



THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

MARCH 2019



It seemed a good idea at the time ...
But the cure is worse than the disease
Productivity Commission goes rogue

Also inside

DO YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE ?

Is DVA serious about 'Veteran centric' reform ?

More Veterans ' own stories

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VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION of AUSTRALIA Inc.

Incorporating

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers

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Productivity Commission wants to abolish DVA and replace it with something even worse

THE Productivity Commission was given the task of reporting how to improve the Repatriation system.

It seemed a good idea at the time.

We assumed that task was to examine DVA processes and advise how to improve them. There is, after all, plenty of scope for that.

And, indeed, the Productivity Commission has come up with many very good recommendations to improve the system.

But on some basic issues, the Productivity Commission has gone rogue so that its basic cure would be worse than the disease.

It is recommending the abolition of DVA and the setting up of a new system in Defence, based much more on the civilian model.

So what's this all about?

It's all about philosophy.

The Repatriation system has developed a certain philosophy based on what society owes those who fight on its behalf. The philosophy has developed in the shadow of wars and embodies

A Word from our outraged Editor

the feeling that arise out of the wars' horrors both in the veterans and the community. DVA, for all its faults, embraces that philosophy.

The Productivity Commission wants to kill that philosophy and introduce its economic fundamentalist, bean-counting, ideas. To do this it realises it must abolish DVA and start again.

There are two articles later in this edition that go into detail about the Productivity Commission's attack on the philosophy of Repatriation in Australia, but, as a foretaste, here's a couple of its findings in its Draft Report.

The Productivity Commission doubts whether veterans deserve their own compensation and rehabilitation system.

And if they have one, it should be based on the civilian model and be supervised by a board substantially composed of experts from the finance industry (yes, the industry the Banking Royal Commission has shown to be full of crooks ripping off their customers).

So rogue has the Productivity Commission gone that it would prefer the Gold Card to be abolished.

Hard to believe isn't it. Read on.....■

On a happier note we are getting more stories with photos in from veterans.

This edition three.

Next edition hopefully more.

We all enjoy them, so keep sending them in.■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

The ancient vivid pink Citroën

From Al Wood



Australian nurses (left to right) Lieutenant (Lt) Ann Hall, Lt Ruth Page, and Lt Diane Lawrence with an ancient vivid pink Citroën sedan on the beach at Vung Tau in 1969. The car, sporting hippie flowers and three bullet holes in the rear windscreen, was captured in November 1968 by New Zealand troops of Victor 3 Company, 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion. After repairs and a coat of paint, the 'new' car was presented to the fifteen Anzac nurses of the 1st Australian Field Hospital at Vung Tau. The car was used to transport the nurses between the hospital and the beach. ■

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Do you have a story?

Again we bring you some veterans' stories.

There must be lot more stories out there languishing in old letters, diaries and, of course, in our heads, about our time in Vietnam.

In this edition we have stories from Al Wood and Ray "Boris" O'Brien.

So if you have a story with some photos in your archives, we would welcome them. ■

*Can you see yourself
working in a mirror
factory ?*

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Tasmanians wishing assistance are asked to call Dennis Hanmer OAM from our Outreach Program at our Sydney Head Office on 02 9682 1788.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT Part 1

National Headquarters



Thank you to our Canberra Research Group.

James Wain OAM

John Godwin OAM

Jules Wills

AS a result of the recommendation of a Senate enquiry into veteran suicides, the Productivity Commission was tasked to review the Repatriation system.

When our National Office was in Canberra, it, in consultation with the State Presidents, prepared the Federation's submission to the Productivity Commission review. So, even though the National Office is now at Granville, I asked the Canberra group to take carriage of our response to the Commission's Draft Report.

They have spent many hours since the release of the report, analysing its 700 pages and coming to grips with the impact of the Commission's recommendations, at both the Federation member level, and at the strategic level.

This has included consultation with other ESOs, seeking comments from Branches, and briefing and debriefing National Office before and after extraordinary meetings at the Alliance of Defence Service Organisations (ADSO), and the ESO Round Table (with the Repatriation Commissioners).

Their response to the Commission's draft report is both comprehensive and objective. It assesses how well (or not) the Commission has addressed issues raised by the Federation in our initial submission, and it responds to all recommendations made by the Commission.

We could not be better served.

Bill Roberts OAM

National President

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Part 2

Some good and some bad in Productivity Commission's Draft Report

THE Productivity Commission was tasked to review the Repatriation system.

The Draft Report was something of a shock.

We expected a report simply recommending ways to reform the present system, ways to improve the workings of DVA.

We thought that because DVA is ripe for reform and improvement. Even DVA admits that.

And while a good many of the Draft Report's recommendations would go some way to improving the current system, others could be described as destructive.

What leads to this destructiveness is the Productivity Commission's seeming inability to understand, accept and adapt to the way the Repatriation System has developed over a very long time.

The system, as it developed, has responded to the special needs of war veterans and more recently their families. It has its own principles emerging from the uniqueness of the war experience and its aftermath.

The Repatriation system originated and developed in sympathy with how governments and the Australian community wanted our war veterans treated. In this way it has developed its own ethos.

It is not stretching matters too far to say

there is a distinct difference between the Repatriation ethos and the fundamentalist economic ethos favoured by the Productivity Commission.

But the Repatriation ethos has embedded itself, over many years, in DVA.

If the Repatriation ethos is to be changed, DVA must first be abolished.

This the Productivity Commission has recommended.

When DVA is abolished, the Productivity Commission sees new organisations established with its fundamentalist economic ethos.

One of the new organisations it would like seen established would be run like a civilian compensation scheme with a board composed mainly of experts from the superannuation and finance industries.

Yes, just those industries that the Banking Royal Commission found to be full of dodgy operators. You'd really have confidence in any organisation run by that lot!

The same repugnance for the Repatriation system ethos leads the Productivity Commission to recommend the abolition of the Gold Card and certainly removing its compensation aspects from war widows and dependents.

There is an article elsewhere in this edition



that deals in detail with this thought bubble.

So repugnant to the Productivity Commission is the Repatriation ethos that they even questions whether war veterans deserve a separate Repatriation system.

That too is dealt with elsewhere in this edition.

The Productivity Commission can only see through fundamentalist economic eyes. Its recommendations suggest that the only motivation veterans have for having a full-time job is financial.

Give them an opportunity, the Productivity Commission seems to be saying, and they will skive off work and onto a pension and Gold Card.

But work gives identity which is often equally or sometimes more important than financial reward.

Our experience over some 35 years, is that it is those who sadly cannot work and are on the TPI pension with Gold Card who suffer

depression and feelings of lack of worth, not those in work.

Is the Productivity Commissioners suggesting that they themselves would give up their jobs if they could get a TPI pension and Gold Card. Would they give up the satisfaction and prestige of their jobs for an inadequate pension for the rest of their lives?

You bet they wouldn't.

Even so, they assume veterans would.

This thinking leads the Productivity Commission to look at all Repatriation benefits and systems to see if they might encourage illness with a view to getting on this amazing pension. They won't see veterans' benefits as simply well deserved rewards earned the hard way.

What we want in the Productivity Commission's final report is simply a recipe for improving the mechanics and motivation of the existing DVA system.

That is what we expected and that is what we want. ■

The new official history of the Agent Orange controversy, after three years, has turned into the straight



Historian Dr Peter Yule

DOCTOR Peter Yule began writing the new volume of the Official History of the Vietnam War three years ago.

He will finish it this year (2019).

The new history will be titled something like *Health and Medical Legacies of the Vietnam War* and as well as a rewriting of the Agent Orange controversy, will look into the vast problem of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other psychological fall-out from war trauma.

We campaigned for a new official history volume to be commissioned because we believed the original account of the Agent Orange controversy in Volume 3 of the Official History to be a shocker. It was both inaccurate and insulting.

It was written by FB Smith and focused on the Agent Orange Royal Commission, falsely claiming that the campaigning veterans were motivated by greed and that they had no valid case to present..

Both claims were ridiculous.

As for the claim the campaigning veterans

were greedy, FB Smith ignored the fact that the veterans' submission to the Royal Commission plainly stated that no extra compensation was sought. The veterans simply believed that DVA, in denying any link between exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam and certain cancers, was breaking existing Repatriation law. This was because, whilst there was good scientific evidence for and against the link, Repatriation law demanded war veterans be given the 'benefit-of-the-doubt'.

So it was not greed that motivated Phil Thompson and the other campaigning veterans, just a need to for veterans to be treated fairly inside the existing system.

FB Smith's claim that the veterans had no case to present avoided the fact that the Royal Commission found that under Repatriation law, soft tissue sarcoma (with its very many varieties) and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma could be linked to exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. And that was after the law was changed during the Royal

Commission to make the link harder to establish.

Whether FB Smith's viscous attack on the campaigning veterans and his incorrect claim that the veterans had no case were due to incompetence or something else is not known.

The VVFA campaign was eventually (after some 20 years) successful.

In 2013, the new Director of the War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson, responded to a document we sent him, and invited us to a meeting. In 2014 the Australian War Memorial Council ordered a scoping study. The scoping study criticised FB Smith's account and recommended a new history be written. This was followed by the War Memorial Council commissioning a new history from Melbourne historian, Dr Peter Yule.

Now, three years into the project, Dr Yule



**The Hon Brendan Nelson
AO BMBS FRACP (HON)
FAMA who so adeptly and
enthusiastically made it
possible**



**Phil Thompson OAM
Leader of the campaign for
a Royal Commission**

and his team have turned into the straight.

They have interviewed well over 100 randomly selected veterans as well as surveying a mountain of information, including listening to our case. Dr Yule has even been to Vietnam to increase his understanding.

