



THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

AUGUST 2021



Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Núi Lẻ, September 1971.

Read our story inside.



"And our ancestor was a Tracker Dog in Vietnam"

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO VETERAN
AND DEFENCE SUICIDES ANNOUNCED**



- Assistance Dogs
- DVA want to help families
- Government moves to end backlog
- Veterans stories **AND MORE**





ABN 35 490 214 100

Partners

Michael A Carbonaro BA LL B
Greg Isolani BA LL B

Level 5

488 Bourke Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
DX: 488 Melbourne
Ph: 03 8673 5888
Fax: 03 8673 5899
gregisolani@kcilawyers.com.au
www.kcilawyers.com.au

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



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

SERVICES

DVA - Military Compensation

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

Asbestos - Dust Disease Tribunal claims.

Industry super claims - income protection - TPD appeals,

Coroner's inquests

claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA

See our article elsewhere in this issue

Vale

Barry Bannerman

So much invaluable service to his fellow veterans

Our NSW Branch Head Office located in Granville has over the period of many years assisted thousands of veterans receive their just entitlements for compensation. Hundreds of Appeals are lodged each year against unfair claim rejections.

Barry Bannerman, a first intake National Serviceman was a vital cog in the Granville team which assisted to make this all possible.

Barry had been a volunteer member of this team for approximately twenty years and provided us with his experience as a banker to keep the books in order and to make sure we had the money available for Granville's vital work.

He had previously been responsible for managing our national membership records and had been an active member of the New South Wales Branch Committee. He was ultimately made a Life Member in recognition of his long term contribution to the affairs of our Association.

For many years Barry, along with Bob Gagan, a long- time friend and fellow Gunner had been under the false impression that a fellow veteran had passed away after being seriously wounded in action during a mortar attack on the Nui Dat base on the 17 August 1966, the day prior to the Battle of Long Tan. The man was returned to Australia for treatment. Discrete enquiries by Barry and Bob resulted in Gunner Norris being located in a Sydney institution and had not had a visitor for decades. Visits to Norris by these men resulted in their learning that Norris had a young daughter.

Further enquiries by Norris's compassionate nurse and the Salvation Army resulted in the daughter being located. She had been informed at childhood that her father had been killed in action in South



Vietnam. A re-union of father and daughter ultimately took place resulting in the pair being together once again. A magnificent result to a very sad story.

Barry was a man of integrity and a real gentleman. He served in South Vietnam as a Bombardier from 22 May 1966 to 2 May 1967 with 1 Field Regiment.

Following a long illness Barry passed away on 22 May 2021. He is survived by his wife Beverly, children Kassandra and David and grand-children Kathryn, Indie and Cooper.

REST IN PEACE SOLDIER

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Would a MindDog help you?

My name is Shayne Frew, I'm in my seventies and a Vietnam Veteran. When talking with my psychiatrist a couple of years ago it was suggested that I get a service dog to help with my PTSD. I rang DVA and was told it would cost over \$20,000 to train a dog but as this was out of my reach they suggested another avenue. That is when I was introduced to the mindDog people (Psychiatric Assistance Dogs).

They were wonderful and still are. They told me I could train my own dog and they would support me through the process. All I had to do was call Gayl if I needed a trainers' help and it would be provided by someone in my area.

They provided a guide book with goals my dog had to achieve each three months. The process took me about 15 months as covid hit in the middle, but eventually she was able to be assessed for all the goals by a mindDog trainer. During this time I was hospitalised a couple of times as well, so that slowed the process down.

Bella is now a fully trained and qualified MindDog Assistance service dog. Bella was 9 months old when we got her from a rescue shelter and started her training when she was about 4 years old. She goes everywhere with me/us, to the hospital, shopping centres, beach, clubs, Bunnings, everywhere. Remarkably she knows when I am ill and keeps an eye on me always.

All you need to do is put the time in and you will have a perfect companion and unconditional love.

I cannot thank Gayl and her team at mindDog enough for all their help and kindness. They are a wonderful organisation that I highly recommend.'

The following information has been

provided by Gayl O'Grady the head trainer and assessor for mindDog.

Gayl O'Grady says:

It is an Australia wide organisation with hundreds of trainers and assessors to support the clients.

To apply for a concession it is \$250 (homeless are free), which includes vests, ID and book, and several visits from your assessor. If you hire a trainer you will need to pay them separately, but at the moment the Minister for Mental Health in NSW is partnered with mindDog to run a program for two years. The government will subsidise 10 sessions with one of our trainers.

After the 12 month training period, you do a Public Access Test (PAT). The cost of this is \$200 for concession and \$0 for homeless. You will be required to do a retest each year for \$150. You get a new ID each year and a new vest. We make sure our dogs are up to the best behaviour standard throughout their working lives. You are also required to get your Vet to fill out a Health Screen when you get the dogs' vaccination each year, to ensure the dog is well enough to work another year. Our priority is for our team and the dogs and to ensure they are living the best lives possible.

Gayl can guarantee Bella Frew is living her best life.

MindDog recommends getting a 1 to 3 year old mix breed from a shelter or RSPCA. These are by far the best for psychiatric assistance work, not a puppy. They also have less health problems than a purebred.

Look mindDog up on their website www.mindDog.org.au. They would love to have a chat and see if mindDog is the best fit for you. ■





NEWS

The Vietnam veteran community loses our valued colleague, Barry Bannerman..... page 1

Would a MindDog help you?...One has certainly helped Shayne..... page 2

The story of the families of Vietnam veterans. Important new book..... page 8

President's Report. What's wrong with DVA's family strategy..... page 11

Moves to reduce dangerous backlog. Budget provides more staff to attack backlog.... page 12

The Royal Commission into defence and veteran suicides. Make a submission... page 14

Government rejects VVFA recommendation for Royal Commissioner page 16

50th Anniversary of the Battle of Nui Lé. Ask the sig what's going on..... page 18

What does Graham Edwards think of The Long Shadow. His launch speech..... page 28

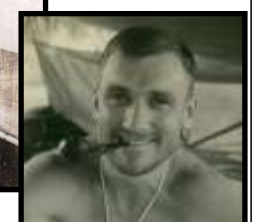
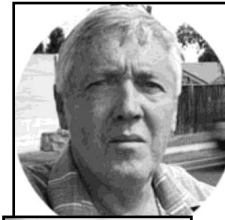
First in Last Out. Boris O'Brien's unique experience..... page 34

The Adventures of Tank 16904 The luck of the drawer in Vietnam..... page 40

Footy in a war zone..... 104 Signals Squadron v 106 Field Workshop..... page 48

From marble to embarkation... Al Wood's pre embarkation confessions..... page 50

VALE Soldier Poet Peter Rothwell. A special eulogy by Greg Lockhart..... page 76

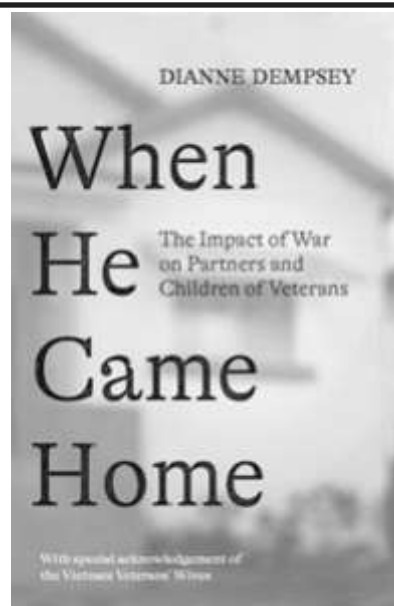


What else is making news

NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT	11
NEW POETS OFFERINGS	26
AVCAT UPDATE	33
NSW PRESIDENT REPORT	38
SCHOLARSHIPS RAFFLE WINNERS	45
NATL / NSW SECRETARY REPORT	46
CALLING C COY 4 RAR	58
TAYLORS ARM RSLSB 'QUILT'	59
PSK FINANCES ARTICLE	60
4 RAR / NZ REUNION 2021	62
LONG SHADOW BOOK EXTRACT	63
NATIONAL SERVICE REUNION	75

Regular features

4. Headliner News Index
6. Federation Affiliates list
7. About us information
10. About the Authors
15. The Minefield extract
32. From the Editors Desk
39. Letters to the Editor
47. Membership Request Form
57. AVCAT Advert
59. Advert 'MyOwnStory' Podcasts
64. Reunions & Notices
66. Open Arms advert
67. Crossword Corner & Unknown Comic
68. Change of Address Form
69. Mortality Report Form
70. Branches / Sub-Branches Listings
72. Merchandise For Sale
74. Operation Life Advert
82 Last Post
84. Member Discounts



And what about the families?

Here is a 'must-read' book about the effect of the trauma of war on the families of Vietnam and other veterans.

We are privileged to have a review of the book by Dr Gail MacDonell OAM. Being the wife of a Vietnam veteran badly effected by PTSD and having studied for her PhD on the subject, she is specially qualified.

As well Gail has been involved in the formation of the Partners of Veterans Association and the Australian Families of the Military Research and Support Foundation (page 8). ■



VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION of AUSTRALIA Inc.

Incorporating

**Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and
Peacemakers**

Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland
Branch Inc.**

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

**Vietnam Veterans Federation Victorian
Branch Inc.**

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

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

**Vietnam Peacekeepers Peacemakers
Federation of Tasmania Inc.**

Vietnam Veterans Federation Committee:

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

Canberra Research Group

Research Officer	James Wain OAM
Research Officer	John Godwin OAM
Research Officer	Jules Wills

WHAT WE DO

We have over forty years' experience assisting with claims in all of the Military Compensation schemes, by our fully qualified, compassionate, highly skilled, Compensation Advocates, Pension and Wellbeing Officers.

We continually strive for the rights of veterans and their families, whenever changes to the laws that govern and recognise their service threatens to diminish just and fair compensation for those that are sent to fight Australia's wars.

We achieve our aims by continued vigilance of government proposals that affect the Acts of parliaments protecting veterans rights and entitlements. By assuring that DVA uphold and enable due process of claims to the letter of those laws. By lobbying government and ministers where the laws could be improved for the benefit of veterans and their families.

We fully support and faithfully attend the Ex-Service Organisations Round Table, (ESORT), group discussions with the government and DVA. As well as maintain a close liaison with other Ex-service organisations.

Our successes have been many, and clarified in our following pages of News, Current Issues and Historical records. Our legacy and continued efforts needs to be handed on to the next generation of youthful supporters willing to take up the challenge as our volunteers become frail and unable to take up the vigil.

We do not charge any fee nor expect recompence for any of our services, and rely upon grants, donations, gifts and bequests, along with a small income from the sale of Raffle tickets and merchandise, for paid Advocates, volunteer amenities, at our many offices throughout Australia.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE ©

Copyright of all original material in The Vietnam Veterans Newsletter is held by the author and should not be reproduced for profit without the permission of the author. Reproduction for non-profit newsletters, military archives or study purposes in proper context is allowable but acknowledgement of the author and source should be made.

Advertise in our Newsletter

Best rates going

**Australian Military
Associations reunions and
contact notices, all FREE!**

Corporate Rates:

(Monochrome, grayscale, black/white only)

Full Page \$660

Half Page \$330

(Prices include GST)

10% Discount applied to campaigns that run
consecutively for 3 or more issues.

**Contact the Editor
always open to negotiation
editor@vfvagranville.org**

**CLOSE-OFF DATE FOR
DECEMBER 2021 ISSUE
*****BEFORE*****
3 NOVEMBER 2021**

ITEMS FOR PUBLICATION

For new material, advertising and compliments,
please **Write, phone, or e-mail:**

The Editor, VVFA NEWSLETTER

C/- PO Box 170

GRANVILLE, NSW 2142.

Ph: 02 9682 1788 Mob: 0421 690 959

Weekdays before 5pm thanks.

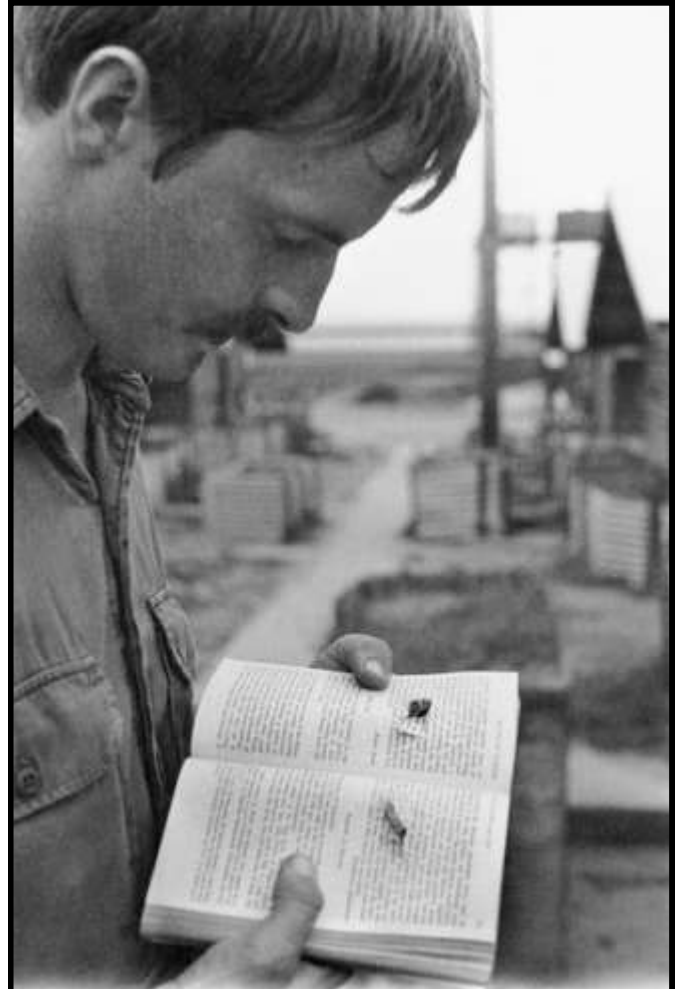
Email: editor@vfvagranville.org

For comments about the articles please write to:

'The National Secretary'.

Email: vfvfanatsec@vfvfa.org.au

50th Anniversary The Battle of Nui Lé



*2nd Lt Graham David Spinkston
contemplates a copy of Taste of
Courage which had prevented an
enemy AK-47 round from hitting his
left leg as he led 12 Platoon, D
Company, 4 RAR/NZ, in a bunker
contact against 3 Battalion, 33 North
Vietnamese Army Regiment, on 21
September 1971. The book is held in
the collection of the Australian War
Memorial. (AWM P07256.007)*

A Must Read

What about the families!!!

The book "*When He Came home*" gives us insight into the strength, resilience, determination and love that a person can have for their partners/spouse.

These are some of the stories of how families coped with the homecoming of traumatised veterans. Even though there are thousands of stories that could be told, I feel this excellent book gives an excellent representation of what families of war veterans can go through.

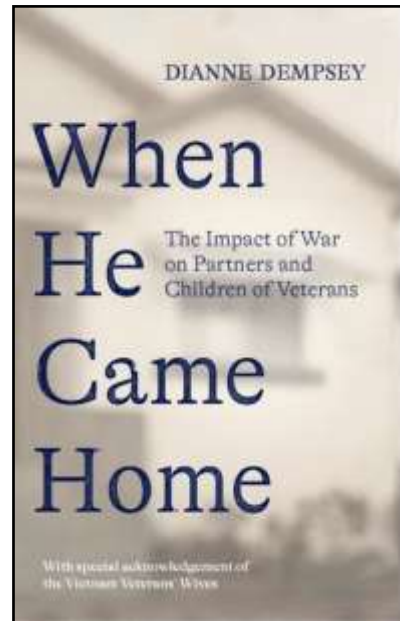
I felt sad when reading about the families, but then I felt angry again.

What this book demonstrates is that nothing much has changed over a long period of time.

Way back as 1998 a government study revealed that the suicide rate amongst the children of Vietnam veterans was 300% higher than their peers in the general community. In 2006 another government study revealed that the suicide rate amongst those National Servicemen who served in Vietnam was substantially higher compared with those National Servicemen who remained in Australia.

Despite successive governments claiming to care deeply about Australia's veterans, the rates of veterans' suicides continue to climb. And so does the number of family breakups and the number of suicides and suicide attempts by partners and children. Government action has been surprisingly inept.

But what the book also demonstrates is that the most successful programs and assistance to families comes from the grass roots; that is programs started by the veterans and their partners themselves. This is the bottom up approach rather than the top down approach as taken by



By author and journalist
Dianne Dempsey

Australian Scholarly Publishing,
2021

successive governments.

And the grass roots action must continue and should be supported by the government and DVA.

Why is it that grass roots action is so sorely needed?

A very wise friend explained to me recently that the department of veterans' affairs does not only have an obligation to the welfare of veterans. It also is obliged from time to time to find budgetary savings some of which will adversely impact veterans. There is also an obligation to the government; it must implement government policy which may well impact veterans and their families adversely.

So DVA officers can be divided in what they see as their duty.

And they will wonder if their prospects for promotion will be better enhanced by identifying budgetary cuts rather than by finding ways to increase veterans' welfare.

One example of this was a DVA senior officer in NSW deciding that a saving could be made by cancelling limbless veterans' right to a spare prosthetic for use when the original prosthetic required maintenance. (This was only prevented by the story being leaked to the media).

So it is important not to trust that DVA will always be on the veterans' side nor to rely

entirely on DVA remedying a bad situations. We must keep the grass roots programmes going.

As for DVA, there should not be, of course, an adversarial attitude when dealing with veterans, as there is now in many cases. And, of course, the key performance indicators DVA officers should strive for should only be the wellbeing of the veteran and the family, not money saved.

And there's another important issue where DVA bows down to budgetary needs to the detriment of veterans and their families. That is the under-manning of critical parts of the organisation. What frustration this under-manning causes.

And what of DVA's interaction with the veteran community.

There are many forums supposedly for meaningful discussion between the DVA officer chair and the veteran members. In the past, these forums often seemed to me more designed to disseminate DVA views than to seek the wisdom of veterans.

I have even pondered the question as to whether these forums were simply designed to allow the government and DVA to claim 'wide consultation' without any intention to take seriously any suggestions for change by veterans.

There is another issue. DVA invites submissions for research grants but insists on owning the results. This is a kind of censorship. The rules must change to make the results of all such research, public.

There is too, the issue of 'where the funds go'. Perhaps less could be spent on those layers and layers of bureaucracy designed to frustrate veterans' claims and more on the frontline services that Di Dempsey's book shows are so urgently needed.

I welcome the Royal Commission into veteran suicide; however much could be done in the meantime. I sincerely hope that the terms of reference for this Royal commission covers all aspects, including structural reforms and not just



Author Dianne
Dempsey

*To order your copy
please email, order
online or telephone.*

*Australian Scholarly
Publishing PTY LTD
Post to: P.O. Box 299,
Kew Vic 3101
[https://scholarly.info/
book/when-he-came-
home/](https://scholarly.info/book/when-he-came-home/)*

T: +61 3 9329 6963

E:

enquiry@scholarly.info

what the government wants covered. I also sincerely hope that once a Royal commission is finished we do not have another enquiry into the results of that enquiry. It will be time for action; time for change.

They say that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Until the structure of the departments are changed and the priority is geared towards the veterans and not the needs of government and the bureaucracy, we will be doing the same thing over and over again. That is certainly policy madness.

If successive governments genuinely care about the lives of the people who protect our country and put their lives on the line cannot see the need to change without more and more enquiries that just take up more and more time and more and more money then we must have serious concerns for our future Military People.

