



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN

Edited and Published By

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia National Council

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## SUMMER 08



*MERRY CHRISTMAS  
and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.*



Seasons greetings to all and may the New Year be prosperous for everyone.

This last year has been productive with an increase in all aspect of the Association's areas of operation. As membership continues to grow steadily it allows more and more members to have their opinion heard in the matters that are of concern to veterans. This is your Association so be encouraged in participating and make sure you express your view within your Sub Branch.

The New Year can be even better than the last if more become involved. Improve your life and self esteem, take an active interest in all activities and programs that are of interest to you. Bring back mates who have drifted away or identify Vietnam veterans in your area who may need support.

### **Vietnam Veterans Family Health Study.**

At the time this edition goes to print there has been a very disappointing response in registration for the upcoming Intergenerational Health Study. Please register and encourage your mates to do the same. This is a World first study but will not be able to be validated without sufficient numbers involved. It should also be considered that this includes the whole family and even ex-partners and children. If you have contact with other National Servicemen who did not serve in South Vietnam they too are part of this study so that they too should be prompted to register. The telephone registration number is 1800 502 302 or via email at [healthstudy@dva.gov.au](mailto:healthstudy@dva.gov.au)

### **VIETNAM VETERAN MEMORIALS**

At the request of one of the VVAA State Branches I have been asked to include a section in Debrief naming any Vietnam Veteran Memorials Australia wide.

I have opened a "Pandora's Box" while seeking the information.

After discussions with the web master (who has some memorials listed on our web site} I am asking for any information from your local areas eg.. Situation, address etc hopefully with photos so we can have a central information site.

When this is done we will then be able to put the information on our web site and in the Debrief. So, if you can help please contact me by

Email: [rkcoxon@netspace.org](mailto:rkcoxon@netspace.org)

Web Master Email: [nat.treas@iinet.net.au](mailto:nat.treas@iinet.net.au)

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### **DISCLAIMER**

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## VVAA National Council 2008



Ian Le'Raye from our host sub branch, Northern Suburbs gives the delegates some insight into the history and workings of the centre.



Ian Campbell, Secretary Dept of Veteran Affairs addresses the delegates.



The Hon Alan Griffin Minister for Veteran Affairs, Ron Coxon and Mike Rodsted, Coordinator of the Yorke Peninsula Veteran & Community Centre after the official opening of the Raymond Robinson Memorial Museum  
*See story page....8*



Above. Inside the Raymond Robinson Memorial Museum at Kadina.



Above.  
Ron Coxon VVAA National President with Paul Copeland National President of the APPVA after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding during the National Council.



The Prime Minister The Hon Kevin Rudd, watched by The Hon Alan Griffin Minister for Veteran Affairs, presenting the cover from the seat that commemorates John Gillespie is finally home to his widow Mrs Carmel Hendrie, his daughter Mrs. Fiona Pike with her husband Phil and his grandchildren Ryan & Jordan daughter on Vietnam Veterans Day  
*See story page..14*



## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT



I welcome the NVP Ken Foster back to the Executive and also Vietnam Veterans South West NSW & Wagga as a Sub Branch of the VVAA. It is pleasing to have them join us and I look forward to their involvement. Contact details are in this edition so for those on the road and in that area take the opportunity to make yourself

known to them.

For some years now, National Congress and Councils have been almost side tracked as there has been deliberations over a rewrite of the Association's constitution. Many people have put in hours and hours of work to come up with solutions to what is required. There should be a simple "plain English" document circulated in the new year for approval of the membership. It concerns me that while all of this has been going on that we have not dropped the ball and forgotten that our core business is the welfare of veterans and that should be the major concern.

The new Government has now been in place for twelve months. I believe with Alan Griffin as the Minister for Veteran Affairs we have some one who really is prepared to put his shoulder to the wheel. From my observations he is a straight talker with a great work ethic but some in the veteran community seem to be continually disseminating wrong information or contacting him over matters that could easily be clarified elsewhere.

Since this Government has been in place they are moving through their veterans election platform. In line with that, the Minister has appointed people to the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee. This association has four members on this committee. We also have three members on the consultative forum for the Veteran Family Health Study. These committees have both had their first meetings.

A submission on behalf of the VVAA was made to the Senate Committee on Community Affairs in relation to Partners' Service Pension. The amendments mean that separated partner's Service Pension will cease twelve months after separation for other than a medical separation or when either person enters another relationship. Obviously each separation has different circumstance that should be considered with some flexibility and there should also be some form of appeal of these decisions. There is also some age restrictions that come into place as well. When this amendment was

introduced it has an effect on, potentially, 580 partners of veterans as at 1 January 2008. DVA have committed significant resources to identify individuals who may have special needs for consideration.

I attended a colloquium on rehabilitation in Canberra. This meeting was addressed by the US Secretary of Veteran Affairs. Interestingly he was a Vietnam Veteran who retired from his position as Surgeon General to the US Army in 2004 to take up this appointment. He spoke of the fact that they were experiencing the same problem as us in that veterans tended to disappear back into the community with little contact with veteran organisations. More importantly this forum was around both vocational and social rehabilitation. From our point of view, as Vietnam veterans, we are too old to rehabilitated, generally, back into the workforce but we must be conscious of attempting to get people back to life not wallowing around home in self pity. Look around your area, are there others out there who could be involved, is there a program or activity that could get more people active.

Other reviews are still under way, one is the review of pension rates that was to report by the end of February, we will be watching this with interest of course. Another from the platform was a review of the committees within DVA and again we have obvious interest in this matter. Whether some committees will be dropped or amalgamated should be considered. We would demand that some consultation should take place before any decision is made along these lines.

The association made a submission to Prof. David Dunt who is conducting the Review of Mental Health in the Australian Defence Force and through Transition and also suicide in the ADF and ex-service community. As well I had an interview with him in relation to both subjects. His findings will be of much interest because I had also taken part in another workshop on almost the same issues. Under the auspices of the Centre for Military and Veteran Health there was a series of meetings culminating in a two day workshop on mental health within the ADF. A pleasing aspect of all of this is the willingness of Defence to have us involved and that they sought us out because of our experience with both Vietnam veterans and those serving and discharging now.

Now is not the time for complacency now we need to be moving ahead. There is a need to encourage more involvement of every one to focus on what can be done better. Those sitting back should become engaged and improve their outlook on life. You will reap the benefits it's not for us it's for you.

Ron Coxon.  
National President

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

Things in the top end are cruising along as we enter the wet season, time to go troppo, well not really.

We had a very good turn out for Vietnam Veterans Day with about 70 Viet Vets marching and approximately 270 spectators. The address was given by the Senior Naval Officer Captain Vaughn Rixon CSC, ADC, RAN.

The Veterans marched a short distant to the cenotaph before falling out and joining in with the crowd. We had 31 books placed at the cenotaph this year and these go to the schools to educate the younger generation about the conflict in Vietnam. The service went well with the help from the Defence Services at Northern Command. It was a great honour to be the MC this year.

The day before being on the Sunday, we officially opened our meeting hall, Reg Hillier House which was opened by the nephew of Reg Hillier, Mr. Neil Bond. The Mural inside painted by one of our members, Mr Larry Gordon was also officially unveiled by our Patron Mr Austin Ashe, AO, See photo pg 31

At the Hall working bees have seen the slab poured for the Memorial wall and our flag pole has been re-vamped and painted thanks to Brian, Les and Larry. The hall is still hired out to various groups for a donation to help offset the expenses.

Our pub meat tray raffles still bring in most income to finance the up keep and running of the House. These are done by our members at Noonamah, Howard Springs and Humpty Doo Taverns. We still have our Bunning's and Harvey Norman Barbies as well.. As today is Melbourne Cup day, we again go to the Noonamah Tavern where the locals have frog races after the Cup is run. The frogs are auctioned off, some going for \$800 or more. There is big prize money for the owner/owners of the winning frog after all heats and final run. Proceeds go to several charities, about \$7000. This is also a good money earner for us as we cook the BBQ and also run a couple of meat tray raffles.

The B & S Ball is another event that was catered for by us last month, also at the Noonamah Tavern.

I believe the council meeting in Adelaide went off well by the report I received from my Secretary. Next year I'll attempt to be there, if re-elected.

I'll have to keep that month free from my bird watching tours. Went to Ashmore Reef this October.

The Pension/Welfare Officers are still managing to serve the Veterans and also the serving members of the defence forces up here and we are also in line for some much needed TIP Training in late November and also in mid March 2009. This should give us a few more troops on the ground to help with the increased work load from Iraq etc.

Well, on behalf of all the Members and Committee in the Beautiful North, we wish all fellow Veterans a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Darryel Binns,  
State President

## QUEENSLAND

Greetings and salutations from the sunny north.

What a year we have had again. Our numbers continue to increase. Our Sub Branches are working collectively with the local Communities. We have successfully worked together with D.V.A. and RSL (QLD) to put a great VVAA Day in August. This continued with a joint Remembrance Day commemoration. We are still working together with VVCS, VVFA and the other ESO's in the area, holding group meetings and pushing Government with Veterans policies.

The Granite Belt is back up and running well at Stanthorpe. Thank you good people from that area for re-starting and may the best of luck be with you for the future.

Advocacy, Pension and Welfare cases are still high within the State. A number of new cases from the Post 75 Brigade are now coming in to see us. Priority now is to bring these people in and train them up to take over from us when we finish.

The new Memorandum of Agreement with the APPVA was signed by both National Presidents in Adelaide on the 25 October 2008. This Agreement will be sent out to Sub Branches very shortly.

As some will know, this will be the last Debrief that will have my moniker on. I will be standing down as State President come February 2009. I would like to express my thanks for the efforts of the great teams that have helped me in this job over the years. The Secretary of the last two years is also standing down. I wish all the best to the new team in the coming year. You all know what this means, there will be more **bull** coming out of Queensland.

It maybe classed as the silly season, but make it a safe and happy one for all, and just think, all them ugly old mugs you saw this year, will look just as bad next year. Remember don't drink and drive, you may hit a bump and spill some of it.

Have a merry Xmas and a happy New Year and remember, you use less muscles laughing than you do frowning.

Brett Bullians  
State President

## VICTORIA

On behalf of the Victorian membership, greetings to all readers of this magazine. It is our hope that you experience a happy and holy Christmas time with your loved ones and good health and happiness in the year to come.

It is interesting to reflect on the progress of the new Labor Government in relation to key veteran issues as we approach the end of their first year in office. Significantly, compensation payments and pensions are now more fairly indexed, and some catch up has been achieved. The Prime Minister's Advisory Committee has been formed, the Intergenerational Health Study is moving forward, a review of the recommendations of the Clarke Report that were not acted on by the former government is imminent and bravery awards for Long Tan have been made. These breakthroughs have resulted in our state manifesto undergoing a significant review and rewrite-with members' requirements to be incorporated into a revised document to be issued early in the New Year.

Whilst we can be pleased encouraged by these achievements, there is still much more that Victoria and VVAA nationally have to work on in the coming year. Defence superannuants are still way behind in terms of fair superannuation payment indexation, and have fallen even further behind in terms of the increases afforded to politicians super and even the aged pension-the struggle continues. We will work with other states to keep pressure on the government to bring forward meaningful and long term policy and action in relation to mental health and aged care, ensure that a review of pharmaceutical benefits is conducted in accordance with the governments' timetable, preserve the value of future funding for BEST and other important projects. We Are delighted to report that at the time of writing Victoria's membership is showing an increase of just on 4% for the year. This result can be clearly attributed to our significant focus on the well being of all our members through our proactive grass roots welfare program and the outstanding work done by sub-branches to reach out to former members and to "sell" the benefits of membership. Our welfare theme "Are You on the Radar?" has resonated within the Victorian Vietnam Veteran community, resulting in many Veterans joining the association for the first time. Having set the welfare wheels firmly in motion, the challenge is to keep up the momentum; this will be done by conducting information sessions across the state and in border areas in coming months and inviting APPVA, VVCS, DVA and other interested ESO's to participate in carrying the message to all veterans.