We are grateful to the War Memorial Council and to Dr Brendan Nelson for this opportunity to correct this long-standing blight on the reputation of Phil Thompson and his team of campaigning Vietnam veterans and to correct the long-standing mis-information on the veterans' case before the Agent Orange Royal Commission. ■

It seemed like a good idea at the time...

But the cure could turn out to be worse than the disease

THE Senate, concerned about suicides amongst veterans, established an enquiry.

It published its recommendations in March 2017.

One of its recommendation was that the Productivity Commission review the workings of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It seemed a good idea at the time.

After all, the Department of Veterans Affairs has a history of deceit, arrogance, dysfunction and refusal to listen, as recorded in past editions of this journal.

So maybe the Productivity Commission would recommend ways to fix it.

And, indeed, the Productivity Commission's Draft Report does make quite a few welcome recommendations that would improve the system.

Sadly that's not the whole story.

Some of its other recommendations would be so destructive if implemented as to destroy the heart and soul of the Repatriation system; a heart and soul developed in the last hundred years as a result of the wisdom forged in the aftermath of many traumatic wars.

These destructive recommendations show the Productivity Commission out of its depth in dealing with the issues of 'Service' and particularly 'war service'.

For instance, in its Draft Report, the Productivity Commission criticises the Gold Card for covering illness and injury which have not been accepted as Service caused. This benefit, the Productivity Commission claims, 'discourages

What is the Productivity Commission

'The Productivity Commission was created as an independent authority by an Act of Parliament in 1998, to replace the Industry Commission, Bureau of Industry Economics and the Economic Planning Advisory Commission.

'The core function of the Commission is to conduct public inquiries at the request of the Australian Government on key policy or regulatory issues bearing on Australia's economic performance and community wellbeing.'

wellness'.

What the Productivity Commission seems not to understand is that the comprehensive cover of the Gold Card in part reflects the domino effects of any service-caused disability serious enough to warrant a Gold Card. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, for instance, preconditions sufferers to other illnesses and injuries. It is the same long-standing understanding justifying the 'burned out Digger' early Service Pension, the understanding that military service (particularly war service) can have deep but hard to predict (and sometimes diagnose) health consequences.

The comprehensive cover of the Gold Card also reflects the beneficial nature and intended generosity of the Repatriation system in



recognition of veterans having given the highest form of public service.

The Productivity Commission is also questioning whether war widows and dependents should have any non-means tested Gold Card rights. That is, whether their Gold Card benefits should be considered 'compensation'.

The Productivity Commission obviously prefers war widows and other dependents to be stripped of their 'compensation' rights on the grounds those rights are 'poorly targeted'.

It seems that the Productivity Commission has not looked at some compelling statistics.

A 1998 government study found veterans' partners suffered high rates of psychological distress.

Alarming statistics emerged from a Sydney University study on 'suicidality'. For the wives of Vietnam veterans, the risk of 'thinking about' suicide is 6.2 times higher, 'planning' 3.5 times higher and 'attempting suicide' 6 times higher than for their peers in the general community.

From the year 2000, comes an even more

alarming statistic. A government study showed the children of Vietnam veterans suffering a suicide rate 300% higher than their peers in the general population.

After that finding, it was not surprising that the recently published Vietnam Veterans Family Study found higher rates of psychological illness amongst the children.

The main cause of these statistics was found to be family dysfunction caused by the psychological wounding of the veteran husbands.

In other words, the spouses and children of veterans must be seen as second wave casualties of the war.

'Compensation' is therefore obviously warranted.

But all this is, apparently, for naught because, as the Productivity Commission puts it:

'...the gold card runs counter to a number of key design principles that should underpin the future veteran support system'.

So what are these key design principles directing

(Continued on page 14)

the Productivity Commission?

In short, the Productivity Commission could be said to be under the spell of questionable fundamentalist economics theory.

The theory is that if the Repatriation system focus was on 'wellness' rather than 'illness', then more veterans will become well and fewer will be ill.

It is a variation on the old and tired idea that 'compensation promotes illness'.

There are very few mentions of 'compensation' in the Productivity Commission's Draft Report. It is as though it is a dirty word.

It is however mentioned in the Productivity Commission's criticism of the system under which Vietnam veterans compensation claims are determined.

That system, the Productivity Commission claims, is too focused on 'illness' rather than 'wellness', compensation rather than rehabilitation.

This does not align, the Productivity Commission complains, with 'contemporary workers' compensation schemes'.

Being 'compensated' the Productivity Commission seems to be saying, is an unnecessary failure and suggests it's recommended 'wellness' system emphasizing rehabilitation won't have much need for it.

This is naïve, to say the least.

'Wellness' is a relative concept. There will always be many veterans suffering from the trauma of war (and in some cases hazardous service) who will never be capable of holding down full-time jobs regardless of the earliness of intervention and the focus on rehabilitation. In these cases compensation is the key to some degree of wellness because it alleviates financial anxiety. In other words, for these veterans, compensation promotes wellness.

There are over 20,000 Vietnam veteran TPI pensioners.

Is the Productivity Commission suggesting that there would have been almost none under it's 'wellness' centered scheme?

Even in the fanciful event of their system cutting that in half, it would still be a very large number.

And this focus of the Productivity Commission can be dangerous.

Readers will know that the Repatriation

System's delay of compensating Jesse Bird, a delay based on just the principle the Productivity Commission is espousing, preceded his suicide.

We don't know if any other recent veteran suicides were preceded by this fetish for rehabilitation over

compensation, but we would not be surprised if there were.

And the Productivity Commission's claim that 'compensation promotes illness' suggests that, it believes that veterans fake or exaggerate illness in an unprincipled pursuit of financial gain. This simply does not fit with our experience.

Our organisation has had some thirty year's experience of advising sick and troubled veterans at our State branches round Australia. In that time many thousands of veterans have come to us for help. (our New South Branch alone has processed over 1,000 compensation claims per year for many years). It is our overwhelming experience that those who have come to us have done so reluctantly. Often, veterans have been dragged to our offices by their worried and wearied wives or have arrived at our doorstep only after dramatically 'hitting the wall'. Not infrequently, the veteran has 'hit the wall' a number of times before seeking our help, each time changing his job and hoping for the best. In most cases the veterans could have and should have stopped work and sought help and compensation years earlier; their strong desire to remain in the

"...for these veterans,
compensation
promotes wellness."

(Continued on page 15)



R19/8

Come-on or do I have to drag you in

workforce preventing them from doing so. This reluctance to cease work has often gone as far as damaging their health and the health of their families.

The assertion that compensation 'encourages' veterans' illness finds no support in our long experience in the vast majority of cases. For most veterans, 'work' has had value beyond its economic significance. Indeed, 'depression' caused by the inability to 'work' has been a serious problem amongst Vietnam veteran TPI pensioners.

Earlier in this article, the Productivity Commission was quoted as saying that its preferred scheme caring for sick and wounded veterans would be aligned with 'contemporary workers' compensation schemes'.

Indeed, the Productivity Commission even challenges the need for a separate scheme for veterans. Why not just have a civilian scheme. The

Productivity Commission claims that the military, like firefighters and police, are already paid enough market-rate upfront remuneration and allowances so that a separate and comprehensive Repatriation system may not be warranted or deserved.

Talk about the Productivity Commission being out of its depth!

We know that there is no other job like war service.

Those preparing for and those sent to fight Australia's wars must be prepared to face a well armed, well trained enemy whose soldiers are determined to seek them out and kill them. Every day and night there is the possibility that the enemy will find some way to outsmart or overwhelm our troops' defences and achieve their killing objective. No matter what precautions our troops take, no matter how careful, how prepared, how diligent and how disciplined they are, there is no place on the battlefield offering sanctuary from the enemy's probing fingers of death.

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But not only must our troops face an enemy trying to kill them, they must also seek out and try to kill the enemy troops.

And it is not as though killing and being killed is some accidental or unintended consequence of war service; it is central to it.

Service men and women cannot limit the risks they take; they cannot refuse a task even if the probability of their death or wounding is high.

Every service man and woman knows that losing their life or being seriously wounded are not rare accidents but the result of purposeful enemy activity. Being killed or wounded are integral parts of the job which they have no choice but to accept.

Indeed, war service is a service so dangerous that governments know, even before deployment of the troops, that some of those sent are likely to be killed, many more likely to be wounded and at least one third will suffer a psychological illness requiring professional help at some time. Governments know that the health and lifestyle of the families of veterans suffering the traumatic effects of war will also suffer. The government's own studies show that spouses of Vietnam veterans suffer a high rate of psychological distress whilst their children have an alarming 300% higher rate of suicide than their equivalent in the general population.

The Productivity Commission report suggests that those fighting our wars, like firefighters and police, receive pay and allowances that take account of the risks inherent in their jobs at market rates.

Or, in plain words, members of the armed forces should not be given special consideration when being compensated for war caused disabilities because they have already been

financially compensated in their wages, like the firefighters and police, for the risks inherent in their job.

In our view, such a claim is ludicrous. Whilst the pay and allowances soldiers get may go a good way towards compensating for discomfort, physical pain and exhaustion, frequent family separation, requirement to obey orders under stringent military law, requirement of be on duty 24 hours a day

when required, and so on, the pay and allowances come nowhere near compensating for war-time risks.

As we have said, when troops are despatched on war service, they are required to fight an often well armed, well trained, well organised, numerous enemy who are determined to kill them. It is not just a dangerous environment like a fire or a building site. The fire

has no malice towards the firemen and the building site no intention of harm towards the construction worker. And whilst it is true that occasionally police may have to face an armed criminal, these occasions are infrequent and the criminal's first priority is usually to escape, not the death of the policeman.

