oceania as the Navy Liaison Officer for three years .

During leave periods to his home state in WA, MRI and Medical reports were completed by our GP. On 11/2/2025 we received a MRCA determination accepting 17 conditions and no rejections and MRCA PI was requested on that date and on 20/8/2025 my client was granted MRCA PI -74 IMP PT L/STYLE 6 and Gold Card when his Naval Service expires .

[Shortly afterwards we received a letter of appreciation from Dennis' client- reprinted below- name withheldED].

Dennis Hanmer

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

Subject: Letter of Appreciation

Dear Dennis,

I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation for your exceptional support and professionalism in managing my DVA claim. The outcome achieved is truly transformative— for me and my family. Your assistance will have a lasting impact on our lives and will never be forgotten.

Throughout what is often a complex and overwhelming process, your guidance and dedication provided clarity, confidence, and reassurance. You have secured an outcome that ensures dignity and security in my later years, while also creating a foundation that will significantly improve my quality of life. This is an extraordinary contribution, and its importance cannot be overstated.

Your unwavering commitment to veterans and serving members is evident in the meticulous care and precision with which you approach every detail. You have made a process that could have been daunting far less confronting, and that level of support is invaluable. It reflects not only your personal integrity but also the values upheld by the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.

Please accept my deepest thanks for your tireless efforts and the profound difference you have made. You are a credit to the veteran community, and your work exemplifies the highest standards of service and dedication.

Thank you once again for everything you have done and for continuing to serve with such professionalism and integrity.

Kind regards.



**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2026 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 Commencing at 10.00am on Wednesday, 13th May 2026.**

AGENDA

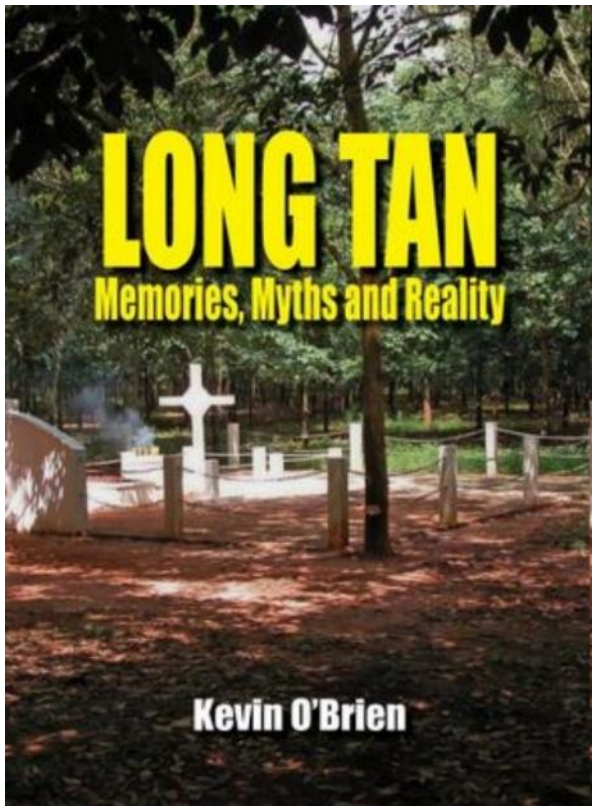
- Opening of Meeting by the Chairman
- Apologies
- Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2025.
- Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2025
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report and Audit Report
- Secretary's Report
- Membership Report
- Changes to Constitution
- Appointment of Association Auditors
- 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 **Wednesday, 29th April 2026.**

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2027.

Ron O'Connor JP
Hon. Secretary
NSW Branch

BOOK REVIEW



'Go for it!': Kevin O'Brien's Long Tan

September 13, 2025

Brigadier O'Brien's Long Tan is the most important account of our iconic battle in 40 years. The book spins 23 short chapters around a short exclamatory order.

At 15.57 hours on 18 August 1966, Major Harry Smith, commanding D Company, 6RAR (Royal Australian Regiment) in a rubber plantation in Phuoc Tuy Province, southern Vietnam, ordered his forward platoon to 'Go for it!'

The platoon had bumped a small enemy patrol, which fled, and the platoon's commander, Second Lieutenant Gordon Sharp, radioed Smith back to company headquarters: "Want me to follow up?"

By Greg Lockhart
2025

Going for it with 29 men, Sharp's 11 Platoon advanced to the east in pursuit of the enemy. Company headquarters and 10 and 12 platoons stopped and awaited developments.

Then, suddenly, at 16.08, after 11 Platoon had moved 600 metres, heavy enemy machine gun fire ripped into its left flank. Within two minutes, five men were killed and two wounded. Dangerously dispersed because of 11 Platoon's extended move, D Company was caught in a "mobile ambush" set by main force 275 Regiment of the 5th Division of The People's Army of Vietnam supported by provincial D445 Battalion.

By 1800 hours, D Company, 107-men strong, had lost a total of 17 killed and 17 wounded, some seriously. One member of the force that relieved D Company was also killed. As almost always, the Australians could still claim a favourable "kill ratio". The accuracy and power of the Anzac artillery at the nearby First Australian Task Force (1ATF) base at Nui Dat largely saved D Company.

The number of enemy soldiers killed in action is unknown. Fantasists have claimed figures as high as "1632" killed. Neither was it '245', which 1ATF maintained after the battle and the Australian Official History followed.

Pathfinding research by former 1ATF intelligence officer Ernie Chamberlain revealed the duplication of some body counts. He also listed the names and personal details of 176 people killed. O'Brien's analysis reinforces Chamberlain's.

(Continued on page 44)

Formerly an artillery forward observer with Australian infantry battalions in Vietnam, O'Brien's eye for the whole battle space — some 600 X 400 metres — plus the gun positions back at 1ATF enables him to manage with sharp insight the great complexity of what was going on. For two hours, 10 and then 12 Platoons manoeuvred to extricate 11 Platoon without success. The artillery saved it from being overrun. Inescapable issues include the disordered “withdrawal” of the remnants of 11 Platoon; the shifts in defensive artillery fire; the fraught ammunition resupply; the consolidation of the company; and the relief column. Supporting comment details the enemy's doings.

A technical narrative clearly dissects the battle. Still, its author knows it has no shape without soldiers' memories of it.

These include many that Terry Burstall's benchmark book *The Soldiers' Story* (1986) collected and built around his own experience. Mia Martin Hobbes' scholarship reminds O'Brien how soldiers often package their experience long after the battle in standard tropes — “the noble and skilful digger”, wherein the battle of Long Tan is recycled as a “David and Goliath feat”. Peter Stanley and Mark Dapin provide other scholarly influences. In their lights, O'Brien's Long Tan realises how myths are made and metastasise in the culture as artists and writers pick them up and uncomprehendingly spread them around.

In relation to historical context, the separation of geopolitical myth and reality begins with O'Brien's pivotal point: “Go for it!” makes it completely clear that Smith had no conception of the enemy force he faced near Long Tan village that day.

When his over-extended company got into trouble it went into its drills and survived with much help from the artillery. But it had been in real trouble. The question is whether it could have been any other way?

O'Brien thinks Smith could possibly have known better. We learn that soldiers in the small patrol initially bumped by 11 Platoon wore khaki uniforms, and one dropped an AK47 rifle as he

fled. Local guerrillas did not wear such uniforms or carry AKs. Importantly, also, the patrol did not carry packs. This almost certainly meant it was a small sentry patrol from a larger force.

Independently and together, those factors strongly indicated that a regular PAVN formation was around.

Something even more glaring also indicated that: the very reason for D Company's operation in the rubber plantation. The night before, an 82 mm mortar, recoilless rifles, and a 70 mm Japanese mountain gun had fired on the 1ATF base wounding 23 people. D Company was thus out in the rubber trees searching for those who'd done it.

But here's the rub: artillery intelligence had correctly identified those heavy weapons, with which local guerrillas were very unlikely to have been armed. Such weapons almost certainly belonged to regular PAVN main force units. How did Smith miss all this? Because what is clear now was not as clear in 1966.

There were strong reasons why Smith's order was unlikely to have been any other way. As a gung-ho company commander of his day, one typically brought up on fighting small-scale counterterrorist operations in Malaya, he saw 11 Platoon's initial contact as an opportunity to do what his superiors expected him to do: his job — get kills for his company.

Second, under operational pressure, no moderating set of attitudes or procedures existed in Australian military thinking that would have been sufficiently strong to jolt him out of the overconfidence that caused him to overlook the real signs of danger before him. Third, Smith was obviously not the only one to do that.

Confirming that key point, O'Brien establishes the political context for the military problem. In fact, official miscalculations surrounding the Vietnam commitment, which the book discusses, were such that 1ATF was bound to find itself fighting to fend off strategic incoherence in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Burstall, *A Soldier Returns* (1990) was already showing that the government had been unable in 1966 to provide the army with basic information about the situation in the province. This included a large divisional size victory that PAVN and local forces had won at Binh Gia in December 1964.

The government and, by extension, 1ATF were even unable accurately to name their enemy. The name 1ATF used, as many still do, was “NVA”, North Vietnamese Army. The profound political as well as military problem with using that name, however, was one that has exercised me: no state of “North Vietnam” and, therefore, no “NVA” ever existed.

Realising that 1ATF’s enemy had called itself PAVN from 1944, O’Brien’s *Long Tan* identifies its culturally specific political-military mode of operations known as “armed propaganda”. According to that routine, PAVN rubric, 275 Regiment’s “mobile ambush” on D Company was more than a military operation; it was primarily designed to impress the local population. PAVN’s message was that it was protecting the people, who would then be unwise to get close to the Australians.