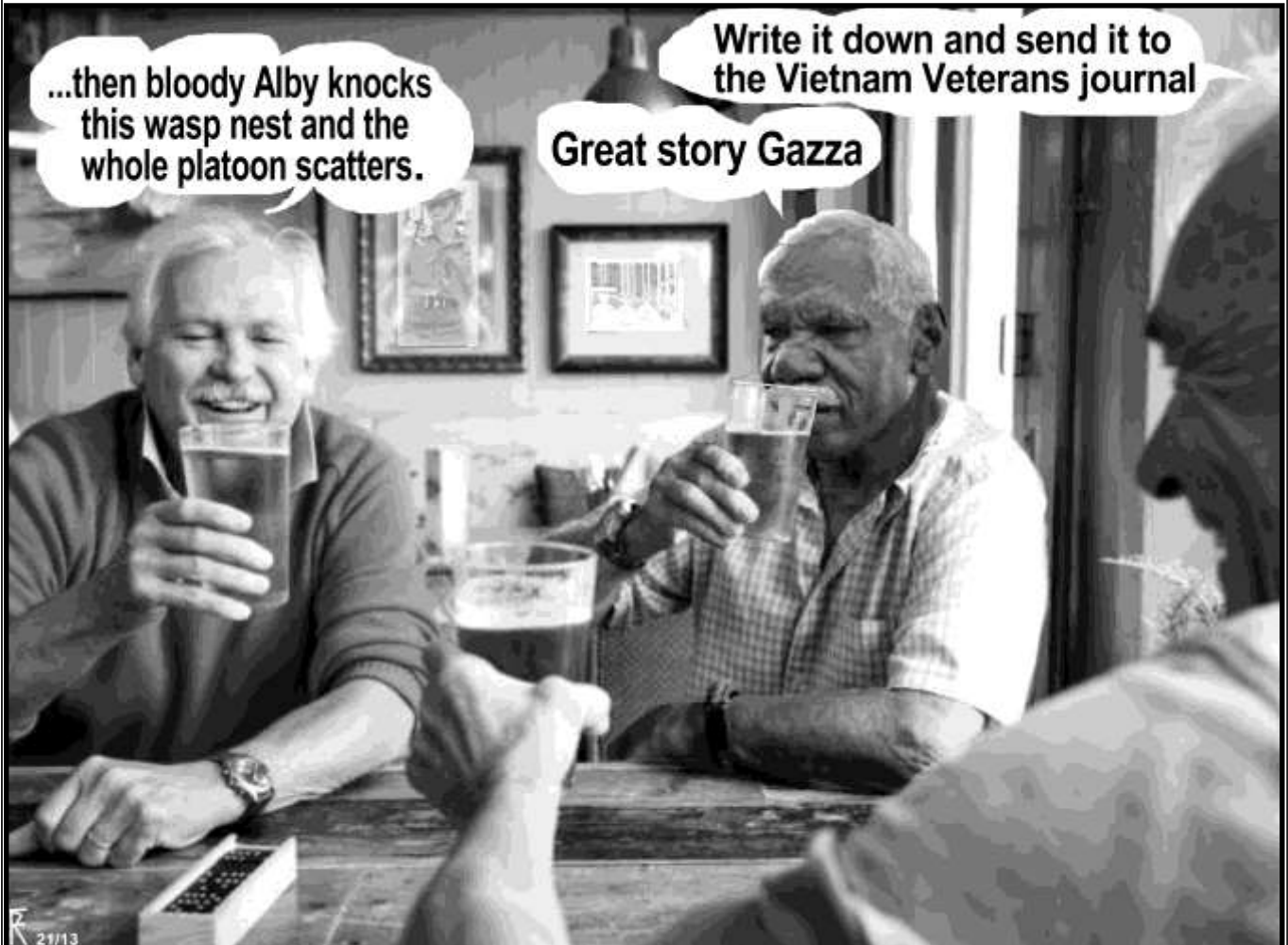
The lives of the veterans and their families have a ripple effect through the entire community. There are not many people in Australia who have not been affected by war at some point in time.

This book needs to be read by us all including politicians and officers of DVA. I thank Dianne Dempsey for putting it together and the partners/spouses for their contributions.

Dr Gail MacDonell OAM ■

Our Readers love Vietnam Veterans' Stories

Gleaned from letters diaries and memories



In this edition we welcome new author Shayne Frew who tells us about the dog companion that has changed his life.

We welcome another new author, Greg Shannon, who writes on the 50th anniversary of Battle of Nui Le. Another new author is Ian Granland who organised a footy game at Nui Dat.

We welcome, too, one of the leading experts on the effects of the trauma of war on families, Dr Gail McDonell, herself the wife of a Vietnam veteran, who reviews an important new book.

We also have the privilege of the speech written by Vietnam veteran Graham Edwards for his launch of *The Long Shadow*.

We welcome back popular storyteller Ray (Boris) O'Brien as he tells us about being 'first in and last out'.

Welcome back too are Graham Munsell and Barry Hodges with another episode of the story of their tank, T169041.

And our prolific storyteller, Al Wood, tells us about what went on before his departure for Vietnam.

Finally, poems from new poets Graeme Foley and Norm Jones on ANZAC and Vietnam Vets Days ■

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What's wrong with DVA's draft Veteran Family Strategy?

(Well, nothing really. But...)

DVA have written a draft strategy about how best to consult with families to find out what they need and is consulting with ESOs abouts it.

In other words, DVA is consulting about consulting.

When DVA gets in all the responses, will they engage a consultant to consult with them about our responses?

My words may sound cynical. They are not meant to be. The DVA draft has much that is good in it; even the appointment of someone independent to represent families.

What is missing is this:

We have known for many years what would change the lives of many veteran families for the better and what would make clear to them that they are appreciated.

These well known measures are the 'low hanging fruit' that should be picked before the need for more consulting and consulting about consulting.

These are practical measures some of which we were campaigning for in the 1990s and earlier.

These are the practical measures some of which were recommended by expensive government reviews going back decades.

These should be implemented now, without the need for further consultation.

After their implementation we can get down to a strategy of keeping in touch with families so

as to keep up with their changing needs.

What are these well known measures?

Though the list could be longer, we restrict our list to four measures, the need and justification for which we believe are incontestable.

They are:

- 1 Award the spouses of TPI and equivalent pensioners the Gold Card (or equivalent).**
- 2 Exclude TPI spouses' earned income from the means-test for the Service Pension.**
- 3 Assist TPI families to purchase a house.**
- 4 Make VCES more generous including helping with peripheral expenses.**

The reasons are well known.

1 The families of many trauma effected veterans suffer as much as the veterans.

2 Civilian families these days must rely on two family incomes to lead a decent life. TPI pensioners families should have the same ability.

3 Buying a house, even in less expensive times, has been beyond a young TPI pensioner.

4 VCES should be more generous for veterans. The bare minimum should not be enough compensation for children who have suffered because of TPI pensioners' service.

Contemplating strategies about more consultation is all very well, but let's clear the decks first. ■

Government moves at last to reduce backlog of veterans' DVA claims

In the May 2021 Federal Budget the government provided 447 extra staff to DVA to help reduce the outrageous delays in processing veterans' compensation claims.

The Guardian newspaper, in an article dated 22 March 2021, reported that the backlog of MRCA claims had reached 25,000.

What does 'backlog' mean in practice?

It means very sick war trauma effected veterans being left in a high state of anxiety for an excessively long time awaiting a decision that will critically effect their lives.

The Guardian article reported that even though legislation targets 90 days for the processing for MRCA claims, the average processing time was 178 days, or nearly six months. The average processing time for MRCA permanent impairment claims was 186 days.

Similarly, department figures showed 514 MRCA initial liability claims had been on hand longer than 12 months, while 32 remained unfinalised after 18 months. There were four that were incomplete after two years.

Reports from our State branches in May

2021 show this Guardian report may be out of date, the situation actually being worse.

As a rule of thumb, VEA (for mainly Vietnam veterans) are taking one year to finalise while MRCA (for younger veterans) claims are often taking two years.

DVA blames an increase in claims lodged.

But it is not as though this increase was not foreseeable.

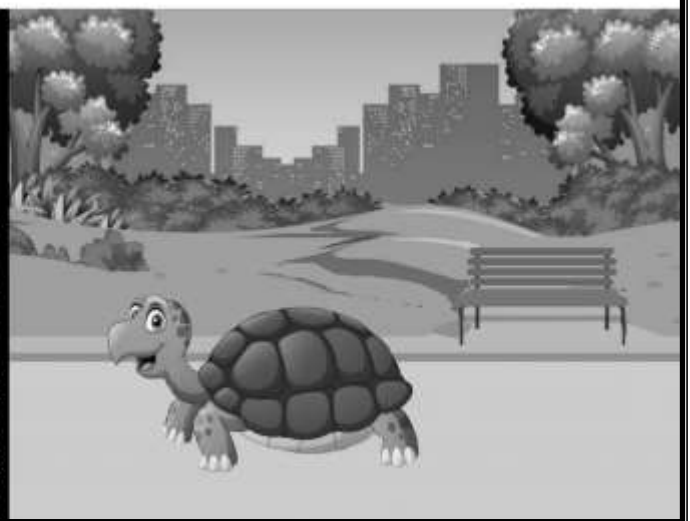
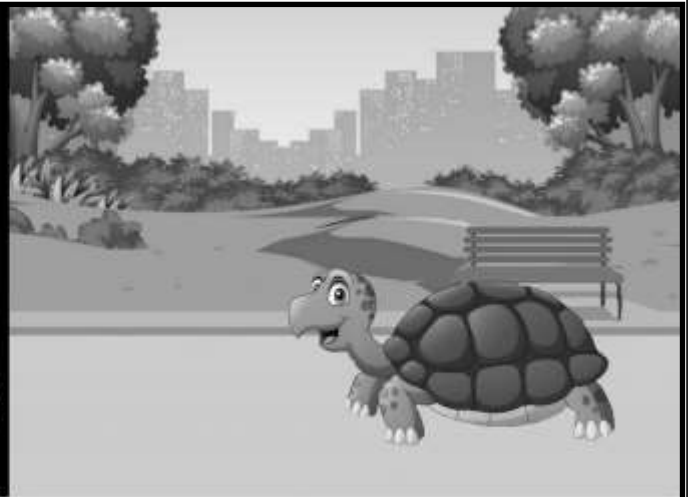
The VVFA, for instance, has been warning of a tsunami of claims for some years now. That prescience is not particularly clever considering the number of deployments many soldiers have completed in Iraq and Afghanistan (commonly as many as 4 or 5 and some as many as 6 or 7, and a few more than that). As well as the number of deployments, many soldiers were not given, or did not take, the required 12 months in Australia, between deployments.

So the increase in claims, as soon as deployments ceased, should have been foreseen by DVA and planned for.

In other words, the current situation is the

(Continued on page 13)

“And whilst much has been written and said about the factors influencing the high rate of suicide in veterans, it may well be that the bread and butter issue of unreasonable delays in claims processing is as important a factor as any.”



product of very poor DVA management.

So what are the consequences?

Much has been said about the most pressing problem amongst veterans: veteran suicide.

And whilst much has been written and said about the factors influencing the high rate of suicide in veterans, it may well be that the bread and butter issue of unreasonable delays in claims

processing is as important an factor as any..

And how long will it take for these 447 new DVA staff to be selected, trained and start to reduce the processing time for claims?

We don't know, but it may well be up to a year.

In the meantime the outrageous delays continue. ■



The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Fighting the Vietnam War increased the rate of suicide amongst Vietnam veterans.

But our warnings that it would happen to the Iraq/Afghanistan generation of veterans were dismissed by DVA and government. 'We've got this covered' they claimed.

This dismissal of our warnings meant remedial actions of various kinds were delayed.

Then, in **February 2020** the government promised to establish a **National Commission for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention**.

It was, however, not until **August 2020** that legislation was introduced into the Federal Parliament and an interim Commissioner appointed.

But the legislation was stalled in the Senate. A group of veterans and families of veteran suicide victims led a strong push to establish a Royal Commission. They were backed by Senator Jacqui

Lambie, the Labor Party and the Greens.

This group claimed that a Royal Commission, rather than a new bureaucracy was needed to expose any neglect or flaws in the government's response and DVA's handling of the issue.

But it was not until **April 2021** that the conflict was resolved with the government announcing the establishment of a Royal Commission.

In July 2021 the government appointed three Royal Commissioners and terminated the appointment of the National Commissioner for Defence and Veterans' Suicide Prevention.

The National Commissioner will report to Parliament before she goes.

Whilst this process has taken far too long in view of the urgent need for action, at last we are seeing progress..■

The Minefield

An Australian tragedy in Vietnam

Two extracts from the book

...Brigadier Greville—who had also served as the commander of 1ALSG in Vietnam—published a history of the RAE. In that work, he made a comment that resonated with significance for both Korea and Vietnam:

‘minefields that could not be covered by observed fire were more dangerous to our own troops than to the enemy’.

A good reason why [Brigadier] Graham’s second world war assumptions about mining remained unshaken by the lessons of the Korean War was that he had not served there. ■

‘One ingenious project the Australians attempted had an unhappy ending.’

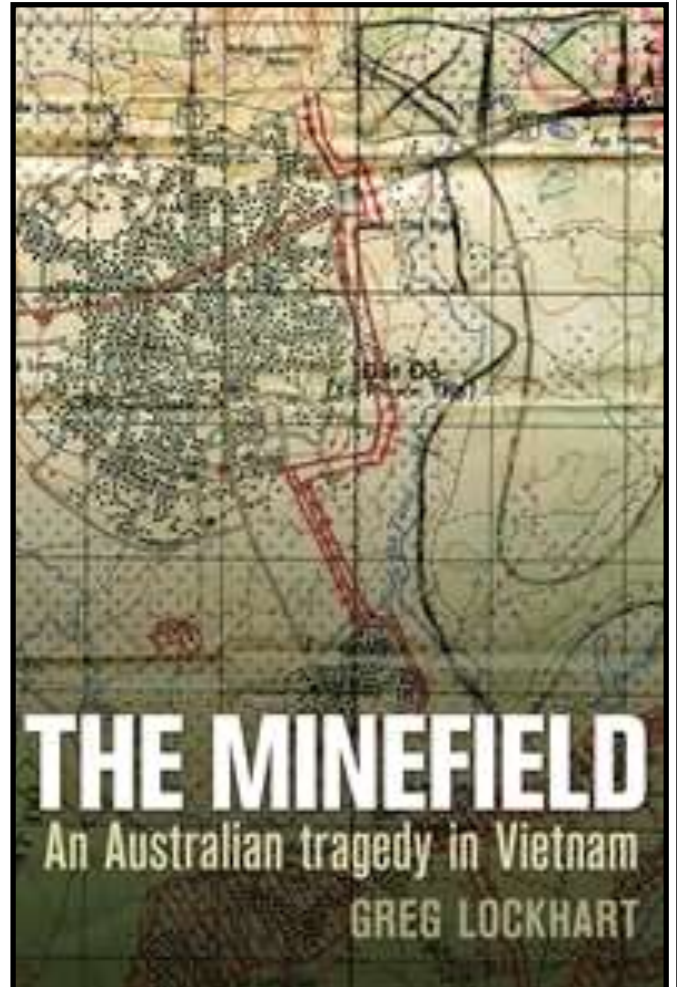
General William C Westmoreland, commander of United States forces during the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1968 in his book, *A Soldier Reports*, 1976. ■

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

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

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

He is the VVFA’s honorary historian. ■



It is the best book so far written about Australia’s participation in the Vietnam war. Written ten years ago and still selling well.

To get your copy simply ring the NSW Branch Granville Office on 02 9682 1788. Or order online at: www.vfagranville.org

Government unceremoniously rejects our recommendation for Royal Commissioner

The government has chosen the three commissioners for the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide.

The VVFA acknowledges the eminence and integrity of those selected.

The government mandated that the commissioners be neither veterans nor from the military. The three selected meet this criterion.

But it would have been advantageous for one or more of the commissioners to have a deep understanding of veterans.

We sent a recommendation to the Minister to appoint John Schumann OAM as one of the commissioners. As it turns out, he is as qualified as are those selected but has the additional vital quality of having that deep understanding of the veteran community

We are therefore very disappointed that the government so unceremoniously rejected our recommendation.

Below is the letter of recommendation we sent the Minister for Veterans Affairs.

Hon Darren Chester MP
Minister for Veterans Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel
PO Box 60
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RECOMMENDATION FOR JOHN SCHUMANN OAM TO BE APPOINTED AS A COMMISSIONER ON THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DEFENCE AND VETERAN SUICIDE

The Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia strongly recommends John Schumann OAM be appointed a Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

John has the trust of veterans and their families; he has a deep understanding of the effects of the trauma of war; and he has the professional background and intellectual capacity that would equip him to make a significant and well-informed contribution to the Royal Commission.

You will be aware that in 1983 John Schumann wrote recorded and started performing the song 'I Was Only 19'. '19' informed thousands

(Continued on page 17)

Veteran and Defence suicide royal commissioners announced

The inquiry will be led by Mr Nick Kaldas APM, former Deputy Commissioner of the New South Wales Police Force

Mr Kaldas will be supported by:

The Hon James Douglas QC, an esteemed former Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland and respected member of the legal community, and

Dr Peggy Brown AO, a consultant psychiatrist and national leader in mental health policy with extensive experience in health and mental health service planning, governance and administration

of individual Vietnam veterans suffering the traumatic effects of war that they were not alone, freeing them to declare their service and to seek help. The song transformed the nation's attitude, leading to an outpouring of support for Vietnam veterans in the 1987 'Welcome Home Parade'. It is fair to say that his song and his work contributed significantly to bringing Vietnam veterans home finally.

From 2011 to 2017, John and his band participated in five Overseas Forces Entertainment tours - East Timor, Afghanistan twice, the Solomon Islands and Tanzania. In 2008, the Army and John produced a DVD designed to address stigma, offer support and raise awareness of effects of PTSD for soldiers and their families. It involved John interviewing many veterans and absorbing many horrific stories. This close association with suffering veterans has given John a deep understanding of the trauma of war. The DVD has helped many Australian Defence Force personnel and veterans deal much more honestly and effectively with their psychological problems.

From 2016 John teamed up with Police Association of South Australia and the Police Federation of Australia to address the same problem in the police force. He travelled round Australia collecting disturbing stories as he had done for the Australian Defence Force. Out of it came the remarkable telemovie, 'Dark Blue' and another gem of a song, 'Graduation Day'.

John's continuous association with and service to the ADF and veteran communities since 1983 has secured their trust and that of their families, a trust which has not been extended to the bureaucracy and government in the wake of the Jesse Bird and other suicides and perceived malfunctioning of the Repatriation system.

John Schumann's career has included public service jobs at SES level. He is also well acquainted with the conduct of our national affairs having served as Principal Private Secretary to the Leader of the Australian Democrats when that party held the balance of power on the crossbenchers of the Senate between 1998 and 2001.

He is currently chair of the Maxima Training Group, a national NFP Joblink and DES provider with 450 FTEs and over 50 offices across Australia.

John's career well equips him for the high-level tasks required of a Royal Commissioner. It is a career, too, that fits John for the vital task of communicating with the sometimes frustrated, sad and angry elements of the veteran community.

We strongly commend John Schumann OAM as an ideal candidate for a Commissioner on the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

William (Bill) Roberts OAM JP
National President ■

50th Anniversary

The story of the Battle of Nui Lé (told by 4RAR Signals Officer, Greg Shannon)

It is fair to say that most battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment that served in Vietnam had one operation or battle that for various reasons became indelibly stamped on everyone's memory. Some operations became enshrined in Australia's military history and have been commemorated as battle honours on the Regiment's colours ever since. To name but three, for 6RAR it is Long Tan; for 1RAR and 3 RAR, it is Coral and Balmoral and for 5RAR, it is Binh Ba; all names which add lustre to the Regiment's already proud fighting record.

But although most battles were neither widely known nor proudly quoted, they are nonetheless significant to those who fought in them. For the soldiers of 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion, in 1971, it was Operation Ivanhoe, and the Battle of Nui Lé, particularly the events of 21 September, that became the focal point of the battalion's second tour; 50 years ago, this year, and the last major battle fought by Australian and New Zealand troops in the Vietnam War. I was the battalion signals officer at that time.

At the outset, it is important to place on record the misgivings held by our commanding officer, the late Major General (at the time LTCOL) Jim Hughes, AO, DSO, MC, over many

years and particularly in the months prior to his untimely death in August 2016. He was of the view there were many in the Australian military community that thought 4 RAR, on its second tour, had very little to do. The battalions that went before us had done it all. We were just there for a bit of a 'jolly'. Those of us, however, on the second tour know that this was very far from reality. The battalion was heavily committed continuously for the whole period of the shortened tour in 1971 and very much made a mark and upheld in every way the reputation of the Australian fighting soldier and the traditions of The Royal Australian Regiment. I would submit that the Battle of Nui Lé ranks up there with other maybe better-known battles involving Australian soldiers in the Vietnam War.

Another matter that played on his mind for many years, from an operational perspective, was the absence of the Centurion battle tanks at the time of the battle. It took him many years to identify the person who had made the premature and ill-informed decision to withdraw the tanks from the order of battle in July 1971 for all the wrong reasons. There is no doubt that they would have made a significant difference had they been

(Continued on page 19)

available rather than being on the high seas enroute back to Australia.

It is also useful to put Operation Ivanhoe into some strategic context. Exactly a month prior to the day that the operation commenced, on 18 August 1971, the then Prime Minister of Australia, William McMahon announced in parliament **“that the combat role which Australia took up over 6 years previously is soon to be completed.”** Further, he announced **“most of the combat elements will be home in Australia by Christmas 1971.”** This news was received with some excitement by our troops and was reported variously in the Australian media. Although reports to the effect that there were no Australian troops still actively engaged in combat were viewed a tad incredulously. It certainly was not the case and as events unfolded the battle drew direct political intervention when the same Prime Minister passed a message to the Commander AFV, General Don Dunstan **“expressing concern about incurring further casualties at such a sensitive time!”** This was actually during the battle when the battalion was fully committed. Fortunately, the task force commander Brigadier (later Major General) Bruce McDonald had the foresight not to pass on this snippet to the CO. In politics, some things never change!

In early September 1971, ‘people-sniffer’ missions flown to the east of Nui Lé and Nui Sao, the two largest features in the northeast of Phuóc Tuy Province, indicated the presence of an unidentified enemy force. (*‘People-sniffers’* were helicopter mounted personnel detectors that measured the effluents unique to humans.) Intelligence assessments were strongly of the opinion that these missions revealed enemy elements that were probably our **“old friends”** the 33 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment; specifically, their regimental headquarters, and the 2nd and 3rd battalions. Their total strength was around 800 all ranks. It was assessed that they were probably back in the province to establish a base there for operations against the northern villages and

outposts along Route 2.