Not only do members of the armed forces not receive pay and allowances which includes up-front market rate compensation for the risks of the battlefield, but governments could simply not afford to pay such amounts to the numerous members of any national army in any moderately serious armed conflict. For instance:

- What would be the market rate for someone to follow a wounded Viet Cong down a narrow tunnel system sporting only a pistol and torch? Many Engineers did similar things time and time again.
- What would be the market rate for a medic to go to the aid of a soldier just blown-up on a

"...it is ludicrous to suggest members of the armed forces are paid or could be paid enough up-front to compensate them at market rates for the risks they take in war."



Australian Government

Productivity Commission

mine, prodding his bayonet into the ground as he goes in the hope of detecting the side of an anti-personnel mine before treading on its prongs and himself joining the scatter of badly wounded and dead? Medics had to be prepared to do this and, in fact, did it on many occasions.

- What would be the market rate for a helicopter pilot balancing one skid on a rock whilst casualties are loaded, so he does not risk detonation more mines? This and similar situations were commonplace.
- What would be the market rate for a medic to go to the aid of a wounded soldier under fire? Medics did this time and time again.
- What would be the market rate for an infantryman carrying out his everyday duty of cutting his way through bamboo infested jungle in areas of known enemy bunker concentration knowing that if he misses the well hidden sign of their presence and approaches close to one which is occupied, he is as good as dead? Not a few soldiers died in this way.
- What would be the market rate for the common requirement of infantrymen crawling out from a night ambush position after the ambush has been sprung to attach ropes to the legs of the (hopefully) dead enemy so they can be dragged back and saved from being retrieved by their comrades? This was a common requirement.
- What would be the market rate for taking part in a counter attack when your mortar platoon has been half over-run by North Vietnamese regulars? Or what would be the market rate to cross the start line of any attack on the well entrenched enemy? This was the infantryman's bread and butter.
- What would be the market rate for repeatedly driving a truck from the port and stores depots to the forward operational base on roads which could very well be mined and under the surveillance of snipers? This was normal driving duties.
- What would be the market rate for sappers laying or lifting a minefield or RAEME recovery teams recovering blown up vehicles.
- What would be the market rate for driving an armoured personnel carrier into the teeth of well-constructed bunker system with well-trained enemy determined to cut short your advance with their pattern of criss-crossing anti-tank grenades? This happened on not a few occasions.
- And so on...

As we have said, it is ludicrous to suggest

(Continued on page 18)

members of the armed forces are paid or could be paid enough up-front to compensate them at market rates for the risks they take in war.

And our troops have never expected to be paid danger money at market rates. They have fought Australia's wars for mainly other than financial reasons. But what they have expected is that should they die as a result of facing Australia's enemies, their families would be well and specially cared for and if that determined, well armed enemy should succeed in wounding them physically or mentally, that the Australian government would care for them medically and compensate them with added generosity.

All this, apparently, has been beyond the Productivity Commission's understanding.

So, while a review of DVA seemed a good idea when recommended by the Senate Committee, it turns out the Productivity Commission's cure, in basic ways, would be worse than the disease.

It is some comfort that the Productivity Commission assures us that 'no veteran or dependent of a deceased veteran who currently receives a benefit or entitlement will be worse off under our proposals'.

But does that mean that there will be no change? Or does it mean that there will be changes that the Productivity Commission, in its wisdom, judges will not make current recipients worse off?

The difference is critical.

So whilst we welcome many of the Productivity Commissions recommendations which would improve the current system and hope they will be implemented, we reject its attack on the Repatriation ethos developed as a result of the wisdom forged in the aftermath of many traumatic wars.

And we note that even if current beneficiaries of the Repatriation system would be spared, veterans of the future will not. ■

MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging
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Success**

Membership is due on 1 January each year.

(July 1 for Queensland members)

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

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

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

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

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

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

We thank you for your kind support.

OUTREACH PROGRAM PENSION TOURS

Our Outreach Program continues to be extremely successful in reaching out to Veterans, service and ex-service community living in regional and/or remote areas.

Any Veteran, widow of a Veteran, and/or relative of a Veteran in rural NSW seeking assistance of the Outreach Team in matters of Service Pensions, Disability Pension Claims, War Widow Pensions, and/or MCRS Claims, etc., should contact the *OUTREACH COORDINATOR* (below) , who will organise assistance.

In the event that members have friends who need assistance they are urged to contact Dennis Hanmer OAM who will coordinate the visit program. Of course, the more people wishing assistance in any one town or rural area, the more fulfilling the trip will be for the team.

Remember, we assist all Veterans, and service and ex-service personnel, in any matter relating to your service that may require the lodgement of a claim or application with DVA..

The team will provide assistance and advice to ALL Veterans of ALL conflicts, including Peacekeeping and Peacemaking deployments.

**ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR
REPATRIATION BENEFITS? OUR
SERVICES ARE FREE.**

Contact: Dennis Hanmer OAM (JP)
Mob: 0428 388 221 Ph: 02 9682 1788
Fax: 02 9682 6134
Email: secretary@vvpfa.org
Mail: VVPPAA (NSW Branch) Inc.,
PO Box 170, Granville. 2142

Who is a veteran?

TRADITIONALLY, the term 'veteran' described former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who were deployed to serve in operational conflict environments. However, in 2017, a Roundtable of Australian Veterans' Ministers agreed that a veteran would be defined as anyone who has served at least one day in the ADF. The veteran community also covers family members.

About the ADF and veteran population

ADF members are professionals who have volunteered to serve in the military. About 5200 recruits join the ADF each year.

In 2017-18, there were about 58 000 permanent members of the ADF and about 20 000 reservists. The Army accounts for about half of ADF personnel and the Navy and Air Force for a quarter each.

More than two million Australians have served in the ADF since federation.

The size and tempo of military engagements (previously falling) has increased since the early 2000s, with little sign of that trend ending.

Personnel returning from deployment can be returning with injuries that, in prior conflicts, might have resulted in death (for example, traumatic brain injuries).

About 18 per cent of those of who leave the ADF do so for medical reasons.

Little is known about Australia's total veteran population. The Department of Veterans' Affairs recently estimated that there are about 640 000 living veterans (including reservists). ■



New DVA 12 step programme for allied health referral process

12 visits limit before new referral is required

A new DVA imposed inconvenience



UNDER current DVA arrangements, a GP may refer a client to physiotherapists and other allied health services for up to a year at DVA's expense (except for dental and optical, for which no referral is required). For chronic conditions, the GP can make an ongoing referral.

Under the new arrangements, which will be in place from 1 July 2019, GPs will only be able to make a referral to physiotherapists and other allied health services at DVA's expense for up to 12 sessions or one year, whichever comes sooner. This new arrangement will also apply to those clients with a chronic condition. Dental and optical services will still not need a GP referral.

The new arrangements will be called the 'treatment cycle'.

At the end of the treatment cycle, the allied health provider will report back to the GP who will assess whether further treatment is required. If it is needed, the GP may refer the client for a further treatment cycle at DVA's expense of up to 12 sessions, or may refer them to another provider if that better suits the patient's needs, or may consider another type of treatment.

The treatment cycle will not impose any hard 'cap' or limit on the number of clinically required services. DVA clients will receive as many services as determined to be clinically necessary by their GP.

But it's not that simple.

What about the veteran who is having two separate conditions treated by the same physio or osteopath etc; a leg and shoulder condition for instance.

Is that 12 treatments each or only 6 each.

Or is the solution to have separate physios treat each condition so each condition can have 12 treatments before new referrals are necessary?

And what about the delays in getting an appointment to see a GP in some areas, particularly in some Regional areas. It can take weeks. And, to add to the inconvenience, there is often a considerable distance to be travelled.

And what about veterans on long term treatment plans such as those who undergo weekly physiotherapy. They will need a doctor's appointment every 3 months to get another referral.

And why 12 visits? DVA tells us they chose 12 times a year because it is the average number of times veterans visit their GPs.

But being an average, it is calculated from the many veterans who have fewer and many veterans who have more, visits.

It makes no sense to make an average number apply to everyone.

Why not a number of visits recommended by the GP.

Now there's a thought.

After all the GP knows what's medically necessary. GPs might judge that some 'treatment cycles' should be less than 12 and some, particularly for chronic conditions, more.

In other words, DVA's 'pick a number, any number' imposition is silly.

It creates a suspicion that it's just another DVA strategy to save money knowing that the extra effort and travel imposed under this new nuisance scheme will deter veterans from seeking necessary treatment?

In fact, figures in the last Federal Budget strengthen that suspicion. The new scheme was forecast to save \$40 million dollars over the next four years. ■

**It seemed like a good idea
at the time...**

**But the cure turns out to be
worse than the disease**

Part 2

YES, the Productivity Commission's Draft Report made some fine recommendation, especially round the rehabilitation area.

These are to be applauded.

But some others show that the Productivity Commission just doesn't get it.

Here's an example.

In the Draft Report it says:

'To streamline and simplify outdated payments made to only a few clients, they should be paid out and removed. The Australian Government should amend the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* to remove the recreation transport allowance, the clothing allowance and the decoration allowance and pay out those currently on the allowances with an age-adjusted lump sum.'

Note that the reasons for eliminating these benefits is not that they are not needed or appreciated, it is that, in the Productivity Commission's view, they are outdated (whatever that means).

The recommendation to axe the allowances is particularly offensive in the case of the decoration allowance. This is more than a financial transaction, it is a continuing recognition of the greatest of public services and personal worth.

We are advocating leaving these allowances alone. ■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Contact on Operation Capital- Saturday 16th Nov. '68.

By Al Wood

THIS Saturday, I was in the 4RAR Tracker Team commanded by Lieutenant. Bob Sayce, and carried the PRC25 "sig" set in our team at the time, and attached to the "Kiwi" Victor Company, with whom we had many experiences, good and not so good, during our tour. It was sometime around 8am, and not all that long after moving off for a day's patrolling, our team being not too far off the front of the column, and with me with a plug in one ear, listening into AFVN Radio's "Good Morning Vietnam" program, the very final morning show for departing US presenter Marine Sergeant. John Horton, my favourite, returning to "the world" as we called any place other than Vietnam.

