



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

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## SUMMER

## 2013

# CENTENARY OF THE RAN



As dawn broke upon Sydney Harbour on Friday 4 October 2013 heralding the start of a pleasantly warm Spring day the first of seven Australian warships left the rolling swell of the Pacific Ocean to enter the calm of what Captain Arthur Phillip had described in January 1788 as *'one of the finest harbours in the world in which a thousand sail of the line might ride in perfect security.'*

Long gone are the dun coloured heads that Phillip would have recognised as he crossed into the harbour 225 years earlier, nevertheless as all seaman who have made that same entry ever since know only too well, there is more than a little magic as North Head slides slowly past the starboard side and a pitching deck gradually flattens out.

Cont.....Pg 5

### DISCLAIMER

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## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT



The past six months since my election as National President have been a very interesting conversion from the role of National Secretary to President.

I must thank Ron Coxon as our Immediate Past President for his assistance and insights,

the new Secretary Graham Anderson for the speedy and efficient way he has assumed the responsibilities of administration, Rob Cox for his support in managing our finances and the two vice presidents Dave McCann and Max Ball for their ongoing support, Kath Coxon has continued her role as merchandising manager and Debrief editor and I thank her for her efforts.

The various state branch presidents have all been supportive, in fact the October 2013 National Council meeting in Adelaide that was preceded by a workshop to define our future as an association was an example of productive input and positive energy from all concerned, there will be a business plan produced in the near future to progress that subject.

I have attend one meeting of the Ex Service Organisations Round Table (ESORT) in Canberra and will be attending a second in mid-November, these are productive meetings and have considered such subjects as, the future of Advocacy, which effects our welfare and pension services, there was also consideration of a single pathway for appeals that will have an effect on our advocacy services.

We took the opportunity to support a submission to the Australian War Memorial board by the Vietnam Veterans Federation that argued that the official history of the Vietnam War did not truthfully acknowledge the effects of chemicals on veterans, that is an ongoing argument.

I also had the opportunity to visit the Australian War Memorial to attend a reception prior to the return of the original Long Tan cross to Vietnam, Hopefully it will return to Australia in the future.

I attended a hearing of the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal in Canberra to present the associations view on a review of the eligibility criteria for the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, the outcome of the tribunal deliberation has not yet been release.

I asked the Victorian President Mr Bob Elworthy to represent our association at a Defence Honours and

Awards Tribunal hearing to discuss the awarding of a Meritorious Unit Citation to the 547 Signal Troop in recognition of their services in Vietnam, again no decision on that subject has been released to date.

I have had the opportunity to attend a meeting with the State executive in Queensland and the dedication of a new memorial at Bribie Island; I have also attended the Victoria State Council Meeting in Bendigo during the past six months.

I have had contact with the new Minister for Veterans Affairs and the New Shadow Minister and have asked for an opportunity to brief them in person of our opinion on a number of subjects.

In the near future there will be a review of our current policy lists and a new item to be added to the VVAA web site will be a President page that will update our members on our activities and new information in a more effective time frame.

The work of the association is ongoing and I would welcome input from any member regarding matters they see as outstanding, I also thank you all for your ongoing support of the association and all we stand for.

*Ken Foster*



**WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY  
A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
& A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF  
VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA INC.**

**KEEP OUR SERVICE PERSONNEL  
SERVING OVERSEAS  
SAFE TILL THEIR RETURN.**



**GRAHAM DONALD ANDERSON OAM JP**

At this year's October National Council Meeting held in Adelaide a number of items were on the agenda for discussion.

One of these items was how to embrace younger veterans who were returning from, or have

served, in Afghanistan and South East Asian Countries since the end of the Vietnam War and to encourage them to become involved in pension and welfare matters involving the younger veterans with medical and disability problems.

The discussion was not how to encourage the younger veterans to join our association but to encourage them to become pension and welfare officers within their own organisations. The theory behind this is to invite them to work with our pension and welfare officers and gain the vast knowledge and experience obtained over the years since the Vietnam War.

The concept behind this is the Vietnam Veterans, who have been performing this function over a number of years, are reaching the age where new blood is required to carry on the great work they have achieved.

The idea is to encourage the younger veterans to link up with the older and experienced pension and welfare officers, who would be able to pass on their experience and knowledge of the DVA system and to understand the workings of SOP's.

Each State of the VVAA should encourage their pension and welfare officers to seek out and support the younger veteran to learn and assist with their pension and welfare work. In this way they will be providing the training knowledge and experience to enable the younger veteran to ensure that the service is available in the future.

The VVAA in the future will have to investigate changes to the wording of our Constitution to allow the younger veteran to link with our association and in time take over the role of the association.

We, the existing members of the association, have to start looking into the future and prepare the younger veterans to take over the responsibility of maintaining the training and experience of pension and welfare officers to support the ex-service community.

We do not want the younger generation to have the same problems which occurred when the Vietnam Veterans returned from Vietnam.

The younger veterans should not have to go through the same difficulties and battles with bureaucracy to obtain compensation for the illness and injuries caused by their war service.

This vision has already been introduced in some of our States. However, to enable it to move forward we have to encourage everyone to give this objective more and serious thought to have it working within the next five to ten years. This, I believe, we owe to the younger veterans and their families.

Graham Anderson  
National Secretary

**Finding assistance:**

Dept of Veteran Affairs

Metropolitan area

Callers from regional Australia

Veterans & Veterans Families

Counselling Service

Lifeline

Suicide Helpline

Carers counselling Line

**Phone numbers:**

133 254

1800 555 254

1800 011 046

131 114

1300 651 251

1800 007 332

**Web sites**

VVCS

Beyond Blue

[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

[www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs)

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**From the Editor.**

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Safe, Healthy and Enjoyable 2014.

Over the year I have spoken to many veterans and your families through Debrief & National Merchandise. I know some of you are doing it tough with health issues and concern for members of your family who are serving overseas. Keep them safe.

I enjoy your calls and am always grateful for your input and suggestions with the Debrief and Merchandise.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE,  
SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR. KATH**

**CONTENTS**

NSW Report	Pg 06
Qld Report	Pg 11
Tas report	Pg 12
ACT Report	Pg 15
Operation Wandering souls	Pg 16
Vic Report	Pg 17
NT Report	Pg 19
SA Report	Pg 20
National Merchandise	Pg 21
WA Report	Pg 26
Bulletin Board	Pg 29
Book Review	Pg 32



## VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

### POSITIONS VACANT

#### Honorary Web Master / Assistant Web Master

There are opportunities for those interested in electronic communications to hone their skills as web masters and assistant web masters for the association.

The National VVAA web site as well as state branch and regional sub branches are in need of maintenance and in some cases a fresh face.

**Duties:** These would include development and maintenance of VVAA web sites in conjunction with executive committees at all levels of the association.

**Location:** as this is an electronic medium your location is irrelevant, your area of interest is a key factor. Remuneration, these are honorary positions but the "Feel good" reward can be immeasurable.

#### Honorary Auditors

There are opportunities for auditors to assist the association in an honorary role as auditors at a National level, state branch levels and at sub branches.

**Duties:** These would include annual audit of financial records and production of audit reports, in most cases the audits are carried out in January and February and in some instances in July when audits are required to acquit government grants.

**Location** of the various levels of the association are shown in our magazine "Debrief" or our web site [www.vvaa.org.au](http://www.vvaa.org.au) although the national accounts are managed in Western Australia arrangement can be made to make records available for audit anywhere in Australia.

**Remuneration:** These are honorary positions however the satisfaction of assisting a worthwhile charity is immeasurable.

#### Welfare officers / Pension Officers / Advocates

There are opportunities for members of the association to act in these roles and support other veterans and their families.

**Duties:** These are varied and full training is provided through the government sponsored Training and Information Program (TIP). Application can be made to your nearest sub branch or state branch secretary.

**Remuneration:** these are voluntary positions but the satisfaction of helping other veterans is unmeasurable.

## SUICIDE AWARENESS SUPPORT FOR VETERANS NOW ONLINE

A new website, Operation *Life* Online, has been launched to assist veterans, Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families in learning about suicide prevention.

The website is the latest addition to Operation *Life*, the Department of Veterans' Affairs' (DVA) suicide prevention and mental health resource.

Operation *Life* Online provides advice and resources for the veteran and defence communities, and is designed to raise awareness of suicide, from recognising warning signs and risk factors to learning ways to help in times of crisis.

Operation *Life* Online will offer advice to people in need of immediate assistance, regardless of the time of day or their location.

Operation *Life* workshops are also available for people who are concerned about family, friends, mates or others in the veteran community. Attendance is free and people can register through the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS).

Tragically, suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia for men under 44 years and women under 34, and current and former serving members of the ADF are not immune from this loss. However, support is available and awareness of suicide risk, could help save a life.

The veteran community is reminded that free mental health treatment is available for eligible veterans without the need to lodge a DVA compensation claim, they just need to contact DVA on 133 254.

Access to Operation *Life* Online is via DVA's At Ease mental health portal [www.at-ease.dva.gov.au](http://www.at-ease.dva.gov.au)

Veterans and their families can access 24-hour counselling and support through the VVCS on 1800 011

#### Help wanted

I seeking information about my grandfather who I believe served in SVN with the Australian Army but has since passed away in 1981.

Name Private Mervyn Stewart MASON  
Service # 4721487  
Royal Australian Infantry\  
Unit 1 Australian Reinforcement Unit  
SVN 27/08/1970 -25/01/1971—National Serviceman

Contact: Hannah Cole  
Ph 02 64944178,  
Email [hc913@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:hc913@uowmail.edu.au)

*Cont from front page.....*

A perfect Spring morning exactly 100 years earlier to the day also greeted six warships as they manoeuvred into line astern formation of the recently commissioned battle cruiser and now flagship HMAS AUSTRALIA to enter Sydney Harbour as the first fleet of the Royal Australian Navy.

HMAS AUSTRALIA and the new light cruiser HMAS SYDNEY after their voyage from England arrived at Jervis Bay where they were joined by the cruisers ENCOUNTER and MELBOURNE, and destroyers WARREGO, PARRAMATTA and YARRA. This was a moment of great national pride as crowds in their thousands lined the shores and vantage points to welcome Australia's own.

Since that memorable day in 1913 there have been many occasion when ships of the RAN has made similar entries into Sydney Harbour and certainly the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations of 1963 again demonstrated the unbridled pride and high esteem that Australians have for their men and ships of the RAN.

Throughout its relatively short history the men and ships of the RAN have distinguished themselves in all major sea battles fought over two successive world wars. The bravery and sacrifice of ships and crews as they engaged in often very unequal struggles is etched well into our naval heritage with names such as Collins, Waller, Sheehan, for example.

With the end of WWII came the gradual demise of our larger ships in favour of the less manpower intensive and more agile Daring Class destroyers. 1963 saw not only the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RAN, but also a break with a British past as Australia proceeded to purchase three purpose built Perth Class DDGs from the United States. These ships following in the daunting wake of their forebears very quickly reaffirmed the dedication and professionalism of their crews and the strong desire to preserve and add to the heritage bequeathed them.

Throughout the centenary celebrations most will focus their attention on the ships of the RAN. One small and often overlooked branch within the RAN is that of the Fleet Air Arm. While the branch itself may be small when compared to that of our international counterparts, the dedication, versatility, skill, and reputation of RAN pilots is second to none. Feats performed by our pilots and crews particularly throughout the Vietnam War are the stuff of legends, and are generally better known in other countries than at home.

One should not be surprised at that though as it is a trait of the RAN since it's founding. The Royal Australian Navy has always been the quiet achiever as it goes about its business whether that is on the front line of belligerence, or showing the flag in a foreign or home port.

Long gone now are the days when a large grey green platform of turrets bristling with 12 inch, 8 inch, or 5 inch guns sat quietly at a mooring buoy or alongside the G.I. Oil Wharf. We are now used to seeing the comparatively smaller frigates. They still carry names that are familiar and revered by matelots from across the decades regardless of their age. The intimidatory displays of large gun capabilities from yesteryear have been replaced with technological conservatism designed to meet an ever changing role of the Australian Navy as it moves into a future as unknown and uncertain now as it was exactly 100 years ago.