Meanwhile, 1ATF itself limited the chances of that. In June, for reasons which Burstall raised in 1986 and 1990 and on which O’Brien now dwells, 1ATF had alienated many locals with its destruction of Long Phuoc village. The 275 Regiment ambush of D Company was, then, the PAVN political as well as military response to that counter-productive 1ATF operation.

Nailing all this, O’Brien emphasises that 275 Regiment was recruited outside the province. This is because the villagers inside it were unlikely to believe the casualties, either inflated or real, which the Australians inflicted on that unit. The battle people heard ringing around their villages was from their perspective a PAVN victory. 1ATF historian Bob Hall also emphasises that meant a strategic political as well as military victory.

The book’s later chapters on the politics of, and awards for, the battle point towards Australian war commemoration. These might also have specified the salience of Long Tan in remembrance culture; the fact that Long Tan is the only Australian battle besides Gallipoli that has its own national day. Why? Partly because the battle of Long Tan was a dangerously close shave.

Like Gallipoli, Long Tan is iconic, because it sits in Australian culture as a narrative that involves the mythical transformation of disasters into heroic achievement. O’Brien’s *Long Tan* is an important book because, in geopolitical context, it illuminates with unusual clarity the perils of that cultural self-deception.

Kevin O’Brien, *Long Tan Memory, Myths and Reality*, 309 pages, Edmund & Alexander, Maitland, 2025, \$39.95 www.longtanbook.com

The views expressed in this article may or may not reflect those of Pearls and Irritations.

Greg Lockhart

Greg Lockhart is a Vietnam veteran and an historian. Formerly of ANU, he has produced five books and many essays. His memoir *Weaving of Worlds: a Day on Île d’Yeu*, is just published.

We would welcome further reviews/opinions from others who have or are going to read this book. —Ed.

DID YOU KNOW ?

FACTS OF INTEREST



DVA Website confirmation: Last updated 12 December 2025:

Subject: Veteran Gold Card

NOTE: SOME OF THE INFORMATION MAY CHANGE WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW 'HARMONISED' VETERANS ENTITLEMENT ACT DUE IN JULY 2026

The Veteran Gold Card provides treatment for all medical conditions within Australia.

The card is a treatment card for veterans, dependents, and eligible civilians. It provides clinically needed treatment for all medical conditions within Australia. You can access a range of services and support with this card, and we recommend you contact your local ESO for details on how to apply.

Your Gold Card may also give you concessions or discounts, as well as eligibility for a Lapel Pin. If you wish to apply for a Lapel Pin, please see the DVA website or contact your local ESO.

If you are eligible, DVA send a physical Gold Card, but a digital version is available in the MyService App. You can also add your Gold Card to your myGov wallet, in the myGov app.

There are a number of ways you may be eligible for a Gold Card.

The card is to help veterans with significant medical impacts from their service, or certain types of service, and dependants of veterans who have died due to their service.

Australian veterans.

If you served with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) you may be eligible if you meet one of the criteria below and your service is covered by either:

the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA)

the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)

Eligible Service Types

If your service included any of the below you may be eligible:

- qualifying service and you are now over 70 years of age
- an ex-prisoner of war

service with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan between 16 August 1945 and 28 April 1952

service as part of the British Nuclear Test program.

Eligible Compensation Payments

You may be eligible if you receive a Disability Compensation Payment and you meet one of the following:

- your payment is assessed at 100% of the general rate or higher under the VEA
 - you get an additional amount for specific disabilities
- your payment for pulmonary tuberculosis was granted before 2 November 1978

You may be eligible under MRCA if you are either:

- getting or are eligible for the Special Rate Disability Pension assessed at 60 or more impairment points.

Eligible Service Pensioners

If you are under 70 years old and you receive a Service Pension you may be eligible. DVA will send you a card if any of the below:

- permanently blind in both eyes
 - have a MRCA permanent impairment of at least 30 points
 - your Disability Compensation Payment is 50% of the general rate or higher
- your income and assets are below certain limits.

If you are an ADF veteran over 70 years old, DVA will send you a Gold Card automatically.

SEEKING FURTHER INFO; CONTACT YOUR LOCAL ESO OR DVA OFFICE AND WEBSITE.

This email received from OWP Secretariat DVA.

Action item 2025OWP/A19 required the OWP Secretariat to circulate information, supplied by Policy Division, to assist ESOs to rebut social media commentary regarding Schedule 9 of the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025. This information is provided below for your action.

The Department has been made aware of incorrect and misleading information being circulated online and directly to veterans and veteran organisations about the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025 (VETS Act) and what it will mean for entitlements from 1 July 2026.

Your support to ensure your stakeholders are aware that misinformation is being circulated would be appreciated, including a reminder that the DVA website is the source of truth for information about the VETS Act, including FAQs and factsheets relating to specific entitlements and circumstances.

In addition, DVA would appreciate your support to ensure that veterans know they do not need to engage fee-for-service advocates (especially commission-based advocates) to get good advice and support in engaging with DVA processes.

The links below can be shared for those wanting to access more (and correct) information about the VETS Act and advocacy services:

The VETS Act – what it is and what it will do | Department of Veterans' Affairs

The VETS Act – how it will benefit veterans and families | Department of Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Legislation Reform – Resources | Department of Veterans' Affairs

Advocacy, representation & advice | Department of Veterans' Affairs

The VETS Act was developed in consultation with the veteran community, and DVA will continue to provide you with information in the lead up to, and after 1 July 2026.



New Aged Care Act: What You Need To Know

Sweeping reforms to aged care began on 1 November 2025 to help improve the quality, transparency and flexibility of care.

With more care levels, clearer pricing, and greater control over how your funding is used, the new system aims to better match services to individual needs. Providers will be required to offer detailed cost breakdowns, empowering you to make informed decisions about your care.

While the reforms are a step forward in care quality, they also come with changes in how services are funded and that may mean higher out-of-pocket costs for some.

What you pay depends on your financial situation – whether you receive a full or part pension or are self-funded – and the services you access.

As the aged care landscape evolves, staying informed is key to making confident choices. Whether you're planning for yourself or supporting a loved one, understanding the new system will help you access the right care at the right time.

Help at home

From 1 November the current Home Care Packages was replaced by a new program called Support at Home.

The key changes include:

- Eight levels of care (up from four) to better match individual needs

Extra funding for assistive technology, home modifications and palliative care
Services are expected to remain the same but the way you pay for them may change.

- For example, clinical care (such as nursing or physiotherapy) will be fully funded by the Government.
- You may pay more for everyday living services (such as meal preparation or cleaning) than you do for independence supports (like personal care or transport).
- The out-of-pocket costs for everyday living will range from 17.5 per cent for full pensioners to 80 per cent for self-funded retirees.

Non-clinical support, like showering, will cost five per cent for full pensioners to 50 per cent for self-funded retirees.

If you were approved for a Home Care Package on or before 12 September 2024, you will be eligible for fee concessions to ensure you are not worse off under the new rules.

The package level you are assigned sets the total funding available to pay for care, with 10 per cent allocated to the care provider to cover the cost of care management.

You then work with your provider to decide how you want to spend the rest of the budget. The provider will set their fees for services and you will make a contribution based on your income.

Residential aged care

Room prices in aged care facilities have been steadily rising following an increase in the Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) threshold from \$550,000 to \$750,000.

Higher RADs mean you may need to use more of your savings or income to cover aged care costs.

From 1 November 2025, anyone who moves into care after this date and pays a RAD, will have two per cent of that amount deducted each year, for up to five years.

You can still opt to pay a Daily Accommodation Payment (DAP), but this will increase every six months in line with inflation.

Other fees include:

- the basic daily fee (set at 85 per cent of the single age pension)
- a means-tested fee or non-clinical care contribution

potentially a higher everyday living fee (previously known as extra or additional services)

Fee caps and planning ahead

The lifetime cap on aged care contributions continues. You won't pay more than \$130,000 (indexed) over your lifetime towards home care and residential care combined.

Understanding how the changes affect your financial future is vital. You'll need to consider:

- whether someone will remain in the family home
- your current income and assets
- potential age pension entitlements

estate planning strategies

Use the government's fee estimator at MyAgedCare to get a clearer picture of your potential costs.

Get advice early

Navigating aged care can be complex and the recent changes add new layers of decision-making. We can help explain your options, structure your assets, minimise fees and plan for your future care needs.

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**

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

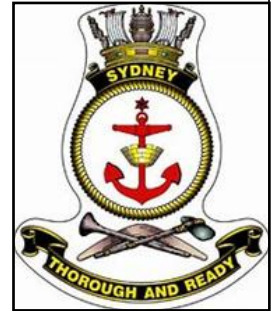
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FINANCES**

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

HMAS SYDNEY:



The bloody “American War” 1966-67

Part 14 of the story of HMAS Sydney, told by one of the crew, John Ingram., ‘ May 1966, Conversion, but first a storm’. The final instalment and Johns’ Epilogue.

By May 1966 SYDNEY had deployed in support of the Army to Vietnam and prior to that to Borneo and Sarawak in 1963/64. She was proving to be a very credible military asset with which to prosecute Australia’s involvement in the war against Communism. Valuable shipboard loading and unloading experience had been obtained; now the ship needed to be converted to enhance her operational worth. But due to the adverse industrial situation in our naval shipyards the Coalition government knew that conversion work in Australia was impossible.

Before conversion could be undertaken all obsolete or redundant equipment and stores had to be removed to lighten displacement and lower the metacentric height, critical in a carrier. As the DSO, I was tasked with inspecting all 80 spaces for which the Supply department had responsibility and submitting a work list to the Engineer Officer for co-ordination, along with input from the four other departments.