Vietnam Veterans' Day 2008 at the Shrine of Remembrance, with a specific focus on Coral/Balmoral, was a huge success despite the inclement weather. Led by RAR associations, the march past was reviewed by the Governor of Victoria, the Victorian Premier, US and NZ consuls, Victorian based senior ADF Officers and other VIP's. Prior to the ceremony, a gunfire breakfast on the lawns of the Shrine was enjoyed by about 1000

veterans. We were able to secure grants from DVA and the State Government to assist with the costs of the day.

To account for the tyranny of distance and increasing membership, the Gippsland-La Trobe Valley area is undergoing significant change with a new sub-branch being raised and other adjustments to sub-branch boundaries. These changes will ensure more effective delivery of services to veterans in the area, and will bring the number of Victorian sub-branches to 28.

As part of our annual activities, workshops have been conducted for sub-branch presidents and treasurers. The presidents considered a hypothetical closure scenario for the state branch from which a discussion paper will be raised next year, and the treasurers met to review new auditing and reporting requirements introduced by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

At the time of writing, Victoria has applied to the Victorian Veterans Council for grants under the 2008 Council Grants Scheme. A grant from the ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund (a payment from the AFL for Ex Service Organisations) will be used to provide a range of welfare related services, and a second smaller grant from the Veterans Fund will be used specifically for education grants and support of our Education Team activities.

With the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Peacekeepers, Peacemakers and Veterans Association, Victoria will be seeking closer and mutually beneficial ties with the many younger veterans residing in the state. Our sub-branches that are spread right across the state and the Veterans Welfare Centre network - a joint RSL-VVAA undertaking - are well placed to work cooperatively with the younger veterans.

Large parts of Victoria are still in the grip of an ongoing drought, a situation that has taken a back seat of late to the gathering economic crisis. These circumstances, along with recent warnings that Victoria is heading into a severe high fire danger season, have already impacted on some veterans and their families and will continue to do so. We have the challenge before us to respond should the need arise, and as we move into the holiday season, our welfare systems are on heightened alert.

Bob Elworthy  
State President

### DVA CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The Dept of Veteran Affairs will be closed from COB Wed 24th Dec 2008 to Thurs 1st Jan 2009. The office will re-open for normal business on Friday 2nd Jan 2009.

The payday of 1st Jan will be brought forward to 30th Dec 2008. After hours during Christmas closure

VVCS Crisis Line.....	1800 011 046
Defence Service Homes Insurance:	1300 552 662
Payments:	1300 304 989

## TASMANIA

Vietnam Veterans Day 2008 was very well attended throughout the State, with many familiar and a few new faces amongst the attendees.

The involvement of Schools, Younger Adults, Younger Veterans and ADF Personnel is certainly good to see, maybe it is saying that we have and are doing something right within our Veteran Community and the Community on the whole.

Prior to the Cenotaph Service in Hobart, the Tasmanian Military Museum was opened at Anglesea Barracks. This Museum represents mostly the Tasmanian involvement in all wars and a significant section of the Museum is dedicated, to a large extent, to Tasmanians who served during the Vietnam War. The displays, models and videos are magnificently presented for your viewing. A lot of time and effort has gone into the Museum by many volunteers and this magnificent display is worthy of a visit when touring Tassie and you are in Hobart.

At the National Council Meeting in October many issues were discussed, with a large focus on our constitution. A Constitution has been accepted. This will now go to the Constitution Committee so as to conform to the Terms of Reference, then distributed in February for comment.

A significant part of the Council meeting was the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia and Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association, this is a step forward for us all, working together for the Welfare and Wellbeing of all Veterans, Service Personnel and their Families.

The Vietnam Veterans Family Health Study is underway, but it still needs more participants for it to work properly and find results.

Please think about registering for this study as the Welfare of Veterans and their families is a primary concern of our Association.

Tassie' State raffle this year has been another big one, thanks to King, Towbars and Trailers of Hobart, VVAA State Branch, VVAA Sub-Branches and all the Volunteers who gave their time and effort with the ticket sales, also to the drivers, who ferried the trailer loaded with all the goodies, around this State to the different Sub-Branches.

The Raffle is to be drawn on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2008, at the Launceston Sub-Branch Christmas Dinner, all prizes will be personally delivered to the winner's home. Thank you to everyone, who purchased tickets and Best of Luck.

Our Memorial Bush Retreat is being utilised a little more this year as many Mainlanders are touring the State and are including a pleasant breather at this facility.

The Bush Retreat Committee thanks the many volunteers who maintain and keep this Retreat to the standard that it is.

The access road into the Retreat has also been upgraded, thanks to the Southern Midlands Council, so no more thumps and bangs to the underside of your vehicle.

Bookings are still done through State RSL Hobart, call Tamara on 03 6224 0881 or email [rltas@bigpond.com](mailto:rltas@bigpond.com)

As Christmas is fast approaching we thank all those people who have assisted us through the year. It is a pleasure working with ESO's, Government Departments and all levels of the VVAA.

Tasmania wishes all a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Prosperous New Year.

John Wright.  
State President

### **Congratulations!**

The Tasmanian State Branch wishes to congratulate John Wright (State President) and Jim Jones (State Treasurer) on their State Life Membership. At the Launceston Sub-Branch dinner on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 08 both John and Jim were given Tasmanian State Life Membership for their untiring work and dedication over many years to the VVAA Tas.

Ann Cash  
State Secretary

### **Vietnam Veterans Association Greater Hobart Sub Branch.**

On the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 1400hrs at ANZAC Park Lindisfarne on the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of World War 1, a service and dedication for a Remembrance Precinct was held with the opening and unveiling by the Premier David Bartlett for the 16 Tasmanians who died on operational Service during the Vietnam Conflict. After the Service we returned to the Lindisfarne RSL Club for afternoon tea with guests, Veterans, families and friends.

Elizabeth Chaffey  
Sub Branch Secretary

### **Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP)**

The revised National Schedule of Equipment lists more than 250 items available under the Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP), with increases in the financial and quantity limits on several items available to entitled members of the veteran community.

Outdated items have been removed from the Schedule, and new items added offering improved results.

The revised schedule effective from 15 September 2008 is now available online and may be viewed/downloaded by visiting:

<http://www.dva.gov.au/health/rap/rap.htm>

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Since National Congress 2008, Western Australia, like all states has been actively involved in the re-draft of the National Constitution and want to see this matter progress to a conclusive result, at Congress 2009 in Canberra.

Western Australia's nominee, for the Children of Vietnam Veterans Health Study Forum, David Cockram, was successful. David was selected to the forum, where his knowledge and experience, will result in valuable input to the study group.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day Service, was held on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> of August at the Kings Park Memorial Pavilion. Fine weather prevailed and the service was well attended by veterans, families and the public.

Brigadier Duncan Warren [retd], delivered a very interesting and informative memorial day address, this was appreciated by all in attendance. The V.V.A.A. W.A., thank Brigadier Warren, for his participation and effort.

Thanks also go to the Army Cadet Drum Corps, the Guildford Grammar School Cadet Unit, the Army Piper and the Salvation Army Bugler, for their assistance on the day. The V.V.A.A. W.A. executive and committee, worked hard to make the day a success, in particular, State Secretary David Watson, for his effort to coordinate the organisation and the service, thank you all.

2008 has been a challenging year for the association in W.A., having a number of new faces on the executive and committee, it has been a year to rethink where we are at, look at what we have been doing right, what we haven't been doing and what direction we need to go in future, to grow and strengthen the V.V.A.A. W.A. in the coming years. Improved communication with and feedback from our membership is a priority area.

To continue in this direction in 2009, it will be important to add to the executive and committee and gain support from the members. It is that time of year again, membership fees for 2009 are due and it's also time to think about nominations for the executive and committee positions for next year. There is always a lot to be done and all too often, too few hands to do it.

Richard Williams.  
State President.



## Back to the Bush Reunion Bruce Rock 2008.

It is all over for another year, although as I write, there could still be a few stragglers in the Bruce Rock area.

The unexpected weather and rain earlier in the week might have settled the dust but did not dampen the spirits of the early arrivals, setting up camp on the local recreation ground. By the weekend it was fine weather and all systems go.

For those attending from day one, the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, the entertainment and activities included, Golf, Rifle Shooting, the Shackelton Fair, Health Forums and Concerts. Saturday is the highlight day, with various Veteran Support Groups, setting up information booths in the Shire Hall during the morning, while there is a local street market for those looking for a bargain or some local goodies.

By 2.30pm in the afternoon, in excess of 400 veterans, a pipe band, cadet unit, vintage military vehicles and the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Display Troop, were forming up in the main street, for a march to St Peter's Church, for the memorial church service and lighting of the candle in the Memorial Peace Window.

Two doors up the street from St Peter's is the Bruce Rock Club, Veterans being Veterans, there is usually more blokes seen going into the club, than the church, well it is a small church and I guess marching does work up a thirst.

Late afternoon everyone adjourns back to the recreation ground, to see a local enthusiast and collector, demonstrate the abilities of a Centurion Tank. The evening concludes with the Big Bruce Rock B.B.Q and entertainment into the night. A good time, is had by all.

Sunday for the stayer's, there is lunch at the Ardath Pub and a Bard's Night, around the fire pit at the Rec Ground.

This year the numbers were down slightly on 2007, with approximately 250 caravans, tents etc booked into the Rec Ground, while others were at the caravan park, hotel/motel and other locations around the area.

It was estimated that in excess of 3000 people, attended the reunion in 2008.

The Wheatbelt Vietnam Veterans Group and the Shire of Bruce Rock are to be congratulated, for their efforts putting on another excellent Reunion.

Watch this space for next years dates and info and plan your movements, towards Bruce Rock in 2009.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

We recently had the National Council in Adelaide again, this time it was held at our Northern Sub Branch at their new location near the Edinburgh Air Base. The feed back that we received from all interstate delegates was that they were all impressed with what the members have achieved out there.

On the Friday prior to the Council meeting, all delegates and visitors were transported to the Yorke Peninsula Veterans & Community Centre at Kadina, for the official opening of their Museum by the Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Hon. Alan Griffin, MP.

Although the day was quite hot with plenty of flies, most people overlooked these little annoyances and had had an enjoyable day.

Thanks to the recent Federal Grant, Head office and all of our Sub Branches are in the process of upgrading all of their office equipment.

South Australia is currently enjoying a reasonable membership but we will be conducting a membership renewal drive early in 2009.

Overall, South Australia is now in a sound financial position to service the States Veteran Community in Pension and Welfare services.

Pension claims in the State have been on a steady decline but this has been offset by an increase in Welfare activities.

I would like to thank all the office staff for volunteering their time and energy in dealing with the day to day running of the office at Torrens Parade Ground.

I also would like to make a special thank you to all the Pension and Welfare Officers for their dedicated service to veterans and their families through out the year.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Paul Coppock  
State President

## Yorke Peninsula Veterans & Community Centre

Three and a half years ago I was fortunate enough to meet two extremely generous businessmen, and after talking with them for an hour the VVAA had a 99 year lease on 2 acres of land with a derelict fish factory on it, and so the Yorke Peninsula Veterans & Community Centre came into being.