I believe it to be as relevant today as it was then. When HMAS AUSTRALIA was commissioned on 21 June 1913 at Portsmouth immediately following cheers for King George V and the official party, a lone matelot sitting astride one of the 12 inch guns shouted out, *"Three Cheers for Wallaby Land."*

A sentiment echoed.

Warwick  
President

### **The Lucky Country Down Under**

No matter how often I roam  
Such joyful times when I come home  
To the great southern land where I was born  
See the glow of rugged mountain ranges at crimson dawn  
Hear booming surf crashing on a golden sandy beach  
It's yours, its mine; such richness and beauty within our reach

A multitude of distant stars reaching down with ancient light  
The smell of campfire embers smoldering through the night  
An early wakeup call by screeching coloured parrots in noisy flight  
Crystal clear bubbling forest streams racing to the sea  
The stifling heat of desert sands and freezing snowcapped land  
Coral isles, Uluru, Rainforests and other wonders so grand

To visit the pub for a beer or two  
Speak strine with blokes and sheilas true blue  
Xmas day playing beach cricket as per Rafferty's rules  
Sausage sizzles to help a needy cause at the local school  
Melbourne cups, footy grand finals and who will be the winner  
ANZAC Day and two up with the familiar cry "Come in Spinner"

Down under is so different from the old world that was  
A free happy life in the land of dreamtime called Oz  
Where people stand tall and always the familiar calls  
"She'll be bloody right mate" and "A fair go for all"  
Such is our nation as it should always be  
Guarded by us and those to follow; a priceless treasure and legacy

George Mansford October 2013

## NEW SOUTH WALES

Vietnam Veterans Day 18<sup>th</sup> August went off without a hitch, thanks largely to Len & Wendy Schulz (our Vice Pres and lady wife) and Carol Ward (our events co-ordinator) and the many hours of organization they put in to make this event successful and congratulations on this achievement.

The event began with a beautiful sunny day (this was ordered by Len), and in attendance were over 200 veterans and general public and because of this we have ordered many more chairs for next years Commemoration. The event started with the marching on to parade, with the Catafalque party leading the New South Wales Police band which heralded the arrival of Her Excellency, Prof Marie Bashir, AO CVO Governor of New South Wales who took the salute. The ceremony began with MC Vice President Len Schulz OAM with the introduction and welcome and a brief history of Australia's involvement in Vietnam.

The Address of the Day was given by Major Doug Humphrey, Principal Member of the VRB, which was an excellent address and very well done. A Poem, Not a Hero by Clyde Hamilton was recited by Caitlin Lydia Whalan (Granddaughter of Ray "Jessie" James, Vietnam Veteran, RAN, Caitlin also recited the ODE later in the ceremony, the Governor remarked to myself that she thought that Caitlin was an elegant and lovely young lady, she certainly was. There were many dignitaries laying wreaths for their different organizations and our National President Ken Foster and Myself laid wreaths for the VVAA National and New South Wales

The event concluded with the Governor doing a meet and greet with Veterans and said that it was special for her to meet the Vets and that she loved Vietnam Veterans in particular, The service was attended by many dignitaries including Major General Mark Kelly, the Premier Barry O'Farrell and the Premiers Deputy Victor Dominello, 5 of the entertainers, representatives of the Deputy Commissioner of DVA, all in all a great day and again thanks to Len, Wendy and Carol.

Elsewhere around the State we were represented by Trev Lawrence in Muswellbrook where around 300 veterans (including 97 members of the ARVN) and this year the presidents of the ARVN National and VCA. After the service all went to the Muswellbrook RSL for refreshments and the President of the Hunter/Central Coast VVAA (Trev Lawrence) presented the Muswellbrook RSL President with a shield and gifts as a thank you from all present for their continuous support

The ARVN State President was also given gifts due to our continued friendship.

VV Day in Bathurst was represented by our State Treasurer (Baggie) along with NSW State Secretary Pam Forsdike OAM and husband Andy Forsdike OAM. The Cadets from Scots School performed as the Catafalque party which was supported by 328 Squadron Air Force cadets and Scots School Army Cadets as Flag and Banner Bearers. Dignitaries in attendance were Paul Toole MP, Bathurst and Regional Mayor, and the Deputy Mayor, Police Superintendent Glenn Connell from Chifley LAC took the salute.

Down south VV Day at Murrumbidgee was well attended and in the safe hands of Des Davie and the lads and ladies from Wagga Wagga and South West Region, with the weather bringing many to the ceremony. Dignitaries from defence included Lt CDR Andrew Collard who gave the Keynote address, Col David Hay with RSM Michael Foster and GPCAPT Chris Crowley. The defence guests were impressed with the location and the semi informal approach, and this year they had a Bugler from Kapooka as their regular Shane Logan had emergency heart surgery but is now ok. During the service, tribute was paid to one of the members Mervin McDonald who passed on the previous Friday, RIP, a wreath was laid in his memory.

During a moving ceremony at St Marys (represented by Vice President Greg Cant), Dianne Lindsay-Simpson (husband of Viet Vet Peter Simpson) performed "Living in the Shadow of the Horse Shoe" and afterwards joined one and all at the RSL and gave a small concert of Country Music for the guests. St Marys commemoration was attended by senator Michael Richardson who flew in from Canberra specifically for the service, others in attendance were David Bradbury Asst Treasurer (at the time) Senator Marise Payne, Penrith Mayor Cr Davies and Cr Jackie Greenough.

Thank you one and all for your fine work in organising these events. Whilst at the Premiers function at Government house, I was approached by three senior Military Officers who asked could they be included in next years VV Day Commemoration activities, it is good to see that we have gained the respect of these senior people, so I guess we are doing something right, Oh and by the way, my reply to the Premiers address was again impassioned although again brief, for which everyone was grateful.

At our September meeting we had an address from John Jarret from the Young Diggers association (which is now up and running) on their "Digger Dogs"

*Cont next page.....*

initiative, this program is well worth supporting as it helps our younger vets who are having mental health problems as well as physical trauma. The companion dogs give tremendous support and help to those in the most need, enclosed is a pamphlet on their programs, as well as their contact numbers if any state would like to get involved in helping them out.

On a final note, Tony Walker, our State Treasurer has just returned from a trip to Vietnam. While there Tony & Glenn Nolan from Tommy's Bar, & Vung Tau Battle Field Tours, were able to lay a wreath



Dave McCann  
National Vice-president/State President

### CENTRAL COAST/HUNTER VVAA SB

People especially ex-service people continue to give towards the welfare of their mates such was the recent case of Jim (will do) Levy.

On 17th July I received a call from the East Cessnock Bowls Club that one of their members, a Vietnam Veteran wanted to raise funds to help in our Welfare and Pensions Services. On Friday 2nd August four of us including Dave McCann, State President, and Trevor Lawrence OAM, JP, Sub Branch President attended a function at the Cessnock Bowls Club where Jim had his "Golden Locks???" shaved.

At the end of the evening the bowls club donated \$2000.00 raised from their promotion and Jim's sacrifice.

Its amazing that people who have already given so much to their country can continue to do so while legislation designed to help them becomes more complex and difficult to navigate.

Once again, our thanks go to East Cessnock Bowls Club and Jim Levy for their donation to our Welfare & Pensions Fund.

Regards.  
John Fraher/Honorary Secretary

### Vietnam Veterans South West NSW & Wagga Inc

On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013 Colonel David Hay Commandant of Kapooka Army Recruit Training Base was given a farewell BBQ lunch at the Wagga Wagga RSL Sub-Branch.

Colonel David Hay has now been posted and will leave at the end of the year to take up his new posting in Canberra; David will be missed by all of the Service and Veteran Community in the Wagga area, as he has officiated at all of the commemorative services in and about the city for the past three years and has always made himself available to talk to after.

He was instrumental in the construction and dedication of the Sapper Memorial at Kapooka Tragedy site, as well as organising the Annual Open Day at the Kapooka Base to let the public see the working of the Army Recruit Training Base first hand.

During his time as commandant David has been very active in Legacy fund raising both on and off base; also David was particularly interested and active in pursuing a better outcome in Women's Health and the Prevention of Violence against Women during his 3 years in Wagga.

Keith Poole President of the V.V.A.A. South West NSW & Wagga Sub-Branch inc. presented David with an honorary membership during the Luncheon in recognition of his commitment and support to this organisation.



The Committee & members of the VVAA South West NSW & Wagga Sub-Branch and the Wagga Wagga RSL Sub-Branch wished David and his Family all the very best for the future in his new posting.

For those of you who were at Nui Dat in the early years here's a very good selection of pictures

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/aodcurator/sets/72157615830627908/?page=3>



## THE RAILWAY MAN MOVIE

State members of the VVAA attended a preview screening of this wonderful film, based on British serviceman Eric Lomax's best-selling memoir.

*The Railway Man* is an extraordinary and inspiring true story, starring Academy Award®-winning actors Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman and rising star Jeremy Irvine (*War Horse*), directed by Australia's Jonathan Teplitzky.



Eric's experience as one of the more than 20,000 allied prisoners of war who were forced to work on the construction of the Thai/Burma railway during WW2 is one that will resonate with Australian audiences, as will the tale of love and redemption that follows.

**1942.** Tens of thousands of brave young British and ANZAC soldiers become prisoners of war when Japanese forces overrun Singapore.



Churchill calls it "the greatest disaster ever to have befallen the British Empire". Eric Lomax, (Colin Firth/ Jeremy Irvine) a 21 year old British Signals Engineer and railway enthusiast, is one of the surrendered men.

Sent to work on the construction of the notorious Death Railway in Thailand, Eric witnesses unimaginable suffering; men forced to hack through rock and jungle with their bare hands, beaten, starved and prey to tropical diseases.

He builds a secret radio to bring hope, and as he whispers news of Hitler's defeats or American advances in the Pacific, a thousand backs straighten and exhausted, desperate men resolve to survive another day. When the radio is discovered, Eric faces beatings, interrogation and worse.



Barely surviving the war he returns home, like so many others, to a country unable to imagine what he and his colleagues have been through. Haunted by the face of one young Japanese officer, he shuts himself off from the world.

And then one day, decades later, he meets a beautiful woman - on a train, of course. She makes him laugh for the first time. They court like teenagers and marry quickly. But on their wedding night Eric's nightmares return.

Battling the code of silence that unites the former prisoners of war Patti Lomax (Nicole Kidman) persuades one of her husband's colleagues, the enigmatic Finlay (Stellan Skarsgård) to tell her a shocking secret. The Japanese officer who holds the key to what really happened to her husband is still alive, and Finlay knows where he is.

Patti must decide: should Eric, a man desperate for revenge, be given this information? Will she stand by him, whatever he does?

Her decision sets up a return to Thailand for a stunning, unexpected and ultimately triumphant finale to an extraordinary true story of heroism, humanity and the redeeming power of love.

The *Railway Man* opens at cinemas across the country on December 26.



## Easier, faster travel claiming online with DVA MyAccount

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) online self-service portal, *MyAccount* is an internet-based service that offers you secure access to a range of DVA services at a place and time that suits you. *MyAccount* gives you more choice and convenience in doing business with DVA.

For some time now, DVA clients who receive entitlements under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act* have been able submit travel claims quickly and easily online through *MyAccount*. In many cases they can have the money in their account in just a few days.

## Improved online travel claims in November 2013

From November 2013 DVA is removing the 100km limit per round trip.

Presently, eligible DVA clients can claim online for up to ten trips per claim and can track the progress of the claim. This includes kilometres travelled using a private vehicle, parking fees, road tolls, taxi and public transport costs. From November you will also be able to claim online for accommodation costs associated with medical travel. Claimants simply need to keep their receipts for four months just in case DVA needs to verify the travel.

## How to start claiming travel online

To begin claiming your travel expenses online, you will first need to register for *MyAccount*.

You can do this easily by phoning the Department on 1800 173 858 during business hours Monday to Friday. Enclosed is a brochure with information on registering for and using *MyAccount*. You can also visit <https://myaccount.dva.gov.au> to learn more.

*MyAccount* gives you more choice in how you do business with DVA. I invite you to try *MyAccount* today for a faster and more and convenient way to manage your DVA travel

Q. If I am eligible, what travelling expenses can I claim online ?

A. You can claim online for kilometres travelled, parking fees, road tolls, taxi and public transport costs.

You will need to keep all your receipts for four months – in case DVA has a query.