So, Operation Ivanhoe was mounted to find and confront 33 NVA Regiment; specifically, 4 RAR’s mission was to ‘redeploy east of Route 2 and locate 33 NVA Regiment’.

The CO’s concept of operations was to deploy three rifle companies into the north of the Area of Operations (‘AO’) between the suspected locations of the 33rd and their probable sanctuaries in Long Khanh Province to the north of Phuóc Tuy province. The companies would then search from north to south. Support Company would be deployed in block and ambush positions north of the searching companies in the Courtenay Rubber Plantation. 3 RAR would be operating to their northeast. Meanwhile 1 Troop A Squadron, 3 Cav Regt, again under operational control of the battalion, was to maintain a presence west of Route 2 and north of the province border in Long Khanh Province and would ambush in those areas by night.

This meant that the enemy would either have to fight their way north through the rifle companies to escape into Long Khanh or alternatively go south to evade the companies before turning north and heading for the border. In either case, if the enemy got clear of the rifle companies, they would still have to fight their way through Support Company, 1 Troop and the 3 RAR blocking positions before gaining the sanctuary of Long Khanh. It was a simple plan and would put maximum pressure on the enemy while leaving the CO ample opportunity to redeploy Support Company and 1 Troop if necessary.

Although the operation was scheduled to begin at midnight on 18-19 September, there would be of necessity some coming and going within the AO for the first two days. Victor Company (our Kiwi brothers!) was back in Nui Dat as Task Force Ready Reaction Force and would not be released back to the Battalion until 22 September. C Company would be taken to Nui Dat for R & C (rest and convalescence) leave at

(Continued on page 20)

1600hr on 19 September and would not be available again until 24 September. And B Company was to be redeployed from Nui Dat into their AO four kilometres southwest of D Company but not until 1000hr on 20 September. D Company, however, which had been in the AO at the end of Operation North Ward, would begin their search at 0800hr on 19 September. The battalion headquarters was located on Courtenay Hill, on Route 2 at the northern most part of Phước Tuy Province.

In practical terms this meant that the CO only had D Company clear of any other commitments in the AO. Consequently, Brigadier McDonald placed D Company 3RAR under operational control of 4 RAR from 1000hr on 19 September, and they were inserted into their AO just east of the Courtenay Rubber Plantation.

The operation, however, began tragically. Due to some confusion over two radio messages from Battalion Headquarters (BHQ), D company propped twice to decode the messages and, shortly after they set off again two of the D company platoons engaged each other. Sadly, a reinforcement, Private Maxwell Rhodes, who had only just joined the company, (a national serviceman who had deferred his national service obligation to complete a university degree), was accidentally shot, and killed. The messages, however, which precipitated this dreadful accident, were very relevant. Intelligence reports indicated that D company was within 500 metres of either one or two enemy radio sets. The Officer Commanding (OC) D company, Major Jerry Taylor, applied a worst-case analysis and interpreted this as potentially two enemy battalions given that radios sets were rare below battalion level. As a result, he decided to keep the company more concentrated than usual.

There were no other incidents that day, although earlier in the morning, the 626 Regional Forces Company outpost on Route 2 received an attack by fire from a 75-millimetre Recoilless Rifle and 82-millimetre mortar rounds. 33rd NVA Regiment held both these types of weapons.

Tracks from the firing points led to the east towards the Nui Sao, which was south-east of Nui Lé.

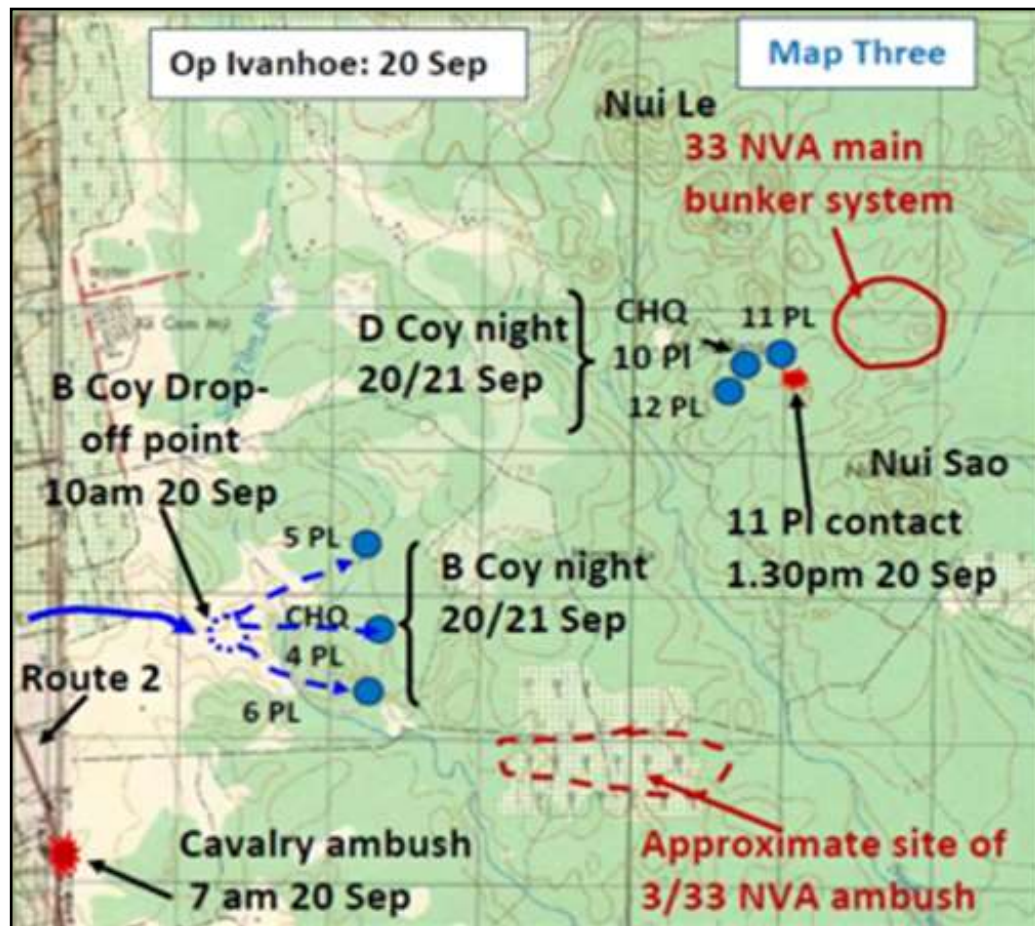
Early on the following day, 20 September, 4 APCs from 1 Troop 3 Cav Regt were ambushed along Route 2 between the village of Xa Bang and the RF company outpost by approximately 20 enemy employing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and small arms fire. A swift counterattack resulted in one enemy soldier being killed. He carried no identification but was well armed. The ambush position was around 150 metres long and set 250 to 300 metres back from the road. Sign indicated that weapon pits and sleeping bays found had been occupied during the night.

A POW, captured by 3 Cavalry Brigade (US) in November 1971, who had been an assistant platoon commander with C9 company of the 3rd Battalion, 33 NVA Regt revealed to interrogators that the original plan had been to lure 1st Australian Task Force units into a prepared ambush, east of Route 2. (This also gave some credibility to the rumour that the NVA regiment had deployed back into Phước Tuy Province to give the Australians a 'bloody nose' before we went home!)

The attack on the regional force outpost on 19 September and the ambush of the APCs the following day in the same area were the 'bait' in an attempt to lure an infantry/armoured reaction force east from the area along a logging track (ambushed by the 3rd Battalion) and into a bunker complex further to the northeast near Nui Sao, where the 2nd Battalion and the RHQ occupied defences in depth.

At around 1330hr, on the 20 September, Gary McKay's 11 Platoon engaged a fifteen-man enemy group about a kilometre northwest of Nui Sao. 11 Platoon opened fire; killing one enemy soldier instantly. The enemy deployed speedily and returned rapid fire but were apparently ordered to withdraw by their commander. Artillery was fired onto their withdrawal route, and a Pink Team, (consisting of a light observation helicopter

(Continued on page 21)



(or “Loach”) and one or two Cobra gunships) assisted. The Cobra gunship was employed to pursue them and opened fire, but without discernible results. Shortly after, 10 Platoon had a brief firefight with, probably, the same group as it withdrew, but there were no casualties on either side. *(The rather beguiling name ‘Pink Team’ belies somewhat the actual role of these US units. They were better described as ‘hunter killer’ teams. The Loach, a Hughes OH-6 Cayuse, would fly at tree top level trying to tempt the enemy into firing at them and when they did the Loach would mark a target and a Cobra Gunship would roll in and attack the enemy. They were a very formidable weapon platform.)*

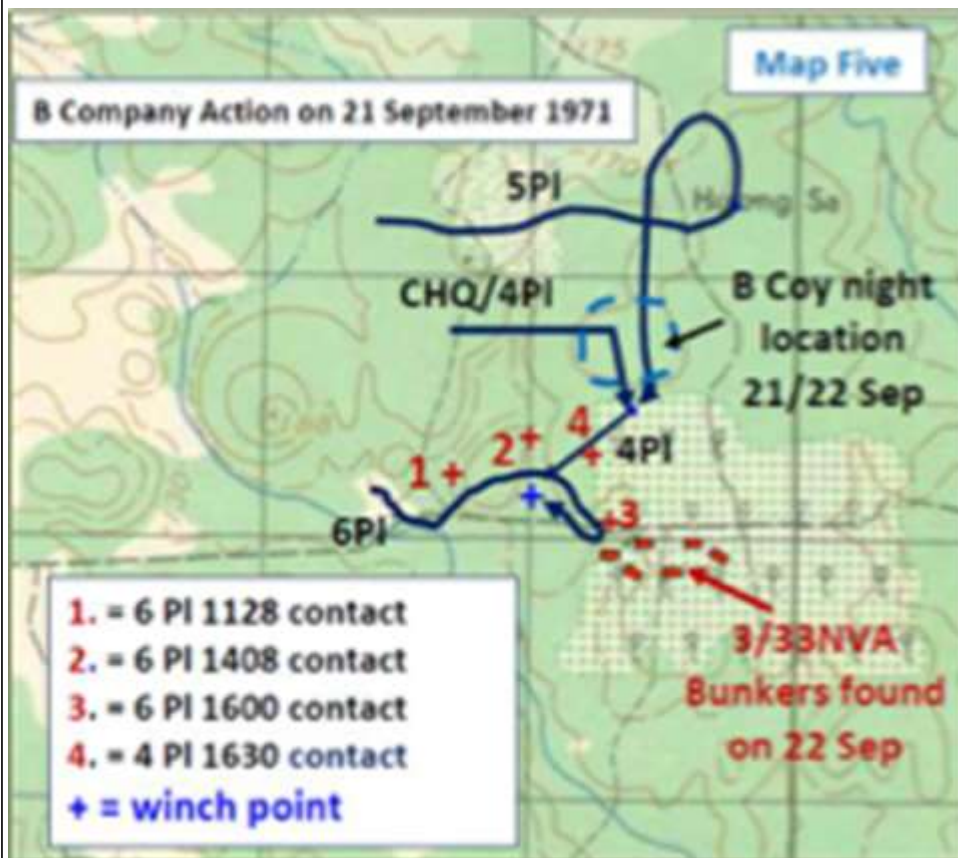
When 11 Platoon searched the contact area, they located one enemy KIA and an AK47, a pack and two Chicom (Chinese Communist) grenades. A follow-up failed to locate any more enemy and the platoon formed a night defensive position (NDP) in the area. A second enemy KIA was located the next day. It was noted at the time of the contact that the enemy were wearing dark

olive-green uniforms and navigating with maps and compasses. This was unusual and further confirmed that we were up against NVA soldiers, the 33rd NVA regiment.

There was an uneasy feeling throughout the battalion on 19 and 20 September 1971!

On the morning of 21 September, 12 platoon located a separate branch of the track from the previous day and suddenly they were engaged by RPGs and small arms fire. During the action 12 platoon lost one soldier, Pte Jimmy Duff, when an RPG exploded on the tree that he was using as cover. Four other members of the platoon were wounded, including the platoon commander, Graham Spinkston. 12 platoon had come up against what was later established to be the western most bunker system of a four system complex, large enough (with 24 completed bunkers with 15 prepared bunker sites) to accommodate the 2nd battalion, 33rd NVA Regt. *(Spinkston was actually hit by two bullets, one in his leg*

(Continued on page 22)



1 6 platoon, following a telephone cable, engaged by sentries, killing one.

2 6 platoon continues following the cable and contacts one more enemy soldier.

3 6 platoon recon group engaged by enemy and receives 60mm mortar fire wounding 15 men including the platoon commander 2LT McDaniel.

4 4 platoon, LT Ballantyne dispatched to assist 6 platoon contacted several small groups of enemy.

+ = Winch Point.

and the second was stopped by a thick paperback novel, *"The Taste of Courage"*, in one of his basic pouches! The book is now on display at the Australian War Memorial.)

At the same time 11 platoon was attacked by a large enemy force from another part of the same bunker system. But with support from both US and Australian gunships, and hard bombs and napalm from US Phantom jets, 11 and 12 platoons were able to break contact and re-join the company. For the next 3 hours the enemy position was pounded with repeated air and artillery strikes. Over 2000 artillery rounds from 104 Battery pounded the position. It was quite a spectacle to watch from the safety of Courtenay Hill.

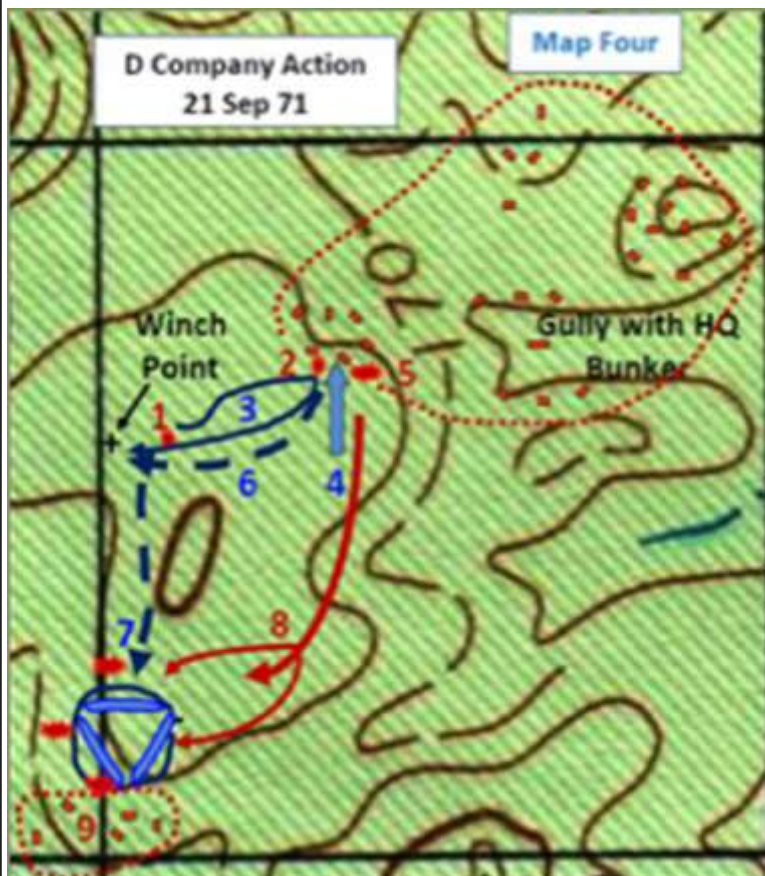
Meanwhile B company, having been inserted by APCs on the morning of the 20th, was generally moving east and south, dispersed as single platoons. They had a few minor contacts and saw sign that indicated somewhat larger enemy parties. Then at 1130 hr OC 6 platoon, 2LT Dan McDaniel, reported the discovery of a telephone wire and had begun to follow it. As they were proceeding, two enemy approached from the

northeast and were engaged. One was killed and the other withdrew northeast. The enemy appeared to have been checking the wire.

A few minutes later, LT Simon Willis's 5 platoon reported that they had found fresh foot tracks heading east and south, about 1500 metres northeast of 6 platoon. B company was now moving carefully because they could hear D company's battle off to the northeast, and they had been listening to progress of the battle over the battalion command net. Now their own platoons were making contact and finding sign, and at 1130hr, following searches of enemy bodies and their equipment, Major Bob Hogarth was able to confirm to the battalion command post (CP) back on Courtenay Hill that his company was in contact with NVA troops. Although no unit identification was possible, the enemy could only be the 33rd NVA regiment.

2LT McDaniel's platoon continued to follow the telephone wire that had been discovered during their previous contact, and saw

(Continued on page 23)



- 1 11 platoon and 12 platoon following track system.
- 2 12 platoon recon group engaged Pte Duff killed by an RPG round: several wounded including platoon commander, 2LT Spinkston.
- 3 D company concentrates at Winch Point on order of Major Taylor.
- 4 D company advances in assault formation.
- 5 11 platoon receives intense fire from the front and flanks and takes heavy casualties.
- 6 Company withdraws to the winch point secured by 10 platoon.
- 7 D company moves 400 metres south and consolidates into a defensive position.
- 8 Enemy follows up on the company.
- 9 The company has inadvertently deployed against another bunker system.

an enemy soldier rolling it up. When they engaged him, he cut the wire and withdrew east. 6 platoon continued to follow the track made by the enemy and at 1600hr commenced a recce for their night location. The recce party then observed enemy to their east, southeast and north. They engaged them and started to withdraw only to be engaged by SA fire and a 60mm mortar north of their position. 6 platoon sustained considerable casualties from the mortar rounds' shrapnel, about half the platoon 15 in total, (including 2LT McDaniel, the platoon commander!). 4 platoon (LT Ian Ballantyne) was sent to their assistance to endeavour to hit the enemy from the north. *(McDaniel had assisted with the evacuation of his casualties and did not know he had been wounded; it was only during the night that what he thought was his back sweating turned out to be next morning, when he could see, blood from shrapnel wounds. He was evacuated a short time later to the field hospital at Vung Tau.)*

The battalion was now heavily committed in two locations four kilometres apart!

Back at D company, around 1500 hours

the company commander Major Jerry Taylor, having formulated a plan for a company attack, ordered the company to shake out into attack formation. 12 platoon on the left, company headquarters (CHQ) centre rear, 11 platoon right flank. 10 platoon was to remain at what was known as the 'Winch Point', providing a firm base and reserve. Around this time too, just as the company attack was commencing, there were reports from pilots that the enemy appeared to be withdrawing in large numbers.

However, within minutes of the move forward, the company came under withering fire from skilfully sighted and mutually supporting bunkers into camouflaged fire lanes. Delta company, all 90 of them, had encountered the 2nd battalion of 33 NVA Regiment – all 300 of them!!! Two of 11 platoon's machine gun teams were hit with a tempest of automatic fire. The two machine gunners were caught in fire lanes, Private Keith Kingston-Powell was killed instantly and Private Ralph Niblett on the other gun was mortally

(Continued on page 24)

wounded and died a short time later. As the number twos on the guns, Privates Brian Beilken and Rod Sprigg, went forward to take over from their shot mates, they too were caught in the fire lanes and were both killed instantly. After about three hours of fighting, the company just couldn't breach the system and light was fading. The company was ordered to pull back, leaving their packs and their dead mates behind, to a night defensive position (NDP) secured by 10 platoon. But the NVA was not finished and swarmed out of the bunkers and launched a counterattack. The two platoons commenced fire and movement rearwards to break contact. The enemy just kept coming. Each platoon continued withdrawing in heavy contact. Meanwhile, 10 platoon was moving to secure the Winch Point and they were engaged by what was discovered later to be the regimental headquarters of the 33rd and the 3rd battalion in another bunker complex. This complex also had sniper posts high up in the jungle canopy.

The company was virtually surrounded and jammed up against this further bunker system. 11 and 12 platoons managed to fight back to 10 platoon and CHQ and the company formed a sort of all-round defence measuring only about 35 metres across. The 2nd battalion continued its assault in waves of troops. The regimental HQ and 3rd battalion were pouring fire into the position from above.

The company was fast running out of ammunition and had little protection. There was every chance they were about to be overrun. Because of the proximity of the enemy the company could not use close air support, so Jerry Taylor made the decision to call for 'danger close' artillery fire. And the gunners of 104 Battery made the difference, but the noise from the artillery bombardment, combined with the small arms fire was deafening. So much so that Jerry couldn't talk to his artillery forward observer, Lieutenant Greg Gilbert who was no more than 10 metres away. Without comms – no guns! No guns and there was a fair chance that the company would be overrun!!