I don't recall just how it started, but as we came in out of a relative cleared area into an area of bamboo thicket, all hell broke loose. "The shit was flying", machine gun and small arms fire, explosions. We hit the dirt, and there were the sounds of a pitched battle raging all round, but especially up front of us. My Team Commander, Lieutenant. Sayce, called on me to lob a grenade to the front, which I did, (the only time I did "in anger.") We took cover behind bamboo bungs, while thoughts of General Custer's fate flashed through my head for an instant. At that moment, my estimation of the bravado and ferocity of the "Kiwi" soldier in action was born. Many, if not the majority, are of Maori extraction, a "warrior" race, and as they swept past us, the sounds of whoops and holla's, with broad grins on their faces as the



41383 Lance Corporal DI Bensemman
RNZIR V3
Died 16 November 1968

shit flew around their heads, firing machine guns, M79's, and lighter weapons from the hip, filled one with unbounded confidence. "I'm glad these blokes are on our side" I thought. A scene which

will never leave me.

Not knowing what we had walked into, the NZ Company Commander ordered the Artillery Forward Observer travelling with us to call in a fire-mission on whatever was confronting us.

A round was landed, then another, only closer, and then-----

Not more than 100yds in front, a full salvo or two landed, I remember the crashing trees, the intense noise, and the sound of whizzing shrapnel past our ears and overhead, with twigs and leaves falling all around us. How close can one get to “mother earth.” VERY CLOSE indeed!

Eventually, and after maybe 20minutes, all was quiet, and the Kiwi’s made a clearing sweep. What they found was a bunker system in the bamboo forest, we had walked right into. One Kiwi was Killed In Action, Lance Corporal Don Bensemann, and several others Wounded In Action. It’s only when all falls silent again, and the adrenaline level drops, that the “shakes” start, I discovered on that morning. A cigarette helped, though I was not a smoker,..... then.

I sent that article on to my then Tracker-Team commander Lieutenant Bob Sayce up in Queensland, and this is his response below.

It has been said many times before, that while under fire, everyone involved sees things differently and has a different version of events.

Al,

My recollection of being ambushed as we approached the Viet Cong Bunker system is that when the KIWI Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Sherrif was wounded after the initial contact, you provided covering fire while I went forward to Gunner Green who was carrying the arty radio and called in fire support as there was no Mortar Fire Controller (MFC) or Artillery Forward Observer (FO/FO’s ACK) travelling with the platoon. I had to adjust the fire from the guns once, then had to call in check fire as the rounds came in on the

bunker system as we were on the edge of it—— it broke the ambush and allowed Corporal Scoobie Knoble to lead his section through and clear the bunkers. We secured the perimeter until the rest of V Company caught up to us. You may also remember how ‘cool’ Trajan was with ‘Slim’ Symington as his handler throughout the battle.

Regards,
Bob



Do you have a story?

Again we bring you some veterans' stories.

There must be lot more stories out there languishing in old letters, diaries and, of course, in our heads, about our time in Vietnam.

In this edition we have stories from Al Wood and Ray “Boris” O’Brien.

So if you have a story with some photos in your archives, we would welcome them. ■

Around 1982-3

Who are these people?

Can you identify them?

In the adjacent column are a couple of random photo from the 1980s.

It's probably round 1982 or 1983.

Any idea who the people are?

On the next page, we are out the back of the old Granville RSL hall.

Granville RSL has given the VVAA the storeroom at the back of the hall.

Mick Scrace with his nail gun and many accomplices are renovating and partitioning the storeroom to make the VVAA National and State offices.

Do you remember working on the storeroom?

Do you recognise any of the people at what might be the grand opening of the new offices?

On the next page there's a gathering.

Do you remember what it was for and do you recognise any of the people in the pictures?

On the page after that there is the dedication of the memorial rock. Do you recognise any of the people there?

On the page after that are photo of a ceremony at the Cenotaph in Sydney. Do you recognise anyone there?

We've had lots of interest in the photos, so if you could supply any information on the events and people, we will publish it in the next edition.

editor@vvfagranville.org

Some random photos

Here's Phil Thompson with ???



Who are they?

Where were they?

editor@vvfagranville.org



1

Early days



2

More work done



3

Opening?
Recognising
anyone?
Let's know.
(look at
those flares)



editor@vfvagranville.org



What's the occasion?

Recognise anyone?



Looks like Phil Thompson, Mick Scrace and ???



editor@vvfagranville.org

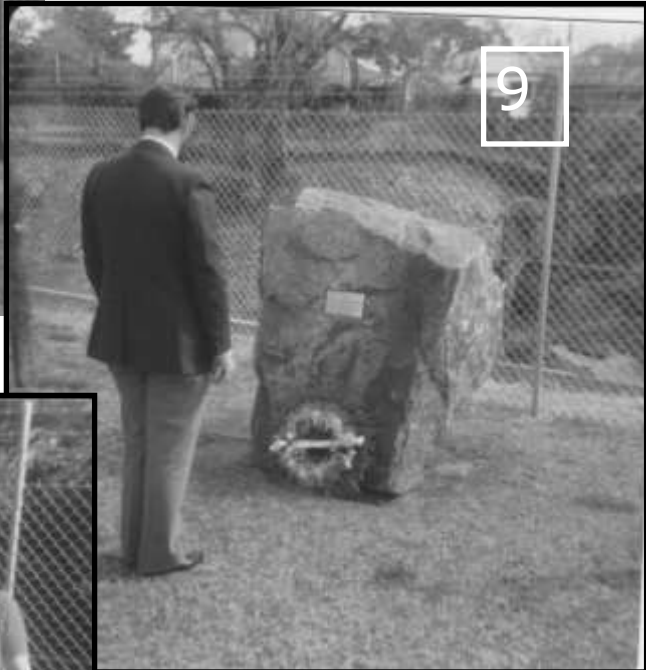
8



The event is the dedication of the rock and plaque.

Recognise anyone?

9



10



Get in touch if you have a story to share: editor@vfvagranville.org

The plaque says:
*For those who died and those
who suffered as a result of the
Vietnam War
1962-1972*

11





Cenotaph, Sydney



There's
Lachlan
Irvine.

What year
was this?

Is that
Admiral
Griffith?



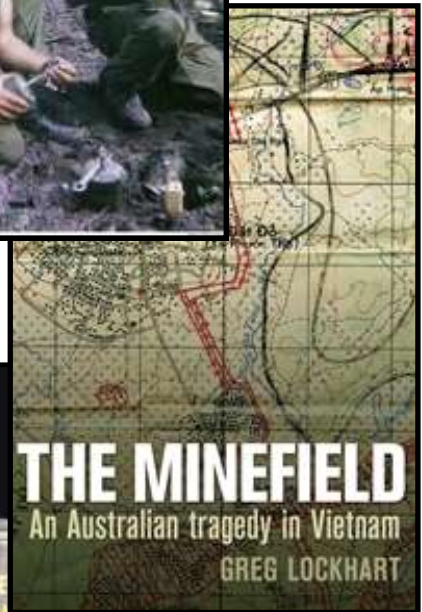
Initial enemy response to the fence

(Extract from *The Minefield, An Australian Tragedy in Vietnam*, by Greg Lockhart)

The presence of children round the fencing operation was the first sign of the popular reaction against its construction. As 'the Dat Do kids' watched 5 RAR working on the fence and flew kites to mark the obstacle's progress most afternoons, their reports were passed on regularly to the local guerrilla forces. According to Xuan: 'We relied on the children... it was through our children that we found out where the Australians had gone and what they had done down there. We weren't on the spot to know...' About two weeks after the fence construction began on 16 March, the Long Dat District Committee was in any case able to order the counter-measures that caused the 5RAR casualties suffered on 6 and 7 April during fence building. Then, after 1 Field Squadron began laying the mines on 1 May, local village guerrilla units were lifting them before the mining was terminated on 30 May.

...

Almost as soon as the mines were laid in the Dat Do section of barrier minefield, Xuan had breached it one night after some instruction from local sappers. She felt the ground lightly for prongs with her hands and feet, and marked paths through the mines with stones and pieces of paper. Rarely using the same path twice, she carried letters to and from the District Committee west of the fence and the revolutionary forces in the east. Before long, she also led village guerrilla forces and others through the minefield on a regular basis.■



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.vvfagranville.org

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.■

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT



NSW Branch Elections

Members are reminded that each second year an election is conducted to fill all positions on the NSW Branch Committee. 2019 is an election year and full details of that election are again contained in this issue of the Newsletter. Election results will be announced at the NSW Branch AGM in May 2019. Immediately prior to the AGM an Extraordinary General Meeting will be conducted to allow members to vote on proposed changes to the NSW Branch Constitution. The proposed changes are detailed in this issue of our Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter.