From November you will also be able to claim for medical associated accommodation

Q. How quickly will I get my money if I claim online?

A. Money can be credited more quickly if you claim travel expenses online.

This is because there is no need to wait for the physical papers to be sent for processing – they are sent to claim officers as soon as you submit them.

The removal of some claim restrictions for online will also improve waiting time.

Of course, if DVA needs more information from you or needs to verify some details your claim may take a little longer to process.

Q. How many trips can I claim?

A. Through *MyAccount* you can claim for up to ten round trips per claim

Q. How many providers can I identify on any claim?

A. You can claim for trips to multiple providers online in one claim.

Q. Do I need a health provider's signature?

A. No. DVA has removed the requirement for a health provider's signature for online claims.

Q. Can I claim for journeys over 100km (round trip)?

A. From November 2013 DVA will remove the restriction on round trips of over 100km. This makes claiming much simpler – particularly for our regional clients.



### Raising awareness in the UK

We are a group of people who are military history enthusiasts as well as collectors of militaria. I am an expat Aussie living in the UK and want to raise awareness here about the Australian involvement in Vietnam.

This came about through doing fundraising for the Royal British Legion and attending other military events. Quite a few of the people in the group showed interest in the Australian efforts in Vietnam and we decided to take it further. During conversation, very few people know that Australia sent forces to Vietnam, especially the contribution of the AATTV.

These guys should have received far more recognition than they did, so we decided to attend some military events and set up a camp to resemble that era, portraying the 'team'. The display has examples of VC booby traps, weapons, uniforms, tentage...as well as our sign post that gets a lot of attention! We also dress the girls in period RAANC uniforms that we had to make, as there are just not any originals around that I could find. The army nurses were also unsung heroes and we let people know about their experiences as well. The interest we generate from the displays is fantastic!



My good friend and fellow history buff, Richard Bass and I also decided to make the docu-drama to give an insight into the gear, weapons, uniforms, etc, that the Aussies used. All of the kit on the movie is original.



The weapons are original, deactivated examples. The cameraman Tony Gray was gracious enough to donate his time and equipment and the quality speaks for itself. The title song at the end of the short movie is an original composition written by myself for the 'team'. It was a lot of fun for us, but it serves as a tribute and an overview of what it would have been like, albeit to a much lesser degree of what the blokes would have actually gone through. I have been liaising with Rick Ryan, who is ex-AATTV and runs the website out of Perth. He has been a great help and supports what we are doing. Also Rob Cox has been in touch and has been a great help as well.



I was only a kid at the time of the Vietnam war, but we were touched fairly dramatically in the small country town I lived in near Albany, W.A. Our neighbours son Jim McQuat was KIA and our other neighbours had two sons, Michael and Gerard Schutz, who were both wounded. It's always stuck with me and it was sad that the blokes coming home got such a bad reception as the war progressed.



We are planning to do more public events next year to continue flying the Aussie flag here in the UK!

Regards,  
Ty Coates.



## QUEENSLAND

Hi to all from VVAA QLD

Queensland is pleased to have Mr. Holt McMinn OAM and National Life Member rejoining our ranks as a member of the Sunshine Coast Sub Branch. For those who do not know Mr. McMinn was a driving force for Vietnam Veterans disabilities to be correctly recognized as a founding member and Past National President of VVAA. He was also instrumental in having the Federal Government fund the VVCS.

Over the past several months VVAA Qld has been looking within itself to ensure that we are meeting our objective, the future welfare of our members and the wider veteran community as a whole.

Our membership is stable in some of the sub branches, however in others the number of members has declined to a level, which makes it difficult to fill an Executive and to have a quorum at meetings.

In looking forward to the future we are seeking more autonomy for sub branches to encourage the younger veterans and other ESOs to join with us in maintaining an effective level of Welfare and Pension service to all veterans.

This is also important if we are to be an effective National Association able to lobby on behalf of all veterans. It is important to raise new veteran issues as they come to notice. But, it is equally important that we ensure there is no erosion of benefits and service already available.

This needs to be balanced against VVAA National Constitution and associated rules so that VVAA National maintain the over arching management until the time comes when The National Executive's most senior positions can no longer be filled by a Vietnam Veteran. What happens then, depends on our future planning.

We are asking all members to have a say in the future direction of VVAA National as this is your association. If you agree that we should plan to at some time in the future be prepared to hand over to younger veterans please help us with recruitment of suitable young veterans to be trained in Welfare, Pensions and Management. We will need their input for future planning.

Remembrance House at Burpengary is being used for emergency accommodation and several young veterans have been most grateful for the support provided. The renewed Caboolture Sub Branch makes regular use of the premises for their meetings and social events, as does a local Military Cadet Unit.

Immediate Past President John Smith and others

provide Welfare and Pension services to all veterans seeking assistance from the premises. Well done

The efforts of the Junior Vice President Rob Mosley in maintaining the grounds cannot be overstated. He recently applied his skills in restoring old motors by getting a 1940 vintage rotary hoe going and it is being used to develop a vegetable patch on the grounds. Then the Treasurer Gwen Mosley amongst other duties was able to furnish the premises on the smallest of budget. The staff, at Harvey Norman's now, run for cover on seeing Gwen enter the store.

Vietnam Veterans Day in Queensland was very successful all round and reports are that everybody had good times. Attached are two pieces of equipment synonymous with Long Tan that were used at the Townsville Service.



However at the other end of the state there has been some of the most disrespectful action by young people in attacking ZACs Place, which is clearly known as a Veterans Retreat. Keys to the premises stolen along with vehicle being stolen and others damaged. These issues have been raised with Police and the local politicians. But this shows the level of disrespect that some elements of society will go.

VVAA Qld would like to extend a safe, happy Christmas and New Year greeting to all VVAA members and their families.

Peter Hindle/President



## TASMANIA

Already the end of another year is upon us with the only consolation being that the weather down here may start to actually warm up. I have been known to occasionally display an optimistic streak.

At the time of writing this there are some very savage fires raging across New South Wales, and without exception our thoughts are with everyone affected. We can only sit and watch at this time and hope that there is no loss of life, and also that no veterans will be caught up in this disaster. In the past, Tassy has received the support and encouragement from other States and I would like to reaffirm even at this early stage that we will, and stand ready to assist whatever way we can.

For those of you who have visited our Bush Retreat at Interlaken in the past it may be of interest that the Ranger's Hut together with its 2001 sq meter lakeside block will soon be on the market. This block is adjacent to the VVAA Tasmania retreat. My advice from Parks and Wildlife is that the block will go for auction either in December of this year, or January 2014

VVAA Tasmania does not have the capability of maintaining an additional holding however it may be of interest to one of our interstate counterparts, hence my mentioning the impending sale here. It would be ideal to at least know who the neighbour is that we will be getting for the future. If there might be an interest let me know and I will obtain all information that I can to assist the interested party.

The overall state of affairs in Tasmania is our membership is slowly decreasing, and not helped by a lengthening sick list and mortality rate. It will only be a matter of time before we run out of fingers to plug the dyke so to speak, but in the interim it is a small band of dedicated individuals who continue to soldier on. The demand for particularly welfare services has increased at an alarming rate and despite hopes to the contrary we are yet to see who the long term replacements will be.

Like most Tasmanians, the VVAA Tasmania is waiting now for the State Elections due to be held in March 2014. There will hopefully be a change of government which will see out the nepotism and cronyism that is endemic under the current regime here as well as to breathe new life into its veteran's representative body TVAC.

This will be my last report as my presidency draws to a close. I do not intend renominating in 2014 and will pass the reins to someone else. For the most part it has been simply a matter of keeping the Branch on an even keel following on from my erstwhile predecessor.

I will of course continue to take an active interest in the ongoing affairs of the VVAA and contribute if asked to do so.

While not being able to hold a conversation for more than a few minutes at a time these days is a blessing to some extent for many, the upside is that it gives me the perfect excuse now to spend more time playing with my Harley and ripping up some asphalt which I fully intend to do with a vengeance.

At National I have met some great people who have in one way or another advised me and assisted me towards furthering the cause for veterans in a practical and positive way. In particular I wish to acknowledge and thank Bob Elworthy for helping me straighten a shelf in Adelaide one evening twelve months ago, and for all his assistance over the past years despite his own difficulties. Clive Mitchell-Taylor who so effortlessly managed to simplify the complicated on many occasions, and I trust is enjoying his retirement. Ken and Phyl Foster for their genuine concern and encouragement during some very testing times. Last but not least Nummer Wun. One of nature's true gentlemen, and a good friend despite his being given over to a questionable taste in dance routines performed only on the roof of a public toilet in Bugis Street while reading the Straits Times.

I have enjoyed my time and challenges with the VVAA over the years and wish it only success for the future and good health, with long lives to all.

Warwick Luttrell  
State President

### AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM TASMANIA ANGLESEA BARRACKS Davey St Tasmania

**For information Phone (03) 6237 7160**

[Militarymuseumtasmania.org.au](http://Militarymuseumtasmania.org.au)

The Military Museum of Tasmania is situated within Anglesea Barracks, Davey Street, Hobart. This Barracks precinct is recognized as one of Australia's most significant historical military precincts and its appearance today is much as it was when the first buildings were constructed in 1814



## A Special Way of Life

Hear Sergeants bellowing “stop” or “go”  
As officer cadets run to and fro  
Learning to lead for their tomorrow  
Striving to master the art of war  
Proud of their cloth and those who went before

See smiling faces framed on hallowed walls  
Once eager youth who answered the call  
To serve and protect a way of life  
Swore a sacred oath of duty, no matter the cost  
Then in distant fields these warriors were lost

Meet old soldiers returning to this military place  
Recalling dreams born at the start of their great  
race  
Reflecting a baptism to Spartan life  
Honouring mute heroes on familiar walls  
Watching tomorrow’s leaders’ march to strident  
calls

Cheer young officers as they leave RMC  
Seeking command and hidden challenges to be  
Confident young warriors prepared for any strife  
Future peacemakers and nation builders answering  
the call  
To confront danger and perhaps more photos on  
the walls

Imagine those tomorrows when youngsters will  
come  
From all walks of life to this college and be as one  
Their bible preaching of respect, loyalty, honour  
and more  
To learn the art of leadership and lessons from  
past wars  
As all before them, to be part of this special place  
for evermore

George Mansford © June 2013

### MEDAL APPLICATIONS

ARMY OR NAVY OR AIRFORCE MEDALS  
SECTION

DIRECTORATE OF HONOURS & AWARDS  
DEPT. DEFENCE  
LOCKED BAG 2003  
COOMA NSW 2630  
ARMY - 1800 065 149  
NAVY - 1800 808 073  
AIR FORCE - 1800 623 306

### All you ever want to know about Vietnam

This site is very good for research  
[http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/  
Vietnam.html](http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html)

The “**AT EASE**” programs on the DVA website help you to Recognise/Act/Maintain.



### New Mobile Apps available

It’s not unusual to experience sadness, distress or anger after deployment. At Ease can help veterans, ADF personnel, and family members identify the symptoms of not coping. When you need to reach out, seek treatment or identify effective ways to move forward, At Ease can provide tips, treatment options & resources. At Ease also has clinical resources for health professionals who may be treating members of the veteran & defence community.

### NEW!-On Track with The Right Mix app

A new tool to help you manage your alcohol consumption and learn about the health impacts of alcohol on your wellbeing and lifestyle. A mobile app from the Department of Veterans' Affairs that lets you keep track of the number and types of drinks you consume; the amount of money it's costing you and lets you know about the impact the alcohol has on your wellbeing and fitness levels.

The **PTSD Coach Australia** app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma

The DVA [ON TRACK with The Right Mix App](#) has been designed specifically for current and ex serving ADF personnel. Visit the [mobile applications](#) page of this website to find out more. The ON TRACK App can be downloaded from both iTunes (iOS)\* and Google Play (Android)\*

The **PTSD Coach Australia** app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma. [Find out more about the PTSD App](#) and where to download.

Features include:

- Reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work.
- Tools for screening and tracking your symptoms.
- A scheduler that allows you to manage all your self-care, health appointments and activities.
- Convenient, easy-to-use skills to help you handle stress symptoms.
- Direct links to support and help.
- Designed specifically for ex and current serving ADF personnel.

Always with you when you need it.