I was sent airborne in the CO's Kiowa helicopter and managed to set the chopper's two FM radios onto automatic retransmission mode so the OC could talk to the forward observer (FO), and the FO could talk to the guns. *(The helicopter pilot, 2LT John Sonneveld flew for 11 hours non-stop that day, save for refuelling and comfort breaks. He was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). I have reflected over the intervening years how lucky we were that the enemy did not or could not engage the helicopter with their 12.7 mm anti-aircraft machine guns!)*

Amazingly, as he couldn't turn on a torch to see his map, forward observer Gilbert relied on his memory of grid references and estimations of the distances they had travelled to adjust the fire. Every time the radio crackled, the enemy directed fire into Coy HQ putting the FO and therefore the whole company in danger. The last Australian casualty that night was the 11-platoon commander, 2LT Gary McKay who was severely wounded. McKay was dragged back into CHQ and with the Regimental Medical Officer (RMO), CAPT Paul Trevillian in Nui Dat relaying treatment instructions over the radio to company medic Cpl Mick O'Sullivan; McKay's life was saved. Once again CHQ came under fire during these radio transmissions. *(Mick O'Sullivan, who had been previously awarded the Military Medal for dedicated and professional service under fire, continued applying his professional skills. Gary McKay survived and was awarded the Military Cross.)*

The enemy attack went on till nearly midnight, and then suddenly they started to withdraw, and as it turned out, taking most of their dead and their wounded away with them. The next morning, the enemy had gone. They had worked frantically throughout the hours of darkness to evacuate their casualties and withdraw through our blocking forces along prepared tracks which were subsequently located by elements of the battalion searching the bunker area near the Nui Sao.

The construction of a bunker complex near Nui Sao, the cutting of good tracks to facilitate rapid redeployment of NVA units in the

(Continued on page 25)

Route 2/Nui Sao area and the detailed planning that was involved in the attempted ambush of an Australian force, indicated that 33 NVA Regt intended to establish a base for future operations in that area of Phuóc Tuy province. **The final paragraph of the Ivanhoe after action report says: “There is no doubt that the quick retaliatory reaction by the APCs of 1 Troop when ambushed on 20 September and the aggressive action of B and D companies, with plentiful close air and artillery support on 21 September 1971, (during this last major battle fought by Australian troops), were responsible for forcing the NVA to abandon their efforts (which had been considerable) to harass the District, and to return to more secure surroundings north of the Phuóc Tuy Province boundary”.**

There is also little doubt that, had it not been for fire support from 104 Battery and Greg Gilbert’s skills in calculating his position without being able to consult his map, and his subsequent corrections which kept the fire moving about the perimeter; and the splendid commitment of the artillerymen at the gun positions, D Company might well have come under a coordinated attack on the night of 21 September. One can only speculate what the outcome of that attack might have been. It was a very near thing.

The cost was high; 5 Australian killed in action (KIA) and 30 wounded in action (WIA). 14 enemy bodies were recovered. Many more, as was NVA practice, were taken from the battlefield.

*(There is an interesting and ironic twist to this story. Many readers will recall, or have read of, the exploits of the US 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment at the Battle of Ia Drang in the central highlands of South Vietnam that took place on November 14–15, 1965 at Landing Zone (LZ) X-Ray. The battle was regarded as the **first** major battle of the Vietnam War. Details of battle were recounted by the CO at the time, LTCOL (later LTGEN) Hal Moore in his book on the battle, “We Were Soldiers Once... and Young”. The battle was portrayed in the 2002 movie, ‘We Were Soldiers’, starring Mel Gibson. Who was the enemy at the Battle of Ia*

Drang? None other than the 33rd NVA Regiment!)

Déjà vu!!

In preparing this account of the Battle of Nui Lei on 21 September 1971, I must acknowledge these are not solely my words but rather they are an amalgam derived from four particular written works. First, from the incisive book, ‘Last Out’ written by Jerry Taylor, who was awarded the Military Cross for his leadership during the tour; the book of the tour, ‘The Fighting Fourth’, which showcased the battalion’s efforts in 1971, prepared and edited by Bob Sayce, CSC, the battalion’s Intelligence Officer and Mike O’Neill, the battalion’s transport officer; Gary McKay’s ‘In Good Company’, and Warren Dowell, the D company support section commander at the Battle of Nui Le, who gave a wonderful personal account of the battle at a commemorative ceremony and unveiling of a plaque in memory of Bob Hann, CQMS D company in 1971, at the Bribie Island RSL on 21 September 2016. Without their words, I would not have been able to put this together.

The maps are courtesy of LTCOL (Ret’d) Fred Fairhead’s book ‘A Duty Done’ (2nd Edition), ‘A summary of operations by the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam War 1965-1972’.

DUTY FIRST!

Postscript:

Sadly, Jerry Taylor passed away suddenly on Saturday, 18 November 2017.

On 06 February 2018, Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Vivian Gilbert (Ret’d) was awarded a belated Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) in recognition of his skills and courage during the battle. At the time his superiors opined that he was just doing his job!

Lieutenant Colonel Greg Shannon OAM (ret’d).

Vietnam Veterans Day 18 August

COMMEMORATION DAY

It's that time again,
when,
the creaking sounds of joints,
reminds me of ammo-laden webbing,
tropical wetness,
jungles of translucent green,
of prickly heat,
and malarial madness;
but also of that strange connectivity,
when loyalty and concerns for others,
links people,
to times and mates that forever last.

times when recoiling mechanisms,
of unseen weapons,
pushed deadly consignments,
to end a life,
and induced a soldier's mind to thoughts
about human vulnerability,
and the wrecking nature of warring strife.



Image of a Dead Man painted by Ray Beattie

times where thoughts of distant families,
missing loved ones,
induce tears of recurring remorse,
which, hopefully, will one day be dried,
by the contented gurgling,
and frivolity of new young lives,
everywhere,
untainted!

Graeme Foley

The Last Anzac Day?

I stood outside my lonely door
Not a soul or car in sight
But I held the flag up high
And watched the day come to light.
I thought about that year of war
And my mates who shared that strife,
Of the demons that steal my mind at night
Calmed by the loving support of my wife.
I recall how strong and proud I was
To answer my country's call
As were others of that age
Though many have now gone to death's great hall.
My candle flickers in the wind
My thoughts beget a sigh
With all the mental pain I've had
Is it better that I die?
My little dog nudges with his paw
And looks at me with loving eyes
Perhaps he's telling me
Like in that war of years gone by
I should fight to stay alive.



But the darkness and anger never go
The battlefield now is in my head.
I am but one but I know there are many
The only one who understood was Kenny
He is now gone, but I fight on.
The night will come, the setting sun
Another battle to be won

Norm Jones
110 Signal Squadron Vietnam
1969/70

What does Graham Edwards think of *The Long Shadow*?

(Graham's book-launch speech)

Graham Edwards (Hon Graham Edwards AM) lost both legs in a mine incident in Vietnam.

After rehabilitation, he worked as receptionist at a Vietnam Veterans Counselling Centre.

He became a Minister in the Western Australian State Government and, later, was elected as the Member for Cowan to the Federal Parliament.

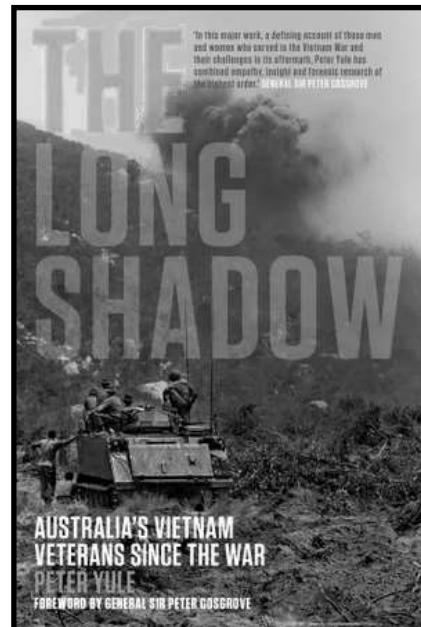
In 2010 Graham was appointed to the Council of the Australian War Memorial.

In 2012, he was elected the Western Australian State President when the Returned Services League there was in crisis.

In 2016 he was Western Australian Senior Australian of the Year for his support for veterans.

And so very much more...

Above all, he has always been passionate in his support of veterans.



Regardless of those rights or wrongs the facts are that young Australian men were sent to serve our nation in Vietnam.

National Servicemen, conscripts and regulars together, served with great courage, determination, pride and professionalism. They formed an enduring bond known only to those who have faced adversity together.

In Vietnam we were together in the greatest tradition of Australian mateship.

But when we came home we came home to a nation divided.

Certainly we returned to the warm embrace of family and loved ones.

But outside of those close ties we were largely met with apathy, disdain, the cold shoulder of indifference and in some cases hostility.

Large numbers of veterans put a lid on their emotions adopting the view that if you weren't there you wouldn't understand.

Over time these deeply buried emotions manifest themselves in many ways. For some they

Graham Edwards' book-launch speech

Much has been written, spoken, debated and argued about the rights or wrongs of Australia's involvement in the war in Vietnam.

Much was argued too about the practice of conscripting young men and sending them off to fight in a foreign war which many considered was none of Australia's business.

I have my own strong views about that war. Views gathered from my own involvement and views that are much more defined in retrospect than they were at the time of my deployment with 7 RAR in 1970.



Graham Edwards
Assault
Pioneer
Platoon
7RAR on its
second tour
of duty in
Vietnam.



Graham Edwards
more recently

exploded in anger, violence, alcohol abuse, withdrawal or depression.

Others sadly took their own lives.

As an office employee of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service in Perth, I saw veterans daily as they presented looking for assistance, advice, understanding or simply a kind supportive word.

I saw in these veterans the same emotions I often experienced myself.

I saw too the devastation to many families and I wondered at the common cause.

I also came to the conclusion I was more fortunate than most.

My wounds were visible, recognisable, accepted, treated and understood.

I saw the devastation and impact of war caused mental health disorders on individuals and families and it became evident that not all the wounds of war are visible.

So that leads me into the introduction of Peter Yule's incredible and historic work.

An authoritative work that has focused on these troubled times and a work that has been crafted with compassion, care, consideration, eloquence and above all, Understanding.

Indeed the inside cover of his authoritative book *The Long Shadow* says this:

Quote:

'The medical and psychological legacies

of the Vietnam War are major and continuing issues for veterans, their families and the community, yet the facts about the impact of Agent Orange, post traumatic stress disorder and other long term aspects are little understood. *The Long Shadow* sets the record straight about the health of Vietnam veterans and reveals a more detailed and complete picture.'

Setting the record straight has been something many Vietnam veterans have long campaigned for.

Crucially, Peter has based much of his analytical work through the direct experiences of dozens of veterans whose war time experiences were accepted as credible, authentic and treated with respect and genuine interest.

But Peter is also coldly precise and forensic in his examination of the Royal Commission which favoured Monsanto and their bevy of highly paid Clayton Utz lawyers against the under resourced volunteers of the VVAA and their understaffed team who were so unjustly treated by council assisting the Royal Commission. .

While the Royal Commission castigated DVA for their adversarial approach to veterans' claims, the result of the Royal Commission was that Agent Orange was innocent.

(Continued on page 30)

However if Peter is forensic in his exposing the bias of the Royal Commission, he is even more clinical as he tears asunder and rips to shreds the section by FB Smith in Volume 3 of the Official History of the Vietnam War published in 1994.

But before I go further into that I would like to recount the reason that Peter's work was commissioned in the first place. I spoke to Graham Walker, a man I much admire and a man with great standing with the veteran community for his determined years of advocacy. Graham reminded me of these points: quote.

'There is a story too about why this book was written.

In the late 1970s the Vietnam veteran movement began a campaign for a Royal Commission into the effects of their exposure to herbicides (including Agent Orange) and insecticides whilst on war service in Vietnam.

In 1983, the Royal Commission was established.

The Royal Commission made findings under two separate standards of proof; one at the civil court standard of proof, the other under Repatriation law which requires giving veterans the benefit of the doubt.

At civil court standard the verdict was 'Agent Orange – Not Guilty'.

Under Repatriation law, however, the Royal Commission found two categories of cancer could be linked with chemical exposure.

In 1994, Volume 3 of the Official History was published. It included a section on the Agent Orange controversy.

The author, academic FB Smith, in a shocking flawed account, claimed the veterans had no case and that they were motivated by greed.

Smith's claim that the veterans had no case was obviously wrong.

His claim that the veterans were



Historian Dr Peter Yule

motivated by greed was ludicrous. If he had bothered to interview any of them he would have realised that they were, in the best ANZAC tradition, fighting for a fair treatment of their brothers in arms.

In amongst many other flaws, FB Smith's failed to mention that the Royal Commission castigated the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposely finding ways round obeying Repatriation law.

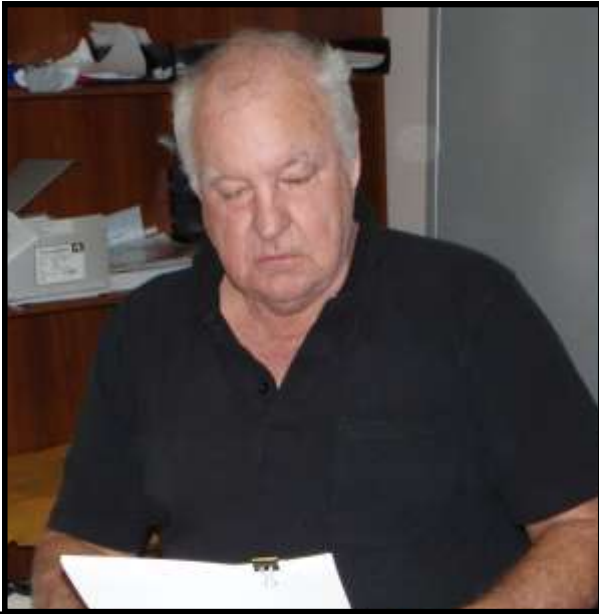
Outraged by this shockingly wrong account, the veterans began a campaign for the Official History to be rewritten.'

It was during this time that I was appointed and served six years on the Council and was able to give support to that campaign.

It needs to be said that without the enduring efforts of the Vietnam Veterans Federation, Tim McCombe, since sadly passed away, and Graham Walker, this work by Peter Yule would never have been commissioned

Indeed, it was not until the appointment of Brendan Nelson as Director of the Australian War Memorial that the arguments were finally accepted, and this work commissioned.

And here we are today.



Tim McCombe OAM



Phil Thompson OAM

Peter, I believe through *The Long Shadow*, you have delivered healing and vindication to the Vietnam Veteran community, their families and in particular to some of our early Vietnam veteran leaders and advocates.

You recognise the incredible work of the late Tim McCombe in tenaciously pursuing veterans' claims and winning ultimate success.

I wish Tim was here today and I am sure if he was, he would be effusive in his praise for your work.

Most importantly too I believe you have reinstated honour and integrity to a former friend, mentor, and champion of the cause of Vietnam veterans, the late Phil Thomson.

Phil was unfairly targeted, denigrated and maligned in Smith's volume.

I quote from *The Long Shadow*:

'Some of the personal attacks Smith made were irrelevant and out of place in an official history. Even more serious is the allegation that Smith made about Phil Thompson. Phil served two tours, was wounded at Coral and discharged after being diagnosed with cancer.

Smith made no mention of Thompson's war service or the fact that he was later awarded

an OAM in recognition for his work for veterans but gratuitously claimed that he was 'receiving irregularly augmented repatriation benefits'

It is almost unbelievable that an official history could denigrate a veteran with no supporting evidence and attempt to disguise the lack of evidence by giving misleading references.'

End of quote.

Rest in Peace Tim; Rest in Peace Phil.

In conclusion Peter I cannot do justice to your incredible volume of work in the short time I have. I will re-read your book and do it over more time and assuredly more than once.

But I want to say this:

Your work, Peter, will stand the test of time and be an enduring, accurate, true reference to the post war trials and challenges of Vietnam veterans and their families.

Your book Peter is compelling, comprehensive, compassionate, sensitive and healing.

On behalf of all Vietnam veterans, their families and loved ones I say thank you Peter and your team and now with much pleasure, I officially launching *The Long Shadow*. ■



Well hello all readers. I hope this Newsletter finds you all in good health and covid free but pandemic aware. Our sincerest condolences go out to everyone who has lost a loved one or family friend recently.

Join the list of veterans who have become authors by telling us your stories in words and pictures.

The List (so far)

Al Wood

Ray 'Boris' O'Brien

Tomas Hamilton

Dave Clark

Garry Gleadhill

Bill Griffiths

Lachlan Irvine

Graham Munsell & Barry Hodges

Gary McKay (well known professional author)

Greg Shannon

Shayne Frew

Ian Granland

Graeme Foley

Norm Jones

Send Contributions to:

editor@vvfagranville.org

Or by snail-mail to:

Editor

VVFA

PO Box 170

Granville NSW 2142

Note: We prefer contributions submitted by e-mail in Microsoft Word with images in JPEG or bitmap files.

But if you can't do that then any way will do. We'll sort it out.

So find those old letters, photos and memories and think about having a go.

Backlogs! It seems DVA have one rule, but we have to abide by another.

The original Repatriation Department (later renamed as DVA) was established in 1918 on the proposal of Senator Edward Millen, the first Minister for Repatriation, as an 'earnest attempt to meet the nation's obligations to those who on its behalf have gone down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death..'

This obligation required a strong repatriation philosophy that acknowledged the special sacrifice made by the armed forces in defence of Australia.

Consequently, repatriation legislation established the principle that the Australian Government had an obligation to sufficiently provide for those who risked everything and lost much in serving their country.

There has been a set of basic principles, which have underpinned the Australian repatriation system since its inception. These principles affirmed that Australia is indebted to those who served in the armed forces and has a duty to ensure those that served, and their dependent's, are properly cared for on a long term basis; and benefits should be made available as a matter of right and not as a welfare handout, and in cases of doubt, the doubt should be resolved in favour of those claiming to be entitled.

DVA must stop treating claimants like welfare fraudsters, show us some respect for applying our rights to claim, and if they doubt a medical opinion, delegates must rule in favour of the claimant. Not seek further medical opinion.

By the way, these exact same arguments have been raised by our organisation since 1975. Not because there was a backlog, but because diggers were suiciding over DVA decisions. It's now 2021 and soldiers are suiciding at 5 times the rate of the general public at the same age.

How long do we wait for yet another inquiry to make recommendations that may well be put on the backburner just as so many recommendations of the recent report of the Productivity Commission have been. ■

The Editor



AVCAT/VVPPAA NSW SPONSORED SCHOLARSHIPS



Applications for 2022 Long Tan Bursaries and other sponsored scholarships open on 18 August 2021, and close, at midnight 31 October 2021. See AVCAT flyer on page 55 of this issue.

AVCAT scholarships are for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Long Tan Bursaries are for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans and are funded by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Most scholarships provide up to \$4000 per year, for three years, to full-time students at university, TAFE college or registered training organisation.

We at Vietnam Veterans' , Peacekeepers' & Peacemakers' Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., (VVPPAA NSW), which is affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia, has for many years, sponsored Scholarships for children or grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans and also Peacekeepers and Peacemakers who are deserving and in necessitous circumstances, to achieve a better level of education.

The Scholarship will help the recipients who may have otherwise been unable to achieve their educational goals. This is the least we can do for the children of the veterans who have proudly served their country.



To be eligible applicants must be:

- the child, stepchild, foster child or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran.
- an Australian citizen or permanent resident.
- enrolled, or planning to enrol in 2022, in a full-time course at an Australian university, TAFE college or registered training organisation.

receiving, or be eligible to receive in 2022, a Centrelink payment like Youth Allowance or an equivalent means-tested educational payment. To apply you should contact **AVCAT** and request to be added to the expressions of interest register. Phone: 02 9213 7999 visit website or write to PO Box K978 Haymarket, NSW 1240. Some scholarships have specific criteria, for further information go to avcat.org.au.

Presently the Association sponsors three (3) Scholarships – **Tim McCombe OAM Scholarship, Phil Thompson OAM Scholarship and Graham Walker AM Scholarship**, which are administered by **AVCAT**.

Our sponsored scholarships are mainly funded from the proceeds of the "Association's Annual Raffle", so please continue to support the Raffle so we can continue to assist our Veterans' children/grandchildren with Scholarships for many more years to come. Your support in the past is very much appreciated.

William (Bill) Roberts OAM, JP
National President – VVFA
Senior Vice President – VVPPAA NSW
Director - AVCAT

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

FIRST IN AND LAST OUT

By Ray (Boris) O'Brien

Just after Christmas 2020 my good friend, Blind Billy, also 1 RAR first tour, rings me from Melbourne and suggests I write a story about my trips on the HMAS Sydney. I was the only Infantry soldier to go over, (to Vietnam), on the first trip, with 1 RAR in 1965, and return home with the last battalion to leave, (with) 4 RAR/NZ in 1971.

Taxing my memory, I remember back to mid-April 1965. We were on B Coy parade ground at Holsworthy, (Sydney NSW), the CSM was telling us not to believe anything that was written in the Sydney newspapers about 1 RAR going to Vietnam. 'It was all garbage. I have just bought a new car, and I wouldn't have bought it if we were being posted overseas'.

On 29th April 1965 the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Robert Menzies, announces Australia is sending a combat battalion to Vietnam to assist the US Forces, and the Battalion would be 1 RAR from Holsworthy in Sydney. 'Does anyone want to buy a brand new car?' asks the CSM on our next parade. No Takers.

Some diggers in the Company on learning the news that we were going to Vietnam were asking questions about the place and the enemy. I said I remember about 2 or 3 years ago we had an old soldier in our Platoon, he must have been nearly 40 years old, he was a German named Heinz Grabowski, and he had served in Vietnam with the French Foreign Legion. Heinz was about to parachute into Dien Bien Phu after their 56 day siege, but the red light came on and he didn't make the jump. Saved his life as the camp was overrun



and all the French surrendered. They got a very severe arse kicking by the Viet Minh, now our enemy the Viet Cong.