We shoveled pidgin poo for what seemed like a life time and after a huge effort by a handful of vets held our first function, with no windows, no doors and no

facilities it was a hoot, bets were taken if the roof was going to blow off.

We've come a long way from there, but one constant during that first 2 years was Ray "Robbie" Robinson, he was like an older brother and father rolled into one and his passing 18 months ago hurt.

Robbie served in Korea, Malaya and did 3 tours in "Nam" he had an MID and the American Silver Star.

His chest on Anzac Day resembled a fruit salad, I asked him one day why he did the things that earned him those bravery awards, "I was there and someone had to do it" was the reply,

I've made that our motto as we've built this centre, we have shown our community that we don't all sit and moan poor me and get pissed, we can be a vital part of the outside world.

We haven't been under enemy fire like Robbie while we did "it", but with some of the petty politics that our association manages to produce at times it's felt like it. So the Raymond "Robbie" Robinson memorial museum is now open, and the moral of the story is, in the words of our National President "Veterans are achievers", get up off your arse and start something.

Mike Rodsted  
Coordinator  
YP Veterans & Community Centre

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### The Rural Recession has been explained in simple terms by an old-time farmer:

It all started back in 1966 when we changed from pounds to dollars – that doubled me bloody overdraft. Then they brought in kilograms instead of pounds – me bloody wool clip dropped by half.

After that, they changed rain to millimetres and we haven't had an inch of rain since.

If that wasn't enough, they brought on Celsius, and it never got over 40 degrees, no wonder me bloody wheat won't grow.

Then they changed acres to hectares, and I ended up with only half the land I had.

By this time I'd had enough and decided to sell out. I put the property in the agent's hand and then they changed miles to kilometres.

Now I'm too far out of town for anybody to buy the bloody place.



## NEW SOUTH WALES

It's with great delight that we welcome the Executive and members of the Vietnam Veterans of South-West New South Wales and Wagga as the newest Sub-Branch affiliated with the New South Wales Branch. My parents and one of my brothers live in Wagga Wagga, so I feel a special affinity with them. By the time you read this, their delegates will have attended their first State Council meeting and in the process confirmed for themselves that this is an organisation which is driven, guided and directed by its rank and file members.

The recent National Council meeting was an opportunity for some frank and free discussion about the relationship between the State Branches. Vietnam veterans don't seem to be short of an opinion on any subject and it's not unusual to find diversions of thought about the way that things should be done.

One of the sticking points has been the National Constitution – a matter which is frankly of little or no concern to VVAA Sub-Branch members throughout Australia who tell us "Just get on with it!". The egos have been put aside and the National Council is getting on with it. That cooperation should also signal a decrease in the tension between individuals who think that the only way to do things is their way.

I recently represented the State Branch at the wreath-laying for Remembrance Day in Martin Place, Sydney. The tiny representation of World War II veterans is a sad reminder of our mortality and a clear statement of our own future. That makes it even more important that we Vietnam veterans continue to work on establishing a worthwhile legacy for those who follow.

Our close relationship with the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans' Association (APPVA) is one of the ways in which we can continue to deliver welfare, pensions and advocacy support to veterans of all ranks, all Services and all conflicts, as well as ex-Service personnel, widows and widowers. Our members are all keen to see the relationship grow and prosper and we hope that through it, veterans of later conflicts will find it easier to seek out and obtain the assistance and guidance that will help them and their families into the future.

Burnout of welfare and pensions officers and advocates continues to be an issue and it would help to spread the load if we could broaden our base of practicing members. The problem is that the job is so worthwhile and has such positive outcomes that there is the temptation to simply do too much. Those who have recently retired from full-time work might consider volunteering some of their time and share the warm and fuzzy feeling that they are doing something of such incredible benefit to other veterans.

On the positive side, we are starting to see new faces at

the management table and this is probably a signal that it's getting closer to the time for those of us who have been involved for so long in National and State leadership to step aside. The conflict here is between experience and vigour and we have to strike a proper balance. Negotiations with government are not swift and many of our Vietnam veteran issues have application across the broad spectrum of veterans, Service and ex-Service people.

The Prime Ministers Veterans Advisory Council has had its first sitting, and we await the outcomes with more than a little anticipation. At the same time there has been a break-through for those previously marginalised by the F111 Deseal/Reseal arrangements and it would be good to have assurance that this will be the model for future recognition by government of the uncertain nature of military service and the unknown dangers which we face. It's not acceptable for governments to deny or stall proper compensation to Service personnel for exposures such as nuclear radiation, chemicals or psychological trauma as in the Voyager sinking. We served and do serve with honour and we expect government to honour its obligation to deal fairly with us.

Clive Mitchell-Taylor  
State President

### Wish you were here

For all the free people that still protest  
you're welcome, we protect you,  
and your protected by the best.  
Your voice is strong and loud  
but who will fight for you  
no one standing in your crowd.

We are fathers, brothers and sons,  
wearing the boots and carrying the guns.  
We are the ones that leave all we own,  
to make sure future is carved in stone.

We are the ones who fight and die,  
we might not be able to save the world,  
well, at least we try.

We walked the paths to where we are at,  
and we want no choice other than that.  
so when you rally you're group to complain,  
take a good look in the back of you're brain.

In order for that flag you love to fly,  
wars must be fought and young men must die.  
We came here to fight for the ones we hold dear,  
if that's not respected, we would rather stay here.  
So please stop yelling and put down your signs,  
and pray for those behind enemy lines.

When the conflict is over and all is well,  
be thankful that we chose to go through hell.

Corporal Joshua Miles and all the boys from  
3rd. Battalion, 2nd Marines, Kuwait.

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT members and the executive are gearing up to host Congress 09 in May next year. By all accounts the venue will meet all expectations and the extra curricula activities will be quite entertaining. The organising committee and ACT members are looking forward to welcoming delegates, the National executive and many observers to the National Capital next May.

While member numbers are steady, we look forward to an increase as more Vietnam Veterans move from paid work into retirement. We expect these Veterans and their families will look to the VVAA to provide interesting activities to entertain and stimulate their minds post paid work. To this end we are continuing our efforts to find suitable premises. Now the ACT government elections are behind us we can move to lobby the new government to provide us with a home.

Finances are again healthy. This is because of the stalwart efforts of our volunteer fundraisers. These hardy souls front up to regular sausage sizzles and our annual badge week street appeal to help raise the funds needed to run the vital operations of the VVAA. Please take this as the strongest praise and acknowledgement of their efforts. A special mention should also go to treasurer Robynne for the precise manner in which she keeps the books.

Recently the ACT voted to confer Life Membership on long serving and extremely hard working and dedicated member Robin "the Colonel" Parker. Robin was presented with his Life Membership badge, VVAA plaque and new name plate at our Melbourne Cup day afternoon.

At the front of the success stories for this year must be the education program. Program manager Eddie has put together a series of presentations to cope with the various periods allotted by different schools. This team has visited a number of local area schools and by all accounts the interactive presentations are extremely well received by students and teachers. The teacher feedback clearly shows how informative and educational this novel approach to history is. Eddie and his co-presenters deserve a "well done" for organising and running this worthwhile program for local area high school students.

Membership numbers while not earth shattering are satisfactory considering the environment we operate in. Obviously we must never lose sight of the fact of why we have members on our books. These are our mates and we must be there for them in all circumstances. As a result of the "wake up call" delivered last May by our Victorian brothers we intend in 2009 to continue the commitment made at Congress 08 to better care for our people. This is a task we must make more effort in achieving. One fact remains: we need members to look after those other members on the local as well as the

national scene.

Our Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day Service on 18AUG was by all accounts a resounding success. This is in no small way to the efforts of those organisers and the site team on the day. Thanks to all concerned.

This year we co-ordinated the unveiling of another "Home at Last" plaque: this one for L/Cpl John Gillespie whose remains were discovered where he perished in 1971 in a helicopter crash in the Long Hais. Members of the Gillespie family, accompanied by *Operation Aussies Home Team* member Peter Aylett, lifted a specially commissioned unveiling banner to reveal the new plaque on the Gillespie / Fisher MIA seat. Now that the remains of David Fisher have been discovered and returned home we are planning a similar service for David's family on 18AUG09. We fervently pray that next year we can also have the Herbert and Carver families here to close the final chapter on our MIAs.

**Contact**, our Branch newsletter, is keeping members informed on what is happening in the VVAA. Editor Wal Brewer is to be commended for the sterling effort he puts in to produce the newsletter. Getting our web-site operational is still on the radar. This is yet another task that needs scarce resources to complete.

This year we would have preferred the AFL to allow us the Commemorative Service at the August Manuka Oval match and the subsequent "bucket drive." Their response to our request was that the only AFL "on ground" Commemorative Services for Veterans are those organised by the RSL and held to coincide with ANZAC Day. We will approach the AFL CEO direct to see if there is a way around this edict for the August 2009 Manuka Oval match.

Branch members welcome the move forward to give us a new National Constitution. We look forward to the new committee delivering us a model that we can all enthusiastically embrace in May 2009. This new National Constitution will present us with a need to re-write the now very dated ACT Branch Constitution and to bring it into line with the requirements of the national document.

Our social calendar provides a means of members getting together. We intend to continue with events and activities during the forthcoming year. As a result of the success of the twice a year golf days Wal has been approached to organise regular monthly golf days and we can look forward to our social dinners as well as some theatre nights and the like.

A great deal of our successes in 2008 can be put down to the sheer dedication and hard work of the volunteers and Branch executive. It is a pleasure and privilege to work with such fine people who all have nothing but the best interests of our Vietnam Veterans' family members at heart.

May we wish all Vietnam Veterans and their families all the very best for the festive season and they would want for themselves and theirs for 2009,

Pete Ryan  
State President

### **SAUSAGE SIZZLE – MORE THAN A FUNDRAISER!**

Sausage sizzles down at the local hardware store are more than just an excellent fundraiser for the VVAA. One Branch reports very positive effect that could be repeated across the board.

“We have watched our people over the years to see what they get out of this activity,” Wal Brewer ACT Branch vice president commented recently.

“There is a lot more to a sausage sizzle than feeding the masses on a Saturday afternoon,” Wal stated. “Judging by the amount of chiacking among the troops they get quite a kick out of being there. The stirring is just a part of it. Everyone hops in and the whole operation runs like clockwork. The teamwork is a joy to watch,” added Wal.

“Our treasurer made up these “VVAA orange” vests and everyone wears them over our black and orange polo shirts with the matching cap and that just adds to the professional image and boosts the teamwork element,” commented Wal.

“We have noticed a marked positive effect on a number of our people and we can only put that down to the team spirit that flows from being part of our major fundraising activity” Wal concluded.

There may be more value than dollars in pursuing these activities to give our people some purpose in helping their fellows.

So the local hardware store sausage sizzle may have treasures hidden as fundraisers.

### **Why The Colours?**

All around Australia you see Vietnam Veterans’ “wearing their colours” – perhaps a cap or shirt or a bumper sticker on a vehicle. This story is about why we should proudly display the fact we are Vietnam Veterans and it has little to do with advertising to the general public.

Recently a VVAA member was packed up and ready to depart a caravan park in outback NSW when a woman of “our age” came up, pointed to his ribbon bar sticker and asked if he was a Vietnam Vet. This story is better told in the words of the Vet.

“I was a bit taken aback, because I didn’t know what was coming next. She then told me that her husband was a Vietnam Vet and wasn’t travelling too flash! Could I have a yarn to him? Of course I said yes.”