# MEDIA RELEASE

4 November 2013

## Save the Memorial at Tarin Kot

The National President Mr. Ken Foster calls on the Australian Government and the Department of Defence to reconsider the reported decision to destroy the memorial at Tarin Kot, Afghanistan.

This is not simply a concrete and steel wall; it has a soul, strengthened by every wreath laid, every salute, and every silent prayer.

It is a living reminder of the service and sacrifice of a generation of Australian service men and women.

Consider not only the financial cost; consider also the potential psychological cost to a generation of service men and women in destroying this symbol of their service and sacrifice.

It is a contradiction to destroy this memorial and then in the next few years erect memorials to commemorate the service of an earlier ANZAC generation, this is their memorial, paid for in blood, sweat and pain.

Australian Vietnam veterans, with the benefit of hindsight, would have brought the Long Tan cross home to Australia when the base at Nui Dat closed, don't make the same mistake now.

*For more information contact the National President on 0413 046 077.*



## A statement from the Chief of the Defence Force regarding the international memorial at Multi-National Base – Tarin Kot

I accompanied the families of our fallen soldiers into Tarin Kot on Saturday 2 November to conduct a commemorative service and to enable them to experience part of what their loved ones experienced during their deployments to Afghanistan.

The occasion was emotional for all involved, and undoubtedly appreciated by the families.

The fate of the memorial wall at the Multi-National Base was discussed during our visit.

The wall is an international memorial. It bears the names of more than 110 soldiers who were killed in action. These soldiers were from four countries, and the largest number were from the United States.

Taking into account all the issues that surround the wall – in particular that it is not uniquely Australian – the families brought a special insight into this matter and agreed to the plan to destroy the wall.

This will be done respectfully and because of the careful planning which has occurred an appropriate historical record of the wall will be maintained.

The families of our fallen are comforted by the knowledge that a range of memorial items are being returned to Australia and will be added to significant memorial sites such as the National Afghanistan Memorial in Yungaburra, Queensland and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

I am disappointed with the media and online coverage of this matter. At least two families were approached for comment and both were conveyed incomplete, perhaps misleading, information which evoked the desired emotional response.

Upon visiting the memorial site and learning of the wider issues involved, the families agree with my proposed approach.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Intake JRTE HMAS Leeuwin 1961

#### First ever reunion

Approximate date is yet to be confirmed, assume Feb/March 2014.

To be held in the Shellharbour area NSW about 110km south of Sydney.

To register your interest and for further details:

Contact Dave Turner or 02 9520 2810

Email: [davkat@bigpond.net.au](mailto:davkat@bigpond.net.au)



## ACT

As 2013 draws to a close, ACT VVAA members and the executive are looking forward to a safe and happy festive season as well as the beginning of commemorative activities to mark the centenary of the Great War.

VP Pete Ryan and I attended the National Council meeting held in October in Glenelg SA. As usual the ACT put a number of matters to Council. One day before Council we all convened to discuss the future of our Association. While some have issues relating numbers and servicing members, many attendees were able to offer positive and realistic contributions to the discussions. However, in my opinion, the VVAA needs to determine if it is to remain the sole domain of Vietnam Veterans or morph into a wider Veterans Association supporting recent generations of Veterans. Clearly the time will come, as we enter and pass our *seventies*, committee and welfare work will need to be undertaken by people who are not Vietnam Veterans. There are several future possibilities for the VVAA, ranging from abolition of the VVAA, breaking up into loosely based regional social groups, amalgamating with other Ex-Service organisations (such as the RSL - I never thought I would say that! ). We should look at these options as dispassionately as possible over the next year or two, with one outcome in mind .... What future model is best suited to benefit all remaining Vietnam Veterans as all we move into old age?

One positive outcome flowing from our deliberations is the recruitment of the ACT by Queensland to work co-operatively to produce constitutional amendments deemed necessary to give the VVAA some administrative flexibility as we meet the challenge of both engaging with and supporting the ageing Vietnam Veterans cohort.

ACT was pleased to advise our fellow jurisdictions that our Chief Minister has agreed to recognise the home state travel concessions of Veterans visiting the National Capital. This means a saving on fuel bills for visitors as well as being able to travel to our many National attractions using our excellent public transport system. ACT sincerely hopes all other State and Territory Governments will match the ACT Governments decision..

While I was interstate on the 18th August, several sources informed me that the Vietnam Veterans' Day Commemorative Service at our National Australian Vietnam Forces Memorial on Anzac Parade was afforded many accolades; as was befitting our fallen comrades, it was a solemn, moving, and highly symbolic ceremony.

As in years past, a large congregation braved the wintry day and were rewarded with a fine finale. As the catafalque party dismounted down the ramp,

John Schumann appeared from the inner sanctum and sang his iconic Vietnam Veterans song, *I was only 19*. Pete Ryan who hosted the day, told me the song reduced quite a few if not all to tears, if not, then to something very nearly resembling damp eyes. It was especially pleasing to have the ceremony end on such a high note as all ACT organisations have, in 2013, been marking the Centenary of Canberra.

A good number of the congregation went on to enjoy the traditional camaraderie afternoon at a local club. John also went back to the club, and being extremely comfortable with our people, stayed and mingled to the great delight of many.

Again the success of the day can be firmly sheeted home to the organising committee. The "quiet achiever" here is Pete's partner, Robynne Mitchell. Robynne does the bulk of the "spade work"; seating plans, tribute organisation and management as well as logistics and much more. The Planning Committee is chaired by ACT VP Pete Ryan, with Robynne and two volunteers from the VVF sorting out the "who's, where's and when's" months before the event. I am particularly pleased that the VVF also contributes to the cost of mounting the service.

Apart from our major commemorative event in August a good deal of our Veteran focused activities centre on committee work. Our executive will continue to represent ACT members on local ESO committees. Such representation breeds the excellent relations our Branch has with our fellow ESOs. One committee is the ACT Chief Minister's Veterans' Affairs Council and Pete Ryan is a member of this body. Planning is well in hand for Veteran oriented commemorative activities in your National Capital to mark the Centenary of ANZAC in 2015.

This is my second stint as ACT President, having held this post, as well as National President in the mid 1980's. As I also hold both local and national positions with Asthma Australia, I need to delegate much of our committee work to VP Pete Ryan. Pete also represents Veterans' interests on several National Committees. Must keep him busy!!

Nevertheless the ACT Branch is seeking nominations for Branch Secretary, Branch Treasurer and Committee Member. Our Branch has been hit hard by the retirement of members who have either moved interstate or can't continue for various reasons. It is not reasonable for Pete and Robynne to shoulder the bulk of our important work and we need others to contribute time and effort before 'burn-out' overcomes the team. Please nominate if you can help out.

As another year draws to a close, the ACT executive on behalf of our members wishes all Vietnam Veterans and their families a happy and safe festive season and all the good they wish for themselves and their loved ones throughout 2014.

Kevin Gill ACT Branch President October 2013.

## Operation Wandering Souls Debrief on visit to Vietnam Jul/Aug 2013

**The Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society at the University of New South Wales, Canberra**

In July/August this year, the Operation Wandering Souls project team returned about 150 documents, paintings, photographs and other artefacts to families and to the Vietnam People's Army (VPA). The VPA has an organisation which endeavours to return items of a personal nature collected on the battlefield, to the families of the fallen.

Bob Hall and Derrill de Heer from the Operation Wandering Souls team, delivered the documents. Over a period of three weeks, numerous handover meetings were conducted. Below are a series of photographs showing some of these meetings.

The Operation Wandering Souls team wishes to thank Australian and New Zealand veterans who contributed items to the project for return to Vietnam. We believe that in addition to helping to heal the pain of loss for individual Vietnamese families, the project has enhanced relations between Australia, New Zealand and Vietnam. We also believe that the project has been a fitting reciprocation of Vietnam's assistance to Australia in the recovery of our six MIAs.

On their visit to Vietnam, Bob Hall and Derrill de Heer were accompanied by a TV crew from Channel 7 'Sunday Night' program. The 'Sunday Night' team included Ben Roberts-Smith, VC, who was the Channel 7 presenter. The Channel 7 'Sunday Night' program can be viewed at the following link:

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/sunday-night/features/article/-/18880430/big-ben-in-vietnam/>

Additional links:

<http://vietnambreakingnews.com/tag/operation-wandering-souls/>

<http://www.journeyman.tv/64240/short-films/wandering-souls.html> ABC Foreign Correspondent

On behalf of the Operation Wandering Souls project team, I would like to thank Australian and New Zealand veterans for their support of the project.

The project continues to collect additional items for eventual return to Vietnam. If you have such items and would like to return them to Vietnam please feel free to contact the Operation Wandering Souls team.

### The Operation Wandering Souls research team

Dr Bob Hall – Team leader and Vietnam veteran (8RAR)

Dr Andrew Ross – Database and analysis guru

Dr Amy Griffin – Geographic Information Systems expert

Derrill de Heer – Field researcher and Vietnam veteran (8RAR, Psyops and 4RAR/NZ)

You can check out Bob Hall and Derrill de Heer at the following URLs: <http://hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/staff/profiles/hall.html>  
<http://hass.unsw.adfa.edu.au/staff/profiles/de%20Heer.html>

#### To contact the team:

Contact Bob Hall or Derrill de Heer

Email: [b.hall@adfa.edu.au](mailto:b.hall@adfa.edu.au) or

[d.deheer@adfa.edu.au](mailto:d.deheer@adfa.edu.au)

Phone: +61 2 6268 8848

Mobile: 0439 887 580 or 0414 574 605

#### Snail mail:

Bob Hall or Derrill de Heer

Operation Wandering Souls project

HASS

UNSW Canberra

PO Box 7916

Canberra BC

ACT 2610

Australia

### Photo album: Return of items in July/August 2013



Le Hang and his son, examining the portrait of his mother, Phan Thi Vu, rescued from a burning building by an Australian adviser. Le Hang was overjoyed to receive the portrait.

This is not the entire article, if you wish a copy contact the addressees above.

## VICTORIA

The members of the Victorian Branch extend warm greetings to the National Executive and members of our sister state and territory branches, and take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a happy and holy Christmas season and a safe and healthy new year. Speaking of the new year, just where has this year gone? It seems just like yesterday that we were welcoming in 2013 and here we are almost at the end of the year. Something to do with getting older perhaps?

As expected we have a new coalition government in charge, and a new Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and he's a Victorian! Senator Michael Ronaldson hails from Ballarat; so he clearly comes from tough stock, having been able to survive that city's notorious winters. It is interesting to note that as was the case with the previous Labor minister who had other portfolios as well, Senator Ronaldson has also been saddled with the extra responsibilities of Special Minister of State and as the Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the centenary of ANZAC. From a (purely selfish?) veteran point of view, we hope that these other responsibilities do not diminish the Minister's ability to deliver on the much publicized and highly touted coalition promises to the veteran community. We wish the new minister well, and given that he is a Victorian, we are in good hands and we look forward with anticipation to his timely implementation of the coalition's promises.

There has been strong debate in the branch in relation to access to beds at Ward 17 (the veteran psychiatry unit-VPU) of the Coral-Balmoral building at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital that will be of interest to other state branches. Both the Victorian DVA Deputy Commissioner and the manager of the Psychological Trauma Recovery Service (PTRS) at the Repatriation Hospital-which incorporates the VPU- have provided responses to formal queries directed to them. A detailed report on their responses is included in the next edition of FSB Vic, due out soon, and I commend the article to all branches. Significantly, the current arrangements between DVA and the PTRS do not guarantee a veteran a bed in the VPU.

There was considerable discussion in relation to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum deciding to host a book launch by controversial writer Don Tate. It needs to be pointed out that as the museum is now an independent entity, the museum board of management decides museum activities, not the Victorian Branch. There were strong opinions for and against the decision which were not entirely unexpected, and the branch and museum respect and accept the opinions of those veterans who took the time to voice their opposition in a civilized manner. However the disgraceful

comments that flowed from the anonymous cowards at the Australian Veterans Matters website were another matter entirely and are deserving of the strongest condemnation. Not satisfied with attacking the author, which is their right, they then turned on the museum with unfounded allegations of fraud and boycott threats.