Just after midnight on 28th May 1965 we snuck out of Sydney. We left Holsworthy Army Camp in the back of covered trucks and buses. No farewells, no bands or bugles playing, no weeping wives or girlfriends, kids or loved ones. We just left under the cover of darkness. It was like the government was keeping our departure a gigantic secret and no-one was to know we had snuck away.

When we arrived at the ship we were shown our Mess Deck, how to put up our hammocks, a small briefing, and up came the anchor and we sailed off. I think we had 3 Company's on board, lots of equipment and vehicles, stacks of odd bods, the battalion Padre, PTI's from Artillery, 1

(Continued on page 35)



NCO from Signals, a WO2 from Intelligence Corp, the Prince of Wales Light Horse, and even a few Civvie Reporters came along for the ride.

Lessons started next morning, PT with the PTT's, who even taught us more unarmed combat. We had bayonet fighting and one of our diggers was unlucky, he received a bayonet thrust into his forearm. A terrible wound with everyone thinking that would be it for him, but he stayed with the Company and completed his tour.

The Battalion Padre would give us lessons on character building and also throw in a few Vietnam history lessons—interesting. Pte Ned McAuliffe, (Nellie), and I, (We were both the Company HQ Signalers at the time), and with the help of the Sigs Corp NCO would give radio procedure lessons, correct use of voice procedures, and the use of numerical and Ops codes. Nearly every day we would have weapons training and live firing off the back of the flight deck.

I cannot recall how many escort vessels we had, but a good mate, Tony Brennan, ('Hipshot'), says we had a few throughout the journey. Tony has an excellent memory. He remembers firing the M60 in a detail when the order to 'Cease Fire' came from the Bridge of the Sydney. The target balloons had drifted sideways in the current and after the shooters had adjusted their firing positions the escort was in their firing line, thus some rounds from the M60s had hit the escort

about 700 yards away. How would you have liked to be a sailor 700 yards away on your ship, when all of a sudden you get hit by a M60 round fired by some unknown soldier. As Kylie would say. "I should be so lucky".

The Vietnamese language lessons given by the WO2 from Intelligence Corp, in my opinion, were a waste of time. He would teach us sentences like "Hello old grandmother, I hope you are having a fine day". He should have taught us "Halt, drop your weapons and put your hands up", or more important "How much are all those beers?". We also had map reading lessons, and each night we received 1 large can of beer. The non-drinkers in the Company were very popular soldiers.

When we arrived near Cape York the ship started to slow down. 'What's going on?' we asked. A stupid sailor didn't want to go any further so he jumped overboard and started swimming for shore, except he was swimming toward New Zealand, not Australia. He went starboard (right) off the ship, instead of Port (left). What a goose. It took about an hour to pick him up, then he spent the rest of the cruise in the Brig. Very good swimmer, very poor navigator.

A couple of nights later we had a "All hands to battle Stations" over the PA system, and again we were not told what was happening, except they (Sailors) put us into a lower Mess Deck. After what seemed like a long time we were stood down and let to return to our Mess Deck. A plane had flown over the Sydney and did not reply to the ships radio transmissions. False alarm, happy soldiers.

On the Saturday some of the sailors were running a SP Book on the Sydney and Melbourne Races, mainly to pass the time and win some 'Sailor Monet'. Some of us had a few bets with moderate results. The crossing of the Equator was a gigantic event for the sailors who dressed in King Neptune costumes and had a fun day. They had some game going with a large garbage bin and giant dice. All of us 'first-timers' were given a

(Continued on page 36)

certificate of our crossing. I am now dubbed as a Sea Rover, not to be confounded with Land-Lubbers, Char-Ladies, and those that over-water good liquor, and always have mastery over Kippers. I am still trying to work all that out.

After a few more days at sea we finally arrived at Cape Saint Jacques (Vung Tau), and being one of the Company Sigs I get told to man the ship to shore link radio in case the comms break down. I am put onto a US patrol boat parked half way between ship and shore, go in circles all day in the patrol boat, not one call all day, I should have done some fishing if I had a line. When unloading was complete the patrol boat dropped me off and I awaited for my lift to our new home at Bien Hoa wondering what lies ahead of us.

MAY 1971..

I have been in 4 RAR nearly 2 years, I am Platoon Sergeant 8 Platoon C Company, and tomorrow we are back to Vietnam again on the HMAS Sydney. This tour is quite different from the first tour. The RSM is on his third tour, all the CSMs and Sergeants are on their second tour, with lots of Corporals and Privates on their second as well. Heaps of experience within the battalion unlike 1 RAR in 1965.

The trip over was uneventful, still lots of PT, Weapons Training, live firing and lectures, but no Padre lessons. Signals lessons, bayonet fighting, no SP Bookies, bugger, and no false alarms. The Navy still went crazy on crossing the equator, King Neptunes everywhere and 4 RAR even had a tug-o-war competition, and still only 1 can per man.

EARLY AUGUST 1971...

The word on the grapevine is that 4 RAR/NZ will be going home for Christmas. Yeah right. The war could be called off. Crap. 18 August 1971 (Big Ears Billy) the Prime Minister of Australia, W. McMahon, announces most combat troops will be

home for Christmas.

September 1971 3 RAR is going home, not to be replaced, leaving 4 RAR/NZ as the only remaining Australian Infantry battalion in Vietnam. November 1971 we move out of 'The Dat' and move to Vung Tau. All the Battalion, except C Company, are encamped around the 'Badcoe Club' area and 'VS'. (C Company move closer to Vung Tau into a ARVN Recruit Camp near town, and very close for local leave. We call our new camp 'Groganville'.

18 November my Platoon Commander leaves to go home and takes some of the Nashos with him. Before he left our platoon strength was one officer and 35 soldiers, also including 4 attachments of two each from RAE and RAA.

23 November 8 Platoon is now one Sergeant, me, also I am now the Platoon Commander, two corporals, one Lance Corporal, and ten Privates. The rest, all Nashos, have flown home, lucky duckies. The remaining soldiers in the Battalion are all going home on HMAS Sydney. D Company 4 RAR/NZ is staying behind as security and clean up. They will return to Australia in February 1972.

The last night in 'Groganville' 7 Platoon Sergeant Garry Chad (Gazza) and I are at the C Company Sergeants Mess, and 8 Platoon Sergeant, Barry Filewood (Bazza) is on his final local leave. On leaving the Mess 'Gazza' says to me, "We should grab three of these folding deck chairs so we three can sunbake on the Sydney". We grab one each and I grab another one for 'Bazza' and we go to our Sergeants Hut.

Next morning the CSM C Company 'Toddy' Smith calls my name and gives me twenty-nine soldiers and we take the first bus to the ship. As we are going through the main gate there are scores of Vietnamese waiting to swamp the area when the last bus leaves. Boxing Day Sales at Myers.

Going up the gangplank onto the Sydney the sailors started to give me crap about my deck chair. I tell them while you are chipping rust off

(Continued on page 37)



the Flight Deck I'll be wearing sunnies with suncream on and drinking a cold goffa whilst watching you all work, so up yours.

When the whole Battalion had arrived aboard we waited for President Thieu to land in his helicopter. He could talk underwater. Some of the diggers were impatient, yelling out things like, "Get off, we want to home" or, "Give him the hint, Lift the anchor", President Thieu finally flew off and up came the anchor and off we went.

About twenty minutes later the call went over the PA System, "All Senior NCOs Report to Mess Deck 3. Mess Deck 3 was the RSM 4 RAR Mess Deck. WO1 Wally Thompson. What's happening now? Wars over for us, we are now on holidays. All the Senior NCOs arrived at the Mess and the RSM informed us that Thieu gave the Sergeants Mess some gifts, silver cigarette cases, thirty of them.

The RSM put everyone's name in a hat, fifteen draws, winner two cases each, one for Platoon Sergeant, one for a platoon soldier. My name came out in about draw six and I received my two cases, pure silver and heavy. After the draw I assembled my platoon with their names in a hat and out came Private 'Gs' name. "Here is a present from President "T" of South Vietnam". Happy soldier Private 'G'.

Walking across the flight deck after briefing my platoon. I had told them what's going on, which was nothing, Don't get into trouble, don't fall overboard, we are now on 9 days holidays. We'll have a parade each morning here at 9am and call the roll, and the rest of the day is yours. See

you tomorrow same place.

As I'm going to sunbake the 2IC C Company calls me over and asks why I still have my deck chair. I don't know what he is on about, He says 'I told both Sergeants back in camp they couldn't bring their chairs on board'. "Sir, you didn't tell me crap, this is the first time I've seen you today, I went on the first bus to leave and saw no one except the CSM. Some naval Officers have already spoken about my chair, so there is no problem, Sir". The 2IC storms off upset he didn't grab his own chair. Poor baby.

A holiday for 9 days, sun baking, drinking cold goffas and reading 'stick books', what a life and getting paid for it on higher duty allowance as Platoon Commander as well. How good does it get. Half way home about 11pm the ship starts to slow down again. Done this before, what's up now? A LCPL from our Company is missing, maybe went overboard?

The ship is searched and he is found asleep in a gun turret. Because of the heat in his mess deck he found a very cool spot and he decided to sleep there. Wacker.

Townsville ahead, holiday now over. I am now the 2ICs favourite Sergeant. He asks me nicely can he have my deck chair because he is staying on board and going south to Brisbane or Sydney, wherever his wife was staying. I tell him he can have it and I will leave it in Mess Deck 6 behind the bulkhead so that the sailors don't pinch it. But alas my deck chair had a severe accident and fell overboard into Townsville Harbour.

We docked, I got the Platoon organised, picked up our spirit rations, 100 ounces, 1,000 cigarettes each, and said goodbye to the Platoon. I could see my wife standing at the end of the jetty. Gazza and I waved good bye to the sailors. We got on real well with them on every trip. A final wave to the old ship HMAS Sydney.

The Grapevine was correct.

Home for Christmas.

Boris. R O'Brien ■

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT



COVID-19

At the time of writing Sydney and other areas of the state are in a lock-down period due to a recent spread of the virus. The proposed two-week lock-down has forced us to temporarily close our Granville office in order to protect our staff and clients. Although this may be very frustrating it is indeed necessary. I urge you all to get tested should you experience any of the advertised systems of the virus and, importantly, speak with your General Practitioner about getting a vaccine. Please keep safe for the sake of your family and friends.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our very successful Outreach Program has once again excelled in reaching out to veterans who live in regional and remote areas and who do not have appropriate access to advice regarding DVA claims. The team's most recent trip was to Darwin where they advised and assisted approx. 70 clients on their entitlements. A great result for these current and former members of the Australian Defence Force.

PASSING OF A GENTLEMAN

Many of you would have known Barry Bannerman who was a volunteer at our Granville office for approx. twenty years. Sadly, Barry passed away on after a long illness. Barry was responsible initially for our national membership records and was then a competent Treasurer until he was forced to retire due to his illness. He earned recognition as a Life Member as a long term contributor to the welfare of veterans. Please see further details regarding Barry on page 8 of this Newsletter. REST IN PEACE SOLDIER.

AGM

The NSW Branch AGM was conducted on Saturday 22 May. I informed the meeting that the Association continues to meet its mission of assisting current and former ADF members receive their just entitlements. The competence and professionalism of our staff is second to none.

The number of veterans we have assisted over the past twelve months continues to ensure that we lead all other ESO's in this regard. Nominations to fill all executive and committee positions had been called for and as there were no more nominations than positions available those nominated were elected unopposed. Financially your Association is being very well managed and our sub-branches continue to provide appropriate services to their members.

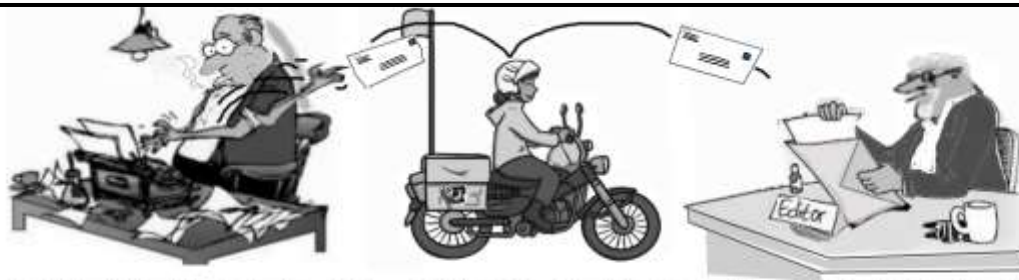
VETERANS SUICIDE PREVENTION

In August 2020 the Federal Government introduced legislation to establish a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. The legislation was stalled in the Senate. The Commissioner was to have enduring powers meaning that it would continue to exist unlike a Royal Commission which has an end date. Ultimately, the Government bowed to pressure for a Royal Commission which is currently being organized. Our national body, the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc., following consultation with our state branches made a submission on the Terms of Reference which the Royal Commission should adopt. Such submissions will go to the Royal Commission for consideration. The National Commissioner will continue to exist and will work beside the Royal Commissioner. Once the Royal Commission is established the VVFA will make a submission.

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

It is with deep regret that this years function at Bankstown Sports Club for Vietnam Veterans Day commemorations on 18 August, has been cancelled, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Frank Cole
NSW President



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's note:

We had a query from Vietnam veteran Bob Freeman about the drinking water on ships.

Sea water distilled to produce drinking water on naval ships and army small ships, concentrated rather than eliminated any contamination by Agent Orange.

We asked for expert advice.

Good morning Bob, thanks for your email.

Simple answer to his immediate problem, get hold of a copy of the second edition of my book *Out of Sight, Out of Mind the RAN in Vietnam 1965-72* which is available through Dymocks, or alternatively the publishers Rosenberg NSW.
<http://www.rosenberpub.com.au>

You might even like to try the HMAS Sydney Assoc. through the Hon. Secretary Mr David Dwyer on 0423 675 146 or 9720 8183, I know he has copies at 40% off due to a personal deal I have with the publisher. Authors automatically get 40% off, so I have passed this onto the HMAS Sydney Assoc. Hope you can pass this email onto Bob Freeman. ...

Sincerely

Dr John Carroll

Editor's note:

Bob Freeman contacted David Dwyer and is now being looked after.

From the editor:

I received a couple of hand written notes from Graham Hanson in early June advising me that one Robert Fulton 2788541 (Bom) who served on HMAS Sydney (ships Army staff), on a 3 day trip to Vietnam, 19 –11-68 to 21-11-68, was the one and only Bobby Fulton, famous Rugby League player, who sadly passed away on 23 May 2021.

Yes, it is true that Bob Fulton, born in England, was indeed called up for Army service in the Royal Australian Artillery Regiment. There are many anecdotal newspaper and internet articles that espouse this fact, and that he was allowed leave to play League on more than one occasion.

I have conflicting dates of birth to overcome , as well as sailing dates, if we are to be satisfied that the person listed on the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans as:

FULTON, Robert, Australian Army, 2788541, Date of Birth 01 Dec 1946, (Temporary) Bombardier, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery, Ships Army Staff (HMAS Sydney), 13 Nov 1968 (to) 28 Nov 1968.

Is it indeed the same Robert Fulton AM (1 December 1947 – 23 May 2021) of Rugby League immortality? (As NSW Rugby League, all press articles and such, indicate the birthdate 1947), the one and same person. With apologies to Ann and family.

I wonder how many of those exercising on the deck of the Sydney realised their PT instructor was to achieve such greatness. Is there anyone out there who has photographs from the decks of HMAS Sydney during this voyage? Probably taking 8RAR there and bringing 3RAR home. ■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

The Luck of the Draw with Tank 169041

Part 3 Still at War

From the book, A CENTURION'S LONG JOURNEY
by Graham Munsell and Barry Hodges



CLAYMORE MINE

Early September we were part of a Tango ready reaction force comprising of 4 Troop, a section of APCs (3 Cav), anti-mine sappers and infantry. On 6th September, we were travelling slowly south on route 15 with the mini team riding on the front track guards of Sweet Fanny. As we were going through a cutting, Sapper Tony Lisle screamed out

“Halt”, as he noticed wires leading up an embankment. On dismounting, he dug up a pressure switch in the road, and following the wires to the top the bank, found a claymore mine facing the road and positioned head high to armoured vehicle crews. My operator, driver and I probably owe our lives to him. After this scare, Sweet Fanny was spelled as lead tank for a while.

On the 9th of September Sapper Lisle was again on the

leading tank and, once again, yelled “Halt”. This time he found a pressure switch to a 23kg mine, again saving the crew, tank and himself.

NEW MOTOR

About this time Sweet Fanny began losing engine power and after reading the speedo, RAEME

(Continued on page 41)

technicians assessed the motor needed replacement due to the high mileage travelled. We motored back to 106 Field Workshop at Nui Dat, and two days later Sweet Fanny re-joined the troop in the field with a major service and new motor.

BAMBOO, BUNKER SYSTEM and HEAVY JUNGLE

Towards the end of the month, 4 Troop was ordered to assist a company of 6RAR who had been ambushed and pinned down just short of a bunker system in dense jungle. To respond to them by the shortest distance, we had to negotiate thick bamboo. Of all the obstacles we encountered in South Vietnam, bamboo was probably the hardest to penetrate as it was 60-70 feet in length and intertwined with each neighbouring clump. The bamboo was so strong it would halt progress as well as rip the commander's .30 calibre machine gun off, tear the storage bins to pieces, and many times we had to reverse and find an easier path. It took us four hours to get through 2kms of bamboo to assist the infantry. To add to our misery, many scorpions lived in bamboo and often fell into the tanks and onto the crews.

We were so close to the bunker system that I had to look down the fully depressed barrel and direct the traverse to the target, because the gunner's sight could not adjust to the short distance. A solid anti-tank round (APCBC) broke up the overhead protection and a HE round finished the job.

On occasion, as crew commander I had to dismount the tank to take an accurate compass reading to direct mortar fire into the bunker



system. After hostilities ceased, the severely wounded 6RAR casualties were carried out on the tanks to a clearing for dust-off. Sweet Fanny destroyed many bunkers that day both by shot and by crushing them.

Some days later 4 Troop had to investigate reports of another bunker system further in the jungle. With Sweet Fanny leading, thick bamboo and vegetation built up over the tank so much, that day turned into night and we had to switch on the turret lights to see. We became trapped inside

(Continued on page 42)



Bamboo, bunker system and thick jungle penetration were a challenge for tank crews and machine.

FIRE MISSION FROM THE HORSESHOE

At the start of October, Sweet Fanny was ordered to temporarily detach from 4 Troop and relocate to the Horseshoe until relieved. During the late evening of 7th October, a fire mission was called at 2200hrs to support infantry being attacked by enemy forces. The distance from the Horseshoe to the target was 5,500 meters in a south-east direction, which must have been out of artillery range from Nui Dat. I had a nervous time trying to

the tank with all our periscopes also covered we were completely blind and had to be given directions by radio from the crew commander of the tank immediately to our rear.

Due to the hot exhaust, the leaf matter was ignited and smoke began filling the tank. To try and dislodge the burning matter we reversed into the jungle and were able to remove some of the burning foliage. I then ordered the crew to fire a canister round to clear the barrel, but we were still confined in the tank until other tank crew members cut away the remaining entrapment.

It also must have been intimidating for the enemy, because we were almost at the bunker system and the fighting pit to our front still had a recoilless rifle (RCL) tripod base plate in it and cooking fires were still hot. In hindsight I guess it would have been terrifying, listening to four V12 Rolls Royce meteor motors screaming in the distance, trees and bamboo crashing down to your front and a blast from a canister round emitting out of a massive clump of smoking, moving vegetation. Yep, I think I would run too!



The Horseshoe

determined the co-ordinates to the target and bring the gun to the correct bearing. After firing one HE round for effect, the correction was add 200 meters. Firing off seven rounds rapid fire, we were told to stand to. Noted in the duty officers log the fire mission was completed at 2210 hrs with the notation "up to one hundred VC had been engaged and with possible kills." Next morning a clearing patrol found 3 enemy KIA and numerous drag marks and blood trails. Sweet

(Continued on page 43)

Fanny excelled herself again.

BROKEN GEARBOX.

Being relieved a few days later, Sweet Fanny re-joined 4 Troop supporting South Vietnamese Troops engaging enemy positions on the eastern side of the Long Hai hills. Whilst traveling to this operation Sweet Fanny, as always, pulled to the right and kept heading off the shoulder towards the scrub. I suggested to the driver, TPR Barry Hodges, that he "pull the left stick Bazz" but no response was received. So again I said "left stick Bazz" and he came back in no uncertain terms that he was indeed pulling the "F*****" left stick. Coming to a halt our summation was a broken gear box. RAEME responded from Nui Dat and confirmed the diagnosis, so we harboured up until a new one was found and fitted. A few days later we were back on operations again with "left-stick Bazz" driving in a much happier frame of mind. We then re-joined 4 Troop supporting the South Vietnamese troops operating around the Long Hai hills.

H&I MISSIONS



Often, when occupying distant fire support bases and fire support patrol bases, tanks were called on for Harassment and Interdiction (H&I) missions. An enemy supply route was discovered near our location, and we were tasked to harass it day and night for 48 hours. The attached photos show the tracer round in flight during the night, with the camera secured to the turret to record the recoil

and the rocking of the tank during the night shoot. ■

Over the page is the story of maintaining T169031.