Current state of your Association

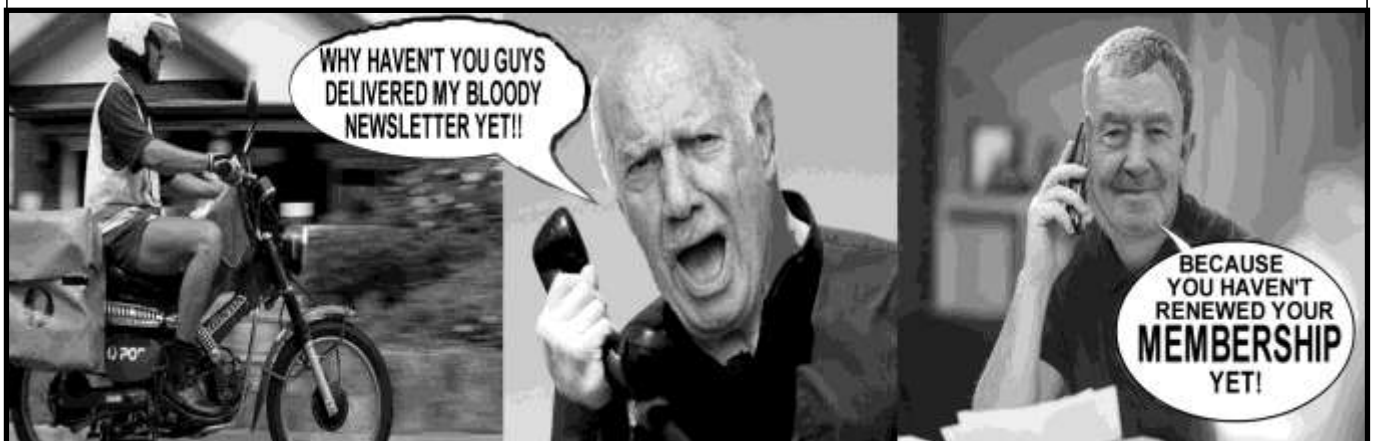
I am delighted to inform you that your State Branch continues to be run in a most efficient manner thanks to our competent, experienced and dedicated staff. Your NSW Branch Committee meet eleven times per year and all are encouraged to express their views and debate appropriate issues.

Each Committee member has operational service, particularly in South Vietnam. Most of our sub-branches are incorporated in their own right and are run under their own Constitutions which are based on the NSW Branch Constitution.

Membership Renewals

You would be aware that membership subscriptions cover the period from 1 January to 31 December each year. Should you have over-looked your renewal for the 2019 year please correct this situation as soon as possible. This will ensure that you continue to receive your Newsletter and your subscriptions will be of enormous assistance to us in continuing to provide appropriate services to our current and former ADF members.

Frank Cole
NSW President



LETTERS TO THE



EDITOR

13 January 2019

Dear Editor

Firstly, Happy New Year to everyone at the VVFA and thank you for the wonderful support you give to Veterans.

Something, I am most concerned about is the assumptions, conclusions and recommendations that have come out of the Australian Government Draft Veteran's Productivity Commission Report. The inquiry says the objective of veteran's support should be to improve the wellbeing of veterans and their families through rehabilitation and social integration in a scheme like workers compensation. However, the objective of the recommendations appears to be more about dismantling DVA and government cost cutting, rather than veteran's welfare.

The report was only released on 14 December 2018, but submissions had to be lodged by 11 February 2019, which is rather poor considering most veteran organisations will still be on their summer break. The Report Overview is 74 pages, but the full draft report is 704 pages. However, as an individual I have sent my own

responses and feedback to the inquiry, which are attached.

As a National Service Vietnam Veteran (April 1967- April 1968), I believe there is a significant difference between a member of the armed forces who suffers an injury or disability in a war zone compared to an injured worker in civilian life, who is rehabilitated under Workers Compensation. There is also a big difference between a member of the Armed Forces injured in a war zone to someone who is injured in Australia. Most war veterans will remember their active service and overseas involvement for the rest of their life. Emergency Service personnel in Australia also suffer bouts of depression and anxiety as a consequence of their job, but they are more likely to receive greater support and understanding from their friends and family and they weren't in a foreign country when they were injured. I agree it is important to get war veterans back into civilian life as soon as possible, but they deserve to be treated and respected a lot better than what is recommended in this Report.

I went back to South Vietnam in April 2008 with eight Vietnam Veterans and their wives and a few family members. I won't forget the day we arrived at Nui Dat and the veterans all of a sudden went silent. You could read it on their faces, they were recalling those days 40 years prior. Over the past four years Australia has spent millions of dollars honouring those who gave their life for this country. In my mind this Productivity Commission Report is totally contrary to the respect that has been demonstrated in recent years to our veterans.

The report recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs be abolished despite DVA clients giving it an 81% satisfaction rating in a recent survey. Yes DVA could be improved, but that is no reason to abolish it and create a new body. The report provides various examples of how well veterans are compensated and even questions whether taxpayers are getting value for money from DVA. It suggests the

veterans Gold Card should be more needs based, it questions why those who qualify at 70 should receive the card, it recommends doctor co-payments and even suggests there will be cost savings from reduced over servicing if we change the colour of the card. Having read the report at length I am deeply concerned that the recommendations are more about government cost saving than improving veteran's entitlements or welfare.

Regards
Malcolm Whitney
VVP&PA Member 1806
Email: malkay@bigpond.net.au

Editor's Note: Malcolm's submission to the PC inquiry is at:
<https://www.pc.gov.au/submissions-search?collection=productivity-commission-sub-web&query=&sort=date>

Dear Editor and Greg,

Many thanks for your recent help, and I wish to make 'The Editor' aware of a couple of things to say about "The Minefield". As you know I was there from start to finish.

(To Dr Greg Lockhart) The book *The Minefield* I found was extremely good reading. It 'ticked all the boxes'.

For me regarding Phouc Tuy Province, you did not appear to be all that kind to Brigadier Stuart Graham. (I think he should have confined his activities to 'Dixie-Bashing').

All the best,
Spud Murphy.

Dear Editor,

Reply to

"WHAT ABOUT THE PARTNERS"

In December 2018 issue of
The Vietnam Veterans Newsletter.

Yes, why are we not given a white card?

The wives and partners are the ones who have to be there 24/7 for our husbands or partners. When they have nightmares and cry out at night in their sleep. We have to try and calm them down with PTSD day and night when they are at their lowest point, and we have to run a household, and try to keep our kids and family together. No-one seems to care that we have to be super Mums, wife or partner. I bet there would be a lot of women out there that would agree with me.

I just hope the government comes to their senses and let us have a white card.

Kind regards,
RJP
Townsville.

Do you have a story?

Again we bring you some veterans' stories.

There must be lot more stories out there languishing in old letters, diaries and, of course, in our heads, about our time in Vietnam.

In this edition we have stories from Al Wood and Ray "Boris" O'Brien.

So if you have a story with some photos in your archives, we would welcome them. ■

WEST AUSTRALIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT



NOTICE TO ALL WA BRANCH MEMBERS

Members assistance is urgently required to assist with the management of Branch affairs. A few weeks back I was doing some tidying up on my computer and I somehow managed to delete all email addresses for Branch members along with the Excel spread sheet with all your addresses etc. on it.

Members are requested to urgently contact me via email vvfawabbranch@bigpond.com or you can ring me on 0407420472, I would like the following information. Service number, unit, period/s of service in SVN if a Vietnam Veteran or other service details Name address and phone if possible.

The only other way I can obtain this information will be by either seeing if the NSW Branch can sort out States by postcode or going through a huge file of old application for membership forms.

Your assistance with this matter would be greatly appreciated and will save me a huge amount of work.

Many thanks in anticipation of your cooperation and my sincere apologies for this inconvenience.

Best wishes to all,
Milton Kirk
President

Hypocrisy we must work hard to avoid

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



THE KNOWN SOLDIER





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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

2019 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	SECOND NAME

STREET ADDRESS		

SUBURB/TOWN	STATE	POST CODE

HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	OTHER PHONE

EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]

SERVICE NUMBER	SERVICE UNIT	O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE

NEXT OF KIN	RELATIONSHIP	CONTACT PHONE [NOK]

ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
MEMBERSHIPS SUBS	(YEARS)	@\$30.00 PER YEAR	\$
DONATION	(AMOUNT ONLY)		\$
RAFFLE TICKET/s		@\$2.00 EACH	\$
MERCHANDISE			
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
Stock item numbers and prices are available on line and from branches. Also page 44,45.		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$

PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD (Circle one only) CASH CHEQUE MONEY ORDER CREDIT CARD

CREDIT CARD DETAILS (Mastercard or VISA only)

CARD HOLDER NAME (PRINT)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--

EXPIRY DATE	TRANSACTION AMOUNT	SIGNATURE
(Mnth/Yr) ____/____	\$	

All cheques and money orders payable to VVPPAA NSW Mail to PO Box 170 Granville, NSW 2142
Credit Card payments may be phoned in to (02) 9682 1788 Mon-Fri 9:30am – 3pm.

OFFICE USE ONLY

MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT DATE:	DONATION RECEIPT DATE:
MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT N ^o :	DONATION RECEIPT N ^o :
MEMBERSHIP CARD NUMBER:	COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):
COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):	BANK SHEET ENTRY BY (PRINT):

**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., will be held at Merrylands RSL Club 10.30am Saturday, 25 May 2019.

AGENDA

Opening of Meeting by the Chairman

Apologies

Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2018.

Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2018

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Membership Report

Changes to Constitution [As listed and included at page 38 of this issue]

Election results (for Office Bearers) [*Nomination form is printed opposite* for convenience]

President

Senior Vice President

Vice Presidents (2)

Secretary

Treasurer

Committee Members (10)

Appointment of Association Auditors

Appointment of Association Legal Representatives

Appointment of Life Members

Other Business by leave of the Chairman

Close of Meeting.

Any items for General Business must be in the hands of the Secretary by close of business on Monday 29 April 2019.

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2020.

Ron O'Connor

Hon. Secretary

NSW Branch

VIETNAM VETERANS', PEACEKEEPERS' & PEACEMAKERS'
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2019 ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Members wishing to nominate for one or more of the following positions on the NSW Committee are asked to indicate with an (X) alongside those positions,. Appointment on the Committee is for a 2 year term.

President (1)

Senior-Vice President (1)

Vice Presidents (2)

Secretary (1)

Treasurer (1)

Committee Members (10)

* Members nominating for a position(s) must be financial for the year 2019.