Staying on the subject of the museum, a new director, Mr Kingsley Munday has joined the board, bringing with him a wealth of corporate knowledge. The communications tower is up and operational and generating valuable monthly income, and a contract for the delivery of a museum strategic plan which has been largely funded by the state government is underway. In a major coup for the museum, and further endorsement of its growing stature, a US exhibition of helicopters in the Vietnam War is to be mounted at the museum-the first time this exhibition has been displayed outside of the US. A "friends of the museum" program is to be launched shortly, and the museum recently became the benefactor of a significant donation from an Ex-Service Organisation. In recognition of outstanding service to the museum, John and Krish Methven will be acknowledged at the museum open day on 18 November when the main hangar building will be named in their honour.

The 2013 Victorian Variety Bash has been and gone and the Victorian sub-branches along with the WA, NT and NSW branches combined to raise a \$2000 sponsorship for the "green machine", which saw the VVAA logo carried on both back doors of the car in the bash from Echuca to Broome via the top end. A sponsorship of this nature is a first for the branch and the other states that joined us, and we believe that involvement in worthy causes such as the Variety Bash shows us to be good and involved community citizens. The vehicle generated significant interest within the veteran community along the way, with many veterans and partners posing for photos and adorning the car with VVAA stickers.

As is our practice, the Victorian State Council has been on the road again in 2013. The AGM was conducted in Horsham in the Mallee in February, followed by council meetings in the heart of the historic Victorian goldfields at Ballarat in May and at Bendigo in July, where we were delighted to welcome the new National President and his wife. The fishing town of Port Fairy on the state's east coast was the location for the last council meeting of the year in October, and the 2014 AGM is penciled in for Phillip Island at the end of February.

State Vice President Ken Baker is heading the planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan activities in 2016, and is sifting through a list of potential high profile activities that have been considered at



State council. Many of the activities will require significant planning and funding, all of this will occur against the backdrop of the centenary of ANZAC commemorations, so it will require plenty of effort to ensure that our significant anniversary gets oxygen. The branch has already written to the Melbourne ANZAC Day Coordinating Committee seeking approval for Vietnam veterans to lead the 2016 ANZAC Day march in recognition of the anniversary, and Peter Liefman has been active sowing the seeds for a special 2016 VetRide.

The DVA organized Veteran Community Story Writing and Art Competition (SWAC) for 2013, for which VVAA Victoria provides a \$650 sponsorship, again attracted a large number of entries this year. The VVAA Victoria wartime photography and encouragement awards were keenly contested. We believe that SWAC is an excellent vehicle for encouraging veterans to engage their literary, photographic and artistic skills, and we are pleased to be a sponsor.

The Leslie Farren Memorial Award, was this year won by Cheryl Myers, secretary of the VVAA Frankston Sub-Branch. The award which is sponsored by Victorian company LAGO Smallgoods, honours the memory of PTE Leslie Farren who was the first Victorian National Serviceman to be killed in action in Vietnam, and is awarded for excellence in the delivery of veteran welfare services.

Jim Coghlan who has been a stalwart of the Victorian Branch Executive is standing down at the end of the year after many years of faithful and loyal service, and I am sure all who know Jim at state and national level join in wishing him well.

Bob Elworthy

## VARIETY BASH—"MILD HOGS"



In a sponsorship first, VVAA Vic, NSW, WA and NT sponsored the "Mild Hogs" in the Variety Bash 2013 to raise funds for sick or under privileged children and children with special needs. The car, crewed by "Mild Hogs" Lance Dennison, John Harris and Scott Geer, had both back doors adorned with the VVAA Logo in acknowledgement of the combined sponsorship of \$2000.

The bash started in Echuca and finished in Broome, and the car attracted a lot of interest along the journey with veterans engaging with the crew, posing for photographs and even putting medal ribbon stickers on the car. The car crew reported that without fail the veteran community they encountered strongly supported the sponsorship. Unfortunately, on the return journey the *Mild Hogs* expired at Coober Pedy and made an undignified return to Melbourne on the back of a truck. A special thank you to all who donated to this very worthy cause which has generated goodwill for the VVAA.



## Swan Hill & District Sub Branch

On August 17<sup>th</sup>. Swan Hill & District Sub-Branch VVAA sponsored the Five matches in the Central Murray football League and presented a medallion to the best on ground for each match.

Pictured is Vietnam Veteran Ken Ball presenting the medallion to Luke Maher from Nyah Nyah West United Football Club.

Harold Heslop.



## NORTHERN TERRITORY

A very busy three months for us!

Grants received and acquittals. BEST Round 15 received to continue to assist our pensions officers with their out of pocket expenses, Emergency Relief Program for the new financial year and acquittal for the last.

The museum move has finally happened, from the Aviation Heritage Centre to the Darwin Military Museum, where it is now looked after by Museum staff and housed in the underground Power Room of Gun Emplacement 2. A great job done by the staff there, and the display opened on the Wednesday before Vietnam Veterans Day.

Already the display has been viewed by many visitors, including MRF-D (Marine Rotational Force - Darwin) members. If you have a chance, go out and have a look, it's well worth the trip.

The annual Vietnamese Association get-together prior to Vietnam Veterans Day was held at the Vietnamese Association hall at Marrara on Saturday 17th. As always a great night enjoyed by all. Sue and Peter, Ross and Del and Beryl were all presented with a scarf hand knitted by a group in Melbourne raising money to assist families of political prisoners in Vietnam. VNTV-31 from Melbourne attended the evening filming Vietnamese community activities in the Top End, as well as Vietnam Veterans Day, and the Vietnamese Horticultural Society in the rural area.

And Vietnam Veterans Day. A good crowd attended the Sunday service at the cenotaph which began with veterans marching up to the Cenotaph.

Senior members of Federal, Territory and local government, the ADF and ESO's placed 31 books in Remembrance of the fallen. These books are delivered by VVAA Members to the designated schools as a lasting donation to the younger generation.

Our thanks to Her Honour, the Honourable Sally Thomas AM, Administrator of the Northern Territory, for delivering a very emotive Address.

Following the Service, a Reception at Parliament House to acknowledge the service of Vietnam Veterans, was hosted by the Speaker of the House, The Honourable Kezia Purich, MLA.

A beautiful venue on the Speakers lawn completed our day's commemoration. Many local and visiting veterans were able to attend both the service and the reception and enjoyed both immensely.

A big thank you to all who made it possible.



The Government House Reception for the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia on Monday evening capped off the weekend. A presentation was made to the Associations State President, Peter Mansell, and members of Reg Hillier's family, Neil and Allan Bond, of a written record of the Operation during which Corporal Reg Hillier was fatally wounded. Again a very emotive speech made by Her Honour and the presentation made by her brother, Vietnam Veteran Nick Thomas who served in the same Company as Reg Hillier. The Report will be available for viewing at Reg Hillier House.

Included among the invitations for the reception were some younger veterans from more recent campaigns such as Afghanistan and Iraq, it was good to see them and make ourselves known to them.

The Association thanks Her Honour, her Brother Nick and all the Government House staff for making this evening possible. A memorable event.

To see photos of the reception and Her Honour's speech go to:

<http://www.govhouse.nt.gov.au/ViceRegalProgram/DiaryNotes/Pages/default.aspx>





## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As 2013 drives to a close, the South Australian members and the State Executive are looking forward to a safe and happy festive season plus a well deserved break.

The Torrens Parade Ground office will be closed from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December and reopening on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

This year Veterans Day Concert went off perfectly even though the weather Gods were not kind to us. Normie Rowe was a real trooper, continuing with his performance even in the rain. I would like to thank everyone who attended the morning service and stayed for the concert.

Pension work has been on the decline whilst welfare had increased. Unfortunately, B.E.S.T grants only support pension work and this year we saw our Best Grants decline by approximately \$15,000. To address the shortfall, we have increased our fund raising efforts through Badge Day thanks to the help of Service Personnel from RAAF Base Edinburgh, plus a number of fundraising Barbecues at Bunnings and Mitre 10. These functions have helped us to keep afloat. Thank you to all the volunteers who have assisted us in the fundraising efforts

The Nation Conference was held in Adelaide from Friday 25<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 the main items of concern to South Australia were, the Future Direction of the Association, plus our "Fair Go Campaign", which is looking at the discrepancies between the General rate of pension and the above general rate.

Brigadier Laurie Lewis and myself will be drafting up a paper for presentation to National in order for it to lobby the Government. in relation to the Associations Future Direction, a number of suggestions were raised. The National President will now draft a business plan for presentation and implementation at the next National Congress in May 2014.

The Veterans Shed at Glenelg North has now passed all the necessary Government and Council regulations, and building should commence at the end of November

Most of the work load is around welfare, now that Vietnam Veterans have claimed their pensions. The younger service men and women of various conflicts since Vietnam are now seeking our help. This however is proving harder than we thought as many of these younger veterans seek solace and assistance amongst themselves via the electronic media. We need to get them in and involved so that they can take over from where we leave off.

A reminder to members, if you are going away over the festive season to book your flights etc. through Flight Centre either at the North Adelaide or St Agnes Branches or just ring 1300 667 063 to make your bookings

Every booking made through the Travel Club will assist the South Australian Branch of the Association.

I take this opportunity to thank all those I have worked with over this period. Without your support and assistance it would have been a difficult task to continue in the position of President. My utmost gratitude goes out to you all.

Merry Christmas to you and your families from everyone at State Branch, keep safe and I look forward to continuing to work with you to help finalise our unfinished tasks next year.

Michael Benyk JP  
State President  
South Australian Branch

### **New Defence Discount program - Exclusive to Defence members and their family [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]**

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, Canberra:** Australian Partners of Defence launched a nationwide discount website to all serving and retired military personnel (including reservists and APS employees), and their families.

These discounts are available through a membership program called APOD – Defence Discounts Online available at [www.apod.com.au](http://www.apod.com.au)

Products discounted include attractions, dining, accommodation, fashion, jewellery, alcohol and more come on each week.

Check out their browse page <http://www.apod.com.au/browse-defence-discounts> for latest offers online, national, local and in the UK through an affiliate program called Rewards For Forces.

To become a member for 2013, membership is free, simply go to <http://www.apod.com.au/membership> and sign up to have immediate access.

'Like' their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianPartnersofDefence> and follow to keep up to date with new discount offers as they come on board.

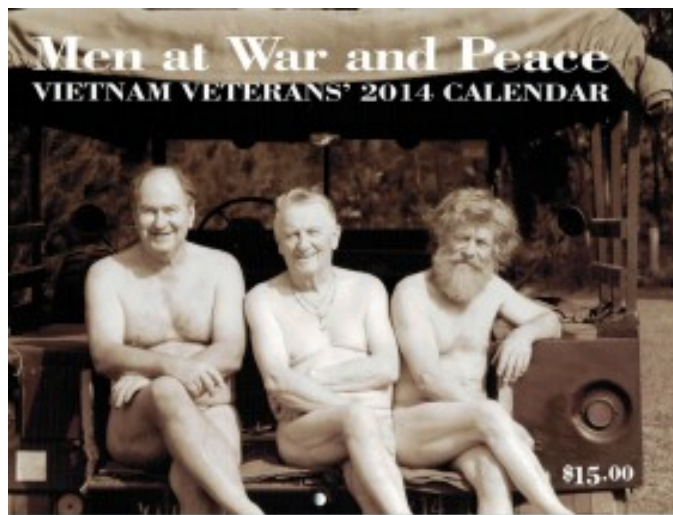
### **Please tell all your friends in Defence including ex serving members as they are all entitled to become members in their own right.**

APOD is a private organisation run by partners of Defence, for the whole defence community, so any help you can offer to get this message distributed will benefit us all. APOD is not a charity nor is it supported in any way by the Commonwealth Government.

For any further information or should you have any queries about the program please contact [hello@apod.com.au](mailto:hello@apod.com.au)



## NATIONAL MERCHANDISE



Above M051 Men at War & Peace Calendar 2014 \$15.



M048 Miniature 1A1 SLR Rifle \$15  
Size 183mm x 35mm.