Next episode

In the next edition the story covers T 169041's last action in Vietnam and the journey home. ■

Maintaining Tank 169041

Maintaining the Centurion

Conditions in wet and dry seasons in South Vietnam presented tank crews with many challenges.

Wet season maintenance meant working in mud and rain for first parade servicing and day to day maintenance, which included maintaining track tensioning, air filters, fan belts, water and oil levels. Greasing points on the Centurion had to be found by removing mud.

A task for the driver was removing the drain plug in the driver's compartment - this entailed having to position yourself under the tank to remove the plug, and replacing the plug after the water had drained. On operations, the driver would sleep in his compartment by reclining the seat, so the drain plug was usually removed to avoid the driver sleeping in a pool of water.

During dry seasons air filters had to be cleaned and oiled every day (dust! dust! dust!). Engine decks had to be lifted sometimes twice a day to perform maintenance, which required the turret would being traversed to move the cargo bins from the deck. The engine decks had five segments, which weighed 50 kilograms each, and had to be lifted in sequence. The transmission decks, located above the radiators behind the main engine decks, were about half the weight.

Cleaning the main armament barrel was the duty for all the crew. Crew commanders were responsible for cleaning and oiling the main breech (the block weighed over 50 kilograms), which had to be removed, placed on the gunners seat and serviced. Only the crew commander was permitted to perform this task.

Over and above all these maintenance duties there were always meals to prepare, morning and night, and picket duties throughout the night.

The ammunition load out of a Centurion

In Vietnam, Centurions typically carried three different types of main armament rounds – 27 HE, 27 canister and 10 armour piercing (Armour Piercing Capped Ballistic Capped or APCBC). Even though armour piercing is designed for tank warfare, they were essential for breaking reinforced bunkers in conjunction with either HE or canister. Sometimes the bunkers were also crushed by the tank (52 tons plus).

APCBC rounds were made of tungsten carbide and had a muzzle velocity of 3350 feet per second and the canister round had 580 half inch steel rods. Although never used in Vietnam, APDS (armoured piercing discarding sabot) was kept in the armoury in case of tank encounters, and they had muzzle velocity of 4700 feet per second. HE muzzle velocity was 1975 feet per second and filled with TNT.



Changing HE rounds

During the first period of tanks in Vietnam, crew commanders complained of HE rounds detonating before impact and on one occasion during a contact two of Sweet Fanny's rounds were witnessed exploding a very short distance in front of the muzzle. This was very disturbing because tanks often fired over the top of our infantry and could have catastrophic results.

The Squadron was ordered to change over from the suspect yellow coloured rounds to safe green issue in June 1969. Information received by the Squadron that some of the rounds may have been sabotaged and the green rounds were safe. No more feedback of foul play was received and all green rounds performed as designed.

Changing Main Barrel in the field

One downside to using canister and armour piercing rounds was they used maximum charge and the friction caused more wear in the barrel than HE round. Engaging bunker systems really stressed the barrel due to excessive use of these two types of rounds, and Sweet Fanny destroyed her fair share, and a replacement barrel was required. Because of the continual presence of the enemy this barrel exchange needed to be carried out in the field. One of the first procedures is to take the smoke extractor off then undo the securing bolts, twist the barrel one quarter of a turn and remove. This operation was carried out by the L.A.D. with a fitters M113 carrier and utilising light crane (referred to as a HI – AB).

The principal of the smoke extractor was state of the art in its day and worked by having angular front facing holes in the barrel and when the round passed up the bore it created a vacuum until it left the barrel. Because the breach was still closed, air rushed into the muzzle pushing the cordite fumes into the empty chamber of the smoke extractor.

**NSW BRANCH****2021 AVCAT SCHOLARSHIP
RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS**

The NSW Branch congratulates the following members who were successful prize winners in this year's AVCAT Scholarship raffle draw.

The Raffle assists with the funding of scholarships for the children and/or grand-children of Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, who may be struggling on their Repatriation Pensions and do not have the spare financial resources, or are in necessitous circumstances to help these children through tertiary education.

The Raffle was drawn in the Veteran Support Centre Office, Granville, in the presence of Committee members present at the NSW Branch June 2021 Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 9th June 2021. The Lucky winners are:

1st Prize: Patrick Thorpe Silverdale NSW

2nd Prize: Lan Tran Lidcombe NSW

3rd Prize: Ian Stanbury Beverford VIC

4th Prize: John Hopman Randwick NSW

We thank all ticket buyers for their support of the AVCAT Scholarship program.

FROM THE SECRETARY



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

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

\$2,000	Anonymous
\$1,500	Anonymous
\$1,000	Amelia Jenkins
\$500	Reg Bateup, Anonymous
\$400	Anonymous
\$320	Anonymous
\$300	Theo Wisman
\$270	Ivan Waskiw, Thomas Grills
\$250	David Gibbs
\$200	Gary Boylett, Patrick Gallagher, Peter Paterson, Robert Edmonds Elton Robinson

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

Ron O'Connor JP
National and NSW Secretary

DCO NAME CHANGE

Defence People Group, Defence Community Organisation (DCO) has changed its name from 1 July 2021 to

Defence Member and Family Support(DMFS) Branch.

The new name was selected because of its strong alignment to the branch vision 'A strong, networked, resilient and capable Defence community supporting ADF members and their families' and clear description of 'what we do and who we do it for'. It will help the branch to strengthen its position within the broader community as a trusted, Defence-led service.

Updating your information

We would greatly appreciate your support by updating references in your materials as per below guidance:

Website links:

from 1 July 2021 all existing DCO web pages will be automatically redirected to www.defence.gov.au/members-families which is the new landing page for member and family information

- please update your links to reflect the new URL noting there will be redirects in place
- historical references to Defence Community Organisation (DCO) do not require updating such as old newsletters, articles etc.

Social media:

Social media handles will be updated:

- Facebook: @DefenceMemberFamilySupport
- Instagram: @dmfs_ausdefence

Twitter: @DMFS_AusDefence

Defence Member and Family Helpline

- the Helpline number will remain the same: 1800 624 608

the email address will be updated to

memberandfamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au

redirects will be in place to ensure service is not disrupted.

Services won't be impacted

While we are changing our name, it is important to note that there will be no changes to any of the services and/or programs currently offered to ADF members and their families. The local area offices around Australia will remain and there will be no changes to the Defence Family Helpline number 1800 624 608, but the Helpline will be retitled Defence Member and Family Helpline.

ESORT Secretariat

On behalf of the Department of Defence



JOIN US AND BECOME A MEMBER

We continually strive for the rights of veterans and their families, whenever changes to the laws that govern and recognise their service threatens to diminish just and fair compensation for those that are sent to fight Australia's wars.

We achieve our aims by continued vigilance of government proposals that affect the Acts of parliaments protecting veterans rights and entitlements by; assuring that DVA uphold and enable due process of claims to the letter of those laws; by lobbying government and ministers where the laws could be improved for the benefit of veterans and their families.

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

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

We encourage membership from all veterans, service and ex-service members, as well as war-widows and their families together with all those who support our objectives.

The following form will give you the opportunity to seek membership of the VVFA at any of our State Branches and/or Sub-Branches, of your choosing, from the Branch lists found on our websites,

(<http://www.vvfa.org.au>) (<http://www.vvfagranville.org>), or as listed in our Newsletters.

Please complete this form in clear printed definition in the boxes applicable for your personal details. Naturally, all privacy issues and existing policy concerning your details will be strictly enforced and never passed, copied or sold to any other entity. It is in your interest not to attempt to complete the form on-line as this method is currently unavailable.

Do you wish to become a member? All you need to do is to complete the following information and send it to the State Branch of your choice as listed on page 72 and you will be sent an application form.

PREFERRED BRANCH/SUB-BRANCH

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

STREET ADDRESS

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE OTHER PHONE

----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]

SIGNATURE

DATE

----------------------	----------------------

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Playing football in a war zone

By Ian Granland

During 1970, the year I spent one of my two years in National Service, I was posted to 104 Signal Squadron in South Vietnam. I was 21.

Before call-up I had resided in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney and had played Aussie Rules Football and as young as I was, had been a senior club administrator of the game from 17 – they had no-one else!!

When I arrived in Nui Dat, the Australian Army's main base in Vietnam, organised sport was almost non-existent, apart from the occasional dart tournament at the boozier.

Someone in our unit organised a game of Australian Football against our sister signal unit, the Vung Tau based 110 Signal Squadron. The game was played on the grass parade ground of an indigenous police academy somewhere around the Vung Tau area. It got me wondering if we could organise a game at Nui Dat.

There weren't too many areas of a suitable size on which we could play the game at the Dat. In fact I didn't know of any, however I was later to learn there **was** one within the Task Force Area.

Inquiries revealed that this ground was around the area of 1 Australian Reinforcement Unit.

A friend from our troop, Geoff Morris and

I did a recce and located the area. Yes it was big enough for Australian Football and it even had posts erected but the grass across the oval ranged from 20cm to 1m in height. That meant that it would have to be cut.

In the meantime I organised a game against 106 Field Workshops for the coming late



Saturday afternoon. We needed an opposition who could get off duty reasonably easily.

We had shift workers, radio maintenance diggers and of course, clerks, cooks etc. So getting our group together wasn't too difficult. Of course we needed a coach – not me.

Next job was to locate a slasher. Word of mouth told us that 105 Field Battery had an old Massey Ferguson Tractor with which they used to tow their guns, plus, a slasher.

We asked and were given permission to

(Continued on page 49)

use it. So we drove the vehicle from there over to the field and Geoff began driving it round and round, and round. He got it down reasonably short but certainly not bowling green stuff. We had to mow it again on the day before the game because we realised the grass would grow significantly enough to require another cut.

This was 1970, pre centre square and 50m arcs so we got a hand mower and mowed in the goal squares, centre circle and boundary. Then we were ready to go.

I didn't know where or who we could get to officiate, so I umpired the game. Something I had never done before, but I did know the rules.

The players turned up in their Land Rovers and trucks. For the life of me I can't remember what jumpers they wore, if any, surely it wasn't "skins v shirts"? But there was ample players of all ages, size and shape all primed for a game. And, there were some bloody good footballers amongst them too. I really wish I had got a photograph.

Our unit won the game – I think, well, they did have the umpire on their side – *just*

kidding. I copped a bit of abuse from the opposition and maybe a bit from my side as well, but that is par for the course. It was in the days of the one central umpire.

The out of bounds on the full rule had only just been introduced and of course I applied it. Some of the older heads were not too happy but recognized that it had become a law of the game.

There was no function, after the match or anything like that, no speeches or best player awards, just back to the units. But, it was a good relief, something a bit different because obviously, everyone who played etc. loved the game.

We could listen to the VFL games on Radio Australia of a Saturday Afternoon. I remember that year, it was when South Melbourne played off in the first semi final before 104,000 at the MCG against St Kilda and received a fair hiding 22-11 (143) to 13-12 (90).

It was the first final South had featured in in a final for years. I hid in my tent and listened, hoping for a South win. ■



Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Marble to embarkation

Al Wood's story (quite possibly your story too)

My marble was drawn

My 'marble' was drawn in the 4th ballot in late 1966, by ex-test cricket captain Lindsay Hassett, and it was some time before I could discover if I'd been "lucky". I was working as a Public Service "pen-pusher" in Sydney at the time, not bad money, but for a 20yr old, pretty boring stuff for one brought-up on a diet of John Wayne movies and action comics. Once I learnt that the information was available on personal application, and couldn't contain my curiosity any longer, so one lunch-break, I walked across to Chifley Square, to enquire. The clerk went away, and presently returned, with the solemn news that I was "in". To his surprise, my response was something like "you little beauty!", and I skipped away back to the office, with visions of derring-do going through my head, with the promised great adventure ahead. When I got home that evening, I recall that my dad said very little, but mum had me already measured-up for a "box". It was to be some months before things got properly moving though. I had to receive official notification and attend a medical exam.

The big day came on Wednesday 19 April 1967, and I was to present myself at Arncliffe depot, for further medical and dental checks. My parents drove me in, and goodbyes were said at



1 RTB Kapooka Barrack Blocks

the gates. I can't remember their emotional state that day, only my own excitement. We were bussed in convoy down to Wagga, a journey lasting many hours, and arrived at Kapooka camp (1RTB) in the dark in the very early hours. After being put to bed for what remained of the night, the next morning was made busy shedding our civilian clothes, (to be sent back to our parents I think, hopefully the only time they would receive a parcel of my personal belongings), issued with a full kit of obviously antiquated military gear at the QM store, and were marched off to the ablution-

(Continued on page 51)



First day in 'boot camp, 1967

block, where a brace of barbers from town were honing-up their shears for our regulation "short back 'n sides". I heard one new guy, obviously sensitive to current hair fashion, ask his barber to do a bit here and a bit there. The barber responded by just moving the electric clippers over and over his head, 'til all trace of his crowning glory was obliterated. Thus was the fate which soon befell all of us.

We were assigned to a room in a multi-story barrack block, me rooming with Lee Shipley, a "journo" from around Gosford way, (who I soon teamed-up with), Jimmy Last, (a school-teacher), and Tony Wodianicky, all of us now in 20 Platoon D Company.

Our Platoon Commander was a Lieutenant Kerr, who we didn't see much of. I later heard that he'd gone into army aviation. Platoon-Sergeant was Sergeant Nelson, who of course, gave us a rough time, as was his job, breaking us down from the civilian mould, to rebuild us into a "rough, tough, fighting machine!!" There was to be no leave into Wagga township or home, for about 6 weeks, except in an emergency, and in that time,

we learnt the fundamentals and finer points of 'drill w/o arms', 'drill with arms', (over and over and over again), physical training, route-marches, fundamental arm's handling, map-reading, etc, etc. Funny thing though, after a time, our loose-knit group began to pull together as a team, giving one guy who refused to pull his weight, a hard time.

I remember on a 20 mile route-march in full pack we took out towards a place called The Rock Those who faltered were helped along by the others. We were all going to make it, whatever came. Must have been satisfying to Sergeant Nelson, though he'd never admit it to us of course. Towards the end of our 3 months. at Kapooka, we were surveyed as to which army corps we would like to go to. We were to give two choices. I kind of thought that being APC M113 crew looked pretty 'cool', sleeping in hammocks inside, rather than on the ground, having an Esky



20 mile route march, Kapooka

for necessary food and beverage supplies, and not having to walk everywhere. My second choice, and in hindsight a mistake to indicate on this survey, was Infantry. BIG mistake, as I think my first choice was somehow overlooked. Hello RAR! With my previous Public Service clerical background, some people said I should have nominated for a Service Corp. posting, pushing a pen somewhere, but I wanted to get as far from that as possible. Besides, apart from family ties, I

(Continued on page 52)

had no other hold on me. I wanted to be in a "fighting corps". It's an interesting statistic, that of the 45 in my platoon at 1RTB, I find that just 25 went on to serve in Vietnam, and of these, only 12 served in the infantry.

I had heard of the easy-lifestyle experienced by those posted to units at Malacca in Malaysia, with servants to do the hard 'yakka'. Sounded like a real holiday on full pay to me. 'I

weeks, we honed our skills under the watchful eye of Sergeant Zymski ; small-arm's training, PT, bush skills, map-reading, (I was good at that), drill, etc. One afternoon, we were all marched down to the camp theatre, there to watch the recently released movie "Zulu", principally to observe the discipline displayed by the British soldiers there at Rorke's Drift in 1879. I also put-up my hand for a one-day officer-training aptitude test, to be sent to

OTC at Scheyville, out near Windsor, west of Sydney. Really didn't think I was 'foreman material' but thought I may as well have a go. Nothing to lose. Various team-exercises, followed by a meal in the officer's mess, but no! It wasn't to be. I was destined to remain a 'grunt'.

We had more freedom of leave over some weekends starting lunchtime Saturday, and went home to Sydney sometimes, driving down the Putty Rd., and also down to Newcastle on occasion. Got a lift in Bobby Byrne's VW "Beetle". He lived over on the North Shore in Sydney



Marching Out Parade Kapooka 27 June 1967

could live with that', I thought. So I opted for the RAR. Silly naive me!

In late June, our families attended a "marching-out" parade, overseen by the 1RTB CO, Col. Oxley. Fortunately for all, the weather, though brisk, was fine, as all that "spit 'n polish" we'd lavished on our kit could be better appreciated. We were then posted off to our respective corps training schools, in my case, by rail to the Infantry Training Centre at Singleton, in the Hunter Valley, NSW. Mid-winter there, as it was at Kapooka, was not very pleasant, especially at early morning-parade, often carrying our bed-sheets over a shoulder, to ensure we would have to remake our beds daily. Sergeant Zymski, our new platoon-sergeant, introduced himself to us on parade that first morning with the words "I am God", and we certainly believed him. Must have, I still remember those words. For the next 12

somewhere. He went on to be assigned to 4RAR like me, and was to later die of wounds received in Vietnam, after spending some months in a coma at Concord Repatriation Hospital in Sydney. Inter-platoon rivalry grew rather intense as time passed. I recall that one guy in our platoon who didn't appear to be 'pulling his weight', was waylaid in the "ablution" block (toilet block to civies) on one occasion, while a number of the platoon members worked a little "persuasion" on him. We finished our training with an exercise up in the nearby Bulga Mountains, where our "enemy" we were told, were to be members of the SAS Regiment. We were further told that should any of us be captured by them, though we would be returned still breathing, rather 'unmentionable things' awaited us from their rough handling. On one night, we were all rostered two at a time and

(Continued on page 53)

overlapping, for a two-hour duty in the 'gun-pit' on sentry piquet. As each of us arrived throughout that moonless night, it was quietly passed-on that there were some 'blackened-up' SAS out front, edging slowly and silently ever closer, only moving when the breeze rustled the leaves. Rest assured, nobody slept on sentry that night. In fact, I remember an aboriginal guy from Cowra, NSW, (Terry Stacy was his name) in the pit with me for an hour. All I could see of him were his wide eyes. I have never been so bloody cold as the nights out on that exercise. On one particular night, though we were told that an A4 charge awaited anyone lighting a fire to keep warm, one guy did just that, and he was.

Halcyon days in the "HD" club.

In early September 1967, the new members of 4RAR, (myself included), bade a fond farewell to our "beloved" drill-sergeant Zymski, and travelled by bus to join our unit, not yet returned from active-duty in Borneo and Malaysia. I remember travelling into Brisbane in the gathering evening darkness, past the developing site for the forthcoming World Scout Jamboree out at the now-named suburb of Jamboree Heights, and arriving at our new home at Enoggera Barracks in the early evening to settle in.

This was to be the start of a very easy 3 months for us, all at that stage housed in the "*High-Density*", or HD accommodation block, 3 storeys high, with about 4 to a room, as well as beds lining the corridors, with ablutions at the far end of each floor. We had a farmer from Victoria in my room, Alan Davis, who occasionally regaled us with a rendition on his bagpipes. Luckily I like the pipes eh! Lazy days were to follow, as a small number of present 4RAR staff did duty, the remainder, as they returned from overseas, going on leave 'til early in the new year.

Parades were few, food was plentiful at the mess (heaps of steaks, all you could eat), and leave was frequent, usually into town, where my mates and I were to be found at the Arcadia Hotel at the

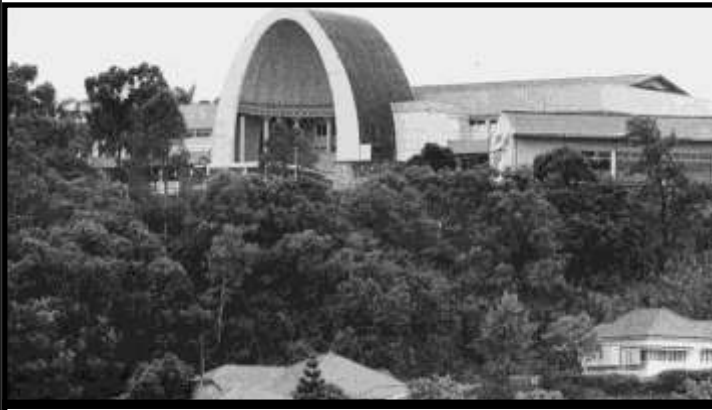


Lands Office Hotel with Shorty Partridge and Greg Reid
(C Company)

top of Elizabeth Street, the Land's Office Hotel around the corner in George Street, or at the Treasury Hotel also in George Street, with its punkah swinging from the front bar ceiling, all now long gone. The Grand Hotel down at the far end of town was the best venue for a bit of "stoush" if one was in the mood, and the tables and chairs were all bolted to the floor, and for very good reason. One evening there with several mates, and quietly behaving ourselves as we always did, a rather scruffy older woman, 'apparently quite intoxicated, also with a tiny creature crawling about in her hair, (I thought and hoped it was only a small possum), took a great fancy to "Shorty" Partridge of "C" Coy. (sitting at centre of image above) and was literally 'all over him', much to our mirth, and his extreme discomfort and pleas for assistance. We told him how lucky he was to have this attraction, through tears of laughter, but I really don't think he believed us.