We embarked a battalion (personnel only) at Vung Tau and headed north to Hong Kong despite warnings of a severe weather event forming up in the South China Sea. This evolution was to give our sailors and soldiers 10 days R and R. Mother Nature had other ideas for she lashed the colony without mercy with severe gales and torrents of water. Several blocks of apartments on Victoria Island simply fell down the mountain side. Our Wessex choppers were deployed in recovery operations, ferrying supplies etc “as and when” flying conditions permitted.

On arrival at our mooring off HMS TAMAR a representative of each department was detached to Whampoa Dockyard for urgent negotiations regarding our extensive “Work Package”. This detachment included me. With lightning speed, the huge work load was agreed as technically feasible and at acceptable cost. I expected SYDNEY to enter the Whampoa dock but, no, the Chinese workforce worked around the clock onboard at our mooring and from lighters, barges, cranes and paint stages positioned alongside, irrespective of weather conditions.

Literally within hours all of the heavy equipment used to launch and recover fixed wing aircraft was being cut by oxy-acetylene torches from their fittings and lowered over the side into giant hoppers along with masses of steel cables and weights used on the flight deck to snare the tail hooks of planes on landing.

Much of the work involved the removal of masses of insulation material applied internally to the ship’s hull as SYDNEY had been designed for North Atlantic WW2 convoy operations. This insulation, originally some 100 mm in thickness, was heavily impregnated with asbestos materials and residues. It was contained in situ by literally hundreds of sheet metal panels affixed between the heavy steel beams (or ribs) comprising the ship’s hull, all of which had to be removed piece by piece and very carefully for health and safety reasons.

What was discovered behind these panels was an “ash and honeycomb” combination. The **latter** was the fossilised, skeletal remains of trillions of cockroaches while the ash was toxic asbestos impregnated wool panels which had decomposed into a fine powder. The most affected areas abutted three galleys, sculleries, food preparation and service spaces, the bakery, canteen and various messes located throughout the ship on various decks. Wherever and whenever possible canvas screens were erected and ventilation fans shut down while removal work was underway. On completion the affected areas were cleansed as far as was possible. From what I now know of the fatal impact of asbestosis and mesothelioma this task should never have been undertaken with 1000 men living onboard. This issue troubles my conscience a half century later.

As was the custom “Side Parties” would negotiate with the ship’s Executive Officer for the right to paint the outer hull of warships in Hong Kong Harbour. Within 10 days Jenny and her team of 50 women had completed the task of washing down, de-rusting, treating, priming and painting the entire hull. This was a formidable job made far more difficult as the harbour waters were choppy, the weather appalling and access difficult due to all of the work involved in stripping the ship and offloading materials into the barges alongside. And what was the negotiated price? No cost to the Commonwealth as Jenny had the rights of salvage for waste metals and items and to sell soft drinks to the ship’s company and embarked soldiers!

Day and night small fishing boats would lie in our wake casting their nets to capture any waste irresponsibly tossed over the side. This might include empty drink cans or food scraps. Such was the desperate situation of men and their families living in the floating villages of Wanchai.

Hong Kong harbour is a sight with its boats, ships, ferries and so forth. At night this becomes even more graphic with the tower blocks cascading down the steep hillsides. The demarcation between land and water becomes blurred and plays tricks on the eye. One night I had the Middle Watch (0001-0400), the weather being so inclement the ship was in “sea routine”; ready to “make way” in case the adverse conditions caused the SYDNEY to drag her mooring and run aground.

I spent most of the watch on the Bridge with one eye on the radar or walking around the ship checking on personnel and the ship’s physical security. When SYDNEY swung through 360 degrees at her mooring it seemed her stern was so close to the Victoria Island shoreline it would be possible to step ashore. I was concerned in these conditions we’d ground: a great spectacle for the media! However, my faith held sway; and I was very relieved to hand over to my relief at 0400 for the night had sorely tested my nerves and confidence. Potentially perilous situations appear far worse at night; danger tends to dissipate with the coming of the dawn.

In the Wardroom mess in the SYDNEY there was a vintage upright piano. I doubt it had been tuned in its 20-year life onboard. But one night, very late, it came to life thanks to the extraordinary keyboard skills of one Peter Woolnough, better known under his stage name of Peter Allen (“The Boy from OZ” with such huge hit songs as “I go to Rio”, “Tenterfield Saddler”, “I still Call Australia Home” etc) who’d been performing at a nightclub in Hong Kong. Peter had been invited on board by our Marine Engineer Officer for a late-night drink. He was a relatively unknown cabaret singer/song-writer and pianist at that time. There was a rumour Liza Minelli, with whom he was performing on stage, was also onboard. If she was, I didn’t see her. As a postscript she and Peter Allen married the following year. He was to credit his meteoric rise in the Music World to international stardom to Liza’s mother, Judy Garland, and her talent spotting husband, Mark Herron, who’d seen his nightclub performances in Hong Kong that year.

Another celebrity who found her way onboard the SYDNEY to attend an official function followed by a Wardroom “knees up” was our “Olympian of the Century”, Dawn Fraser. We were making a rare visit to Melbourne at the time. It was shortly before Dawn married and so she was in fine form. She’d been banned by the Australian Swimming Federation from competing for her country for 10 years for incidents of alleged misbehaviour the previous year at the Tokyo Games. Ingredients which, when combined with pool performances, produce legendary figures.

(Continued on page 52)



**Dawn Fraser,
Australia's
"Olympian of
the 20th
Century"**

In her stunning career Dawn won eight Olympic medals, including four gold medals and six Commonwealth gold medals. She also held 39 records. The 100 metres freestyle record was hers for 15 years from 1956 to 1972. She was the first of only three swimmers in Olympic history to have won individual gold medals for the same event at three successive Olympics namely the 100 metres freestyle in 1956, 1960 and 1964. In 1962, she became the first woman to swim 100 metres freestyle in less than one minute. It was not until 1972, eight years after she retired, that her 100m record of 58.9 secs was broken.

1966 proved to be a very rewarding year for the "old girl" SYDNEY. We'd accomplished all tasks assigned in the operational, training and trans-national exercise arenas with distinction. As we prepared to say "au revoir" to our highly respected skipper, news was received that we'd been awarded the most coveted trophy, the Duke of Gloucester Cup, for the most proficient ship in the Fleet. The big Gold Star, to be worn with pride, was affixed to the funnel.

January 1967 brought a new CO, Captain Eric John Peel DSC RAN. It also brought a new job for me as I relieved LEUT Barry Tuke RN, a VOYAGER survivor, as the Captain's Secretary and therefore responsible for SYDNEY's administration. "EJ" had some remarkable similarities and characteristics when compared with his illustrious predecessor. Both were handsome men of fine stature who dressed impeccably; both had soft, cultured voices

coupled with a quick wit. Both set a standard of ethical behaviour and respect for all men, irrespective of their status.

Both had commanded the VAMPIRE, "EJ" having commissioned the Daring class destroyer six years previous. There was another endearing feature; he'd been seriously wounded in WW2 with the sinking of the former VAMPIRE by Japanese Imperial Navy forces off Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon). These wounds involved the loss of lung function. He'd later commanded two RAN frigates in WW2, had been awarded the Legion of Merit by the United States and held the Distinguished Service Cross.

Morale of the ship's company is always a concern to the CO and an effective Secretary has the ear of the CO. It is not a privilege to be abused or taken lightly. I knew "EJ" valued my confidential comments and suggestions. Having been the "Personnel Section Officer" on the Fleet Commander's staff in the MELBOURNE and SYDNEY I had a good "feel" as to how best to handle most personnel issues whether they be at the senior officer or junior sailor level. He shared my more liberal (read tolerant) attitude towards the imposition of punishments, applying more discretion at his "Defaulters' Table". He knew SYDNEY and her men were being worked really hard in very trying circumstances. He also fully understood we were a hybrid lot of young trainees at sea for the first time, Reservists onboard for just a few weeks each year and a dependency on older specialist officers from the merchant navy to make up the ship's company.

"EJ" was of the "old school": even in the torrid heat and humidity of the tropics would insist on looking resplendent in his white bush jacket, complete with leather bound telescope tucked firmly under his left armpit and monocle hanging on a gold chain around his neck. On one occasion he was descending the ladder into "4-Romeo" flat where the Master at Arms (MAA) had the Requestmen and Defaulters lined up ready for the weekly session. The ship was kicking and bucking a fair amount and all of a sudden, the "Old Man" lost his grip on the metal steps and crashed heavily. I was right behind and feared for the worse. His cap, telescope and monocle went flying across the deck. We were left wondering as to how best to inspect

him for injuries when “EJ” got to his feet, adjusted his clothing, put on his cap, placed the telescope on the table, raised the monocle to his eye and said to the Master at Arms “Let’s get this underway!”

In October 1967 SYDNEY entered Vickers Cockatoo Dockyard for conversion and refit. I handed over the role of Secretary to my successor. This had been the hardest two years in my career to date. I’d grown attached to this old warhorse and to her two brilliant commanding officers. I shed a tear as I stepped ashore from her for the last time.

Those tears became tears of joy when it was announced SYDNEY had retained the Gloucester Cup and the gold star would remain firmly affixed her funnel for a second year.