Right. Discontinued Line  
Green RAR Cloth Patches

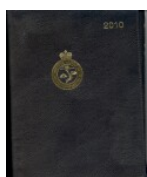
**Except 3 RAR**

1,2,4—9 RAR Cloth Patch \$2.50

**Until sold out**



Right. FA003  
Vietnam Veteran  
4 Ribbon Flag  
128cm x 61cm



### VVA 2014 Diaries.

VA013 A5 Diary	\$15.00
VA012 Pocket Diary	\$7.00
VA014 Mini Diary	\$6.50



Above. M038 Gallipoli Scarf. \$40. Size 180cm x 16cm.  
The scarf will only be available for a limited time. One end of the scarf has Lest We Forget, the other end has Gallipoli 1915—Digger Centenary 2015 on the other side. The Rising Sun is in the middle. **Note. Made in Australia.**



M053  
Agent Orange



Above. Stubbie Holders \$8each

M055



M052

Dysfunctional Vet Plain & 4 Rib



Above. C007 \$5each  
Vietnam Poppy Penny



Above. M042 .  
Mouse Pad \$5ea.

Right. M049  
Poppy Scarf  
\$40ach  
Made in Australia



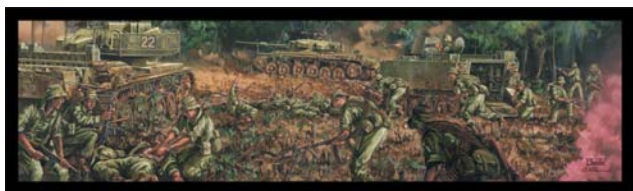
M028. 4 Ribbon Scarf. **Made in Australia** 180cm x 16cm.  
Due to a rise in materials this Scarf is now \$40ea.  
**Made in Australia.**



Above. M041 Australian National Service Scarf \$27.50  
This scarf has been redesigned to have Australian National Service in the middle with the NS ribbons at each end (no dates) **Note. Made in Australia.**



## Combined arms contact, Vietnam



Above. M046 Bar Runner \$27.50



M943 Jigsaw Puzzle 750 Pieces  
\$27.50



Above. M045  
Stubbie Holder \$5



Above \$17.50 each  
CAP40 Cap  
CAP41 2013 Goggle Hat



Above.  
LT36 \$5      LT37 \$9  
Lapel Pin on card      Medallion on card



Print      Limited edition  
PCT 08 Lg      \$1900.00 Postage \$25  
PCT09 Sml      \$325.00 Postage \$15  
PCT10 Unframed \$135.00 Postage \$10



Above. Left LT43 Medallion Set \$185.00  
Above Right. LT44 Medallion Set \$67.00



## An image of Navy for the Chief of Navy

Australia's Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, is the first recipient of a limited edition artwork commissioned to celebrate one hundred years since the first Royal Australian Navy fleet entered Sydney Harbour. The artwork by noted Australian marine artist, Don Braben, depicts the then fledgling Royal Australian Navy en-route to Sydney Harbour on the morning of 4 October 1913.



Above. Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, accepts the limited edition Centenary of First Fleet artwork (#1 of 100) from Stephen Davie of SALT and Stephen Gregory of Navy Canteens. Reproductions of the artwork are on sale as part of the International Fleet Review celebrations.

Only 100 full-size reproductions of the artwork are available worldwide, with number 1 earmarked for the Chief of Navy, while the remaining framed canvas reproductions are destined for offices, Navy Messes, boardrooms and private collections.

The artwork, especially commissioned for the anniversary, portrays an image of Navy - sailors and ships at sea. From the elevated position the it shows the ships of the new fleet in the early morning light as they make way to Sydney. The flagship, HMAS *Australia*, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Patey, leads the column, followed in line by the cruisers HMAS *Melbourne*, HMAS *Sydney* and HMAS *Encounter*, with the destroyer HMAS *Yarra* at the end of the line. The destroyers HMAS *Parramatta* and HMAS *Warrego* flank Australia. .



Available from VVAA National Merchandise

PCT08	Canvas Print	\$1900.00
PCT09	Framed LTD Print	\$ 340.00
PCT10	Unframed Print	\$ 145.00

# ORDER FORM

Ph: 03 6266 6467 Fax: 03 6266 6478 Mob 0411 054 654

**Add Postage & Packing:** 12- 00

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_ -

**NAME:** ..... Make cheques payable to VVAA National Merchandise

.....

.....POSTCODE.....

**Card No.**...../...../...../..... **Expiry date**...../.....

23



# VIETNAM VETERANS FAMILY MEDALLION



**Actual size...80mm high by 50mm wide.  
"Trade Mark pending"**

During World War 1 the Department of Defence issued the Female Relatives Badge to the wife or mother (or the nearest female relative) of those on active service overseas and this tradition continued on into World War 2.

There were two badges issued during World War 1. One was issued to the nearest female relative of soldiers, airmen, nurses and masseuses who left Australia for active service abroad; the other to the nearest female relative of members of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) who had enlisted for general naval sea service for at least a period of the war, and who actually performed service outside of Australian waters. A bar was suspended below the badge to indicate additional relatives abroad involved in the war effort.

During the First World War a Mothers and Widows Badge was issued to the mother and/or the widow of all members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) or the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force who had been killed in action, or subsequently died of wounds sustained. The badges were suspended from a white metal bar which bore laurel leaves. Stars were added to the bottom bar, each representing the death of one man.

During the Second World War there was only one badge issued to the nearest female relative of members of the RAN, Australian Imperial Force (AIF), (including members of the Australian Nursing Service), and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on active duty abroad.

The Second World War Badge was round and silver in colour. Suspended from two securing rings from the bottom of the badge was a flat rectangular bar to which stars were added representing the number of relatives involved in the war effort, as with bars for the First World War badge. The badge bore the words "to the women of Australia".

The Mothers and Widows Badge of the Second World War was issued to the mother and/or widow of a member of the (RAN), (AIF), (including the Australian Army Nursing Service), Citizens Military Forces, or RAAF killed in action, or died of wounds or from other causes whilst on service or as a result of such service. (Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial web page)

All of these badges have one thing in common, they featured a metal bar to which stars or bars were added for overseas service or those killed in action or died of wounds.

No such badges were issued during or after the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the War in Iraq or the War in Afghanistan. It is time for this miscarriage to be rectified, even if belatedly so. Not just only for recognition of mothers or the nearest living female relative, but specifically extended to include recognition of widows, wives, partners, children and grandchildren of veterans of these conflicts, particularly the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam Veteran Family Medallion (vvfm) has been designed to recognise and honour the families of Vietnam veterans and follows a long established tradition tracing its history back to the start of World War One. This tradition will celebrate its 100 year anniversary THIS YEAR, 2014.

Stars will be added to the bottom plate to identify your relationship to your Vietnam veteran. A gold star represents a mother, widow, wife or partner of a Vietnam veteran. A silver star in the bottom plate will identify the son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran and a bronze star represents a grandchild of a Vietnam Veteran. The cardboard presentation box maintains the delivery protocol of service medals for World War 11, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

THE RETAIL PRICE OF THE VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILY MEDALLION, IS \$98.00. TO APPLY FOR THE VVFM YOU MUST BE A MOTHER, WIDOW, WIFE, PARTNER, CHILD OR GRANDCHILD OF A VIETNAM VETERAN. For an additional cost of \$12.00 you can purchase a cardboard presentation box which will be posted separately. These prices include handling, packaging and postage by Australia Post, signature on delivery for the medallion.

The information supplied by the applicant in the application form will be checked against the NOMINAL ROLL OF VIETNAM VETERANS. **WANT TO KNOW MORE:**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, HISTORY, PHOTOGRAPH, ARTWORK AND ORDER FORM. **GO TO:**

**[www.vvfm.com.au](http://www.vvfm.com.au)**

# VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

## VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILY MEDALLION ORDER FORM

First Name:	
Middle Name:	
Last Name:	
Street Address:	
Suburb/State/Postcode	State.....P/C.....
Telephone Number:	
Email Address	
	<b>VIETNAM VETERAN INFORMATION</b> <b>Note: All fields below must be completed</b>
First Name:	
Middle Name:	
Last Name:	
Veterans Relationship: <i>Eg. Husband/Father</i>	
Service Number:	Unit Details:.....

The below fee includes Postage by Australia Post, registered mail, signature on delivery.

**COST: PER Medallion** \$98.00

**Cardboard Presentation Box (if required)** \$12.00

**Note: Each medallion is individually numbered.**

SEND ORDER FORM AND CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER TO:

VVAA NATIONAL MERCHANDISE

PO BOX 89

HUONVILLE TAS 7109

PHONE 03 6266 6467 FAX 03 6266 6478

Email...rkcoxon@netspace.net.au\Please supply one form per Medallion

Card No...../...../...../.....

Expiry Date...../..... Card Type..... AMEX not accepted



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

At this time each year, I look back in review of the past 12 months, to find the positives and negatives for the year. My view is the 2013 year has been positive for the V.V.A.A. W.A. Our membership numbers, while there has been some decline in recent years, the state branch is still receiving enquiries from veterans and family members, wishing to take out membership. Also pleasing, is that other veterans, past members, who's membership had lapsed, are coming back and renewing. Overall our membership numbers are stable.

During the year, the association is still getting regular requests, to participate in school and community ANZAC Day and Vietnam Veterans Day services. Requests for school visits, to give talks on the Vietnam era, are now infrequent, along with assistance to year 11/12 student projects.

The V.V.A.A. W.A. received 2 unexpected donations during the past 12 months. One from a year 12 student, following her school project, "Speak to me of War" monologue performances. The other, from the Elixir Cafe in Wanneroo, from their ANZAC Day trading. These donations were greatly appreciated.

Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Service, what can I say, a really great day, one of the best supported Memorial services for some years. The "dedication to the allies" and the Artillery reunion group, 1 Field Regiment RAA, 103 and HQ batteries, the batteries that fired support for D company, at Long Tan, present and participating in the service, helped make the day a success. The Memorial Day address, was delivered by American Vietnam Veteran, Dr. Larry Davis.

Well done to those who attended and assisted in planning the service. Thanks go to Hollywood Hospital and Ramsay Health Care, for again sponsoring the day. The 2013 AGM was held in October, following the good support in 2012, it was disappointing that numbers at this years meeting were down. All executive and committee members renominated and with one new member joining the committee, the V.V.A.A. W.A. have a strong leadership group for the coming year.

No nomination was received for State Secretaries position. Since the AGM, I have had a member offer to fill the vacancy and I am hopeful that an appointment will be made in coming weeks.

ANZAC Cottage, the small "Friends of the Cottage" committee are working and planning to promote the Cottage and preparing for the centenary of the building of the Cottage in 2016. We have recently had the W.A. Heritage Gardens Group, offer their assistance, to restore the gardens and maintain them, as an ongoing project.

Since April this year, with regular open days and group visits, approximately 900 people have visited the Cottage.

Into the future for the V.V.A.A. W.A. it is important to maintain our membership numbers, this can be achieved by having family involvement, as well as drawing in other veterans, who are not members of any other organisations. The main drive to keep the state branch viable, is member support, be it nominating for an executive or committee position or just putting their hand up to assist in some way and attendance at meetings.

There have been discussions in W.A. regarding the future of the state branch and from those discussions, a "Future Plan" will be developed. The Future of the V.V.A.A. be it at national or state levels, must always remain a members decision.

Richard Williams.

President. V.V.A.A. W.A.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to the Bush Reunion. Bruce Rock. W.A.**

The 2013 Back to the Bush Reunion, was held from the 28<sup>th</sup> October to the 4<sup>th</sup> November, at Bruce Rock, east of Perth, in W.A.'s wheatbelt.

The attendance was down a little on previous reunions, with about 50 less caravans/campers on the oval this year. It must be noted that a number of interstate grey nomads, timed their travels, to spend a week at the Back to the Bush.

All the usual week's activities, Golf, Rifle shooting, Bingo, Lawn bowls, as well as some activities for the ladies.

DVA, sent two hard working young ladies, Katie and Brook, from the east, to handle enquiries and provide information to veterans, on using MyAccount. This service was well received by veterans and family members, keeping the 2 department representatives busy, during the time they were in attendance. DVA, are to be complimented on this initiative, a very worthwhile exercise, allowing veterans, particularly from country areas, face to face contact with department staff members.

Saturday, is the Big Day, with information booths in the Shire Hall and Street markets. It was noticeable, that there were fewer ESO and other providers, with booths in the hall and less people through, during the morning.

The Avon Valley 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse group, had their mobile museum on display, along with a variety of military vehicles, courtesy of the Military Vehicle Collectors.