Always good for a late-night snack in the central-city streets was a "café de wheels" which appeared nightly in Edward Street, between Queen and Adelaide, serving-up pies 'n' pasties, etc, with coffee 'n' tea, and such. At the opposite end of the spectrum of respectability was Christie's Restaurant and Milk-Bar, to be found in Queen Street down near the Edward Street corner. There

(Continued on page 54)



Cloudland in Brisbane

was also a great little nightclub alongside the Arcadia where every table was prominently numbered, each being furnished with an "in-house" telephone (just dial-up a table-number of choice) to call-up girls sitting at other tables for an anonymous chat if the mood hit. Soft lights, music, booze, all the ingredients. - it was a great place for a 'pickup'. Other popular destinations, but usually on a Saturday night, were a small floating dance-hall down a long and steep flight of stairs to the river in town, a drive down to The Glen Hotel out near Eight-Mile Plains in the city's south, or to what was commonly referred to amongst us as "The Bulk Store"; better known as Cloudland, an old-fashioned large and very prominent "big-band" dance-hall perched on the

top of a hill out at Bowen Hills, with "wall-to-wall" single females in attendance. If you couldn't get a 'pickup' there, then you weren't trying.

I found a girlfriend from there in my first week in Brisbane, she lived out near Capalaba as I recall. (I was also to find another girlfriend there just a week before I sailed in May '68.) As it was difficult to travel out to Capalaba at awkward weekend hours by public



Cawston and 'Kempie'



Saturday night at Cloudland

transport, my next essential was to get a set of wheels, so I soon had me an old FE Holden for \$300, picked-up from a dealer out at Albion. (Bill Harrison Motors). There was a large rust-hole in the front passenger-side floor with a rubber mat over it, very handy after a "heavy" night out and driving back to camp, as one didn't really have to stop moving if someone was "busting for a leak". When the wind got up, so did the mat as we moved along, with a mate

(Continued on page 55)

Bob “Zorro” Page from Colac, Vic., hanging out a window yelling “ariba, ariba” [cheer shouted by the cartoon mouse *Speedy Gonzales*] to all and sundry as we passed-by. We’d also take the occasional weekend down on the Gold Coast, where Greg Reid, “Shorty” Partridge and I, would make the best of sleeping in my car and spend the odd hour together at the Cabbage-Patch beer-garden at Coolangatta. Eats were obtained from what we referred to as the “Chew and Spew” café, in the main street of Coolangatta. These were wild and carefree times!! We were all indestructible then. Young ‘n dumb I guess !

Life at Enoggera during those 3 months revolved around duty, (or ducking it); usually in the mess, (OR’s, Officers or Sergeants), gardening details, or sentry duty. I spent my 21st doing the latter in fact. I recall early one morning being told that in our shower block in the HD, there were several ‘ladies’ of very questionable morals, to be found. A number of us attended a fortnight’s Mortar Course down at Ingleburn outside Sydney during November, which was very convenient for me, as I came from Sydney. Life was very lazy. In early December, we and the rest of the country were shocked when the P.M. Harold Holt disappeared while swimming off a beach in Victoria. Rumours had it that he’d been picked-up and whisked away by a Chinese submarine.

During this time in Brisbane, a contingent from the British Army’s “King’s Own Shropshire Light Infantry” stayed for a few days in the barracks nearby, post-exercising up north I think. They marched everywhere at “double-quicktime”, which seemed very comical to us, but I really did like that “rainbow”-striped belt of theirs and tried to barter for one at a pub in Brisbane. They wouldn’t part with it though. Several days were occupied with a party of us travelling down to Hamilton Wharf by truck to do stevedoring duties on the British supply ship “Sir Lancelot”, then loading a cargo for Vietnam. Took us longer than it should I suppose but we were in no hurry to get the job finished. It broke the boredom anyway. Some time was even spent by some across the road at the local pub. As several of the blokes

could operate forklifts, they held a jousting bout down on the cargo-deck for our entertainment. My favourite music then was by Garry Puckett and The Union Gap and Engelbert Humperdinck’s “Last Waltz” was not bad either.

Training up for bigger things to come

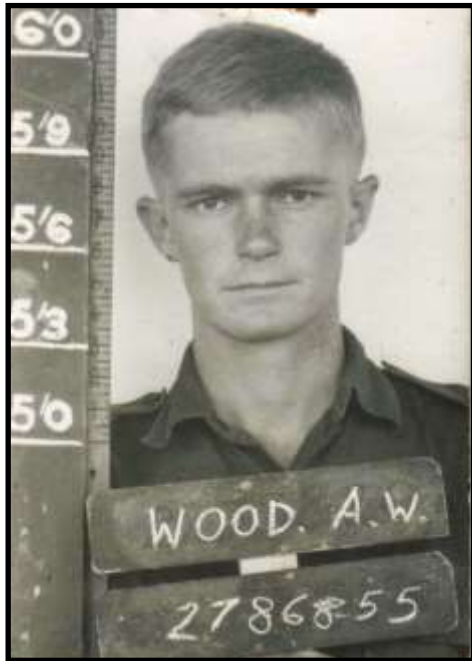
As those who had been on extended post-tour leave began to return to barracks into January, our holiday was finally drawing to an end. Lieutenant Max Chambers was appointed to be our platoon commander with Gerry Villalba his sergeant, and to us new blokes, our nemesis. Continuous rounds of drilling, route-marching around the suburban streets of Brisbane, (as far afield as Keperra), range-practice out at Greenbank, tracker training, practice in “choppers” loading and unloading on



Buddies: Jimmy Cawston, ‘Tubby Woods’, ‘Hollywood’ Hunter

the base’s football field, bushcraft, practicing with armoured personnel carriers (APC’s), numerous parades, practice with Recoilless Rifles, (both in camp and out on the range), training, training, training. But the time went by faster than in late ’67. Sometime during April, we found ourselves up in the Shoalwater/Tin-Can Bay area near Rockhampton for a week’s exercise, made a little more palatable by a small group of us, while riding on an APC on one occasion, discovering a beachside pub to buy a few cans of Mac’s, then travelling at some speed down the long beach ‘til we were brought to an abrupt halt by the discovery of some girls sitting on the beach, who looked as though they were badly in need of a drink and a

(Continued on page 56)



little convivial company.

We were some weeks later off to Canungra Jungle Training Centre (JTC) for a 2-week stint. There, it was to be yet more weapon's training, bayonet-fighting, tracker-training, battle condition's practice, where we crawled beneath barbed-wire entanglements over a course through mud, whilst an old Vicker's machine-gun fired live bursts over us into a vast rock wall on the far side of the valley. The infamous obstacle course was awaiting us at course's completion, with its much feared "bear-pit", full of all kinds of obnoxious materials.

As I recall, on the river crossing, where one had to cross-over through the water pulling yourself on a rope fixed at each end, Jimmy Cawston, our English platoon member, (conscripted whilst in Sydney on holiday from his home in Essex), had "the gun" strapped on his back. After its 22lb weight pulled him under for the 3rd time, he wasn't going down for a 4th count. He promptly uncoupled it and it sank to the river's bottom. He was promptly placed on an A4 (charge), and the M60 had to be later retrieved by a staff member of JTC. The course finished with the climbing of a tower in full webbing, kit and weapons and a leap into the river from around 25 metres. Before this, and luckily, they would ask

about one's swimming ability. They didn't wish to lose anyone prior to Vietnam.....did they?

Immediately after Canungra, we spent a further 2 weeks in Northern NSW at the Wiangaree State Forest, brushing-up further on our bushcraft, patrolling techniques, ambushing and tracking practice. This place was absolute "hell". Straight up and down stuff, with lots of "scrub-bashing", ants, leeches, mosquitoes, 'wait-a-while" vegetation, snakes. Vietnam would be a breeze after this place, I'm sure. Glad to get back to Brisbane and some real food, girls, soft beds, girls, showers, girls, pubs, girls, again.

As May '68 came, we went on final embarkation leave and, upon return to base, arranged a platoon party for our final Saturday night. Our destination was to be Bishop Island at the mouth of the Brisbane River, with a BBQ, booze, wives, girlfriends, concubines, whatever. Chartered a small ferry out, and a great time was had by all, to various degrees, I'm sure. I remember that I walked with the girl I was with down to the beach and gazed out to the number of small launches and yachts bobbing about in the gloom, anchored just off-shore. As I remember, she said something about us commandeering a nearby row-boat and going out to "look them over more closely", but I ignored her suggestion. In hindsight, Was I slow, or what?

Couldn't take it with me where I was headed, so I finally had to offload my old vehicle. All I received after much barter was \$10, and that for its battery, which incidentally had been taken out of a long abandoned car in our car-park near the HD Club building at Enoggera. I think the previous owner had "gone over the hill" (AWOL) quite some time earlier, so we assumed he had no further use for it.

Came our last day in Brisbane before departure, Monday 20 May, (see Dec. 2019 edition for continuation of this article).

All Wood ■



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

AVCAT

SCHOLARSHIPS



Transforming lives through education

Applications open 18 August, and close midnight 31 October 2021.

AVCAT Scholarships, including the Long Tan Bursary, are for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Scholarships provide up to \$4000 per year, for three years, to full-time students at uni, TAFE or a registered training organisation.



Scholarship Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria includes Australian residency, child or grandchild of Australian ex-serving veteran, full-time tertiary student in 2022 at uni, TAFE or a registered training organisation, in receipt of or eligible to receive Centrelink payments including Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy or an accepted means-tested Commonwealth government payment.

'My AVCAT Scholarship gave me confidence that I still draw on. It's something that cannot be taken away.'

– AVCAT Scholar

Apply online at avcat.org.au

Calling C Company 4RAR

Historian Dr Sean Carwardine wants to understand your fire-fight with the VC at the Horseshoe in July 1968

Firstly my name is Dr Sean Carwardine, 'Carbs'. I am an ex-Airfield Defence Guard of 21 years and a veteran of Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Last year I completed a PhD into the policy of RAAF airfield defence 1929 – 1970. During this investigation I came across an event in Vietnam.

A quick 'what happened':

Three Airfield Defence Guards were sent to 4RAR at the Horse Shoe in July 1968.

While on check point duty at a MG pit, an attack happened and a soldier Patrick Shane. O'Connor was killed (7 July 1968).

I am trying to find any member of Charlie Company 4RAR (particularly 9 Platoon Charlie Company) that remembers the incident and/or remembers the Airfield Defence Guards being attached.

I would be most grateful if you would contact me by phone or e-mail.

Thank you.
Sean

Dr Sean Carwardine. BEd (PrimtoMidYrs), MHist (RAAF Airfield Defence), PhD.
RAAF Airfield Defence & Security Force Historian.

'Defend the Eyrie'

M: 0400703565

E: carbs99@bigpond.com

Some excerpts from the report of an Airfield Defence Guard involved.

'The very next day the section I was in was sent on a mission to man a checkpoint on the main road; this main road was dirt and it ran parallel to the horseshoe, this was 'Checkpoint Charlie'. This checkpoint was to monitor all traffic that passed in and out of Dat Do. The position was set with a machine gun bunker at each end...'

'I had been there awhile when the Digger in the other bunker called out and asked me if he would like to exchange places for a break. As we swapped places I noticed that all civilian and animal traffic had stopped and that the people were congregating as if in a traffic jam about 150 metres from the check point...'

'As I arrived at my new position I looked back at the Digger who had exchanged with me and saw what looked like a black ball going through the air from the heavily wooded area toward his position. The 'ball' landed between the feet of the digger then exploded, killing him and disabling the M60. The incoming M79 must have been the initiating signal for the VC in the wooded area to attack...'

'The other diggers in the waiting area moved out of the bunker on the opposite side and took up a position on the ground and returned fire...'

'A passing Australian 'Bushranger' picked up the radio procedure and after radio contact was made swept in to lay down covering fire...'

'The relieving section arrived by APC from the Company Base camp atop the Horseshoe...'

THE GIFTED QUILT

I thought you might be able to let the Vietnam Veteran Motorcycle Club, members, who were at Goulburn a little time ago know where the impressive quilt that they raffled finished up.

It was won by a Taylors Arm Chap who regularly supports our RSL Sub-Branch raffles on a Friday night. On receiving the quilt, he thought it was too impressive to install in his bush house and as a result donated it to the Sub- Branch.

We had two options. The first was to have it beside our roll of honour boards in the local hall, where it would rarely be seen. The second to install it where it was constantly on show at our club house, "The Pub with No Beer". It is on display hanging behind the table where our raffles take place on a Friday night. The Vietnam Association Badge is with it on display.

It will be quite an attraction on our days of ceremonies, as after the event we go back to the Pub and put on some eats, the memorial is only two hundred yards away. The Pubs name changed from " The Cosmopolitan Hotel " to its current name.

During World War II the beer would arrive by truck but was unreliable. When the beer was running low, favoured customers got their share and the others were given rough plonk or told to go. Gordan Parsons (the noted country and western artist) was one of these so with his mates headed home up the valley. They had to stop halfway home to finish their drinks and Parsons put pen to paper to cheer his mates up.

When Slim Dusty just over the hill heard it, he put it to music and the Pub changes its name.

The Quilt will be appreciated in the community, and it gives us a chance to bring the valuable work for veterans and the community in general by Vietnam Veterans association to the public.

The photo, (Top left), is of the quilt has Jethro Ainsworth the donor (Winner of the raffle) and Terry Welsh our Vice President and Vietnam Veteran Association member I hope word of this might filter back to the Bike Riding Group and we might even see some of them some day.

Kind Regards
George Stuart Johnson



THE GIFTED QUILT
(left) Jethro Ainsworth (raffle winner) with
Taylors Arm RSLSB Vice President, and VVPPAA
NSW member Terry Welsh (right)

Get your life story recorded



In your own personal podcast
It's done over the phone or on Zoom by
professional broadcasters
www.myownstory.com.au
Call Matt for special deal - 0438 848 810

**Matt is the son of Ian Granland whose story
appears on page 48 of this issue...Ed.**

PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

Understanding home downsizing and super contributions

The Federal Government announced in the May Budget that it is widening the scope of the scheme allowing eligible Australians to sell their home and put extra money into their superannuation.

First introduced in the 2018-19 financial year, the "downsizer measure" has provided an opportunity for individuals 65 years and older to add up to \$300,000, and couples up to \$600,000, into their super from the proceeds of their home.

Data from the Australian Tax Office shows that, as of 30 April 2021, just over 23,000 older Australians had collectively made \$5.46 billion in downsizer contributions to their super fund.

But those numbers are set to increase significantly over time.

From 1 July 2022 the minimum age limit for participation will be reduced to 60, which will open the superannuation door for more people wanting to build up their superannuation account balance.

Here's what you need to know

The downsizer scheme is administered by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and has a range of eligibility criteria in addition to the minimum age requirements.

The ATO will only permit additional super contributions if they are made using the proceeds from selling your principal place of residence.

You or your spouse must have owned your home for 10 years or more prior to the sale, with your ownership calculated from the date of settlement when you bought your home.

Your home needs to be exempt or partially exempt from capital gains tax under the main residence exemption.

There's also a strict definition of what constitutes a home. It must be in Australia and cannot be a caravan, houseboat, or a mobile home.

You're unable to use the downsizer scheme to

deposit funds from the sale of an investment property. These can only be done through a non-concessional (tax-paid) super contribution.

Downsizer super contributions must be made within 90 days after you receive the proceeds of your home sale. The ATO will allow for a longer period if the delay is due to circumstances beyond your control.

The downsizer measure is a one-off, so once you've made a super contribution, you're unable to do so again by using the proceeds from another home in the future.

However, if the home that is sold is only owned by one spouse, the spouse that does not have an ownership interest is able to make a downsizer contribution or have one made on their behalf, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements.

Downsizer contributions form part of the tax-free component in your super fund. They can be made in addition to non-concessional super contributions and do not count towards your personal super contribution limit.

They can also be made even if you have a total super balance of more than \$1.6 million.

Your downsizer contribution will not affect your total superannuation balance until your total super balance is re-calculated to include all your contributions, including your downsizer contributions, on 30 June at the end of each financial year.

Ultimately any downsizer contributions you make however will count towards your tax-free transfer balance limit when you move into pension phase at retirement.

You'll need to make sure your super fund (or funds) accepts downsizer contributions. If you don't currently have an open account with a super fund, you'll need to open a new super account to make your downsizer contribution.

You'll also need to provide your fund with a completed Downsizer contribution into super form, which can be downloaded from the ATO's website, either before or at the time of making your downsizer contribution.

Be mindful of the pension assets test

People considering making a home downsizer contribution into super – especially those already receiving a partial or full government Age/DVA Pension – should do proper due diligence.

Because the Age/DVA Pension is calculated on the value of all assets outside of your family home, including the amount you have in your super accumulation or pension account, a large cash injection from your home proceeds may result in a breach of assets test rules.

Under what's known as the taper rate, Age Pension entitlements are reduced by \$3 per fortnight for every \$1,000 in assets over the Government's asset test thresholds.

The current assets test limits are shown in the table below.

Full Age/ DVA Pension	Homeowner	Non- Homeowner
Single	\$268,000	\$482,500
Couple	\$401,500	\$616,000
Part Age/ DVA Pension	Homeowner	Non- Homeowner
Single	\$585,750	\$800,250
Couple	\$880,500	\$1,095,000

Source: Department of Human Services, limits effective 20 March 2021

Once an individual or couple breach the limits for the full Age Pension, their fortnightly payments will gradually reduce using the taper rate. Those on a part pension could find their payments cease altogether if they move above the maximum thresholds.

So, even with a higher superannuation balance because of your home sale contribution, your total income stream could be less than what you received from a full or part Age Pension.

It's therefore essential to seek out professional financial advice before proceeding, especially with respect to social security means testing.

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

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

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



Extract from *The Long Shadow*

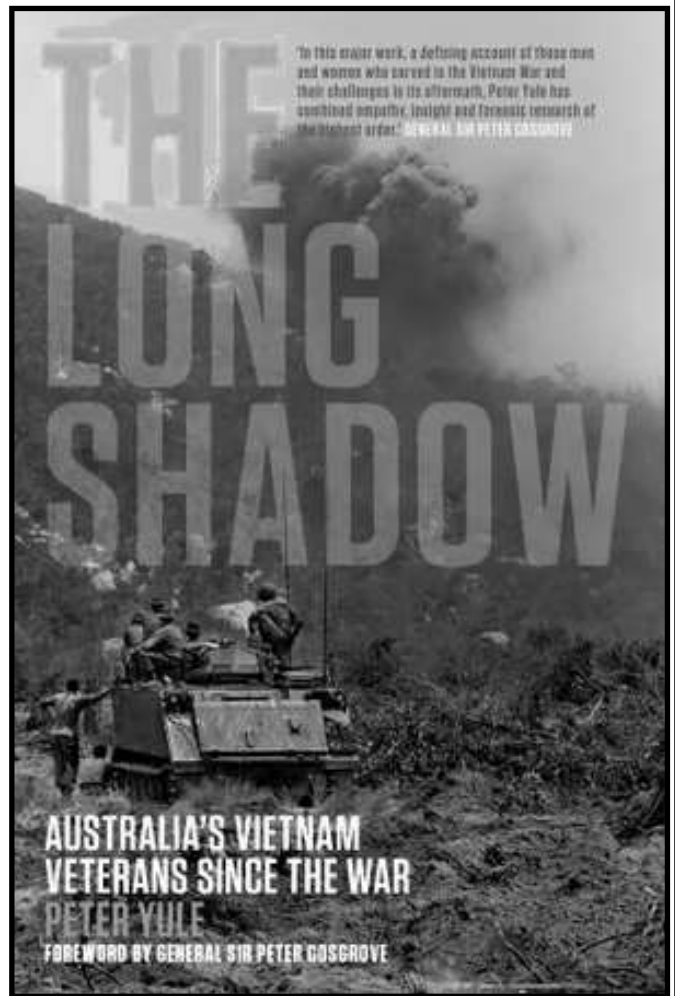
The Long Shadow

Australia's Vietnam Veterans Since the War

An extract from the book

'Graeme Killer, who became principal medical advisor to DVA in 1991, recalls that the department was not prepared for the mental issues that emerged among Vietnam veterans. There was little understanding of the scale of the problems or how best to help affected veterans. This was surprising because in the early 1980s when veterans had claimed that many physical and mental ailments were due to exposure to toxic chemicals, DVA had responded by arguing that the mental issues originated in mental stress. Apart from the establishment of the VVCS, however, DVA had done little to address veterans' mental health problems, possibly because some within the department believed they were no more real than the claims of chemical poisoning.

After a decade of paying little attention to mental health issues, DVA was subjected to heavy pressure from veterans' organisations to change its approach. This prompted Dr Killer to advise the department to send a team to America to investigate developments in the understanding and treatment of war-caused trauma. The visit opened the eyes of the DVA delegation to the progress that had been made in understanding and treating veterans' mental health problems and led to major changes in the departments' attitude and approach and the establishment of the National Centre for War-Related PTSD at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. ■



The VVFA campaigned for twenty years to have the flawed and insulting Official History account of the Agent Orange controversy, rewritten.

The Australian War Memorial Council was eventually convinced and in 2015 commissioned eminent historian Dr Peter Yule to author the story of the health and medical legacies of the Vietnam War.