*‘And they were singing bye, bye, Miss
American Pie
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was
dry
And them good ole boys were drinking
whiskey 'n rye
Singin' this'll be the day that I die
This'll be the day that I die*

Don McLean’s “American Pie” with lyrics courtesy of MetroLyrics



Painting by SYDNEY messmate Lieutenant Peter Blenkinsopp of logistics operations Vung Tau 1967

(Continued on page 54)

Epilogue:

On 24.11.2020 the esteemed journalist Alan Ramsey died. Alan was the first Australian journalist to actually report from South Vietnam, he having embarked in the SYDNEY for passage to Vung Tau on 27 May 1965. Precisely 35 years later in the year 2000, Alan composed a brilliant article in the Sydney Morning Herald titled “**Vietnam-a legacy of denial**”. I kept that cryptic piece, now yellowed and curled at the edges, as a reminder of those far off days, lest we forget.



Alan, permit me to reproduce some (abridged) paragraphs of your creation extracted from your fine article: -

“Today 27 May 2000 is the 35th anniversary of the Vung Tau ferry. If you’ve no idea of what I’m talking

about ask your nearest Vietnam Vet.....HMAS SYDNEY made 25 operational voyages from Australia to Vung Tau’s open harbour in the Mekong Delta between 1965 and 1972, ferrying 15,600 troops, 350,000 tonnes of weapons, vehicles and equipment.

It began in the middle of the night. There was no glory, no crowds, no speeches, no television cameras. No bands played. No Prime Minister-or any other politician to farewell Australia’s latest commitment of combat forces to someone else’s war. It was 1.29 AM on 27 May 1965 when the SYDNEY drew away from Garden Island and slipped out through Sydney Heads to join her escort, the destroyer HMAS DUCHESS.

Also leaving onboard the SYDNEY that night was five press-men; a TV camera man, two photographers and two reporters. I was one of the reporters. Perhaps that is why I remember 35 years later what the politicians, then and now, like to forget?

That is their Vietnam legacy. No glorious victories to immortalise, no heroic defeats to mythologise. Just the abiding guilt that, first, Australia ever got involved in such a shameful conflict and, second, the appalling way we treated our troops when they came home. Have you noticed that governments in this country never commemorate anything to do with the Vietnam War as such? Its beginning, its end or anything in between.

Authority, political and military, doesn’t want to know. Like the Americans we lost in Vietnam, humiliatingly. The politicians committed the troops, solely for political reasons, then scarpred, also solely for political reasons, three years before the Americans did. It took all of another 20 years...to honour the 50,000 Australians (and 520 dead) who served there with a memorial and their own parade”.

Later in the article Ramsay writes: “On 18 August 1971: The Prime Minister Bill McMahon announced **“The combat role which Australia took up over six years ago in Vietnam is soon to be completed.....I am now able to announce the Government has decided to withdraw all remaining combat forces.....I express the Government’s conviction the decision is a mark of the success which has attended our policies and actions in Vietnam over the years.....”**

Three months later.....the Parliament in a 75-minute debate, restricted to six speakers, voted **“its appreciation and gratitude”** to all Australian forces who had served in Vietnam **“for their courage, dedication and sense of duty”**.

Not all the troops got home for Christmas. In February 1972 the SYDNEY sailed from Vung Tau with 457 troops, its last troop withdrawal. Her final trip to Vietnam in November that year - just weeks before the federal election that.....brought the Whitlam Labor government to power – SYDNEY hoisted the last of the Australian forces’ equipment onboard and left Vung Tau for the last time.

HMAS SYDNEY was sold for scrap and towed out of Sydney Harbour to the breakers in Hong Kong in October 1975”.



HMAS Sydney – “The Vung Tau Ferry” as she became affectionately known. Sydney began her life during 1942 as a Majestic Class Aircraft Carrier in the Royal Navy, where she was named HMS Terrible. Following her purchase by the Royal Australian Navy in 1946, she served as a carrier in the Korean conflict and later during the Malayan emergency. She was hastily recalled to active service during 1965, at a time when she was undergoing a refit. During the period of the Vietnam conflict, she made 25 operational tours in her new guise. In addition to the thousands of military personnel who travelled either to or from Vietnam in her, she was also responsible for cargoes of vehicles, aircraft, ammunition, artillery pieces and numerous other logistical materials necessary to sustain our Army, Navy and Airforce personnel in country. Photographs courtesy of John Creswell (at left) and Paul Roberts (above).

The caption above reads; “HMAS Sydney— The Vung Tau Ferry—as she became affectionately known. Sydney began her life during 1942 as a Majestic Class Aircraft Carrier in the Royal Navy, where she was named ‘HMS Terrible’ . Following her purchase by the Royal Australian Navy in 1946, she served as a carrier in the Korean conflict and later during the Malayan emergency. She was hastily recalled to active service during 1965 , at a time when she was undergoing a refit. During the period of the Vietnam conflict, she made 29 operational tours in her new guise. In addition to the thousands of military personnel, who travelled either too or from Vietnam in her, she was also responsible for cargoes of vehicles, aircraft, ammunition, artillery pieces, and numerous other logistical materials necessary to sustain our Army, Navy, and Airforce personnel in country.

Photographs courtesy of John Creswell (above-left) and Paul Roberts (right).

Acknowledgments:

I am most grateful for the photographs, additional to those from my personal collection, included in this article. Some are from official RAN/Defence (Navy) sources while others are from publications including *The Vung Tau Ferry* (Rodney Nott & Noel Payne) and *Voyages to Vietnam* (compiled and written by Stephen Lewis).

John Ingram.

OVERVIEW: HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE.

The 1st Australian Task Force, whose headquarters is referred to as HQ1ATF played its role in the Vietnam War between April 1966 and November 1971.

Established as a brigade-sized formation to replace the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) which had been in Vietnam since 1965, its main base was at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province, with a separate logistical support group based in Vung Tau.

HQ1ATF was responsible for commanding Australian and New Zealand forces in the area, including infantry battalions, artillery and armoured units, and was involved in numerous operations and significant battles.

The operational corps of HQ1ATF were as follows:

- Headquarters Company
- Defence & Employment Platoon (Infantry)
- Headquarters Staff
- 1st Australian Reinforcement Unit
- Headquarters Platoon
- 1st Transport Platoon
- Detachment 198 Works Section (RAE)
- 1st Australian Light Aid Detachment (RAEME)
- 1st Australian Provost Detachment
- Detachment 1st Division Intelligence Section
- Detachment 1st Topographical Survey Troop

HQ1ATF's primary mission was to secure Phuoc Tuy Province, a task that involved both combat operations and civil affairs activities and to operate in conjunction with US and other allied forces.

Headquarters Company's function in Nui Dat was to provide administrative and logistical support staff ranging from intelligence personnel right through to paymaster, just to name two categories.

Defence & Employment (D&E) Platoon, in the early days of the Task Force, were employed as working parties in building the facilities required by HQ1ATF – when D&E was not out on patrol. The Platoon also had a key role in the defence of Headquarters, 1ATF should the Task Force Base at Nui Dat come under fire.

D&E Platoon was involved in many key battles of the war, including the Battle of Long Tan in 1966, Operation Bribie in 1967, Operation Coburg, Operation Coral and Operation Balmoral in 1968 along with Operation Overlord and the Battle of Long Khanh in June 1971. Seven Veterans lost their lives at Courtenay Hill on the morning of 12 June 1971.

D&E Platoon was the longest continually serving Infantry Platoon in South Vietnam, being continually reinforced through the 1st ARU, and was only removed from the Order of Battle when HQ1ATF withdrew from Nui Dat to Vung Tau in late 1971.

www.hq1at.org

See our 2026 reunion notice opposite



**HEADQUARTERS
1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE
SOUTH VIETNAM 1966 - 1972**

60th ANNIVERSARY HQ1ATF ASS. REUNION

**PACIFIC PALMS, NSW: 16 November to 20 November
2026 Tiona Holiday Park (THP)**

4451 The Lakes Way, Tiona, NSW 2428

Phone: 02 6554 0291 Email: stay@tiona.com.au Web: www.tiona.com.au

The 2026 HQ1ATF Association reunion will be held at Tiona Holiday Park, 16 – 20 November and will remember 60 years since we first marched into Nui Dat in April 1966. This five 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 reunion plays a significant role. There will be ample time for members and families to spend time together over the period of the reunion.

The Commemorative Dinner will be held on Tuesday 17 November 2026 at the Palms Pavilion at TIONA. The dinner will be preceded by a Dedication Service on the lawns facing Lake Wallis. The service will commence at 5.45 PM.

On Wednesday 18 November the group will enjoy a coach tour to the surrounding country side with lunch at the Farmers Wife Gin Distillery.

The informal farewell dinner will be held at the RECKY Pacific Palms Recreation Club on Thursday 19 November.