Following the afternoons street parade, by veterans and the church service, at St Peter's Anglican Church,



lighting of the candle, in the Memorial window, everyone adjourned back to the Recreation grounds, for the evenings activities. A BBQ and entertainment, by some local performers, along with the main act, John Schuman and Redgum.

Watch this space, for No 14 BttB, in 2014.



Reverend Karen Arnold conducting the service in St Peters Anglican Church.

### Brothers

I first met him when an oath we did swear  
To serve our nation, no matter where  
We were just ordinary blokes enjoying life  
Suddenly trapped in an angry world of strife

He lived in struggle street on the bones of his arse  
For me it had always been a free ride and a gold pass  
He was black and I was white  
Such different views on wrong and right

Not long after, we soldiered in thick and thin  
Soon, he looked after me and I with him  
Hungry, thirsty, sunburnt or shivering in cruel weather  
In that terrible bloody war, always together

We were bonded; two youngsters as part of a team  
Sharing dangers, chores and even dreams  
We became as one, part of each other  
No matter our past, war had made us brothers

Came that fateful day I became so ill  
He took my place on patrol and left the hill  
My last image of him was a wave and a grin  
Then gone forever in the angry smoke and terrible din

I often visit where he lived in that lonely street  
A dirt road he once walked with bare feet  
Where dreams were spawned to seek a bright tomorrow  
By a spirited youth who answered a Nation's call to follow

I still see him as he used to be  
Boundless energy, witty and views ever so free  
Of right and wrong and such deep love of country  
A dear brother in arms; a man far better than me

George Mansford © September 2013

### THINK OF THE ANZACS

*Comes a time when young soldiers will ask  
"How do I know I'm really fit for the task  
If in battle and the chips are down  
Can I be sure I won't let our mob down"*

*The answer of course is so very clear  
Just think of the ANZACS no longer here  
Cos they were Aussies, no different to you  
Young, eager, larrikins and ever true blue*

*They too had doubts but never wore a frown  
Despite dangers, still smiled, never looked down  
Sometimes confusion from a General's flawed plan  
Always the cry, "keep going, let's do the best we can"*

*No matter the task, doubts, risks or cruel weather  
They went forward as one; comrades together  
When no officers' were left, it was still "let's go"  
They knew what was to be done to beat the foe*

*So look after your mates who are part of the team  
Be careful, be tough but never cruel or mean  
And remember that fortune favors those who dare  
The ANZACS are watching; good luck and take care*

GEORGE MANSFORD© February 2010

### A Soldier Home at Last

Such a bright happy memorable day  
As she spied him in the jet weary throng walking her way  
Then a strong embrace and a whispered fond giddy

He was home at last and she prayed it would be for evermore  
No more the cruel waiting and fear of that knock on the door  
Farewell to loneliness and a half empty cold bed  
Goodbye restless sleep and dreams of him being wounded or dead  
No longer will there be that sad, empty, silent chair  
Once more clothes and wet towels scattered here and there  
To feel again his warm comforting embrace  
Such beautiful love as their hearts do race  
Hear him showering and a terrible rendition of "Singing in the Rain"  
This and more will be part of a precious sweet life together again

His duty done; united as one and never more to part  
Time to give new life to shared visions from the past  
With strengthened love and her soldier boy home at long last

George Mansford© June 2013

## VIETNAM VETERANS FRIENDLY RETREATS

### Queensland

**Standdown Park:** 91 Radke Road, Kia Ora (halfway between Gympie and Tin Can Bay). Power, water, pets, open fire, showers, toilets, disable facilities, coin laundry, secure off the highway, restful surrounds. No cabins/onsite vans. Discount for veterans.

Contact owners Rod (ex 9RAR) and Pam Elkington (07) 5486 5144 or 0417 718 127

**Cockscomb Veterans Camp:** Located only 23km from Rockhampton, camp kitchen, showers, toilets, no power, \$ 5 donation.

Contact Allan Evans (07) 4934 4941 for directions

**Pandanus Park:** Follow the three red stripes from Mareeba, no facilities, take all and remove your rubbish. This is an isolated retreat in Cape York

**Sapphire Gemfields:** Located behind the post office at the RSL, power, toilets, showers, water, and barbecue. The Club bar is open Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

\$15.00 per night \$100 per week. Contact (07) 4985 4588

**Alaric Homestead Veterans Retreat at Quilpie:** The Homestead is fully furnished and managed by a Veteran Duty Officer. Very low nominal fee charged per day. Caravans and camper trailers can be parked at a low daily fee.

Booking essential for the Homestead (not necessary for caravans/campers) Contact the Duty Officer (07) 4656 4740. Email: alaricretreat@activ8.net.au C/O PO Quilpie Qld 4480

**Rocky Creek War Memorial Park:** This camp spot is located at Tolga. The Atherton Shire Council maintains it. There is a 72-hour limit and a gold coin donation. There are toilets, barbecue, and non-potable water. It is a memorial site to all soldiers, who trained on the tablelands before being sent overseas. There is a caretaker on site.

**Zac's Place:** Located on 715 Ross River Road, Kirwan, Townsville, run by VVAA Qld Branch. There is accommodation for up to 11 people with all facilities. Tariff is \$35.00 per night singles or \$55.00 per night double or \$175.00 per week singles or \$225.00 per week Doubles accommodation. Contact manager Mr Jason Spurr Ph. (07) 4773 6980.

**Homestead Caravan Park:** located along the Landsborough Highway at Barcaldine Queensland Every day in the late afternoon during winter your hosts Ben and Thanh prepare the campfire with damper and billy tea prepared the old bush way. Entertainment nightly. They always have something special on for Vietnam Veterans Day 18<sup>th</sup> August. Cabins available.

For Reservations ph. Ben or Thanh on (07) 4651 1308

#### Camp Gregory:

Camp Gregory is a rural acre property inside a national park with the Gregory River running along one side.

A long drop toilet is available. It is ideal for camping and caravans free of charge to Veterans and their families. People can have a maximum stay of 2 weeks.

Contact: Roger Dwyer first Ph: (07) 4129 4030

Address: 168 Darville Rd, Woodgate Qld 4660

### South Australia

#### Bublacowie Military Museum:

Located between Stansbury and Giles Point Yorktown. Three Veteran Museums - \$5.00 admission, \$2.00 children Accommodation enquiries: Contact owner Chris Soar (ex vet of Malaya) (08) 8853 4379 or 0419 853 294

**Camp Andrew Russell:** in South Australia is located 35km Sth East of Loxton along the Murray Bridge Road, turn left (or right if coming from Adelaide) onto the Lameroo Road, taking the right fork along the road. The entrance is marked with a cream tractor tyre, just past a road sign.

You will need a key for access and thus need to contact John Hough mobile 0409 098 093

### New South Wales

**Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat:** This retreat was named after Ramon John Deed, of 1FId Sqn, Vietnam. The retreat is located at Dareton, 17Km from Mildura & 16Km from Wentworth and is open to all Veterans, serving & ex-service personnel & their families. There is power & water. Unpowered (\$10.00 per night) powered (\$20 per night) Phone:

Barry & Di Langan (03) 5027 4447

Email rdveteransretreat@bigpond.com

**Murraguldrie Veterans Retreat:** It is situated on the edge of the Murraguldrie State Forest about forty minute drive from Wagga Wagga, and approximately seven kilometres from the Hume Highway turn off point to Tumbarumba on the Tumbarumba Road.

To arrange access or booking enquiries contact:

Gordon Irvine: 0428 381 292 M

Les White: 0428 226 097 M

Bob May: 0417 490 127 M

Email vvsouthwestnsw@gmail.com

Web <http://www.vvaansw.org/murragaldrie.htm>

### Tasmania

**Tasmania Veterans Retreat:** Offers fully equipped House accommodation in the remote Central Highlands area, 20 minutes from Bothwell. \$30.00 per double + \$5.00 per extra person. Bookings made through the State RSLA Headquarters, Hobart.(03) 6224 0881. Open to all APPVA members.

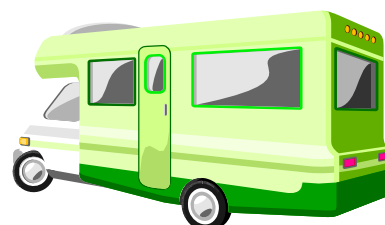
### Western Australia

**Camp Hart:** Camp Hart is a combination of private and crown land vested with the Shire of Kulin. It is situated 3.5 hours south east of Perth, 14kms east of Kulin, Camp Hart is a memorial park located next to Lake Jilakin and in the shadow of Jilakin Rock. It offers shade, ablution block, sheltered barbecue and bush kitchen. Donations are welcome. Open to all ADF Veterans. All inquiries are to be made to Roger Lingard (08) 9527 8000 or 0419 944 627.

**Bruce Rock:** situated 254 Km from Perth in the wheat belt. Vets always welcome but each year in November they conduct a Vietnam Veterans activity. Most stay at the Bruce Rock Caravan Park Ph. (08) 9061 1070

#### Bunker Drop in Centre.

Old Railway Building, Bruce Rock WA



## BULLETIN BOARD

### HELP WANTED

My name is Barry Moore and I am a Vietnam Veteran, having served in the New Zealand Army. I served in Sth Vietnam May 1970 - May 1971 with Victor Five Company, 1RNZIR and we were part of the ANZAC Battalion, attached to 2RAR.

Seeking past serving NZ soldiers who served with Victor Five Company, 1RNZIR (2RAR) in South Vietnam May 1970 - May 1971.

A company reunion is planned for April 2015 to be held in Brisbane, with the highlight being for all members to march in the ANZAC Day Parade through the Brisbane CBD. The most recent reunion in Nelson (NZ) (June 2013) saw NZ members agree to assembling in Brisbane. There are several Kiwi Vets who served with V5 who are now living in Australia. We would cherish the opportunity to hear from you asap - please send your name, address, phone number and email address to Barry Moore and email is best means of contact: [bmoore423@gmail.com](mailto:bmoore423@gmail.com) Please make this a memorable occasion and join the fellowship of past friendships with your mates in what will be a highly charged moment, as we also commemorate the Gallipoli Campaign 100 years ago with our Australian comrades. Please join us. ONWARD!

Any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Barry Moore ( Reg # 43746 )  
3 Sec, 3 Platoon  
V5 Coy  
1RNZIR - ( 2RAR )  
Sth Vietnam - May 1970 - 1971

### REUNION - 1 ALSG

Meet & greet, Mildura RSL Thur 24/4/14 @ 4.30pm  
This reunion is for all members who served with 1 ALSG Vung Tau, and wives & Children of members who have since passed away.

For Accommodation and reunion details contact:  
Tony Brown 03 5021 2066 V 0428 852 736 M  
Email: [tonyraye11@bigpond.com](mailto:tonyraye11@bigpond.com)

### Debrief articles.

Any articles, poems, stories, correspondence etc re Debrief

to: Debrief Chairman. Ken Foster

Email: [vvaa.president.kf@bigpond.com](mailto:vvaa.president.kf@bigpond.com)

Or Editor Kath Coxon:

Email: [rkcoxon@netspace.net.au](mailto:rkcoxon@netspace.net.au)

If you are receiving more than one copy of Debrief per household but only require one, please notify Debrief Ken Foster.

### Care Packages for our overseas Troops

With Christmas approaching remember our diggers overseas and post them a Care Package, free postal arrangements are in place for parcels packed in BX2 Mailing Box weighing no more than 2kg. The Australian Forces Post Office box address below will be open from 1 November until 9 December 2013 ONLY.

#### An Australian Defence Member

#### AFPO 60

#### Australian Defence Force NSW 2890

Remember to include a note with your name and address.

In order to ensure an equitable distribution of parcels it is requested that all donations be gender-neutral, and be addressed to 'An Australian Defence Member', not to a specific job title, trade or unit member.

Unfortunately Defence cannot accept care packages for Military Working Dogs or Explosive Detection Dogs due to strict care requirements relating to both their diet and their training programs.

To ensure that all items are delivered to our deployed forces, donors are asked to ensure that packages are of non-perishable goods. It is important that items be robustly packaged as breakages can occur during transit, which can lead to infestation and spoilage of perishable goods. Defence cannot send perished or infested items overseas.