“Well she was right this bloke was a bit of a mess psychologically and he was driving his missus bonkers.”

“No sweat, at first I thought I’d just have a chat for a few minutes you know the old, when did you tour, who were you with, do you know...?”

“This bloke hadn’t joined any group and preferred being a loner. He’d bottled up all of the ghosts in this dark hole inside himself. He said I was the first person he’d ever spoken to about the whole mess in over thirty years.”

“We yarned or actually he talked and I listened for two and a half hours. He poured it out. His missus was off somewhere away from us and that might have helped him spit it all out, and spit it out he did for a couple of hours. In the end he stood up shook my hand and almost in tears said ‘thanks digger.’ He didn’t know my name or couldn’t remember it – not important.”

“His missus walked over to me as I was going back to my van and just said thanks, ‘You made a difference I can see in him now’”

This story illustrates just why “wearing the colours” can do good among our people, especially those who hide themselves away and how you can make a difference by displaying the logo or ribbon bar on a cap or shirt or a bumper sticker on a vehicle.

The script of this story is as told to the author early in June.

### **NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT**

The RAAC Association has taken on the task of driving this project. Col. John Haynes OAM is the Project Leader & he has a national team supported by individual state committees.

Of all the National Memorials that have been erected along the full length of Anzac Ave, none has been erected in memorial of the Boer War - a war in which more Australians died than in the entire Vietnam War; and drawn from a far, far smaller population base. They were the first ANZACs. Six VC's were won.

Yes, there are some very nice memorials to the Boer War around the countryside ... but there is no National Memorial. Many feel that this is an oversight than must be corrected.

The Federal Government has allocated a corner on Anzac Parade (not far from the Vietnam Memorial) on condition that a suitable memorial be designed and build by June 2010 (19 months away).

The attached brochure will give some sort of a picture of the goal.

The BWM Committee (i.e. headed by Col Haynes OAM) has a very informative website 'The Australian Boer War Memorial' and, through it you could make contact with those running the show.

Try:<http://www.bwm.org.au/site/Home.asp>

Alternatively, Col. John Haynes OAM can be contacted via email :[raacansw@defence.gov.au](mailto:raacansw@defence.gov.au) and phone: 02 9339 3209.

## Farewell to a loyal & faithful friend

A number of Vietnam Veterans recently witnessed the final act in the long running saga of a loyal and faithful friend of Vietnam Veterans with the retirement at the Army Aviation centre Oakey Queensland of the UH-1 helicopters from service.

Australia's association with the UH-1 helicopter affectionately known as Huey began more than forty years ago when the RAAF took delivery in 1962 of eight UH 1B choppers.

Within a few years No9 Sqn RAAF deployed to Vietnam equipped with a slightly upgraded version eight UH 1B choppers than those originally delivered. These 1000 series aircraft arrived off Vung Tau in HMAS Sydney on 12 June 1966 and were flown ashore to their new home at the nearby airfield.

Two years later, in 1968, these eight were replaced by sixteen UH 1H models with four of these being converted into the "Bushranger" gunships.

While some will suggest that 9Sqn failed to support their Aussie comrades the facts belie this scurrilous assertion. The RAAF had just twelve "slicks" to support a brigade sized task force. This job called for an establishment of up to sixty Hueys and a dozen or so Chinooks. So while it is true to say that often the US Army transported the diggers it did so with vastly superior resources.

Talk of these "urban myths" about lack of support comes to a short sharp end when a Vietnam Veteran stridently confirms that he or one of his mates would not be here without being "dusted off" by a 9 Sqn chopper. A similar outcome comes when those knowledgeable in the facts talk of the relief at getting a resupply of desperately needed rations and water and sometimes ammo while in the bush and the joy of getting a mail delivery.

Few Vietnam Veterans are not moved by the "WOCKA WOCKA" sound of a Huey's rotors even thirty or so years on from Vietnam.

One of the roles of the 9 Sqn Hueys was inserting and extracting Australian SAS patrols. Often these extractions were "hot" or while the patrols were in contact with the enemy and many ex SAS soldiers will tell of their appreciation of the Hueys appearing overhead to pull them out of trouble. The closeness of the association between these two units is demonstrated by the tributes to 9 Sqn on display at the SAS Association HQ at Swanbourne WA.

The Huey Vietnam story would not be complete without mention of the RAN.

Navy air and ground crews formed what was known as the Experimental Military Unit and were part of the US Army 135<sup>th</sup> Assault Helicopter Company based at Camps Blackhorse and Bearcat in III Corps.

While the irony of the unit acronym EMU, representing a flightless bird, was lost on our American allies, these Navy aviators flew countless sorties in often very dangerous conditions operating both troop carrying aircraft and gunships.

In addition to EMU Flight, eight Navy pilots flew with 9 Sqn RAAF during 1968-69.

9 Sqn operated in support of 1ATF until the unit was withdrawn to Australia in 1971, sailing from Vung Tau on board HMAS Sydney on 8 December.

While 9 Sqn relocated to RAAF Amberley its sister unit 5 Sqn joined with 9 in vital civil defence work in Australia including flood relief and bush fire fighting while maintaining their primary role of Army support. White painted RAAF Hueys were also deployed to the Middle East as part of the Multi National Observer Force of the United Nations.

Training the Army in helicopter operations and RAAF chopper pilots remained the primary task of both units until the aircraft were transferred to the Army Aviation Regiment in 1986.

Huey "soldiered on" under new management until the gunships were retired in June 2004 with the aircraft being converted back to slicks. In October 2007 the final Australian Huey sorties were flown over Brisbane by a section of aircraft, landing back at Oakey that afternoon to enter a well deserved retirement.

Two UH-1B aircraft and one Vietnam Veteran UH-1H are part of the display at the RAAF Museum Point Cook Victoria.

The VVAA has applied to the government for a Vietnam Veteran UH-1H to be allocated for display at the Vietnam Veterans' Museum at Phillip Island. At the time of publication the VVAA has not received confirmation of this allocation.

This venerable chopper's achievements certainly make what rightly should be called a memorable saga of a loyal and faithful friend of Vietnam Veterans.

## EPITAPH

The loss of an old friend is always difficult and this is certainly the case as the mighty Iroquois is finally retired from service. She was loved by all who flew, maintained, supported or simply rode in her. The distinctive sound of her rotors, known as "the sound of freedom" will no longer herald the ride into or out of battle or the arrival of help, resupply or evacuation. She will be long remembered as a trustworthy, reliable and thoroughly honest old friend.

You, who deserve a nation's plaudits, rest in peace, among Australia's war heroes.

Inscription of the commemorative brew mug sold at the farewell to Huey dining in night, Combined Mess, Army Aviation Centre, Oakey Qld, October 2007.



## PRIME MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Australian veteran and ex-service community will have their views represented by the fourteen Australians appointed today to the Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on Ex-service Matters, the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin announced today.

The members of the Council are different to any other current veteran representative group. Members are drawn from every part of the veteran community, including servicemen, partners of veterans, war widows and veteran advocates. The Council reflects and brings together the diverse groups in the veteran and ex-service community.

The Chair of the Council will be Dr Allan Hawke, former Secretary of the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence and the current Chancellor of the Australian National University.

Dr Hawke will be assisted by Frank Benfield, Dr Robert Black AM RFD, the Hon Graham Edwards, June Healy OAM, Commodore Nick Helyer MBE RANR, Warrant Officer Peter Hind OAM, Ken Kipping AM, Gail MacDonell, Anne Pahl, Philip Pyke, Donna Reggett, Brigadier Keith Rossi AM OBE RFD ED (Rtd) and Brigadier Neil Weekes AM MC (Rtd).

"As a group, these people have personal and professional experience spanning the three services, in advocacy, rehabilitation and parliamentary processes, and have an understanding of the impact of service on families. I look forward to hearing their input on ex-service issues," said Mr Rudd.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs sought the views of the ex-service community about how they wanted their issues communicated to government. More than 100 submissions to a discussion paper were received, and the Minister met in excess of 800 people at consultation meetings held throughout Australia during the Parliamentary recess.

"As you'd expect, I've heard a variety of views, but veterans themselves were very supportive of the concept of the Council," said Mr Griffin.

The Council will advise the Government on veteran and ex-service issues, and identify problems and priorities to improve the Government's provision of services.

The Council will meet for the first time in October 2008. At its first meeting it will confirm its terms of reference and advise on a review of current consultation mechanisms between DVA and the ex-service community. The Government will also seek the Council's advice on major issues facing the portfolio in coming months, including the study of suicide in the ex-service community and the reconsideration of the Clarke Review recommendations not accepted by the previous Government. Further information on the Advisory Council is available at [minister.dva.gov.au](http://minister.dva.gov.au).

## DEEMING RATES TO BE LOWERED FOR VETERANS

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, today said that lower income test deeming rates would apply for veterans from payday 4 December 2008.

This is to reflect the recent reduction in interest rates and the impact the global financial crisis is having on returns on the investments of veterans.

The deeming rate will change from 4 per cent to 3 per cent for the first \$41,000 of a single pensioner's financial investments (\$68,200 for a couple). It will also shift from 6 per cent to 5 per cent for the balance of financial investments over these amounts. The changes are effective from 17 November and will be included in payments made from 4 December 2008.

Department of Veterans' Affairs payments affected by the deeming rate include service pension and income support supplement.

The lowering of the deeming rates means that part rate pensioners paid under the income test, with financial investments mainly in term deposits, shares, managed investments and other accounts, may receive an increase in their pension payments, to reflect the reduction in their assessable income.

Veterans already paid at the maximum rate will have no change to their pension payments.

This Rudd Government decision acknowledges that many pensioners and social security recipients who also rely on own-source income have been adversely affected by the global financial crisis.

"In addition to the one off payments announced recently as part of the Rudd Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy, this decision will help ease some of the financial pressure on DVA pensioners," Mr Griffin said.

"I have also asked DVA to update the value of pensioners' listed securities and managed investments. As a result, on November 20, nearly 18,000 DVA income support pensioners will receive an average increase of \$10 per fortnight."

Individual results are heavily dependent on individual circumstances.

DVA pensioners who would like to discuss the outcome of this decision should contact the Department on 133 254.

## JOHN GILLESPIE “HOME at LAST”

On Vietnam Veterans' Day at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra, Gillespie family members, watched by a congregation of more than 450 including Prime Minister Rudd, unveiled a newly positioned plaque on the Gillespie Fisher MIA seat to commemorate that John was finally home.

This moving element of the annual Service took place as members of John's Vietnam unit, 8 Field Ambulance, complete with parade banner, formed an honour guard on the path leading to the seat.

A lone piper piped the family to the seat with “Coming Home.”

The new plaque matches in material and style the original plaques positioned on the three MIA seats in 1992 for the opening and dedication of our Memorial.

This plaque carries words noting that John was found where he fell, his remains were returned to Australia and where he was finally laid to rest together with the dates of each event.

“This moving and solemn event was woven into the order of service for Vietnam Veterans' Day by the organising committee. We followed the precedent set a year earlier for the Parker and Gillson ‘Home at Last’ plaques,” said the committee chair recently.

“All elements were co-ordinated with DVA and cleared by the Gillespie family before approval,” the chair added.

DVA, in conjunction with the VVAA, designed and commissioned an unveiling cloth in heavy satin in the colour of the RAAMC and emblazoned with a Tri-Service crest woven in gold thread.

Prime Minister Rudd later presented the cloth to John's grandchildren.

The next chapter in the MIA story began in October this year with the return of David Fisher's remains to Australia and his funeral several days later in Sydney.