For details contact: John Verhelst: 0437212121 or jeverhelst@gmail.com www.hq1atf.org

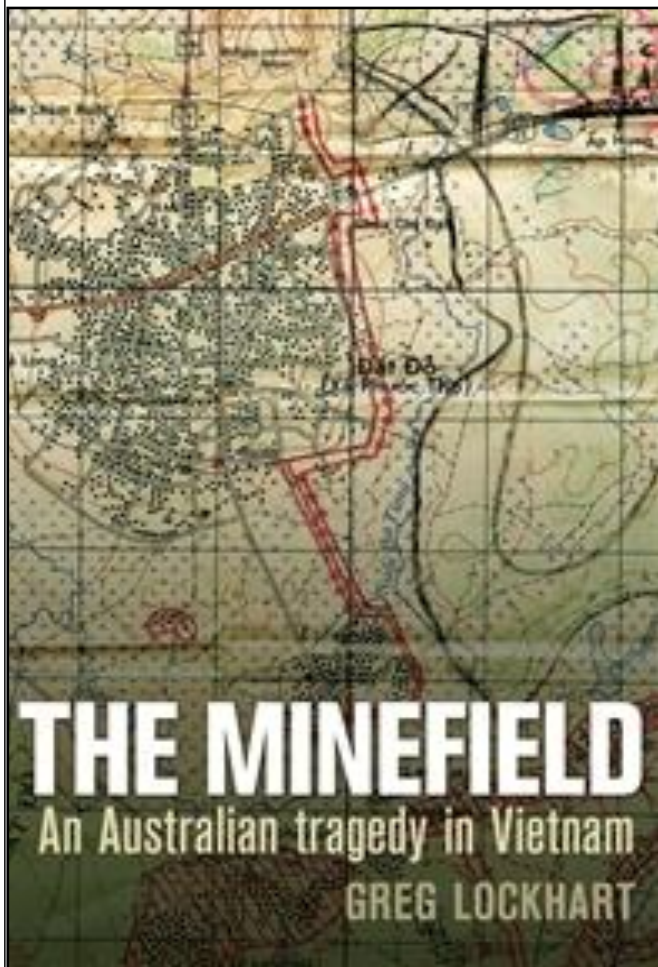
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1st AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE
NUI DAT SOUTH VIETNAM 1966-1972**

Headquarters Staff	Det 198 Works Section (RAE)
1 ARU	1st Australian Light Aid Det (RAEME)
Headquarters Company	1st Australian Provost Det (Raprov)
Headquarters Platoon	Det 1 Div Int Sect (Int Corp)
Transport Platoon	Det 1st Topo Survey Troop (Rasvy)

D & E Infantry Platoon, Royal Australian Regiment.

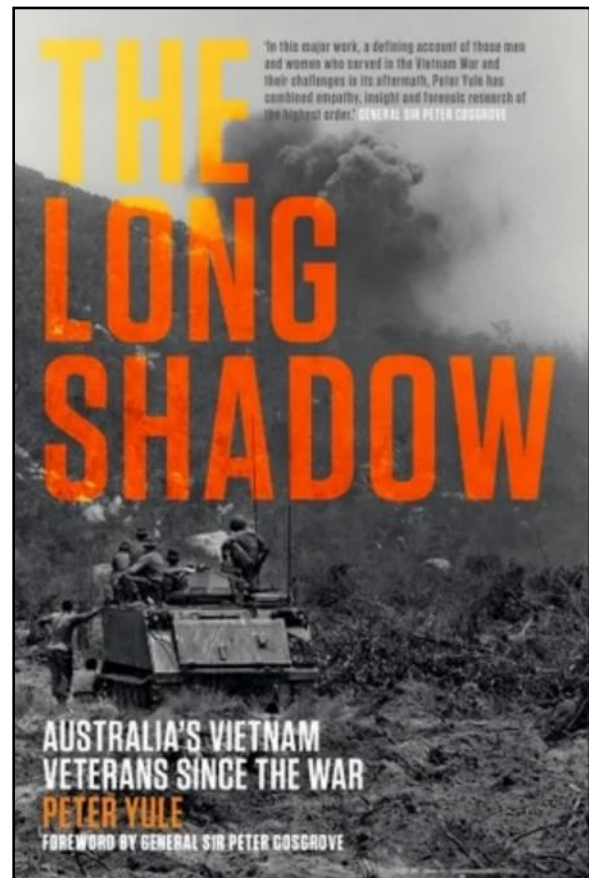
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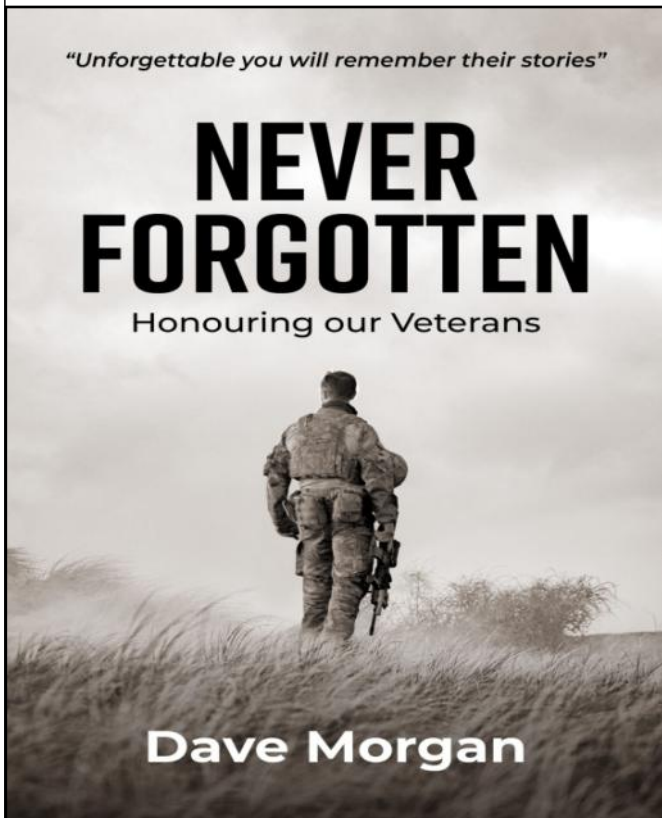


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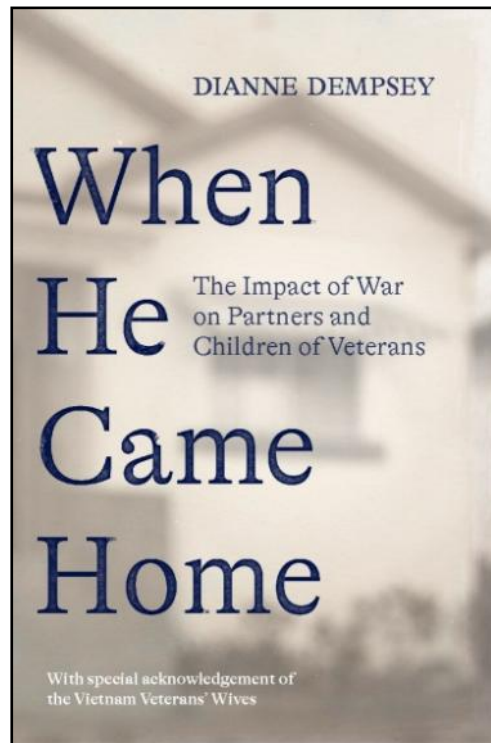
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Reunions & Notices

**HMAS Leeuwin, Ramsay
Stevenson Divisions, 55th
Intake**

Date: 17 Apr 2026
17 - 22 April 2026. This reunion will celebrate 50 years since we walked through the gates of HMAS Leeuwin. All recruits and their partners are welcome and encouraged to attend. There be a meet and greet night, Reunion Dinner and a farewell breakfast. Reunion program including venues and cost to be confirmed.

Reunion details
Location: Adelaide
Contact details

Name: Ian Taylor
Email:
55threunion2026@gmail.com

**HMAS Leeuwin 16th Intake
(1966-1967)**

Date: 19 Jun 2026
19 - 22 June 2026. 60th anniversary reunion. Contact Colin (below) or Ken Griffin - harlandgriffin@hotmail.com

Reunion details
Location: Port Macquarie
Contact details

Name: Colin Hardie
Phone: 0416 250 242
Email:
hardiecolin4@gmail.com

'A' Battery Association Inc.
"WARNING ORDER 2026!"
155th Birthday & Reunion
Date: 31 Jul 2026
31 July - 1 August 2026.

Reunion details
Location: Brisbane, QLD
Contact details
Name: 'A' Battery Association Incorporated
Phone: 0411 166 904
Email:
abtyassn@abtyassn.org.au
Website: https://www.australianartilleryassociation.org/a_bty_association/index.html

B. Company 2 RARNZ 70-71

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

Taskforce Veteran
60th Anniversary Battle of Long Tan—Scheyville
Date: 18 August 2026
Location: Scheyville Officer Training Unit, Scheyville.
Luncheon including entertainment by John Schumann's Redgum
Contact: Paul Irving
Email: paul.kaaren@gmail.com

**HMAS Leeuwin 1st Intake
(1960)**

Date: 5 Oct 2026
5 - 9 October 2026. Due to the age of us still around, and sadly the loss of a great number of our intake, this could be the last of our official get togethers. We hope to make this reunion one to remember with as many 1st JR's and their partners attending as possible. Ian Dunn is busy organising a programme along with an accommodation venue. Please indicate your interest to attend.

Reunion details
Location: Fremantle, WA
Contact details
Name: Don Barker
Phone: 0437 500 528
Email: evdonb@bigpond.com

Airman Aircrew Reunion
Date: 23 Oct 2026
23 - 24 October 2026. RAAF Airman Aircrew and Associates are invited. It's a great opportunity to catch up with those whom you haven't seen for many years. Check out the website for more details.

Reunion details
Location: C.ex Coffs Club, Coffs Harbour, NSW
Contact details
Name: Allan 'Al' Harris
Phone: 0412 608 817
Website: http://www.airmanaircrew.com.au/html/functions/reunions/airman_aircrew/2026/general_information.html

Headquarter & Headquarter company 1st Australia Logistic support group

Date: 14 Oct 2026

14 -19 October 2026. This is for veterans who served in 1 ALSG (headquarter company and friends)

Reunion details

Location: Albury/Wodonga, VIC

Contact details

Name: Tony Brown

Phone: 0428 852 736

Email: tony11raye13@gmail.com

60th ANNIVERSARY HQ1ATF ASSOCIATION REUNION

Date: 16 Nov 2026

16 - 20 November 2026. Contact John for all information.