### SERVICE RECORDS

#### NAVY

Service Records Requests, CP

Navy Records

Queanbeyan Annex

CANBERRA ACT 2600

#### ARMY

Central Army Records Office

GPO Box 393D

MELBOURNE VIC 3001

#### AIR FORCE

RAAF Records

Department of Defence

CANBERRA ACT 2600

### THE GREY NOMADS

- Do you know of a good Caravan Park
  - Have you any helpful tips for caravanning & camping
  - Have you got any entertaining stories antidotes about your trips/travelling
  - Have you got some photos to put in the magazine
- Send them to me for the next edition of Debrief.







## RAE REUNION

ALL UNITS PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS

Where: HERVEY BAY QUEENSLAND

When: 6th to 9th June 2014

Venue: HERVEY BAY RSL CLUB

All enquiries to: [sapper.association.qld@gmail.com](mailto:sapper.association.qld@gmail.com)

### Reunion. HQ Company, 1st Australian Logistic Support Group, (1.ALSG )

#### MILDURA

Thursday 24th April 2014 till Sunday 27th April

Meet and greet at the Inlander Resort Thursday 24th at 4.30. pm

Main Dinner - Inlander Resort Sunday 27th April

This reunion is for veterans who serve in 1 ALSG, and family of veterans who have since passed on.

For accommodation and reunion details:

Contact Tony Brown

0350212066 mobile 0428852736

email [tonyraye11@bigpond.com](mailto:tonyraye11@bigpond.com)

### Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force REUNION

Date: 8TH—12 November 2014

Where: Discovery Holiday Park Hadspen (DHP)  
Cnr. Main & Meander Valley Highway,  
Hadspen Tas 7290

[www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au](http://www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au)

Freecall:1800 281 885

Email: [Hadspen@discoveryparks.com.au](mailto:Hadspen@discoveryparks.com.au)

Contact: Brian Harper OAM 0417 074 616 M

Email: [vvanec@netspace.net.au](mailto:vvanec@netspace.net.au)

#### Reunion

D Company 3 RAR Vietnam 67/68 will be holding a reunion in Caloundra 26 - 29 May 2014. The reunion will be centred around the Caloundra RSL Club and is supported by Sunshine Coast Regional Council. We are expecting about 150 -160 attendees.

Contact:

Lofty Eiby

16 Rhaps Street,

Buderim QLD 4556

Phone: 5478 3165 or 0418 873 145

### 1RAR GROUP 1965-66 REUNION



Melbourne - 22nd-26th October 2014

#### EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

As with any reunion good planning is paramount and numbers are very important and the key requirement, so we are asking for your assistance. If you think you'd like to attend please express your interest, you are not making a firm obligation at this stage.

I have agreed to operate as the communication officer as I have that ability, so if you're interested please email or snail mail me with your details, name, address, unit and number likely to attend with you.

I will keep those who provide their details informed.

Contact

Ray Payne OAM

2 Flemington St

BANORA POINT NSW 2486

[raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au](mailto:raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au)

### The Caribou 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash

Over the weekend of August Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> in 2014 we will be holding the **Caribou 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bash** at Opal Cove Resort at Coffs Harbour.

**I have already paid a deposit and reserved the Resort for us.**

This Reunion is to commemorate the arrival of the first Caribous to land at 38 Squadron's Base at RAAF Richmond on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1964.

It is also to commemorate the arrival of the first Caribous commencing operations in Vietnam as 'RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam' on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1964 till June 1966 when 35 Squadron was reformed to take over from RTFV.

It is intended to hold a 'meet and greet' BBQ on the Friday night and a sit down dinner on Saturday Evening.

**Accommodation** at the Opal Cove Resort is \$145.00 for a standard room and an ocean view upgrade for \$20.00 per double, both room prices includes full breakfast for two.

**This is only a rise of \$3.00 on room prices 5 years ago.**

#### **EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

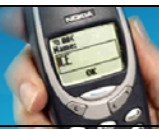
At this time I am asking for expressions of interest for the event.

Will you please reply to me before the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

Stew Bonett P.O. Box 160 Glenorie NSW 2157

Phone (02) 9652 1653 or [stew.b@bigpond.net.au](mailto:stew.b@bigpond.net.au)

## IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (ICE)



Telstra is encouraging Australian mobile phone users to store the name and number of a family member or friend in their handsets to be contacted In Case of Emergencies (ICE), so Australians may benefit from faster contact and advice in times of crisis.

While we recommend people should not ever rely solely on a mobile during emergencies, including ICE in your mobile is an easy step that that may help you when you need it most - in times of accidents and emergencies.

### How does ICE work?

Simply enter the acronym ICE - for In Case of Emergency - into your mobile's address book and list the name and number of the person you want to be contacted in an emergency. It could be a family member, close friend or even your doctor.

You could also store your blood type and other relevant information under your ICE entry in some handsets that allow notes in the contacts section.

### How could ICE help?

Having ICE in your mobile phone may make it quicker and easier for emergency services workers or passers by to get in contact with someone you want and who can help with vital information.

### How should I choose my ICE contact?

Ideally your ICE contact should know your basic medical information, such as blood type and allergies and be able to help emergency services make decisions if needed.

### When could ICE information help?

An ICE contact may be helpful not only in major accidents and emergencies, but anytime you get into difficulty, such as if you have a bad tumble or a sudden asthma attack. It could also help reassure family members of those at higher risk such as the elderly and those with an illness.

### Who supports the Australian ICE campaign?

Many Australian emergency organisations have thrown their support behind the ICE campaign and Telstra's education efforts.

### What if a mobile phone is locked or needs a password to activate it?

Many mobile handsets are simply key-locked and can be accessed by pressing two keys. However it's correct that some phones need a password to activate and that is why Telstra recommends that people do not ever rely solely on a mobile phone during emergencies

## 2 RAR REUNION

**Tuesday 22nd - 25th April 2014**

- 22nd Meet & Greet at Walkerville RSL
- 23rd 1100hrs. Commemorative service at Vietnam Memorial, Torrens Parade Ground  
The service will commemorate the last six South Australians who paid the Supreme Sacrifice whilst serving with the Battalion

(both Tours) in South Vietnam.

Those Commemorated will be:

Pte Dennis Nelson DOW 28/9/67

Pte Stan Radomi KIA 28/9/67

Pte Ray Binning KIA 26/1/68

Cpl Graham Norley KIA 26/1/68

Pte John Rogers KIA 10/2/68

Pte Rod Chapman DOI 28/4/71

- 24th 1200hrs An unveiling and dedication of a Memorial to all Former Members who have served in the 2nd Battalion, since inception.  
This service will be conducted on the "Pathway of Honour" behind Government House and adjacent to the Torrens Parade ground.

Refreshments to follow.

- 24th 1830hrs National Reunion Dinner  
Buckingham Arms Hotel

- 25th Dawn Service Venues and ANZAC MARCH  
Details to be advised  
Lunch at the British Hotel

Contact:

Tom Young

(08) 8269 4171

## WRAAC REUNION 2016

We are in the preliminary stages of planning our WRAAC 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be held in Canberra in 2016 over the weekend Fri 12 February to Monday 15 February. Currently we are running an online survey to gather early information regarding the celebrations from interested ex WRAAC members and any RAANC who trained with ex WRAAC during 1951 to 1985. Please note the survey and the celebrations are for our ex servicewomen.

Should any Corps members be interested in attending the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we would very much appreciate them contacting [administrator@wraacreunited.org](mailto:administrator@wraacreunited.org) to be sent a link and information about the survey.

Denise Hudson  
Program Director

## Book Review of "GALLIPOLI SNIPER"

by John Hamilton

I have read and reviewed many books written about the exploits of Australian servicemen during the war to end all wars, WW1; two of the best being "Somme Mud" and "Beneath Hill 60", both written by best-selling author, Will Davies.

The story of trooper Billy Sing in the book "Gallipoli Sniper" is a powerful and very different account of WW1, and its effect on those who fought in it. It is at least, the equal of Somme Mud and Beneath Hill 60, and like those two books, the story is expanded upon and authenticated by the inclusion of quotes from other military historians and authors, and from other sources such as military records and letters home from those involved in the conflict.

John Hamilton has thoroughly researched the history and life of Billy Sing, and has written an extraordinary account of a dark and hidden side of the Gallipoli campaign - the sniper's war. The Anzac battlefield on the slopes and gullies of the Gallipoli peninsular was made for snipers. Scrub, cliffs, spurs and hills meant that both Anzac and Turkish positions often overlooked one another. The sudden crack of a gunshot and instant death were ever present. Hamilton follows the exploits of trooper Billy Sing, a light horseman with the 5th Lighthorse Regiment, from his recruitment in North Queensland into the squalor, dust, blood, death and heroism of firstly Gallipoli, and then on to the Western Front, as seen from the viewpoint of a sniper.

It was not only the lower ranks who found themselves lined up in the rifle sights of the sniper. The story describes in considerable and graphic detail, the wounding of General Sir William Birdwood, commander of the Anzacs, and the death by Turkish sniper of General William Bridges, the first Australian commander of the AIF. Bridges was killed at Shrapnel Gully which became known as the Valley of the Shadow of Death. John Hamilton then recounts how five days later, at the same location, John Simpson Kirkpatrick, a stretcher bearer with the 3rd Field Ambulance unit, and now immortalised as the Man with the Donkey, also fell victim to a sniper's bullet.

The death by sniper of Lt Col Hubert Harris, the commanding officer of Billy Sing's unit, the 5th Lighthorse Regiment, is portrayed by Hamilton as an incentive for the increasing of Sing's resolve to intensify his deadly trade. Major Midgley, who was promoted to Lt Col and took over command of Billy's unit following the death of Harris, recorded in the unit's diary, that whilst Sing was credited officially with killing 201 Turks, he had actually accounted for approximately 300. Billy only counted those victims who had been verified by his spotter and eyewitness, who had been observing for Billy with a telescope. He did not include those enemy casualties shot when he had no observer, or where the

end result was doubtful.

For his conspicuous gallantry, Billy Sing was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, a decoration second only to the Victoria Cross. He was later Mentioned in Despatches by General Birdwood.

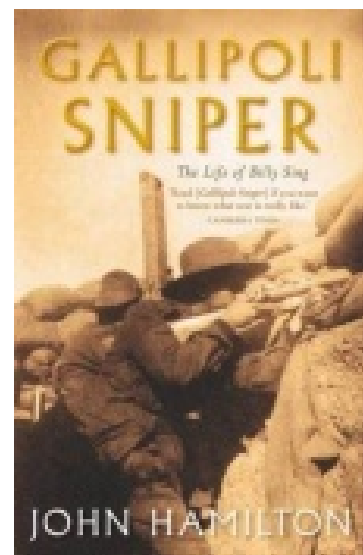
Following the withdrawal of the Anzacs from the Gallipoli peninsular, John Hamilton details the exploits of Sing, where as part of the 31st Battalion, Billy was involved in the third battle of Ypres and the battle for Polygon Wood. For his gallantry and heroism during these conflicts, he was recommended for the Military Medal, and later, he was awarded the Belgium Croix de Guerre.

Billy Sing was discharged from the army and returned to Queensland at the end of 1918. Physically and mentally, his health was spent, as Hamilton described, he had been wounded three times, mustard gassed, and in and out of hospital for months with injury and sickness. He tried his hand at sheep farming under the soldier settlement scheme, and then as a prospector, digging for gold. Like so many other returned servicemen, he became alcohol dependent, drinking large quantities of beer and rum, mainly to help him forget his combat experiences. In the final chapter, John Hamilton portrays the sad demise of a true Australian war hero, who died a sad and lonely death in May 1943, aged 57, in a small room of a boarding house in the suburb of West End, Brisbane. Billy Sing is buried in Lot 38 in Anzac 7, section 85 of the Lutwych Lawn Cemetery.

"Gallipoli Sniper" is a quick easy read, due to the fact that it is hard to put down. Graphic use of the English language by John Hamilton creates an atmosphere of excitement, fear and anticipation, and I found myself looking for any possible spare time to return to reading this gripping story. It is a book that I could easily read another two or three times, over the next few years.

The book is listed under the category of Snipers-Biography ISBN 978-1-4050-3865-2..

Enjoy it – "Bookworm"





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 Co-ordinator Allan Nolan  
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 66 Bridge Road, Nowra NSW

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