On Vietnam Veterans' Day 2009 the service organisers intend, with family approval, to similarly have David Fisher's family unveil his “Home at Last” plaque.

At the time of writing David's Vietnam unit, the SAS Regiment are planning to attend the 18AUG 2009 service in numbers.

### The Repatriation and Funeral Of Private David John Elkington Fisher SAS

By Ken Foster VVAA National Vice President.

I had the privilege and honour of representing the national president, and in that capacity, the association at the rehabilitation and funeral of Private David Fisher,

the last Australian soldier to return from the Vietnam War.

On 10 October 2008 I attended the repatriation service at RAAF Richmond where as the family, official party and guests waited in a hanger the sound of a C130 could be heard approaching, as the doors of the hanger rolled open and the ramp of the aircraft was lowered a guard of honour formed and the family waited, a party of SAS veterans of the Vietnam war marched from the aircraft and joined the honour guard.

The coffin was carried with dignity to the hanger and in a closed area the family welcomed home their warrior before a service that included the Minister for Defence, Army chiefs, serving members and veterans.

Following a very dignified service the coffin was taken, under guard of honour to a place of rest prior to the funeral.

On 14 October 2008 I attended the funeral service for Private Fisher at Macquarie park crematorium chapel in Sydney.

It was a wet and wild day, the family, official party, serving members and veterans gathered under cover and at the appointed time were asked to take their seats in the chapel, the sound of a military band with muffled drums could be heard firstly in the background then closer, it was raining however the entire compliment of what was a formal military funeral did not appear to notice, the guard of honour, the bearer party marching beside the gun carriage, the official party, including the Minister for Defence, the Chief of Army, the chaplain, each and every one soaking wet, cold and showing no sign of any discomfort or emotion other than the respect they were paying to a fallen warrior and comrade.

As the service ended and Private Fisher was committed again to the earth the sun broke through the cloud, the last Australian soldier of the Vietnam War was home.

The professionalism of the serving members could be expected, the presentation, demeanour and dignity shown by the veterans, mainly ex SAS and many that served with Private Fisher was an example of the feeling with which Australian service men and women have for each other and in particular for those that have died in combat, they did themselves proud and any feeling of guilt for not recovering him at the time can, and should, now be put to rest, he is home, has been laid to rest with dignity and respect.



May he now Rest in Peace.

## VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC. NATIONAL MERCHANDISE



**PO BOX 1097**

**GLENORCHY TAS 7010**

Ph: 03 6273 6982 Fax: 03 6273 7240

Email: rkcoxon@netspace3.net.au

Web site [www.vvaa.org.au](http://www.vvaa.org.au)

(Allow \$8 postage & handling)



History of the Rising Sun \$89.95  
Comes in a timber presentation box is 240mm  
high x 180mm wide x 30mm deep



### MENS WATCHES

Vietnam Memorial Dual Time Sports Watch \$135.00	Vietnam Memorial Gold Dress Watch \$70.00
--	---

Watches come with a two year warranty.



Above. Belt  
Buckle. 4 Ribbon over Map of Australia on a  
dark background with nickel edge.

**NEW  
ITEMS**



Above. 4 Ribbon Stubbie Holder \$7 each



Above. Four Ribbon Necklaces \$10 each



Right. 4 Ribbon Belt Buckle \$30each



Above.  
Long Tan Commemorative Badges  
1. Long Tan 40th Anniversary Badge  
2. Vietnam Helicopter Badge  
3. The Gunner Badge  
4. The Tracker Dog Badge

All \$5 each



Above. Plastic Pocket Medal Holder \$7



Above. Bullet Pen \$15 each.



Above. Four Ribbon Lanyard \$5each.

Below. 4 Ribbon Bar Runner  
\$30 each



Above.. 4 Ribbon Number Plate Surround \$20





Vietnam Veteran  
Supporter Black  
or Navy



I Love My Viet Vet



Navy Cap with ribbons



4 Ribbon Black



Green & Tan 4 Ribbon

All Caps \$16 each



4 Ribbon Beanie \$16 each  
Available in Black or Navy.



Four Ribbon Polo Shirt \$35 each  
Navy Blue with white trim. Size: S to 4XL



Four Ribbon Polo Shirt \$35 each  
Green with gold trim. Size: S to 4XL



Above. Vietnam Veterans Supporters Polar  
Fleece Jumper . Navy Blue.  
Size S to 5XL \$45.each



Above.. Vietnam Veteran Supporter Vest  
Black \$40 each. Size S to 3XL & 5XL



Above. Vietnam Veteran Supporter Vest  
Navy/Gold \$40 each.  
Size S to 3XL & 5XL



Above. Vietnam Veteran 4 ribbon Polo  
Fleece Jumper Black \$45each  
Sizes S to 5XL



Above. Vietnam Veteran 4 Ribbon Vest  
Black Reversible \$40each  
Sizes S to 3XL & 5XL



Above. Vietnam Veteran 4 Ribbon  
bonded Vest. Navy Blue. \$40 each  
Sizes M to 4XL (Not reversible)



## STICKERS



ST012 Flag Sticker 26cm x 6cm

\$5 each



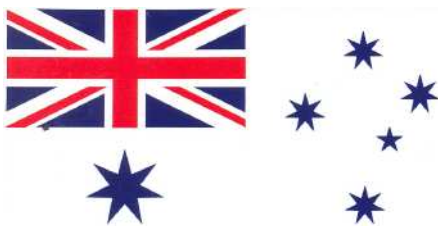
Support our Troops. 15cm x 7cm.

\$5 each



ST020 RAR

\$5 each

Left. ST023 Mini 4 Ribbon Sticker  
155mm x 25mm \$4 eachRight.. ST024  
White Ensign  
Stickers  
130mm x 65mm  
\$5eachRight. ST007 Premises Protected by a Viet Vet \$5 each  
7 1/2 inches x 5 inches.

Above. ST017 4 Ribbon Oval Sticker 185mm x 135mm \$5 each



ST016 Vietnam Veteran \$5 each.

Left. ST021  
Aust/Vietnam flags.  
8.5cm x 8.5cm.Above.  
Honour the Dead ...but  
fight like hell for the  
living. \$5.00

Above. ST015. RAAF \$5 each

Right. ARMY  
15cm x 6cm. \$5 each.

4 Ribbon Sticker Lg. 29cm x 5cm.

\$5.50 each



## CLOTH PATCHES



Above. RAR Colour Cloth Patches. \$10 each.

Above. RAR Cloth Badge with 1 to 9 RAR underneath. \$6.50 each.



Above.  
My Husband Served in  
Vietnam. \$6.50 each



Left. . 5 RAR (Tiger) Cloth Patch \$6.50 each.



Slouch Hat  
Cloth Patch  
\$6.50



Rising Sun  
Cloth Patch  
\$7.50



Left.  
VVAA Hat Bad  
\$7 each



Above.  
VVAA Pocket Patch  
\$9 each



Left..  
Vet with Australian Flag.  
\$6.50 each



Above.  
Viet Cong Hunting Club.  
\$6.50 each.



Above.  
Australian Vietnam Forces.  
\$6.50 each.



Above.  
AVF with Kangaroo.  
\$6.50 each.



Republic of Vietnam Service.  
\$6.50 each.



## National Vietnam Veterans Museum

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum while faithfully telling the story of Australia's longest war, currently satisfies three main requirements:

1. It provides a resource and learning centre for future generations;
2. It is a place of healing and a spiritual home for all Vietnam veterans: and
3. It is developing into a successful business, capable of being self sustaining to ensure that the Museum can live on.

The Museum has great historical and cultural significance for Australians of all ages. Entertaining and educational, whilst making no political comment, just showing it how it was.

Located next to the airstrip on Phillip Island, the Museum is just 90 minutes from Melbourne's CBD. Open between 10.00am and 5.00pm everyday except Christmas Day and Good Friday, the Museum is increasing in popularity and this year will have a throughput of 30,000 visitors.

The number of excursion visits from schools has increased significantly over the past year and it is encouraging to note that each school that has visited, has followed up the following year with the new class. When the schools book in, they are provided with an Excursion Guide which provides direction for the students and Museum provides a veteran to direct them during their tour.

Our Research Library and Archive holds much information useful to students and historical scholars, offering on-line facilities for research relating to the Vietnam conflict and listings of personnel, enabling visitors to track family involvement in the armed forces at that time.

Generally visitors are directed first to the 'light and sound' show. The Shirley Spectra holographic production is an evocative and very moving experience, highlighting people, places and actions that contributed to Australia's involvement in our country's longest war. This sets the scene to have the other exhibits brought into perspective.

The Museum is still in 'construction mode' as a new hanger will be erected immediately behind the existing one. This will house the restoration of the Canberra Bomber back to 'engines running'. Visitors will be able to observe the work in progress for the estimated 4 years of the project. One engine has been completed and is on display in the Museum. We hope to have the hanger up by next March.

Clearly funds are tight and we still have the Buy-A-Brick program running. You can see our website for details at [www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org](http://www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org)

The Garden of Reflection houses the replica Long Tan Cross and now that the spring growth is taking effect, it looks more like a garden than it did when officially opened in May this year. It is a very popular and appropriate addition to the Museum.

This Museum is the result of much effort by the Veterans themselves, relying almost wholly on volunteer labour for the construction, fitting and dressing of the building. The staff consists of volunteers who are themselves Veterans or people connected in some way to the Veteran Community.

We have put on our first full time staff member in May. Simon Waters is the Administration Manager and his appointment has significantly eased the load on the volunteers.

The appointment of our first permanent part-time person to run the kitchen has also eased the load on the wives of members. Wendy Hartley has made real impact on the Nui Dat Cafe and we serve light meals and the best coffee on the Island.

### Awards and Grants

During the current year, the Museum has made an effort to be acknowledged in the Management and Business Community in order to build up our credibility when applying for future Grants or other requests to Government bodies. This seems to be working as the National Library of Australia announced on 11th November that we were successful in being offered a 2008 Community Heritage Grant. This Grant allows us to have a Significant Assessment conducted on our collection which is a great start to determining priorities for specific preservation.

This Grant included a 3-day intensive preservation and collection management training in Canberra 11 – 13th November. John Methven attended this Course.

Awards this year have included:

- Bass Coast Shire Community Event 2008 - for the Museum Official Opening
- Bass Coast Shire Business Awards – Winner 2008 Community Business Award



- Museum Australia – Victoria – 2008 Best Museum Management for a volunteer-run Museum
- Victorian State Finalist – 2008 Small Business Champion Awards
- Rural Achievement and Community Awards – Semi-Finalist 2008 Australia Post Business Achievement Award
- National Library of Australia 2008 Community Heritage Grant

### The Museum Company

A registered company has been formed and is in the final throes of completion to enable a Board of Trustees to manage the operations of the Museum. Duties and obligations of Trustees are being documented and the interim Board of Trustees has had preliminary meetings in an effort to finalise the situation.

What this will mean is that the VVAA will no longer be responsible for the day to day running of the Museum. The Museum will be truly stand alone and will be even more clearly a Museum for all Vietnam veterans. We at the core have never doubted this but there are some 'outsiders' who have had their doubts.

### Exhibits

The Museum exhibits are under constant change and refinement and almost always for the better. There a number of people doing a lot of good things – however there are many more things that could be done with a few more specialists.

John Methven as Curator oversees the layout and displays – some of which are put together by the assistant Curator / Librarian, Margaret Gallagher and her team. They have been producing some great things and the recording and cataloguing of the collection is going ahead at a good pace.

Models Curator, John Loughman has continued to add enormous value to the exhibits. He has completed a diorama around a mine incident with APC's. (Amazingly two of our members were involved in that very incident: Graeme Smith and Colin James.)