Reunion details

Location: Tiona Holiday Park,

Pacific Palms

Contact details

Name: John Verhelst

Phone:

Email: jeverhelst@gmail.com

Website: www.hq1atf.org



“Someday we’ll be laughin’ at this cockup at some flamin’ reunion!”

SEEKING

PETER HENNESSY & IAN COMPTON

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

Anyone who knows of both or either is asked to contact: ‘Dobbo’ via email to: wgdobson@bigpond.com Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

MCMILLAN JOHN

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

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

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

Contact: Name: Peter
Phone: 0409 697 865

PAUL BRANDT

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

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

Contact Wazza

Phone: 0490 028 064

LOST LOCATORS

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

Contact:

Name: Peter

Phone: 0409 697 865

WANTED KNOWN

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

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

Contact: Russ Morison

Phone: 0408 947 935

Email: dabblers3@gmail.com

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

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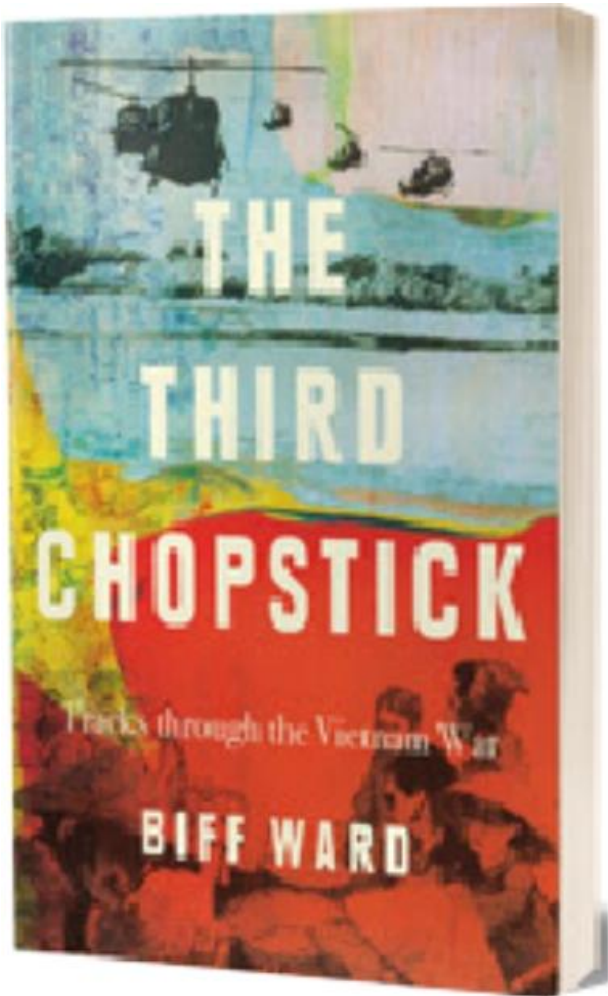
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Other recommended reading see page 60

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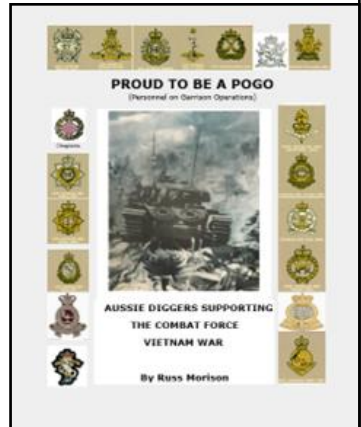
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By Russ Morison

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Vietnam era, and in particular the history of 2 Transport Platoon RAASC.

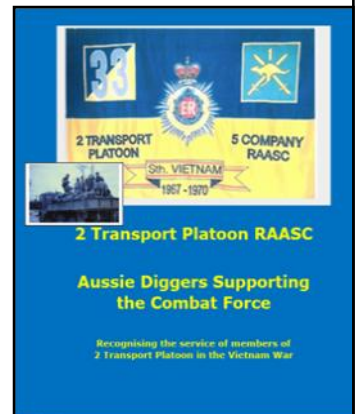
The platoon is one of five RAASC Platoons that served our combat forces, supplying and delivering the material that enabled our forces to establish a firm foothold in enemy territory who once prospered in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Their story has finally been told here.

Pages: 260

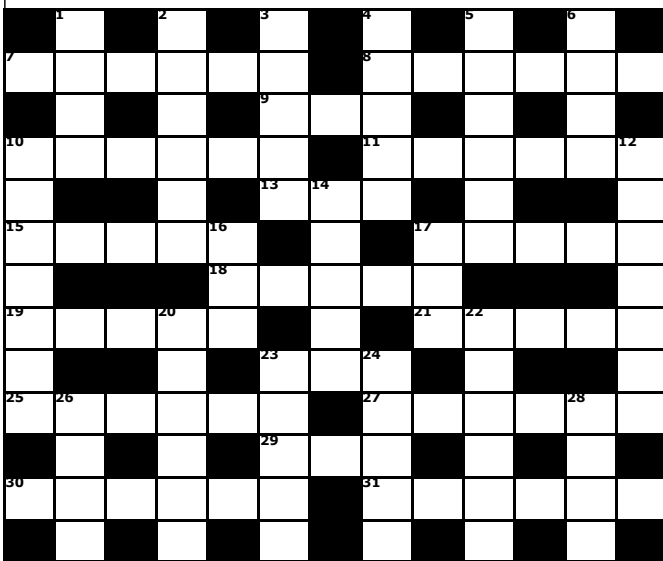
Cost \$38 plus satchel postage \$16

To buy: dabblers3@gmail.com or 0408 947 935



Russ's other three books are advertised on page 66.

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

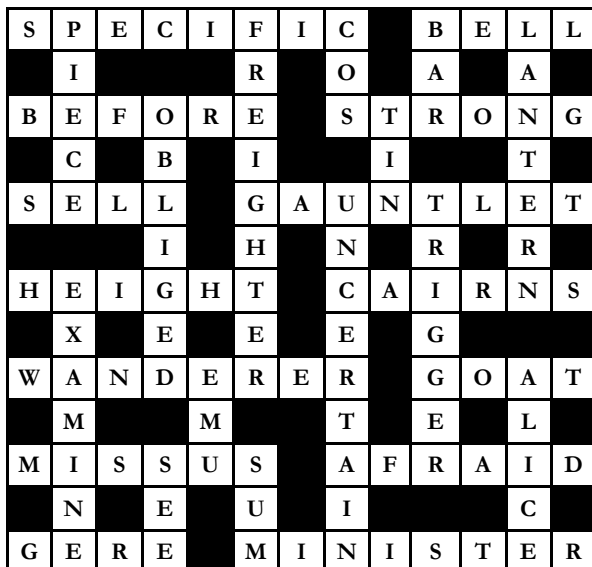
- 7 Eraser
- 8 Stay
- 9 Utilise
- 10 Can pay
- 11 Wriggle
- 13 Time region
- 15 Raves
- 17 Doing words
- 18 Similar
- 19 Beneath
- 21 City in Florida USA
- 23 ---, and buts
- 25 Self evident truth
- 27 Related by marriage
- 29 Swine
- 30 ----- battle, hard
- 31 Athletes barrier

DOWN

- 1 Fit of anger
- 2 Former PM Tony
- 3 Unrefined – oil
- 4 Top of wave
- 5 Protect, inoculated
- 6 Fibber
- 10 Circus performer
- 12 Accidents
- 14 Inhale audibly
- 16 Observed
- 17 Animal doctor
- 20 Start up point
- 22 Attractive trait
- 23 Hint at
- 24 Vision
- 26 Thick cord
- 28 Testate document

Solution next issue

DECEMBER 2025 SOLUTION



THE UNKNOWN COMIC

People comment on my lack of vocabulary. I tell them I am lost for words.

Little Tommy got on the bus and sat next to a man reading a book. He noticed the man had his collar on backwards, and asked him why was his collar on backwards. The man replied he was a Father, to which Little Tommy said that his father didn't wear his collar like that. The father looked up from his book and said he was the father of many, to which Tommy said his father had 4 boys, 4 girls, and 2 Grandsons. The Father then said, tirelessly, I am the father of hundreds. Little Tommy told the Father that maybe he should wear his pants on backwards instead of his collar.

I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes. She gave me a hug.

A man is walking through the woods and he spots a suitcase along the side of the trail. Inside the suitcase, he finds a mother fox and her three cubs. He immediately calls the RSPCA to report what he found. 'Oh my gosh, that's terrible,' the RSPCA worker said, 'Are they moving?' 'I'm not exactly sure,' the man replied, 'but I guess that would explain the suitcase.'

Paramedics have confirmed that the hospitality worker who fell from the 18th floor nightclub was not a bouncer.

Whenever I think of the past, it brings back so many memories.

If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest have to drown too?

My new boss told me to dress for the job I want, not the job I already have. So I went in as Wonder Woman.

The person who came up with 'a penny for your thoughts', sure knew how to coin a phrase.

RUSS MORISON'S 3 BOOKS ON LOGISTICS SUPPORT IN VIETNAM

BOOK 1 - Peas, Beans and Bullets-Aussie Diggers Supporting the Combat Force by Russ Morison

"The collective stories of the 300 odd officers and men of the RAASC who deployed to Vietnam, the difference in diet, paucity of equipment initially, the conflict with American and Australian supply systems, the tenacity and "can do' attitude to get the job done, the impact and success in operations and the individuals themselves"

David McLachlan, AO, MAJGEN ret (extract)

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

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

BOOK 2 - Sustaining The Fight-Aussie Diggers Supporting the Combat Force by Russ Morison

"During the period 1966-1972 RAASC soldiers provided the Combat Force the Ammunition, Fuel, Rations, Water, Transport, Air Despatch, Canteen and Postal Services to enable them to succeed against a cunning and aggressive enemy. They performed admirably, worked tirelessly throughout the campaign and deserve high praise in the true ANZAC tradition."