Books are available from the NSW Granville Office, on-line from the AWM and other good book stores.

E-books can be downloaded more cheaply. ■

REUNIONS & NOTICES

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



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

JUST CALL 1800 011 046

If overseas call +61 8 8241 4546

FORMERLY KNOWN AS

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service



**Call
24/7**

A service founded by Vietnam veterans



1300 924 522

Our programs

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

Veterans services

Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah provide compassionate care for those in need of psychiatric help. The goal of the hospitals is to provide positive outcomes, not only for our **patients** with a mental illness but also for their **family and carers**. As centres of excellence within Wesley Mission our Wesley Hospitals have been providing professional and compassionate care for over 60 years.

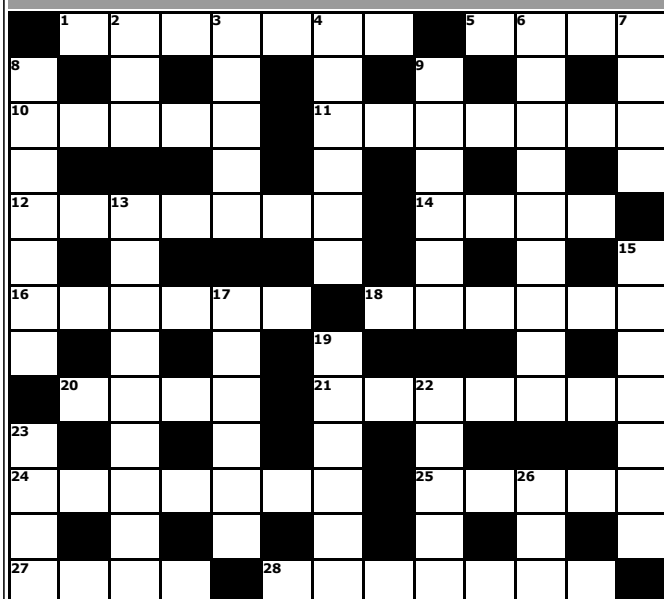
Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah are private psychiatric hospitals which offer both **in-patient** and **day patient** services. Our treatment programs combine medication, therapy and include life skills and support networks to ensure recovery is effective, ongoing and enriching.

**91 Milton Street,
Ashfield NSW 2131**

&

**7 Blake Street,
Kogarah NSW 2217**

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

1. Brings in
5. Russian ruler
10. Bird of prey
11. Less older
12. Gangster
14. Jump
16. Light source
18. Live in
20. Continent
21. Link with
24. Find size
25. Lucid
27. Fastened
28. Type of polish

DOWN

2. Coffee vessel
3. Musical drama
4. Endeavouring
6. Autograph
7. Unusual
8. Army Navy etc.
9. Communal
13. Rural painting
15. Puzzle
17. Consortium
19. Plan, plot
22. Smooches
23. Leave out
26. Period, age

Solution next issue...

April 2021 SOLUTION

S	U	L	T	A	N	A	S		B	O	S	S
K		O		X		S		D		R		E
U	N	C	L	E		S	L	E	N	D	E	R
N		A		D		U		S		E		V
K	I	T	E		C	R	I	T	E	R	I	A
		E		P		E		R				N
R	I	D	G	E	S		F	O	U	G	H	T
E					R		G		Y		R	
P	L	A	T	F	O	R	M		H	A	T	S
E		C		U		O		B		N		H
A	T	T	E	M	P	T		R	A	D	I	O
T		E		E		T		A		M		W
S	I	D	E		M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N

THE UNKNOWN COMIC

One day, Einstein has to speak at an important science conference. On the way there, he tells his driver that looks a bit like him: "I'm sick of all these conferences. I always say the same things over and over!" The driver agrees: "You're right. As your driver, I attended all of them, and even though I don't know anything about science, I could give the conference in your place."

"That's a great idea!" says Einstein. "Let's switch places then!" So they switch clothes and as soon as they arrive, the driver dressed as Einstein goes on stage and starts giving the usual speech, while the real Einstein, dressed as the car driver, attends it. But in the crowd, there is one scientist who wants to impress everyone and thinks of a very difficult question to ask Einstein, hoping he won't be able to respond. So this guy stands up and interrupts the conference by posing his very difficult question. The whole room goes silent, holding their breath, waiting for the response. The driver looks at him, dead in the eye, and says: "Sir, your question is so easy to answer that I'm going to let my driver reply to it for me."

Sometimes I can lie awake for hours worrying over ridiculous things—like, How does the chap who drive a snowplough get to work...

Exit signs are on the way out.

A completely inebriated man was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter. A cop pulled up and said, "I've got to take you in pal. You're obviously drunk." The wasted man asked, "Officer, are ya absolutely sure I'm drunk?" "Yeah buddy, I'm sure," said the cop, "Let's go." Breathing a sigh of relief, the wino said, "Thank goodness. I thought I was crippled."

I told my boss three companies were after me and I needed a raise to stay at my job. We haggled for a few minutes and he gave me a 5% raise. Leaving his office, he stopped and asked me, "By the way, which companies are after you?" I responded, "The gas, electric, and loan company."

Was the person who named the fireplace just lazy?

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

--	--	--

OLD DETAILS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

OLD ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

NEW DETAILS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

NEW ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Complete all sections and post to:

The Secretary
 VVPPAA NSW
 PO Box 170
 Granville
 NSW 2142

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

VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

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

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

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

Please print clearly

VETERANS DETAILS

SURNAME FIRST NAME SERVICE NUMBER

--	--	--

SVN UNIT/S TOUR DATES

--	--

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

--

SR Service Related **UNK** Unknown **S** Suicide **O** Other)

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

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

YOUR NAME

--

SUBURB/TOWN STATE POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE MOBILE PHONE SIGNATURE

--	--	--

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

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

VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING

NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE (VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE)

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

**VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA
FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING**

Currently in the ADF, Transitioning, a younger Veteran?

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

Simply select your preferred Branch or Sub-Branch from the list above, complete the form on page 47, and mail it, or email a copy, to the address indicated.

MERCHADISE FOR SALE

Please consider leaving a bequest in your will

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

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

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

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

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

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

Operation Life



Register Now!!

CALL **1800 011 046**

OPEN
Veterans & Families
Counselling
ARMS

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

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

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

FORMERLY

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service



Vale

Soldier Poet

Major Peter Rothwell

(24 July 1932- 3 June 2020)



IN MEMORY

**A tribute delivered at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney,
13 March 2021**

by Greg Lockhart (AATTV)

I am really delivering two tributes tonight; the first is one on behalf of Former Commander of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (ATTV), Brigadier (then Colonel) R.L. Burnard, who was Peter's Commanding Officer in Vietnam in 1967; the second is my own.

Brigadier Burnard asked me to deliver this first tribute, as he is unable to be here tonight.

I chose Peter to be my Adjutant as he had combat experience from Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam. I knew he disliked paperwork but the promise of a job with Special Force Forces 4 months later enabled him to become a very efficient administrator of the widespread Team. Peter spent most of his time as Adjutant travelling to wherever Team members were posted and became a valuable "eyes and ears" for me. I was sad when he left to command a Mike Force Company but he was the ideal man for the job.

We were both in Sydney postings when after the Anzac Day March in 1969 we decided we must have our own Banner and March as the Team. Peter played a major part in the raising and conduct of the AATTV Association both state-wide and nationally. It was during this work that Peter and I developed a mateship that has lasted over 50 years.

Peter published his first book of poetry "The

Jesus Nut" in 1973, joining military poets such as George Mansford and John Bineham. They had much in common. They all Joined the Army at a young age with only basic schooling. All served in combat in Korea Malaysia and Vietnam and were great soldiers.

Peter wrote in a book he gave me:

For Brig Ray,

Time may ring the echoes of war

But we are never deaf to

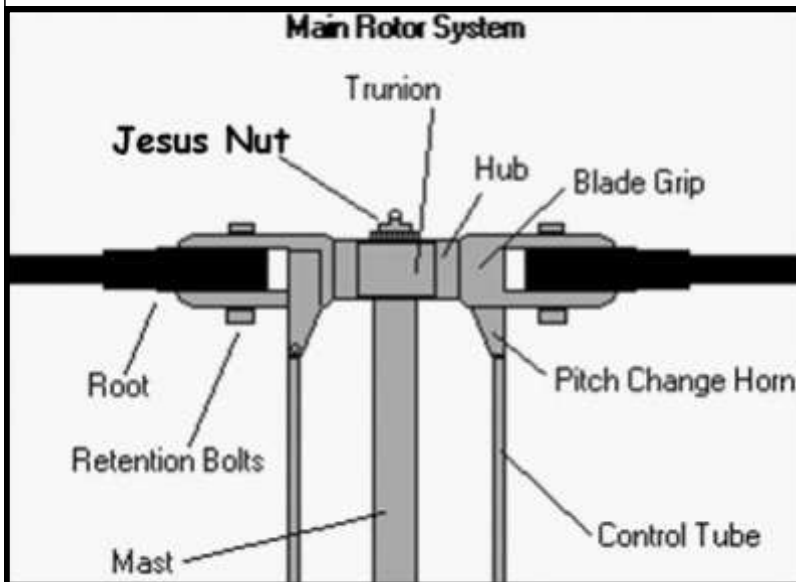
The sound of the shot and shell of our baptism

Following this tribute from Brigadier Burnard, let me now deliver my own.

For my part, I'd served in Vietnam, where at one point Brigadier Burnard had been my superior also. However, I didn't meet Peter until 1986 when we were involved in a well-attended Vietnam War poetry reading sponsored by a Canberra Community Radio Station. So, we were mates for 35 years, and I was pleased when his wife, Denise asked me to say something about his writing and to read one of his poems this evening.

My point would be that Peter's war poetry gets us close to Peter the man.

Consider the name of his book *The Jesus Nut*, also the name of the first poem in it.



The Jesus nut

That name refers to the assembly that held the rotor blades on a helicopter in place. The *Nut*, which kept the whole machine in the air, was of course machined steel. But what of the *Jesus* part? That is the prayer, pleading for life, as the working of the steel assembly depends finally on fate.

However strong the steel, life hangs provisionally by a thread, making it as painfully fragile and precious as it is beyond our control.

Such a sense, which we all know, was both in Peter's experience and writing intensified by war.

The poem begins:

Farewell tears are spent
a kiss
a smile
a tender caress
of Father
Wife
and child

An autumn in Vermont
Orange green
and
gold
heralds
of the winter's cold

As the cold bites, Peter's short lines snap. The heart stops.

Centurion's thrust
with
naked spear
torn flesh
blood of Christ
agony
gone
The Jesus Nut

The poem is an unanswered prayer.

Before returning to read it, let me say something about another of Peter's

poems that fills out what seemed to me to be a central ambiguity of his attitude to life and war. This is 'Landing Zone Princess', based on a ghastly experience of death, I remember him telling me about. This was when his company was tasked one day to sort out a pile of bodies that had been brought into a landing zone by helicopters.

Enlarging what happened, the poem sets the foul task, which is such a fundamental and yet barely reported aspect of war, in 'the lap of the weeping princess.'

two bundles are thrown
to the sodden earth
each shroud
a poncho
caked with blood and dirt.'

A large question: 'Why kill?'

Are they ours
or theirs
Friend or foe?

The answer is no answer:
not ours
not theirs
but them

(Continued on page 78)

But another question:

Does the reaper
choose?

Not in the poem between friend and foe.

A sound
then a roar
A second green bird
comes to rest
on the sodden princess

A bundle of bags drop
The undertakers alight
Then:
The curtain rises and
the play begins

Like a 'giant bird', another helicopter lands.
its tail flops down
tumbling
stiff bundles of dead
into the ground

The undertakers go about their grisly business
of documenting and bagging the bodies (some
without heads).

In all Peter's poems, short lines, sometimes one
word long, create the mechanical or, perhaps,
clicking cadence of what could be military drill,
weapons working or the reaper's swing. In this
one, the lines carry the rhyme in which the
soldiers' destiny reduces them to the name cut into
their identity discs.

a metal tag
it spells a name
labelled from the womb
en route to the tomb?

And in this frame the owner is doomed to
dance, even after death. Bagging the bodies, the
undertakers still pull the strings.



On the right
Captain Peter Rothwell, D Company,
1 Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment
AWM Photo

puppets dance
pockets shake open
treasures drop
a letter
a biscuit
a forgotten flip-can top

Finally, with each puppet collapsed and
'shrouded in a new coat of green', the choppers
'are loaded' and the 'curtain comes down'.

Who cares?
The sleeping princess
A cross on a map
A paddy field bare
Nobody knows
Except those who were there

Peter had been there and did care. This was a
source and subject of the creative energy that
drove his war poetry and other writing. Yet being

there was not, I think, the only source or subject of it.

Peter felt he was labelled from the womb, I think. In the First World War his uncle Charlie was killed at the Somme. Aged 19, his father Richard was stitched up the side by a German machine gun, came home with the wounded and, often ill, took over twenty years to die. This was in 1940, when Peter was eight.

As his mother and father had separated some time before his father's death, he now missed them both. Alternating relationships between a stepmother he could not get along with and an orphanage followed. From the beginning, self-reliance became a necessity of life, lived fearlessly – for Peter was nothing, if not fearless – in the face of great odds. You never got anything for nothing; the world was not a level playing field.

He worked on a farm before he found his feet. With his background and society marinated by war – remember that the foundation stones for the Anzac Memorial in which we find ourselves tonight were laid in 1932, the year Peter was born – it was then in the army that he re-found his family.

Through three wars, or four, if you count his two tours of Vietnam, soldiering meant a great deal to him. His strength of character, military skills and natural leadership saw him rise through the ranks. Talking to him or reading his verse it was clear that he cared deeply for his soldiers. By these tokens he became an archetype of one.

On leaving the army, he was also successful in business.

Quick to anger and hard-nosed, he was also fair in his dealings with others. Guileless but no fool, his singing, sailing and support for Denise's art all show he appreciated the finer things in life. He was curious and generous to his friends and those less fortunate than himself. It seems to me those qualities went with the sense of injustice that drove and puzzled him and that, altogether, made him the man and soldier-poet he was.

The Americanisms and, perhaps, some of the lilt in his language stem from the time he spent with US Special Forces in Vietnam. So did the

exasperation with which he often referred to the 'madness' of that experience. Neither does his poetry suggest any illusions about war. Yet the ambiguity of his life and poetry was, like that of most old soldiers and, indeed, of most testosterone driven young ones who follow them, that I don't think he could have missed his wars.

Let me now read you the first poem of Peter's I heard, the one he read at the Canberra poetry reading I mentioned way back in 1986.

The Jesus Nut

Farewell tears are spent
a kiss
a smile
a tender caress
of Father
Wife
and child

An autumn in Vermont
Orange green
and
gold
heralds
of the winter's cold

Ride
The jet stream
close
to god's right hand
a
one way journey
to
the sweat
of
a foreign land

(Continued on page 80)

The Jesus Nut continued

Leonardo
 Father of flight
 Flying dragons
 Chinese kites

 Wright brothers
 Kitty Hawk field
 paper
 strings
 advancement
 on the wheel

 Wonder
 of
 this modern age
 a
 human bird
 within a cage

 Christ on the Cross
 Calvary
 a plea
 to the Lord
 Faith

 The Jesus nut
 key
 to the whirling blade
 legends of
 King Arthur's sword

Safe haven
 up
 above it all
 green world below
 serpentine river
 humanity
 life's slow flow

 A bird in flight
 Feathers
 Blood
 Bone
 God's creation
 a law alone

 The whirling blade
 a metal thing
 legacy
 left by them
 Da Vinci
 Father of flight
 Flying dragons
 Chinese kites

 Flying home
 completion
 successful drop
 Cannon's roar
 a fateful shot

The Jesus Nut continued

Centurion's thrust
with
naked spear
torn flesh
blood of Christ
agony
gone
The Jesus nut

Right seat
Left seat
crew chief
gunners aft
a grin
prelude
to the reaper's laugh

God almighty
hear us
between
heaven and hell
ninety seconds
then
break the spell

Helen
Jody
Dianne
I love
you all

Mother
this
is your son
why
must life finish
before
it has begun

No one
to call
just sit and wait
Scotch on
the rocks
with Peter
at the gate

Screw the war
forget the world
I don't give a
God damn
die you bastard
die like a man

The Lord
is
my shepherd ...

An autumn in Vermont
orange green
and
gold
heralds
of the winter's cold ■



Last Post





Last Post



LORRAE DESMOND AM MBE

“the blonde goddess in the golden dress”

Travelled to Vietnam 5 times to entertain the troops between 1967 and 1971.

Born: 2 October 1929, Mittagong, NSW

Died: 23 May 2021, Gold Coast.Qld.

Gave up her time in Vietnam to meet the diggers, eat meals with them, and often spent as much time as possible with our wounded.

Lorrae also toured the Middle East, Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya and Somalia, to become “the forces sweetheart”.

May she rest in eternal peace.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES

CARNEEDS Pty Ltd

152 Parramatta Rd

STANMORE

Prptr: Robert Stenta

Ph: 9519 1441

10% discount

On mechanical repairs

& competitive prices on tyres and batteries.

To all Vietnam Veterans

Federation Members.

MALCOLM MOTORS

Automotive Service Specialist. All mechanical repairs & servicing.

15% Discount for members on services and repairs.

JOE CARE

603-605 Parramatta Rd

Leichhardt NSW

MTA Lic. # 42198

TRAILERS

TOWBARS BULLBARS

Fastfit Bullbars & Towbars

Trailer sales and spares-side steps
Bike beacons-Custom work

65 St Hilliers Road

AUBURN

Ph: (02) 9749 1209

10% Discount on products

EXHAUST SYSTEMS

Menai Mufflers

Unit 4/788 Old Illawarra Rd

MENAI

Ph: (02) 9541 4720

20% Discount

Balmain Radiator Centre

Mark Borghonzian

22d Crystal St

ROZELLE

Ph: (02) 9818 4920

Mbl: 0419 417 206

10% Discount

NEW CARS

carhelper.com.au

New car buyer's advocate

Buy a discounted new car
over the phone and have
it home-delivered

No salesmen, just independent
advice from a Wheels
magazine car reviewer

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

Service cost of \$165 reduced
to \$110 for members

MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES

Motor Cycle Accessories Supermarket

Head Office.
321 Parramatta Rd
Auburn NSW
(02) 9648 1400
www.mcas.com.au

CITY: 9261 5182.
LIVERPOOL: 9601 8276.
CARINGBAH 9574 5100
PENRITH 4737 6100

**10% Discount except
helmets and tyres**

BATTERIES

POWER PRODUCTS

For all your power needs

BATTERIES

SOLAR POWER

INVERTERS

GENERATORS

Motor Cycle battery specialists

Russell is offering 15% discount to
VVF Members on Batteries . 5% on
Solar products,

Inverters & Chargers 10%

3/3 Sovereign Pl

South Windsor

Ph: (02) 4577 7761

Fax: (02) 4577 7768

Ashfield Battery Centre 110 FREDERICK STREET

ASHFIELD, NSW, 2131

02 9798-6166

GEORGE KAWAUCHI (owner)

We sell:

CAR, TRUCK, MARINE, DEEP
CYCLE, GOLF CART,
MOBILITY, MOTOR CYCLE
BATTERIES.

CHARGERS, SOLAR PANELS,
BOOSTER CABLES,
FUSES, GLOBES, INVERTERS,
TERMINALS, BATTERY BOXES.

OPEN FROM: 9am - 5-30pm Mon-
Fri

OPEN SAT FROM: 9.30am- 3.30pm

Closed Sundays and public holidays.

10% Discount to veterans

SMASH REPAIRS

Wreck-A-Mended

Smash Repairs

Unit 1, 20 Bosci Rd

Ingleburn NSW

02 9605 9008

Ask for Alan

Tell them you are a member and they
will send us a donation

FLOOR COVERINGS

Waratah Floor Coverings

473 Burwood Rd

BELMORE

Ph: (02) 9759 6511

Ask for Special Rate

MOTELS

Golden Chain

Motor Inn Ltd

Ph: 1800 023 966

Must have Golden Chain Card. Its
Free When You Call The Number
Above And Ask

Present your Federation membership
card and ask for a "Golden Link"
card to be issued.

There is a **10% discount** on room
rates

Australia wide

TRAVEL TRANSFERS

GROUP TRANSFER

Airport or Cruise Terminals

All Tours, All Services

**15% DISCOUNT FOR
VETERANS**

For Bookings call:

Michael Viet

(02) 9723 2262

0404 754 899

TYRES

BRIDGESTONE

**Tyres & Complete
Auto Servicing.**

**10% discount to
members**

(not current specials)

223 Woodville Rd

Merrylands NSW

02 9897 1002

Mon-Fri 8—5

Sat 8:30-12:30

If you're reading
this we don't
have to tell you –
it works!



Stand out from the crowd!

In these difficult times, you need to get noticed. Attract new customers, boost sales and brand recognition with innovative marketing, direct mail, print, and fulfilment services. Getting back on your feet can be tricky. However, targeted, direct mail can be the difference with cutting through the noise and finding your next client.



02 9633 2883



info@alphamail.net.au



www.alphamail.net.au



ALPHAMAIL
Smart Name. Simple Solutions.