The model APC 'HMAPC FLINT' that was involved in Mine Clearing under 1 Field Squadron RAE, is another welcome addition. This will become a part of a mechanical mine clearing diorama which is currently under construction. It will include the Centurion Tank mine clearer.

Also on Armour – The Curator for Armour, Col Filt-ness has done an outstanding transformation with our Centurion Tank. He has been supported by many ex-tankies in getting equipment together and then by Graeme Smith and Col James in bringing the tank 'to life'.

The Armoury presentation has been rearranged and expanded. John Methven and Graeme Smith have been busy with that.

### Volunteers

We are aware that circumstances change and this means that some people have to move on, and for others it means that they may be freed up – have more time on their hands. If you fall into the latter category then we would love to hear from you. Even a regular / reliable one day per fortnight or month helps us.

We still need a range of areas of expertise. For a start, we can do with assistance with web sites, programming of slide shows, conversion of slides to CD's, book keeping, data entry (cataloguing of inventory), general handy men, kitchen assistance and cleaning support.

We do need additional people to help on the front desk. Our computer and system is now almost user friendly – so don't be put off by that. We need too people to act as Museum Guides. The Guides however must be able to work on the front desk if we are caught short staffed. We have an urgent need for carpet layers. We need to carpet the mezzanine before Christmas. We have the carpet and now need it to be laid correctly.

Finally, if anyone has a marketing / PR background and some time on their hands (or just wants to help,) we can provide a great opportunity to make a difference and to see results for their efforts. Please contact Gary Parker on (03) 5956 6400, or by email [president@vietnamvetsmuseum.org](mailto:president@vietnamvetsmuseum.org)

### **The Orphan**

(Dedicated to the unknown soldiers of all countries from all wars)

Mud and blood in trenches torn a diggers died no  
one would mourn

Smoke to haze the killing run Australia lost  
another son

A landscape wrecker beyond despair no tree could  
grow no one could care

Although he lived but eighteen years no one was  
there to shed the tears

For he was born an orphan boy no one to care this  
life destroyed

They left him there in grave unknown a simple  
cross no grand headstone

With valor he knew not before he gave his life  
for evermore

He served and died without regret he gave his life  
lest we forget.

Copyright © Peter Edmonds, July 2003



## **NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE VVCS - VETERANS AND VETERANS FAMILIES COUNSELLING SERVICE**

### **Some Facts about the National Advisory Committee**

On 21 July 1981 the Minister for Veterans Affairs Senator Tony Messner announced the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS). The Minister decided that the VVCS was to be monitored by a National Advisory Committee (NAC) reporting to him.

The NAC was established under the chairmanship of Major General Allan Morrison, the Services member of the Repatriation Commission, and conducted its first meeting on 21 September 1981.

The committee comprised the Chief Director, Medical Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, the VVCS National Manager, a Consultant Psychiatrist with Vietnam experience and Ex-Service Organisation representatives from the Returned and Services League of Australia and the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

In the early days the Role of the NAC was to advise the Minister on the establishment and operation of the Counselling service and offer other advice on staff appointments, selection of sites for centre's and other relevant matters".

In August 1984 the NAC was restructured following the release of the *Waterhouse report* that recommended a restructuring of the NAC to ensure the independent accountability of the VVCS to the Minister, under a new Chairman, Mr. Les Harvey.

Since its inception the VVCS operated under the Health Division (now Service Delivery) with a degree of autonomy and separation from the mainstream Department of Veterans Affairs, in separate accommodation, demonstrating independence in line with the expectations of the Veteran community, although in some regional areas the VVCS is collocated with VAN Offices. The NAC has monitored and preserved this degree of independence.

With the advancement and establishment of new treatment regimes and service providers the NAC since 2000 includes ex-officio members from allied mental health researchers from the Australia Centre for Post-traumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) and the Defence Community Organisation (DCO), a provider of services to ADF families,.

The Services Commissioner and the National Manager VVCS are ex-officio members of the NAC providing updates/advice and a valuable link to Repatriation Commission and the VVCS.

In the main ex-officio members provide specialist advice, the latest research and updates to ensure the NAC can make informed decisions.

In recognition of the changing VVCS client group, a Veterans partner member joined the NAC in the year 2000, a Younger Veteran Peacekeeper/ Peacemaker in 2004 and Veterans Daughter/Son member and a General Practitioner in 2007.

From time to time the Minister receives requests from organisations for direct NAC membership. However it is Ministerial policy that appointments to the committee are made on a personal basis only, while committee members may be members of interested organisations they do not serve on the committee as representatives of those organisations.

A stakeholder consultation mechanism was introduced in 2003 as a way of gathering feedback from individuals, client groups and organisations representative of various categories comprising the ex-service community including serving members of the Australian Defence Force

All organisations have the opportunity to raise policy issues directly with the Minister or air them during the NAC consultative forums.

The NAC remains impartial and one of its principle aims is to act in the best interests of the wider ex service community and all information received by the committee regardless of source will be reviewed on this basis.

The stakeholder consultation process enables the committee to provide the Minister and VVCS Management with consultation based advice arrived at after discussion / deliberations in relation to this information and utilising the NAC members experience, professional training and qualifications.

In April 2007 in recognition of the changing client group and family focus the name of the service was changed to VVCS - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service.

The membership of the NAC is now truly reflective of the VVCS client group and the partnerships developed with many allied mental health professional researchers, medical Officers and those providing services to serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

The NAC remains proactive and continues to consult nationwide to deliver independent and distinctive advice to the Minister on the needs of the veteran community and ways in which these can be addressed through the VVCS.

The NAC has a work plan and conducts workshops and reviews on a needs basis to deal with special requests from the Minister and VVCS Management.

Further details about the NAC, its Terms of Reference and the current membership can be found at <http://www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs/nac/index.htm>

*(This document was endorsed by the National advisory Committee at a meeting in Canberra on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2008 for distribution to the ex-service community and posted on the NAC webpage)*

## Dose Administration Aids

Almost everyone has those moments when you wonder 'where did I leave the keys?' Many factors can cause you to forget small things – busyness, loneliness, illness or ageing are just a few. Not a great problem if you are looking for a parking space but potentially dangerous if you forget when or how to take your medicine.

Dose Administration Aids (DAAs) are a convenient way to make sure you take your tablets at the right time and in the right amount. Each DAA is a pillbox or blister pack that separates tablets according to day of the week or time of the day.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) recognises the importance of taking medicine correctly. To help you improve your own medicine use, DVA has produced a Veterans' MATES module on DAAs. This explains the benefits of using a DAA to manage your medicines. DVA has also introduced a DAA Service, where the pharmacist will pack DAAs free of charge for eligible veterans.

Use this quick checklist to see if you might benefit from using a DAA:

I take more than 4 solid oral medicines a day;

I am confused about why I have different medicines and how to take them;

I sometimes forget if I have taken my medicines; or

I have a chronic illness or medical condition;

If you agreed with any of these statements, you may benefit from using a DAA.

For more information about DAAs in general, refer to the Veterans' MATES module number 16 at [www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/veteransmates).

For more information about the DVA DAA Service, refer to [www.dva.gov.au/health/daa](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/daa) or speak to your pharmacist or GP.

A co-payment still applies for medicines used in the DVA DAA Service

## CENTRAL QUEENSLAND COAST VIET VETS

Merry Christmas to all Veterans and their families across Australia.

The Central Queensland Vietnam Veterans Association will be dining out for Christmas at Wilbys Restaurant, part of the TAFE catering school. In the past it has been a great night out and I'd say this year will be the same.

Throughout the year our BBQ / Meetings have been held at the Kershaw Gardens Vietnam Memorial <http://kershawgardens.tripod.com/kgvm.html> and will recommence next year 2009 in February.

During Long Tan week this year CQVVAA planted another tree at Kershaw Gardens Vietnam Memorial in Remembrance of twenty seven year old commando Lance Corporal Jason Marks who was killed in action in Afghanistan. Jason was a local Yeppoon man and he leaves behind a wife and two children.

Members are kept informed by Phil Aplin (ex 1RAR) our Secretary and the state of the books is well looked after by Pauline, Phil's wife.

Members and Veterans in general need to know that within our community we can use the resources of Robert Stanton an Exercise Physiologist. DVA Approved consultations with a normal referral from your GP. Veterans don't need to be a member of a Gym, but this would help too.

In mid August our Association hosted Don Tate and wife Carole with his book "The War Within" launch, it was a good night and attended by a cross section of ex military and civilians.

A miss understanding of one of the DVA Fact Sheets could lead Veterans who have Superannuation into believing that nothing changes until 65 years old. This is not correct. The fact sheet clearly states that *Current pension ages for superannuation assessment purposes are: 60 years for a male veteran or male income support supplement recipient (source <http://www.dva.gov.au/pensions/yandyp/ch4.htm#financialandnonfinancialassets>)* so don't be misled.

Recently the State VVAA put up a new website giving other Associations the opportunity to send in Club details and a head photos of Exec Members. This is a great means of letting other Associations know who is or has been doing the hard yards keeping the Members informed.

*Remember the penalties of Drink Driving, but enjoy Christmas and New Year and hopefully we will see you all next year*  
Cheers Nick Quigley OAM—President CQVVAA  
<http://cqvvaa.tripod.com>

**Veteran's Children Education Scheme  
(VCES),  
Military Rehabilitation and Compensation  
Act Education and Training Scheme  
It is up to you to apply!**

All those in receipt of a Special Rate pension (T&PI), War Widows pension and Extreme Disablement Adjustment pension (EDA) who have children **under the age of 25**, who are attending school, TAFE or University are eligible for assistance from the VCES regardless of their income, assets or children's income. Veteran grandparents with custody or grandchildren students who are eligible should also make application for assistance under VCES.

We are aware that a lot of new TPI's / War Widows / EDA's may not be aware of these Education Schemes. You are reminded that the DVA have no details on family members for many that have been granted pensions since 1982. There are several important financial benefits that the VCES has over AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY.

VCES eligibility (from 1/1/2001) was extended to the children or former children of **veterans with Vietnam service**, where the child is diagnosed by an appropriately qualified professional as having a depressive disorder, or in the opinion of an appropriately qualified professional, is vulnerable.

The VCES provides support and counselling for parent and student as well as financial assistance for education and tutorial assistance if required.

**Education allowance Payable from 1 January 2008 are;**

**Primary Students:**

The annual education allowance for primary students is \$214.10

**Secondary / Tertiary Students (fortnightly rates in \$)**

<b><u>Students</u></b>	<b><u>At Home</u></b>	<b><u>Living away From home</u></b>	<b><u>Homeless</u></b>
Under 16 years	44.00	332.56	355.40
16 – 17 years	194.50	355.40	355.40
18 yrs & over	233.90	355.40	355.40

**Double Orphans Secondary / Tertiary  
(fortnightly rates in \$)**

Under 16	16 – 20 years	21 years and over
\$197.50	\$355.40	\$431.70

Note: Secondary/Tertiary Double Orphans (fortnightly rates, applies VVCS students only)

**If you would like more information, phone the DVA National Line on 1300 131 945 and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA VAN Office.**

**Veterans Children Education Scheme Eligibility  
Did you know?**

**A Vietnam Veteran's dependents may be eligible for the Veterans Children Education Scheme (VCES), even if the Veteran is not receiving a disability pension at the Special Rate (TPI). A dependent is a student aged under 25 who is in the Veterans care. This includes grandchildren, step-children and foster children who are in the care of the Veteran.**

The 1999-2000 Health Study of Australia's Vietnam veteran community found that the children of Vietnam veterans suffered from a rate of educational disadvantage that was higher than the Australian community standard. In the 2000 Budget, the Government announced a range of initiatives in response to this and other findings from the study.