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

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

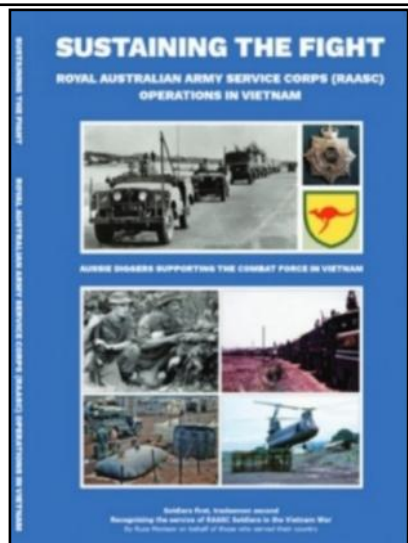
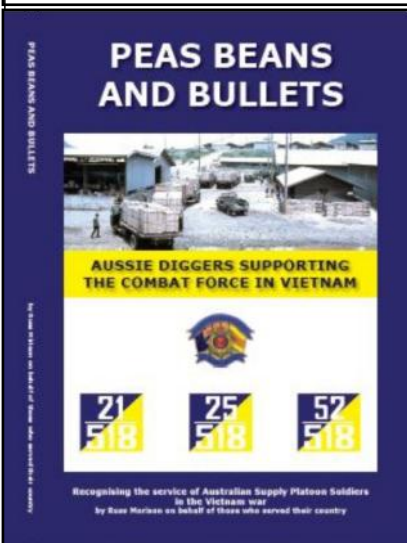
BOOK 3 -1st Australian Logistic Support Company (1ALSC) Bien Hoa 1965-66 Supporting the Combat Force by Russ Morison

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

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

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

To buy, contact dabblers3@gmail.com or call 0408947935





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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

Website : www.vvfagranville.org

01/01—31/12 Yearly

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

SURNAME		FIRST NAME		SECOND NAME	
STREET ADDRESS					
SUBURB/TOWN		STATE		POST CODE	
HOME PHONE		MOBILE PHONE		OTHER PHONE	

EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY IN THE BOX BELOW]

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

NEXT OF KIN	RELATIONSHIP	CONTACT PHONE [NOK]

ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
MEMBERSHIPS SUBS	(YEARS)	@\$30.00 PER YEAR	\$
DONATION	(AMOUNT ONLY)		\$
RAFFLE TICKET/s		@\$2.00 EACH	\$
MERCHANDISE			\$
			\$
			\$
Stock item number and prices are available on line and from merchandise lists at branches.	And, inside your Newsletter.	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$

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EXPIRY DATE	TRANSACTION AMOUNT	SIGNATURE
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PHONE FOR BANK TRANSFER PAYMENTS. INCLUDE NAME AS REFERENCE.
 CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS MAY BE PHONED IN TO (02) 9682 1788 MON-THU 10AM – 3PM.
 Email: accounts@vfvagranville.org Post: VVPPAA NSW PO Box170 Granville NSW 2142

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MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT N ^o :	DONATION RECEIPT N ^o :
MEMBERSHIP CARD NUMBER:	COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):
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SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

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OTHER PHONE

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NEW DETAILS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

NEW ADDRESS

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SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS [*PRINT CLEARLY*]

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Complete all sections and post to:

The Secretary
 VVPPAA NSW
 PO Box 170
 Granville
 NSW 2142

OFFICE USE ONLY	
MEMBERSHIP 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 it's record base.

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

Please print clearly

VETERANS DETAILS

SURNAME FIRST NAME SERVICE NUMBER

--	--	--

SVN UNIT/S TOUR DATES

--	--

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

--

SR Service Related UNK Unknown S Suicide O Other)

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

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

YOUR NAME

--

SUBURB/TOWN STATE POST CODE

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HOME PHONE MOBILE PHONE SIGNATURE

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RETURN FORM TO: The Welfare Officer

VVPPAA NSW Branch
PO Box 170
Granville NSW 2142

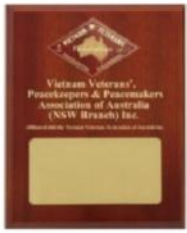
Phone: 02 9682 1788
Fax : 02 9682 6134
Email: secretary@vfvfagranville.org

MERCHANDISE LIST

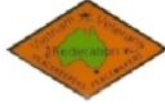
STOCKS AS AVAILABLE ANY REORDER MAY DELAY DELIVERY

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE		ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
1101	NSW PLAQUE	50.00		3445	LONG SHADOW	POA
1103	NSW BADGE	10.00		1401	LAPEL PIN RAN	5.00
1105	NSW STICKER	6.00		1402	LAPEL PIN ENS	5.00
1107	RED PEN VVFA	8.00		1403	LAPEL PIN ARMY	8.00
1108	NSW STUBBY HOLDER	10.00		1404	LAPEL PIN RAR	8.00
1109	STUBBY HOLDER TRICOLOR	10.00		1405	LAPEL PIN RAAF	8.00
1111	VVFA GREEN CAP	22.00		1406	LAPEL PIN CROSS	8.00
1112	VVFA BLUE CAP	25.00		1411	LAPEL PIN FAMILY	7.00
1113	VVFA WHITE CAP	25.00		1500	STICKER TWIN SET REG	7.00
1114	VVFA BLACK CAP	25.00		1501	STICKER REGULAR	7.00
1115	CAP BLACK ^62-75'	25.00		1507	STICKER TWIN SET NASHO	7.00
1120	Mr. GADGET	8.00		1502	STICKER NASHO	7.00
1121	NOTEBOOK/PEN	8.00		1503	STICKER DAMN PROUD	8.00
1122	COOLER TOTE	14.00		1504	STICKER LOVE or LEAVE	5.00
1124	FRIDGE MAGNET	8.00		1506	STICKER SUPPORT	7.00
1125	KEYRING NAVY	8.00		1508	STICKER SUPPORT NAVY	7.00
1126	KEYRING ARMY	8.00		1509	STICKER NAVY VET	7.00
1127	KEYRING RAR	10.00		1510	STICKER SUPPORT ARMY	7.00
1128	KEYRING RAAF	8.00		1511	STICKER ARMY VET	7.00
1129	KEYRING VVFA	10.00		1512	STICKER SUPPORT RAAF	7.00
1130	LANYARD	10.00		1513	STICKER RAAF VET	7.00
1131	KEYRING HEART	10.00		1514	STICKER AFGHAN VET	5.00
1201	THE MINEFIELD	45.00		1515	STICKER IRAQ VET	5.00
3440	HOW TO RESEARCH	45.00		1516	STICKER SOMALIA VET	5.00
3442	THIRD CHOPSTICK	40.00		1517	STICKER TIMOR VET	5.00

MERCHANDISE IMAGES



1101



1103



1105



1107



1108



1109



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1112



1113



1114



1115



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1121



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1126



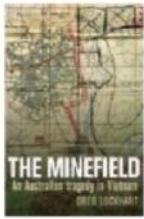
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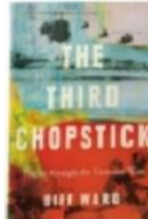
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3442



3445



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1401



1402



1403



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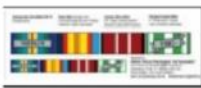
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1511



1512



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1515



1516



1517

MERCHANDISE SPECIALS June-Dec 2025

ONLY WHILE STOCKS LAST
ALSO AVAILABLE ON LINE

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

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



ONCE EACH 'SPECIAL' ITEM SELLS OUT IT WILL NOT BE RESTOCKED OR AVAILABLE , HOWEVER, POTENTIAL PURCHESERS MAY BE DIRECTED TO A SUPPLIER UPON ENQUIRY.

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



Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway



Honour Their Legacy. Preserve Their Memory.

We invite you to support the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway
a place of reflection dedicated to the courage and sacrifice of our veterans.

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

Donate now to ensure the values of Kokoda endure.

www.kokodawalkway.com.au/support-us

Thank you for your support.

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



Transitioning from the ADF

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

Common challenges
Some challenges faced
when transitioning to civilian life include:

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

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

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

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

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.