Details of Nominee:

.....		
Print Name	Signature	M'ship No

Details of Seconders (2)

.....		
Print Name	Signature	M'ship No.

.....		
Print Name	Signature	M'ship No.

NOTE:

All nomination forms must be in the Secretary's hands by COB 25 March 2019.

Should an election be required personal profiles will be requested and ballot papers will be posted. The election results will be declared at the AGM on 25 May 2019.

Notice

General meeting

THE VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.

A General Meeting of NSW Branch members is required to vote on any change to the NSW Branch Constitution. The NSW Branch Committee has approved certain changes to the Constitution which seek to:

Vary – Section 17 – “DISCIPLINING OF MEMBERS”.

Vary Section 14 – “WINDING UP”

The General Meeting will be held at Merrylands RSL Club, 14 Military Road, Merrylands New South Wales at 10.15 am on Saturday, 25th May 2019 (immediately prior to the 2019 AGM).

The proposals to vary the Constitution are:

AIM

To vary the NSW Branch Constitution to provide further clarity to Section 17 – “DISCIPLINING OF MEMBERS”

VARIATION REQUIRED

Sub-section (1) – Delete the reference to “Sub-branch of”.

REASON

The provision within the Constitution of the NSW Branch for disciplining of members should not be restricted to or limited to members of a sub-branch but should apply to all members of the Association.

AIM

To vary the NSW Branch Constitution to provide greater flexibility in the disbursement of assets in the event of the winding-up of the Association.

VARIATION REQUIRED

Section 14 - Add a new sub-section (3) which states that “Some other institution or institutions” as defined in (2) above shall be deemed to include an organisation operating a Trust to provide financial assistance to Veterans’ Children/Grand Children where those children are in necessitous and deserving circumstances, including in the area of education. An example of such organization is the Australian Veterans’ Children Assistance Trust Limited (“AVCAT”) – ACN 008 609 032.”

REASON

To include training institutions such as the AVCAT, or other similar organisation/s, in the Winding Up section of our Constitution.

FROM NSW 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. Periodically, we will publish a list of individual NSW Branch donors of amounts of \$200 or more. Whilst all donations are gratefully received, and combined are of enormous assistance to us, they are too numerous to list. Donors to the NSW Branch of \$200 or more since the last Journal were:

\$5,000	Ray Hopkins
\$1,000	Brian Hunter Kevin Faust Warren Axford Michael Walker
\$800	Anonymous
\$570	Kenneth Hull
\$500	Ken Jago Peter Unwin Stephen Bunter Gordon O'Brien Tanya Edwards-Hackett

\$500	John McNeil Wayne Adler Geoffrey Jones
\$400	Wesley Hindmarsh
\$320	Neville Lemon
\$300	Geoffrey Peattie Howard Clark Garry Smith Dallas Mulhall OAM Henry Walker William Smith
\$250	Richard Croall
\$200	Kevin Stewart Donald Elbourne Adrian Starr Bruce Cullen Colin Kelso Anonymous John Robicheau Alexander Robinson Anthony Gibbs Graham Sutherland Robert Wyer Hector Grant Garry Chenhall Greg Meek Ronald Giveen Albert Brown Francis Scicluna Denis Nolan Peter Cochrane

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



Ex-ADF members getting 'that old feeling' helping out after the Indonesian tsunami.



Last edition we told the story of Team Rubicon's deployment to assist the drought stricken farmers in Dubbo

Their contribution there was magnificent.

In October last year Team Rubicon deployed to Palu, Indonesia (amongst other places) to help in the aftermath of the devastating tsunami.

Central Sulawesi suffered a series of earthquakes up to a reported 7.5 magnitude. Initial damage and aftershocks were exacerbated from a 3m metre tsunami that caused damage around the Palu and Donggala area. Due to the geography of Palu the tsunami was channelled into the port city which appears to have contributed to the damage.

The Operational Reconnaissance Team working with Team Rubicon network partners, Team Rubicon UK, conducted liaison with local authorities including attendance of a coordination meeting. The team on the ground received approval to deliver WASH (Water Sanitation &



Hygiene in Emergencies) and drone support by the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management.

Who is Team Rubicon?

Team Rubicon is a volunteer disaster relief organisation made up of 70% ex-ADF members with the rest, first responders and interested civilians.

Members are called on to give a week or so of their time to join Team Rubicon groups heading off to help people suffering because of a disaster. ■

If you are able to spend a week or so in disaster relief
and you want to experience again 'that old feeling',
why not join?

Join on line at <https://www.teamrubiconaus.org/>

PH: +61 (02) 8815 8113
Team Rubicon Australia
1/299 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
info@teamrubiconaus.org



Dean West's Story

“As everyone is soon to find out, from my BBC doco, I had a hard time after leaving the army. I have a lot of survival skills, and using this to help other people, balances my inner demons. I’ve been very fortunate with Team Rubicon to deploy overseas and domestically. At the moment, I am sitting in Palu, with Rich and Dion, and we’ve just been out to check some sites that we will be damage assessing tomorrow with our UAVs [drones]. The site we were standing on was impacted by a phenomenon known as liquefaction, where the earth is churned so much

that it turns into a quicksand whirlpool. It’s now thought to be the gravesite of thousands of people. I feel extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be here and help the people of Indonesia and I feel incredible sorrow for their loss. But I know me and the team are here to do something for the Indonesian government that is needed and will help them move forward. Tonight when I go to sleep, I know that balance in the fight with my demons is topped up. Thanks to Team Rubicon. Cheers, see yas when I get back.” ■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

The following story and pics come from Ray "Boris" O'Brien who completed 2 tours of Vietnam.

The first with 1 RAR 1965-66. The second with 4 RAR 1971.

Bike Race Day

IN May '65 1 RAR was posted to Vietnam. We, along with. 1st 503 US, 2nd 503 US made up 173rd Airborne Brigade. We were posted to Bien Hoa Airbase, 18 miles North East of Saigon.

After a short time in -country the company started collecting VC push bikes. We got them from everywhere, VC rice and salt caches, VC villages, enemy contacts, and just lying around in general.

We would ask the US helicopter pilots to drop them off in our Company area. They would reply, 'You Bicycle Company guys should have dozens by now'.

Later on, the OC B Coy 1 RAR, Major McFarlane, nickname "BlackJack", an excellent officer and man, who would not take any crap, on a rare day off decided we would have a 'Bike Race Day'. *(That's me on the right with mate, Trevor Veale in the middle. Unfortunately time has eroded the memory banks and I cannot remember the guy on the end, left.)*

Because Pte Trevor Veale and myself were running the SP, I was asked to run the book on the races, with any winnings going into Company funds.



The Coy 2IC, Captain Peter Arnison, later Major General, then a Governor of Queensland, gave us a few hundred dollars to start with. Paid in US 'Green backs'. Before decimal currency.

Race day, the first race was a section event and was won by the team from CHQ, who were the outsiders of the field. The only people who backed them were the ARVN Interpreters attached to CHQ. Because they were poorly paid their win wasn't that large, \$20-\$30.

After 3 or 4 races the company funds was looking good, as hardly anyone had backed a winner. The main event was a individual race and Pte Brian Broderick was the even-money favourite, hardly any money on him at the odds. The Battalion RSM had \$20 on Pte Jimmy Lang, a well liked B Coy soldier and we gave the RSM 50-



They're off!



Round they go

1 on Jimmy.

Race starts, Jimmy goes 10 meters and falls off his bike. The RSM prods Jimmy with his pace stick, saying "Get up Pte Lang, I stand to win \$1,000 on you!".

Bad luck, RSMs \$20 into the Bookie Bag.

Brian Broderick wins with ease and Company funds is bursting. Trevor and I count the winnings and pass it on to the 2IC. A couple of thousand profit.

The 2IC tells us the OC and him are very happy with the results and if I go to the 2ICs tent in 30 minutes we will both get a reward. Trevor and I think \$50 to \$100 each would be very nice, A

day trip to Saigon would be much better.

10 minutes later I go to the 2ICs tent, he reaches down behind his desk and brings up 2 cans of Budweiser beer. 10 cents worth, big deal.

When our tour finished, 13 months all up, we had a farewell party at the company boozier and the OC gave the chief ARVN Interpreter a gift. A brand new motor bike paid for by B Coy Funds.

The bike race day was a terrific idea by the OC, everyone had a great day, great fun and laughs, magical day. Took our minds off the other side of the war for a day.

Boris. ■

One Barrel , One Marble , One Life.

By Ross Bridle

A life "on hold" past forty years,
On red alert, a world apart.
Standing-by, waiting for
True blue life to start.

In '65 the Fed' saw fit
To take us off to war.
"All the way with L.B.J.",
The future no one saw.

National Service stormed the scene.
Abusive boot-camp blighters.
Green, naive Aussie youth
Made combat-ready fighters.

The person that I was back then
Transformed for ever more.
The plans and dreams I had for life
Could never be restored.

A subtle sense of sadness still,
Sidetracked, in early stage.
The boy I was, the joy of life,
Chance rewrote that page.

"Trained to kill" does not look good
On any C.V. sheet.
Recruits excelling in this skill
Have issues back in Civvy street.

My parents paid a price in health,
No acknowledgement to date.
Fearful of my fate in 'nam,
They too serve who stand and wait.

There is no doubt my wife's a saint
For putting up with me.
We were not aware, were never told
Of the "complementary" P.T.S.D.

Civilian life is black and white,
"Nasho's" - technicolour.
Combat training flicked a switch -
A disconnect with self and others.

I've turned a page , a new day dawns.
Four years of Veterans' counsel.
There are more options for me now -
Seize the day , and of my "state" be mindful.

The benefits of all this work
Will some day surely show,
And life will start where I left off,
Forty years ago.

MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE JANUARY 1ST

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS A VERY VALUABLE ASSET AND WE CONTINUE
TO HONOUR YOUR CONTRIBUTION IN SUPPORT OF VETERANS.

AT TIME OF PUBLICATION CURRENT NSW MEMBERSHIPS ARE DOWN
ON 2018 NUMBERS. SO IF YOU HEAR OF A MATE WHO DID NOT GET HIS
COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER, IT MAY BE THAT HE/SHE HAS
FORGOTTEN TO SEND THEIR RENEWAL TO US. KINDLY REMIND
THOSE YOU KNOW TO RENEW THEIR 2019 MEMBERSHIP ASAP.

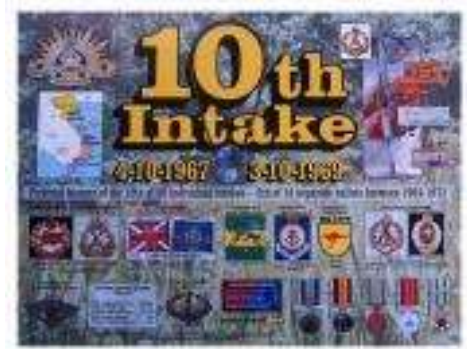
YOU WILL BE DOING US ALL A BIG FAVOUR.

NATIONAL SERVICE REUNION.

WHO. 10th Intake (All those called-up early October 1967)

plus wives and partners.

NB. Overseas service not a prerequisite.



WHERE. Sawtell Beach Holiday Park (10kms South of Coffs Harbour NSW). 5 Lyons Road Sawtell NSW 2452.

Reservations: 02 6648 4485 or 1800 200 555.

Email: sbhp@chcc.nsw.gov.au

(www.coffsholidays.com.au).

WHEN. 21st to 28th October 2019 inclusive.

EVENTS. Happy Hour. State of Origin fun games.

Brief Memorial Service (medals) & wreath laying.

Fantastic Club dinners. Trivia sessions.

Social tennis, lawn bowls, golf & croquet.

Fishing. Bush/beach walks.

Secret women's business & coffee outings.

FINAL. This reunion will celebrate 50 years since the 10th Intake Nashos were discharged from the Army.
Many attendees will arrive earlier and stay longer.
All interstate folk will be most welcome.

NOTE. Bookings are now open to secure your favourite caravan site or villa/cabin.
Please mention 10th Intake National Service Reunion to obtain a 10% discount. Tell your old mates.
Check (www.tenthintake.com.au) for the full program.

Richard Barry (Facilitator). Enquiries: 02 6792 3114 or richyvon47@hotmail.com

PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

2018 in review - A year to forget...or one to remember

With sharemarkets exhibiting volatility over the past few months, I thought I'd share with you a 2018 review by Chris Lioutas - PSK Chief Investment Officer.

Behavioural finance shows us that human bias puts more weight or emphasis on near term events rather than events further in the past. Hence, 2018 would be more a year to forget than remember. However, remembering years like 2018 is equally important in terms of providing a reminder that investing in anything outside of at-call cash deposits at the bank involves some sort of risk and that that risk varies through time. Risk appetite and risk tolerance are two very different things.

Highlights for the year included:

- Synchronised global economic growth
- Roaring equity markets led mostly by tech stocks in the US
- Oil price surge on production cuts, sanctions, and rising aggregate demand
- Falling unemployment across all regions
- Rising wages globally, mostly led by the US
- Inflation largely in check, somewhat surprisingly given rising economic growth and tighter labour markets
- Corporate profit margins remaining high
- Strong corporate earnings growth on rising demand and significant tax cuts in the US
- Corporate balance sheets largely remaining in good shape
- Rising household wealth in light of property and equity markets rising globally
- Lowlights of for the year included:
- Trade wars
- US central bank possibly getting ahead of themselves with regard to tightening of policy
- Tight US labour markets leading to labour

shortages thus constraining growth

- Potential US recession potentially nearer than expected
- Brexit
- Italian elections and subsequent budget
- Chinese growth slowdown
- Chinese deleveraging without previous levels of stimulus
- Trouble in emerging markets on US dollar strength and political risks (Turkey, Argentina, South Africa, Brazil)
- US / North Korea

Australian residential housing market under pressure from change in bank lending behaviour

Sharp falls equity markets in the last few months on the back of rising investor concerns and higher US interest rates

The key takeout is that something around the world is always happening that may or may not affect investment markets. Risks are a constant, but investor perception of risks varies widely and is near impossible to forecast with any degree of certainty. The risks for 2019 certainly seem elevated, however, these risks have largely been known for some time. What has changed are the degrees of probability around them.

What we can do is focus on the fundamentals and assess the risk of changes to these fundamentals over the medium to longer term. As it stands right now, we don't think the risks likely to present themselves in 2019 warrant the breadth and depth of largely panic selling that we've seen in the last few months. We expect a reasonable year from investment markets in 2019, better than the last few months, but not as good as the last few years.

For some, this will represent an opportunity; for others it will represent a time to sit back and reflect; whilst for others it will cause some angst and concern.

For all, it represents an opportunity to ensure the following applies or is present:

1. Quality – high quality investments, held over the longer term, create wealth
2. Diversification – both across and within asset classes and individual assets. Yes, the most recent experience has shown us that all asset classes can go down at once, but it's also reinforced that there are varying degrees of down and diversification still works
3. Review – regularly reviewing your portfolio doesn't necessarily involve the need for action. But reviews do highlight which investments are doing better than others, and trimming winners and topping up laggards, has been proven to work over the long term
4. Opportunity – it's quite often difficult to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves as it usually comes after a sell-off or involves going against the herd. The greatest long term wealth is created by taking advantage of such opportunities

If you would like to discuss this further, or to have a complimentary assessment of your financial situation, please feel free to contact me on (02) 9895 8800, 0414 811 777 or paulm@psk.com.au

Paul Messerschmidt

Authorised representative and credit representative of Charter Financial Planning

PSK Financial Services Group Pty Ltd (ABN 24 134 987 205), corporate authorised representative (CAR), number 340647, trading as PSK Financial Services Group Pty Ltd, is authorised to provide financial services on behalf of Charter Financial Planning Limited (Charter Financial Planning, ABN: 35 002 976 294, AFS Licence No. 234665). Charter Financial Planning is a member of the AMP Group. Charter Financial Planning is a Professional Partner of the Financial Planning Association (FPA) is fully committed to the FPA's Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct. Charter Financial Planning is also a Corporate Member of the Association of Financial Advisers (AFA).

This article contains information that is general in nature. It does not take into account the objectives, financial situation or needs of any particular person. You need to consider your financial situation and needs before making any decisions based on this information.



Advice that puts you first

Authorised Representative of Charter Financial Planning

AFS Licence No. 234665

At PSK Financial Services our key focus is to guide you through life's financial challenges and our promise is to help you achieve financial peace of mind.

We offer a wide range of services which focus on every client's unique goals and needs.

Areas of advice:

- DVA/Centrelink strategies
- Superannuation
- Retirement planning
- Aged Care
- Investment
- Estate planning

For any questions regarding your financial situation please contact

Paul Messerschmidt

MFinPlan, GradDipFinPlan

Partner and Senior Financial Adviser

PSK Financial Services

Level 4, 3 Horwood Place,

Parramatta NSW 2150

M 0414 811 777 | P (02) 9895 8800

E paulm@psk.com.au



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 recognize 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
VVCS



***The Gold Coast Branch
of the
Royal Australian Air Force Association
Queensland Division
has recently been reformed.***

The Association is established to foster the spirit of friendship formed on service and to celebrate and perpetuate the honour and ideals of the Royal Australian Air Force and other designated services.

Membership is open to serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force and Allied Armed Forces, their family members, current and former Air Force Cadets, Air League Cadets and members of the public who have not served in any air force, but who have an interest in aviation and who support the mission and objectives of the Association.

A primary objective of the Gold Coast Branch is to provide members with the opportunity to join socially with like-minded people in a relaxed and friendly environment.

For further details or membership application form, please contact:

Membership Coordinator:

Mike Powell – 0411 138 520 or mikepowl@gmail.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

--	--	--

OLD DETAILS [PRINT CLEARLY]

OLD ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

NEW DETAILS [PRINT CLEARLY]

NEW ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS [PRINT CLEARLY]

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Complete all sections and post to:

**The Secretary
VVPAA NSW
PO Box 170
Granville
NSW 2142**

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

VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

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

We seek your assistance in reporting the death of Vietnam Veterans, past or recent, to allow the Federation to expand and preserve 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
VVPAA NSW Branch
PO Box 170
Granville NSW 2142

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

REUNIONS & NOTICES

REUNIONS & NOTICES



SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR THE CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN

AVCAT OF AUSTRALIAN VETERANS

The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust is a national independent charity helping the children and grandchildren of ex-service men and women to a better future through tertiary education. Through the generous support of the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, ex-service organisations, corporate sponsors and private donors, we provide scholarships which assist recipients to obtain the tertiary qualification they need for their chosen career.

One of the scholarships administered by AVCAT is the VVPPAA Scholarship, specifically available for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans. Our proud association has seen many successful recipients achieve tertiary qualifications and reach their goals, that erstwhile may not have been available to them. We hope to continue this proud heritage long into the future with your help. It is through your generous support of this organization, and valued donations, that we keep the hopes of children alive.



Some of our recent recipients and successful achievers in their chosen fields

"It means the world to me that someone I don't know cares about my education and believes I have potential."

2014 Recipient

2019 scholarships open in August 2018 and close at the end of October 2018. See below for more.

"Without the scholarship, achieving my goals would be almost impossible. The financial support has provided me the opportunity to study and without your support I would simply not be in the position I am in today, and for that I will be forever grateful". Recent recipient.