One of these initiatives was the extension of VCES eligibility to Vietnam veterans' children who are diagnosed with a depressive disorder or who are regarded as vulnerable. With access to the VCES, and the support available through the guidance and counselling it provides, it was hoped to encourage these children to achieve their full educational potential.

A student child of a Vietnam veteran may be eligible to receive an Education Allowance, under ss.116(1)(e) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act*, if they are determined to have a diagnosed depressive disorder or, if an appropriately qualified professional has determined that they are vulnerable.

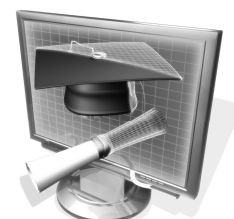
This involves is having the child assessed by either the local family doctor, the VVCS or another appropriately qualified professional. The assessment is a one question form, asking whether the student meets the criteria.

Once eligibility is confirmed, the student is eligible for the Education Allowance until he or she finishes full-time study which includes tertiary study.

VCES eligibility entails other benefits, such as funding for tutoring if needed.

**If you would like more information, phone the DVA National Line on 1300 131 945 and ask for the VCES State Secretary or contact your local DVA VAN Office.**

VCESRATESinterstateversionJan08.doc updated 9/11/2008



## JUST FOR LAUGHS

### LOVE DRUNK PEOPLE

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 am by a loud pounding on the door.

The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

'Not a chance,' says the husband, 'it is 3:00 in the morning!' He slams the door and returns to bed.

'Who was that?' asked his wife.

'Just some drunk guy asking for a push,' he answers. 'Did you help him?' she asks.

'No, I did not, it is 3:00 in the morning and it is pouring rain out there!'

'Well, you have a short memory,' says his wife. 'Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke-down, and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself!'

The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the pounding rain.

He calls out into the dark, 'Hello, are you still there?'

'Yes,' comes back the answer.

'Do you still need a push?' calls out the husband.

'Yes, please!' comes the reply from the dark.

'Where are you?' asks the husband.

'Over here on the swing,' replied the drunk.

### PENSION

A retired gentleman went to the Centrelink Office to apply for the Age Pension.

The woman behind the counter asked him for his driver's license to verify his age.

He looked in his pockets and realized he had left his wallet at home.

He told the woman, "I am sorry, looks like I have left my wallet at home. I might have to come back later."

The woman said: "Don't worry, Sir, let me see what I can do. Just unbutton your shirt, please."

So he opened his shirt revealing a mass of curly silver hair.

She said: "That silver hair on your chest is proof

enough for me", and she processed his Age Pension application.

When he returned home, the man excitedly told his wife about his experience at the Centrelink office.

She said: "You should have dropped your pants. You might have got the Disability Pension, too."

### THE DUCK AND THE LAWYER

A big city lawyer went duck hunting in rural North Cowra. He shot and dropped a bird, but it fell into a farmer's field on the other side of a fence.

As the lawyer climbed over the fence, an elderly farmer drove up on his tractor and asked him what he was doing.

The litigator responded, *"I shot a duck and it fell in this field, and now I'm going to retrieve it."*

The old farmer Peter replied, *"This is my property, and you are not coming over here."*

The indignant lawyer said, *"I am one of the best trial lawyers in Australia and, if you don't let me get that duck, I'll sue you and take everything you own."*

The old farmer smiled and said, *"Apparently, you don't know how we settle disputes in North Cowra. We settle small disagreements like this with the 'Three Kick Rule.'"*

The lawyer asked, *"What is the 'Three Kick Rule'?"*

The Farmer replied, *"Well, because the dispute occurs on my land, I get to go first. I kick you three times and then you kick me three times and so on back and forth until someone gives up."*

The lawyer quickly thought about the proposed contest and decided that he could easily take the old codger. He agreed to abide by the local custom.

The old farmer slowly climbed down from the tractor and walked up to the attorney. His first kick planted the toe of his heavy steel toed work boot into the lawyer's groin and dropped him to his knees!

His second kick to the midriff sent the lawyer's last meal gushing from his mouth. The lawyer was on all fours when the farmer's third kick to his rear end, sent him face-first into a fresh cow pie.

Summoning every bit of his will and remaining strength the lawyer very slowly managed to get to his feet. Wiping his face with the arm of his jacket, he said, *"Okay, you old fart. Now it's my turn."*

The old farmer smiled and said, *"Nah, I give up. You can have the duck."*



## BULLETIN BOARD

### Reunion

A reunion is planned for all who served on HMAS DUCHESS from Friday 8th to Sunday 10th May 2009 in Hobart. Please email expression of interest to:

Mark Triffett - [triff88@hotmail.com.au](mailto:triff88@hotmail.com.au)

Or Graham Halton - [forcetth@bigpond.com](mailto:forcetth@bigpond.com)

Have started culling books. Do you know if any one would collect Duty First Magazines.? It would be appreciated if you send this around the traps.

I have

June 1995 Vol. No. 8

Nov. 1955 Vol 2. No. 1

March 1996 Vol. 2 No. 2

Oct. 1996 Vol.2 No. 3

Vol. 2 No. 4

1997 Vol. 2 No. 5

1998 Vol. 2 No. 6

Vol. 2 No. 7

Vol. 2 No. 8

1999 Vol. 3 No. 1

2000 Vol. 3 No. 2

2000 Vol. 3 No. 3

2001 Vol. 3 No. 4

2001 Vol. 3 No. 5

2002 Vol. 3 No. 6

2002 Vol. 3 No. 7

2003 Vol. 3 No. 8

2004 Vol. 4 No. 1

I really don't want to chuck them - will post them for the cost of the postage - total weight approx. 5 kgs. Or has anyone any ideas what to do with them.

Contact Bev: Email [bev.davehaines@bigpond.com](mailto:bev.davehaines@bigpond.com)

### LONG TAN Powerpoint Presentation

Long Tan veteran, Dave Sabben, has produced a 50-slide animated Powerpoint presentation on the battle at Long Tan. It can be downloaded free from the net, and Dave would like it sent as far and as wide as possible.

The contents are suitable for school teachers & students as well as Viet Vets and others who are just interested. Not to forget serving members of all forces, including those overseas and in Allied forces.

It's a PC version only (a Mac version may follow, if funded), and runs on Powerpoint version 2003 and later. (Don't try to run it on earlier Powerpoint versions - eg, 97 - it uses features not available before the 03 version.)

It's large - about 5.6Mb - but it's paced to the viewer. May be an hour or more of viewing/study.

The website is: <http://www.dave-sabben.com/>

Click on

[Download LONG TAN PowerPoint presentation](#)

## Special Vietnam Veterans Concerts & Workshops.

**ATTENTION, All V. V. Grey Nomads touring through W.A. in January 2009.**

A Vietnam Veterans Concert will be held at Harvey Dickson's Country Music Centre, at Boyup Brook [South of Perth], from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2009.

**Featured will be John Schumann, EmKae, James Blundell and Adam Brand, other artists still to be confirmed.**

Situated 5km out of Boyup Brook on the Boyup Brook-Arthur River Road.

Camping at 3 bush sites on the property, for Caravans and Tents etc, is available at \$8.00 per night, free country air, wildlife, birds and kangaroos.

**Licensed Bar**

**Hot Food**

**Drinks**

It is sure to be a good weekend, with proceeds going to, MIVAC, Mines Victims and Clearance Trust.

Check online, [www.harveydickson.com.au](http://www.harveydickson.com.au)

Harvey Dickson@westnet.com.au

Phone/fax: 08 9765 1125

Mob: 0429 651 125

An ALL CREWS Reunion for all who served on HMAS VENDETTA will be held in Brisbane From 24th to 26th April 2009

For further information contact:

Bill Krause Phone: 07.3288.1702

Mob: 0417 700 531 Email: [mkrause@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mkrause@bigpond.net.au)

### WRANS—RAN Women Reunion 2009

The WRANS Sub branch of the Naval Association SA will be hosting a Reunion for all WRANS and RAN Women (retired and currently serving) on 23rd to 26th April 2009.

For full details, go to [www.navalassoc.org.au](http://www.navalassoc.org.au) and go to "Reunions/Special Events."

Catch up and reunite with past friends, make new ones and enjoy reliving our "glory days"

Phone: Helga 08 8289 0321 or Mattie 08 8242 2850

### Helping a mate—Raffle

As you may have heard, one of our blokes came to grief in America. He is not only a biker but a Vietnam Veteran and we are raffling a custom built Harley as a fundraiser for him.

We have full details on our website [www.qldvvmc.com](http://www.qldvvmc.com) Also see vision posted on YouTube <http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=KvePlyhs9V8>

## VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

The staff at VVCS are professionally qualified and experienced social workers or psychologists.

### Who can use the V V C S?

The following people can use V V C S:

- Australian veterans of all conflicts and peace operations
- partners, and dependent children (under 26 years of age) of veterans with issues arising from the veteran's service and war widows/widowers
- ex-partners, within five years of separation
- all sons and daughters of Vietnam veterans, regardless of age, with psychological, emotional and social needs arising from the impact of their parent's operational or warlike service.
- ex-service personnel with a mental health condition as a DVA-accepted disability, *and*

current serving members of the ADF who have been formally referred by the ADF under the Strategic Alliance (Memorandum Of Understanding) Fee for Service Arrangement.

### What services V V C S provides

V V C S provides:

- individual, couple and family counselling
- after-hours telephone crisis counselling (Veterans Line)
- group programs including lifestyle management programs
- referral to other services
- information and education.

In a friendly and safe setting, counsellors help people address problems in their lives with the aim of finding effective solutions for an improved health and wellbeing. V V C S counsellors are available to help, whether or not the problems are obviously war-related.

### Group Programs

Group programs provide a variety of educative and therapeutic groups to enhance the quality of life for veterans and their families.

V V C S groups have been positively received by both veterans and their families. Groups may be provided to address a range of issues and are goal-directed and time-limited.

Group programs cover areas such as:

- Health and wellbeing (stress and anger management, alcohol management, assertiveness and self-esteem skills)
- Relationships
- Lifestyles
- transitioning from the Defence force into a civilian life, and many more

## Puckapunyal Army Tank Museum

Established to celebrate the achievements of the Australian Light Horse and the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, the museum features Australia's largest display of vintage tanks. It has over 70 armoured fighting vehicles, the Small-Arms and Anti-Tank Weapons display, the Australian Light Horse exhibit (1880s-1945), the Australian Armour During World War II and Vietnam display, and the Weapons Against Armour Lethality exhibit.

The museum has car and coach parking, a barbecue area, a gift shop with a large selection of military models and souvenirs, group rates and wheelchair access. It is located in Heraklion St and the route is clearly sign-posted all the way from the Hume Freeway near Seymour. It is open from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. daily (closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day), Phone: (03) 5793 7285.

### Help needed.

Came from Woomera (SA), and served in Vietnam? Two ex-Woomerites, Frank Corcoran and Barry West (Both ex-104 Bty) are seeking information from all Vietnam Vets who went to school in Woomera, with the view to producing an Honour Board or something similar for presentation to the Woomera Area School. We have already contacted the current Principal of the Woomera School, and he is supportive of the idea.