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
NAVY						
O918	LT	JK	PERRETT	HMAS MELBOURNE 2	15/12/25	17/8/36
R64121	LEM	RC	MCRAE	HMAS SYDNEY 2/VENDETTA 2/ VAMPIRE 1	28/11/25	30/11/47
R62546	ROS	LG	WILLIAMSON	VAMPIRE 2	20/12/25	17/6/45
R53512	POQM	LJ	PRICE	VAMPIRE 3	19/7/25	21/7/40
R55960	LC	GW	SMITH	HMAS VAMPIRE 4	13/12/25	30/4/41
R59005	LW	RAC	SMITH	HMAS BRISBANE	25/5/25	25/10/43
R59424	LEM	KV	BULMER	HMAS BRISBANE/SYDNEY	28/1/26	10/4/45
R96041	OS	EW	GEESING	HMAS SYDNEY	20/12/25	11/5/51
R94491	OS	DA	NICHOLS	HMAS SYDNEY	1/1/26	11/7/48
R94603	OS	J	COOMBS	HMAS SYDNEY 2	13/11/25	28/4/49
R55208	PO	JE	HARRIS	HMAS SYDNEY 2	22/1/26	27/1/39
R64788	OS	TJ	SEWELL	HMAS SYDNEY 2	30/1/26	11/7/47
O53928	LT	KA	SWAIN	HMAS SYDNEY 2/YARRA/ SYDNEY	20/1/26	7/6/38
R103556	EMW	DB	GREATRIX	HMAS SYDNEY 4	9/1/26	20/6/52
R95755	AS	DC	METCALF	HMAS SYDNEY 5	14/11/25	14/4/50
R107203	EM2	PC	DE KORT	HMAS SYDNEY 7	4/1/26	11/12/52
R96559	AS	PJ	MUNDY	HMAS SYDNEY 8	5/11/25	18/5/52
R52939	CERA	JH	MORONEY	HMAS SYDNEY 3/DERWENT	10/1/26	19/5/29
R95370	AS	WJ	RICHARDSON	HMAS DERWENT	5/1/26	25/10/45
R95662	AS	AK	STRANGE	HMAS SYDNEY/VAMPIRE/PERTH	11/1/26	3/8/50
R106226	OS	GJ	ABNETT	HMAS PERTH	25/10/22	18/10/52
R66808	OS	MJ	ROWAN	HMAS ANZAC	4/1/26	24/10/46
R66460	ASQM	GC	HAYES	HMAS HOBART / DUCHESS	16/12/25	2/9/49
R95163	AS	DJ	RICKARDS	HMAS SYDNEY3/DUCHESS2/ JEPARIT5	24/11/25	30/8/49
R62355	DO	JW	FEGAN	HMAS YARRA 2	1/1/26	6/2/44
R64365	ST	RK	HICKS	HMAS YARRA 2	17/11/25	17/4/48
R66318	NAM	AD	DAVIDSON	RAN HFV	30/1/26	3/5/46



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
ARMY						
4410942	PTE	RL	LIST	161 INDIP RECON FLGHT	30/10/25	29/9/46
235214	CAPT	FJ	MARKCROW	161 INDIP RECON FLGHT	15/8/25	22/9/39
1202213	PTE	JC	ZEILSTRA	161 INDIP RECON FLGHT	9/1/26	18/8/44
43782	CPL	JC	CLARKE	161RECFLT/5RAR/2AOD	24/11/25	17/11/44
2950015	PR	WP	GHERSI	HQAFV PHILANTHROPIC	24/11/25	1/4/40
215280	WO2	JL	HOUGH	HQ AAA GRP VIETNAM	25/10/25	14/11/41
214084	SGT	JL	MARTIN	HQ1ATF / AFV CO	10/1/26	23/8/33
2791660	PTE	GH	CARR	AFV DET 1DIV INTEL UNIT	17/11/25	15/7/47
2787367	PTE	ML	GREEN	AFV PROVOST	21/12/25	3/3/47
17617	CPL	WP	MURRAY	3 FLD TROOP/1STFLDSQN	25/11/25	17/11/44
3168895	LCPL	PB	GRENFELL	1 ARU / HQ1ATF	18/1/26	8/4/46
2791925	CPL	EO	MAXWELL	1 ARU / HQAFV	1/12/25	16/10/46
2786067	PTE	IH	PARKER	85 TRANS PL RAASC	30/11/25	9/6/45
2786106	PTE	EC	SAMIN	85/86 TRANS PL RAASC	28/11/25	25/12/45
2789673	PTE	KJ	KENNY	86 TRANS PL RAASC	13/1/26	17/11/47
2792574	PTE	KJ	SUMMERS	HQ 5COY RAASC	8/12/25	19/12/48
2785891	PTE	J	MCINTOSH	DET 5 ASCO	12/1/26	19/4/46
2791730	PTE	RH	NICHOLSON	2AOD	15/11/25	29/10/46
2791540	CPL	ML	LANGLEY	8 FLD AMBULANCE	20/12/25	21/5/49
213725	CPL	GA	COOMBS	101 FD WSHP	10/1/26	29/1/42
2784094	CFTM	GW	ADAMS	102 FLD WSHP	19/11/25	5/3/45
216390	CFTM	NW	TOLHURST	102 FLD WSHP	5/12/25	15/3/48
218023	CFTM	KL	SHEFFIELD	102 /106 FLD WSHP	25/12/25	11/12/49
3795113	CFTM	KP	ARTHUR	106 FLD WSHP	13/2/24	14/6/46
58510	WO2	AW	COOK	AFV DET 1DV STWSHP 2 /106FLD WSHP	1/4/21	27/6/33
2793201	CFTM	BR	BAILEY	17 CONS SQN WSHP	15/1/26	18/5/48
242967	SSGT	NJ	BARRETT	17 CONS SQN WSHP	10/1/26	1/2/440



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
2783963	SPR	AJ	FAIRHALL	DET 11 MCG	11/11/25	5/9/45
2785737	SPR	EV	CLARKE	198 WKS SECTION	15/12/25	31/7/45
54651	SGT	BW	WOODS	32 SMALL SHIPS	2/11/25	19/3/41
243232	LCPL	WJ	CULBERTSON	32 SMALL SHIPS	2/1/26	11/12/45
215314	CPL	DG	TAYLOR	110 SIG SQN	11/12/25	20/9/32
54331	LT	LF	O'NEILL	110 SIG SQN	16/12/25	13/7/42
216430	LCPL	ID	ROWLING	103 (2) /110 SIG SQN	7/11/25	8/2/48
2792302	GNR	PJ	CRAIG	1 FLD REGT	10/11/25	31/12/46
2781888	GNR	RJ	ALLPORT	1 FLD REGT	30/10/25	6/6/45
4718752	LBOM	LA	DAVENPORT	4 FLD REGT / 12 FLD REGT	6/2/26	13/5/46
217494	LBOM	BF	MAURER	4 FLD REGT	9/11/25	8/3/50
2783897	GNR	LF	WINTON	4 FLD REGT	7/11/25	21/6/45
216718	TRP	K	WEBB	B / A SQN 3 CAV REGT	21/11/25	26/4/45
218742	TRP	DJ	BUFFETT	B / A SQN 3 CAV REGT	23/12/25	28/10/50
2795932	TRP	DG	BROWN	A SQN 3 CAV REGT	19/12/25	6/2/49
2794529	PTE	D	POOLE	A / C SQN 1ARMREGT	3/1/26	11/3/49
2786997	PTE	JW	TRUDGEON	1 RAR	4/12/25	17/11/46
39410	CPL	BD	WHYTE	1 RAR	28/10/25	25/4/45
215909	CPL	AT	THIRKELL	1 RAR 2	19/12/25	26/2/46
43865	2LT	CH	FORDE	1 RAR	11/1/26	10/1/46
213632	CPL	RE	CLAUSEN	1 RAR 2	22/11/25	29/10/38
2782926	CPL	RJ	PINK	2 RAR	14/1/26	18/10/45
216896	PTE	RJ / IL	KELLY /SHIPP	3 RAR	2/12/25	21/10/48
2276670	PTE	BL	PENNEY	3 RAR	21/11/25	27/8/50
3798185	PTE	RT	SPRAGUE	4 RAR	3/2/26	1/3/49
38290	CPL	MN	SHAW	4 RAR	6/11/25	3/6/42
17773	PTE	M	WALDRON	1 RAR / 5 RAR	UNK	30/12/43
2781298	PTE	DL	BENSON	5 RAR	13/12/25	21/1/45



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
2781889	LCPL	TB	BURKE	6 RAR	8/1/26	14/1/45
1730852	PTE	KJ	NELLER	6 RAR	5/12/25	12/3/45
3411491	SGT	WJ	NICHOLSON	1 RAR / 7 RAR	17/1/25?	25/4/38
217135	CPL	ER	TICKNER	1 ARU / 7 RAR	30/1/26	28/5/38
2793296	PTE	WS	KENNEDY	7 RAR	22/1/26	16/4/48
4721127	PTE	WJ	BRICKNALL	1 ARU / 8 RAR	4/1/26	18/4/49
2790399	LCPL	PC	KEARNS	1ALSG / 1ARU/ 8RAR	5/3/26	5/1/48
2789288	PTE	JA	PARR	1ARU / 4 RAR / 9 RAR	9/1/26	11/8/47
RAAF						
A219862	LA	CW	SELMAN	RAAF TRAN FLT VIETNAM	16/12/25	11/8/44
A43414	SGT	RF	JONES	HQ AFV -RAAF	15/12/25	25/1/39
A223135	LA	ST	WOODGER	No 2 SQN	19/9/25	12/7/48
A223348	CPL	WA	CONROY	No 2 SQN	7/1/26	19/1/47
A45105	LA	WM	LEE	No 2 SQN	19/11/25	10/12/42
A34968	SGT	TV	LEWIS	No 2 SQN	12/1/26	1/12/35
A225123	LA	KL	MAKKINK	No 2 SQN	21/1/26	9/5/51
A110291	CPL	CWE	MARNEY	BASE SPT FLT/No2 SQN (2)	6/12/25	6/1/41
A1221820	LA	LR	HOY	No 9 SQN DETA / No 9 SQN	9/10/25	6/2/40
A43872	SGT	LG	FRY	No 9 SQN	30/11/24	9/3/43
A22532	SGT	AC	BURLING	NO 9 SQN	16/1/26	10/11/28
O116949	FO	NW	HOBSON DFC	No 9 SQN	4/12/25	1/6/44
A17830	LA	K	JAMIESON	BASE SPT FLT/No79 SQN	7/12/25	29/9/40
A218823	LA	KR	STONE	No 79 SQN	20/2/26	22/8/42
A219267	LA	RJ	CAMERON	RTFV/No35 SQN/BASE SPT	24/1/26	9/3/41
MEMBER, VOLUNTEERS & FRIENDS						
R43579		PJ	HALE	NAVY	3/1/26	2/4/52

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,
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