The names we have so far are:

4719405 J.F.Corcoran. 12 Fd Regt, 22/10/68 - 11/05/69  
 044201 J.J.Harrison. 37 Sqn/35 Sqn, 02/02/66 - 08/10/66  
 44232 P.I.Henderson. 1ARU/4RAR, 27/08/68 - 30/05/69  
 45437 P.J.Lucas. 1ARU/4RAR, 26/08/71 - 17/12/71  
 44930 R.W.Moika. 7RAR, 16/02/70 - 04/03/71  
 43739 R.G.Radford. 110 Sig Sqn, 10/12/68 - 12/11/69  
 44753 D.K.Renton. 110 Sig Sqn, 04/06/70 - 24/09/70  
 43808 A.V.Surman. 1 Armd Sqn/106 Fd W'shop, 03/09/68 - 10/09/69  
 1411308 R.E.Wallis. 2SAS Sqn/3SAS Sqn, 22/11/68 - 03/09/69  
 4410756 E.R.Weatherall MID. 1RAR, 27/05/65 - 09/07/65; 8RAR, 19/11/69 - 12/11/70  
 4718962 B.G.West. 4 Fd Regt/12 Fd Regt, 20/11/67 - 15/10/68

Frank or Barry would welcome any of the above vets (or anybody who knows of their contact details) to contact them, and if anybody knows of other Woomera vets they believe we have missed from the list, we'd be grateful for that information too.

Contact Frank Corcoran

Tel: (03) 9598 3474 Mob: 0400 113 929

E-mail: [corcorf@bigpond.net.au](mailto:corcorf@bigpond.net.au)

or

Barry West

Tel: (02) 6258 2009 Mob: 0412 448 332

E-mail: [bandswest@netspeed.com.au](mailto:bandswest@netspeed.com.au)

## PROSTATE CANCER

Vietnam Veterans are within the age group that makes us particularly susceptible to Prostate Cancer. Many of us know of someone who has had Prostate Cancer, or perhaps has died as a result of the disease. Prostate Cancer is a taboo subject for many veterans, but we must at least try to put information in front of our members - by doing so we will be providing practical welfare support to our members.

Those of us who saw the sad spectacle of Ted Whitten, stricken with Prostate Cancer, doing a final lap of the MCG a few days before his death will never forget it, and we would not want that to happen to any of our mates if we could help it.

### PROSTATE CANCER FACTS

Prostate Cancer is the most common cancer in Australian men excluding non-melanoma skin cancers.

- There are more Prostate Cancer deaths than breast cancer deaths in Australia.
- In 2005 more than 2900 Australian men tragically died from Prostate Cancer.
- In 2006 it is estimated that 18700 new cases of Prostate Cancer were diagnosed in Australia.
- Australian men have a 1 in 5 risk of Prostate Cancer by the age of 85 years.
- Regional and rural Australian men have a 21% higher mortality than men in capital cities.
- Certain risk factors have been consistently associated with Prostate Cancer:
- Age: Risk increases with age for men from 50 years onwards.
- Family History: Men whose father or brother has or had Prostate Cancer are at greater risk.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Speak with your GP about Prostate Cancer - this is your first step in your own health promotion. Remember that often there are no symptoms in the early stages of the disease.

Ask your GP to conduct a PSA test (a blood test) and a digital examination. A combination of a PSA test and digital examination should be included as a part of your general male health check from 50 years of age onwards or from 40 years of age if there is a family history of Prostate Cancer.

Talk to your partner and your mates about Prostate Cancer, encourage each other to take Prostate Cancer seriously.

### MORE INFORMATION

There are 84 Prostate Cancer support groups in Australia.

Information is available at [www.prostate.org.au](http://www.prostate.org.au) or 1800 22 00 99.

## Vietnam Veterans Family Study

### Have you registered?

Have you registered your family with the *Department of Veterans Affairs* for this very important study? To date only a small number of people have registered. This means that it will not be possible to draw much in the way of conclusions regarding sons and daughters health or quality of life issues.

*All information provided is confidential.*

Register your interest by:

Phone: 1800 502 302 or,

Website: <http://www.dva.gov.au/health/research/fsp/vv/>

or Email: [healthstudy@dva.gov.au](mailto:healthstudy@dva.gov.au) or,

Mail:

Family Study Program,  
Department of Veterans Affairs,  
PO Box 21 ,  
WODEN ACT 2606



## ANZACS

By June Courtney

The thought of war abhors us all,  
Yet we honour those who fought  
They gave their lives without dissent,  
No accolades were sought

These wounded men with shattered souls,  
In bloodied fields they lay  
Some merely boys who did not,  
Live to see another day  
So much pain and suffering,  
The loss, the lasting grief

Was it worth the giving, Of a life so very brief?  
At Gallipoli they made their stand,  
And met the Turkish foe  
Two brave armies face to face,  
For fear they did not know

These parents sons, these husbands,  
These children's fathers who  
Return with bodies broken,  
And lives of families shattered too

The spirit of the Anzacs, Still lives on today  
We bless them for their sacrifice,  
The price they had to pay  
There must be a peaceful way,  
Our differences to resolve

We pray that when it's found we'll see,  
A better world evolve  
So we honour our fighting men,  
And let our teardrops fall  
For those who came back and those who did not  
Heroes one and all.

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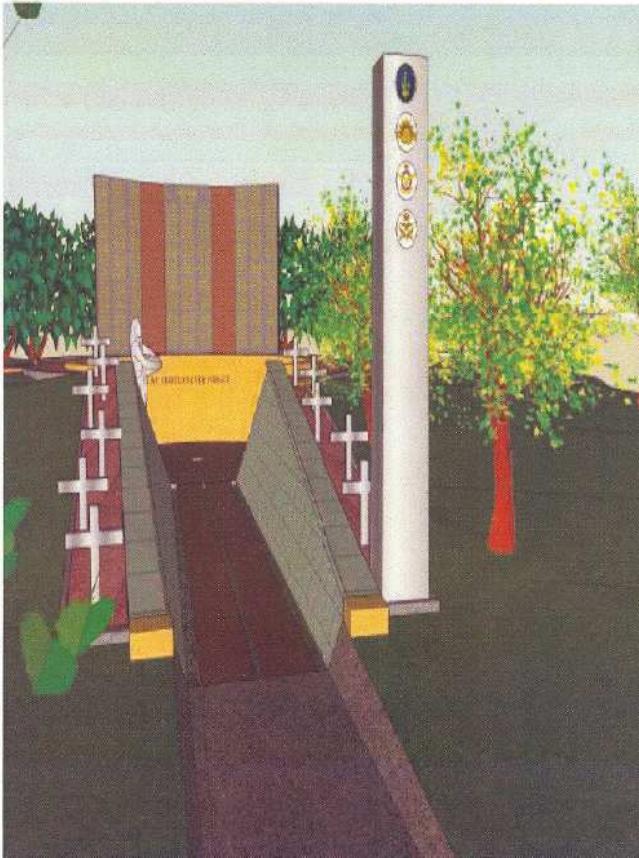
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All articles, poems, photos etc for the next  
 Debrief in July please send to:  
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 Or Editor Kath Coxon: [rkcoxon@netspace.net.au](mailto:rkcoxon@netspace.net.au)

**Any change of address is to be sent to  
 your Sub Branch NOT TO DEBRIEF**



Above. Muswellbrook Vietnam Memorial  
New England Highway Muswellbrook NSW.  
Contact Muswellbrook RSL P/F 02 6541 1002

Right...Officially opening of the meeting hall, Reg Hillier House which was opened by the nephew of Reg Hillier, Mr. Neil Bond.

*See NT State Report pg...4*



**Above.**

**Seeds of Attainment Memorial, Montague Farm.**

The memorial is positioned in the heart of Montague Farm Estate. Montague Farm Estate, has dedicated street names to all who paid the supreme sacrifice in the Vietnam War. Situated in Henderson Square, Montague Farm Estate For more info contact VVAA Northern Suburbs Sub Branch.



**Back To The Bush Veteran's Reunion**

*Vietnam Veterans Memorial Peace Window.*

**Blue Sky :**  
Represents Australia.

**Green Fields:**  
Her diverse peoples and cultures.

**White Cross:**  
Vietnam.

**White Dove with Eucalyptus sprig:**  
The Holy Spirit offering God's peace.

**Rising Sun:**  
Our Military Forces.

**Shadow:**  
Represents the lasting impression this Military Campaign has on the pages of Australian history.

**1st November 2008**

**St Peters Anglican Church**

**Australian Army Aviation  
and  
The Museum of Australian  
Army Flying**



The Museum of Australian Army Flying is situated 3 kilometres north of Oakey on the Darling Downs in Queensland. The location is adjacent to the civil airport terminal on the eastern side of the Australian Army Aviation Centre.

**MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN ARMY FLYING  
ARMY AIRFIELD**

**OAKEY QUEENSLAND 4401**

**Phone: 07 46917666**

**Fax: 07 4691 7675**

**E-mail: [AustArmy.FlyingMuseum@defence.gov.au](mailto:AustArmy.FlyingMuseum@defence.gov.au)**

**Web Page:**

**<http://www.army.gov.au/history/museums.htm>**



## EXHIBITION PARK IN CANBERRA

Flemington Road, Mitchell ACT 2911  
 PO Box 456 Dickson ACT 2602  
 Phone: 02 6241 3022 Fax: 02 6241 5394  
 Email: [info@epic.act.gov.au](mailto:info@epic.act.gov.au)  
 Website: [www.epic.act.gov.au](http://www.epic.act.gov.au)

## Murraguldrrie Veterans Retreat

**Murraguldrrie Veterans retreat is now open for Bush Camping.**



**Contact : Gordon Irvin on: 0428.381.292**



Above. Col Bill Hanlon Commandant ARTC Kapooka unveiling memorial at Murraguldrrie on Vietnam Veterans Day 2008.

Below right Stuart Innes (president) presenting Kay Hull MP (Federal member for the Riverina) with her Honorary membership  
 Below. John Mason



## Standown Park

91 Radtke Road, KIA ORA Old 4570  
 Phone: 07 5486 5144 Mob: 0417 718 127  
 Email: [info@standown.com.au](mailto:info@standown.com.au)  
 Web: [www.standown.com.au.com.au](http://www.standown.com.au.com.au)

Standown Park is the unique bush camping experience with new, modern facilities, where all campers, motor homers, caravaners and weary travelers are welcome to pull up a stump and meet your old friends or make new ones



## VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Tasmanian Branch Inc.

### MEMORIAL BUSH RETREAT DAGO POINT INTERLAKEN

Tariff.... \$30 per night for the first two people then \$5 extra per person per night after that.  
 For bookings please phone:  
 Robyn O'Connor (03) 6224 0881

# ALARIC Homestead

100 kms North West of Quilpie, Queensland

**Prior Bookings Essential**  
 (Except for Campers and Caravans)  
**Group Bookings welcome**

**A Rural Retreat For ALL Veterans**  
 at minimal cost to the Veteran.  
 Alaric is a Welfare Project of the  
 Riverina Queensland Branch  
 of the  
 Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

Visit for a day or a week or whatever.  
 Duration of your stay is your choice.

No formal activities, do as much or as little as you choose.  
 Opal Fossicking, Fishing, Yabbying, Reading, Rest, Bushwalking, TV - the choice is yours.  
 Bring your mates

Railbus transport to Quilpie. Duty transport available to Homestead and return ex Quilpie. (Train departures: Sunday and Thursday 7.15pm. Rail is free to eligible Veterans (TPs). Or Private Vehicle access.

Strictly NO Dogs or Firearms  
 Alaric is a working Camp Station

**Alaric Veterans Retreat** Ph: 07 4656 4740  
 PO Box 316 Quilpie Qld 4480