You are eligible to apply for a scholarship with AVCAT if you answer yes to the following questions:

- Are you a child or a grandchild of an Australian veteran? A veteran is a person who has rendered service as a member of the Australian Defence Force.
- Are you an Australian citizen or permanent resident?
- Are you enrolled, or planning to enroll, in tertiary studies for a minimum of one year?
- Will you be studying full-time next year?
- Are you or will you be eligible for Centrelink's Youth Allowance?
- Are you under 25 years of age?

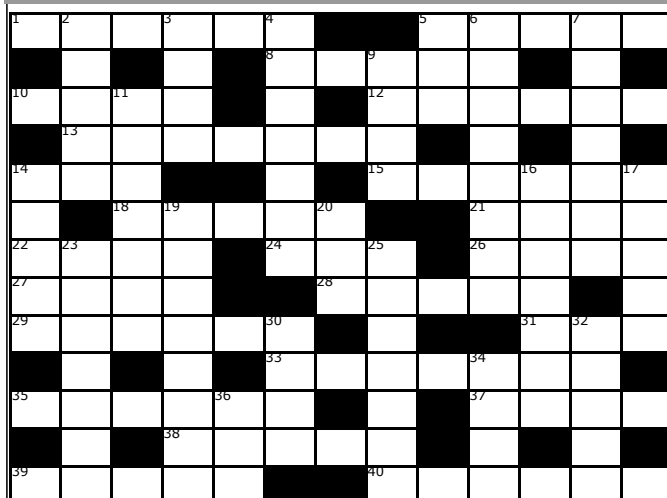
To apply you should contact AVCAT and request to be added to the expressions of interest register.

Phone: 02 9213 7999

Web: avcat@dva.gov.au

PO Box K978 Haymarket, NSW 1240

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

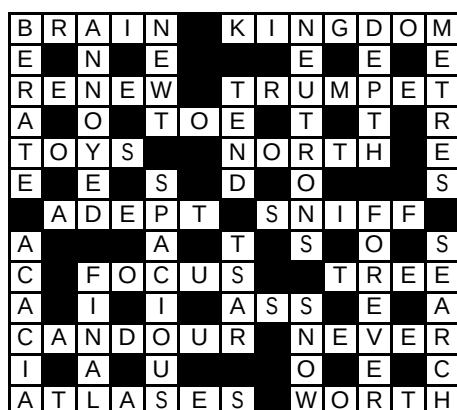
1. Tallies
5. Cries, sobs
8. Beverage (Ale)
10. Type of cheese
12. Eased
13. Shade apparatus
14. Writing implement
15. Seeps out
18. Stair post
21. Travel on
22. Goddess
24. Spot
26. Eternal
27. Impression
28. Pent up
29. Motor
31. Cereal grain
33. Detest
35. Spray with bullets
37. Costly
38. Singer, voice
39. Let go
40. Salt water solution

DOWN

2. French Pancake
3. Backside
4. Cut, reduced
5. Spider trap
6. Deletions
7. Go before
9. Wind
11. Sunbaking reason
14. Group of lions
16. Multiple range
17. Fabric
19. Assess cost
20. Parcel of land
23. Roman elder
25. Puzzles
30. Paradise
32. Desire
34. Fans object
36. Nourished

*SOLUTION NEXT
ISSUE*

**DECEMBER
2018
SOLUTION**



THE UNKNOWN COMIC

Paddy drags a huge box along to the Antiques Roadshow filming in Dublin. He waits in the queue for ages, dragging the big box with him as he went, until finally he gets to meet an expert.

'Where did you get this?' asks the expert. 'It's been in my loft for 40 years or more, to be sure', replies Paddy, 'and I tink it must be some kind of a family heirloom'.

'I see,' says the expert. 'Tell me, do you have insurance?' 'No,' replies Paddy. 'Do yur think I shud?' 'Yeah,' replies the expert. 'It's your water tank'.

O'Reilly is really, really drunk, when the publican calls time and tells him it's time to go home. So he gets up off his stool and falls flat on his face, and thinks, 'Shoit I've had a few'. He crawls over to the door pulls himself up and steps into the street, and falls flat on his face, so instead he crawls the 3 houses to his home. When he gets home he opens the door, pulls himself up, and yet again falls flat on his face as he steps inside.

He crawls upstairs into his room, stands up and falls flat on his bed and falls fast asleep straight away. The following morning his wife wakes him up and says, 'You've been drinking again haven't you?' O'Reilly replies, 'What makes you say that?' His wife replies, 'Well the pub just called, you've left your wheelchair there again!'

Colin and Trevor are life long buddies. They make a pact that whichever one dies first will contact the living one from the afterlife. Then one sad day Trevor ups and dies. Colin doesn't hear from him for almost a year and begins to think there is no afterlife. Then one day he gets a call. It's Trevor. 'So there is an afterlife! What's it like?' Colin asks. 'Well, I sleep in late. I get up, have a big breakfast. Then I have sex, lots of sex. Then I go back to sleep, but I get up for lunch, have a big lunch. Have some more sex, take a nap. Huge dinner. More sex. Get to sleep very late and wake up the next day.' 'Oh, my God,' says Colin. 'So that's what heaven is like?' 'Oh no,' says Trevor. 'I'm not in heaven. I'm a rabbit somewhere out near Parkes.'

BRANCH LISTINGS NSW SUB-BRANCHES

BRANCH LISTINGS OTHER STATES

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

Susan Cole 1947 - 2019

How can one possibly tell of all the things that you have shared with a good friend over 23 years and that being only a small part of the 72 years that Sue spent here amongst you all.

In 1983, when coming down from Pheagan's Bay to visit her father in hospital, Sue was involved in a nasty car accident on the Woy Woy Road. Sue spent six months in the Sanatorium Hospital. The doctors told her that she would never walk again and so, determined not to let it change her life, Sue carried on with the Ladies Auxiliary selling raffle tickets for the VVA on street corners in her wheel chair.

However, Sue was determined to prove the doctor's wrong and, after a lot of hard work and physio, this is exactly what she did.

Dennis and Sue were very active members of the Vietnam Veterans' Association in Granville and the Sub-Branch at Wyong. They were close friends with Phil Thompson, then President of the VVA NSW, who unfortunately committed suicide as a result of his frustration with the inaction of the Government of the day and the negativity of the Evatt Royal Commission into Agent Orange. Dennis and Sue had a keen interest in the outcome of this Commission because of the effects of this chemical on their family. Phil's suicide had a devastating effect on Sue (as I am sure it did on many others) and she was always upset that so many members of the Association did not even know who Phil was. She felt that members should take an interest in the Association and those who had fought so hard to gain those entitlements which our veterans enjoy today.

In 1991, when things started going downhill at Wyong, Sue and Dennis decided to come along and join with a group of veterans who were starting up a Sub-Branch in Gosford. Sue had started up a Ladies Auxiliary at Wyong and when they moved to Gosford some of those ladies came with her. That was 28 years ago.

I first met Sue in 1996 when Cheryl Fitzgerald took me down to Ettalong Markets one Saturday and introduced me to Sue. Cheryl told Sue that I was going to take on the position of Ladies Auxiliary President the next year at the Vietnam

Veterans' Sub-Branch. Sue talked to me briefly, looked me up and down and said, "You'll do". Thus started a whole new phase of my life.



Sue was a very 'full on' person. It was as if we had to get everything done because there was so much time to make up for. She would invite me around to her place for a cuppa and then she would proceed to get out boxes of craft materials and bits and pieces and start teaching me how to make the sorts of things that the ladies sold on the stalls they had in Gosford around 5 times a year. She would be on the telephone to me every other morning checking up to see what we would be doing that day, or the next.

I started to organise workdays at my home and the ladies would all turn up and sit around our rather large table in the gazebo out the back of our little house in Ettalong. We would stop work for a leisurely lunch and chat and then back to work and clean up before my husband arrived home from work. At this stage Sue held the position of Treasurer of our Ladies Auxiliary and she would be at all our stalls and the many raffles we held in Umina, when she was well enough. Unfortunately she never did escape the pain from her injuries and she was under constant supervision from her Doctor for pain management and at times this prevented Sue from leaving the house.

In recognition of her service, in February 2002, Sue was presented with Life Membership of the Gosford Sub-Branch and again in March 2003, of the NSW Branch of the of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia.

In 1998 a group of our ladies from the Ladies Auxiliary, including Sue and myself, Maureen and Shirley, attended an Eight Week Course run by the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service. This course was to help those wives and partners of Veterans to understand the problems that our

veterans had to face as a result of their service. At the end of the course the counsellors emphasised the fact that the carers themselves needed to find the time for respite and support from those who understood. So, we decided to form our own Support Group in Gosford and invited other partners to join us. Our first meeting was held at the Gosford RSL on the 16th February, 1999.

In the meantime one of the veterans at the Sub-Branch, John Rae, had been talking to me about starting an organisation to fight for the rights of the partners/carers of veterans to get some recognition and support from the Government. Sue, who was the Secretary at the time, thought this was a great idea and backed me all the way. When I heard a lady by the name of Lee Hoinville speaking on the radio in Sydney, about exactly the same thing, our group decided we would attend the conference she was arranging.

For one reason and another this conference did not come about and so our group decided to go ahead and do it ourselves. We contacted other groups around NSW and arranged a conference at Myall Lakes. Twenty Nine ladies from five groups across the state took part.

I will never forget the excitement with which we set out that day to drive to Myall Lakes. Sue, Cheryl, Daphne, Maureen and I climbed into my car with Dennis, Bill and John loading up our luggage and waving us off. We met up with the other ladies and off we went. By the time we came home the Partners of Veterans Association was a reality. The rest is history.

Sue was always a dedicated member of our group and of the Ladies Auxiliary. She crocheted thousands of face washers and the tops of tea towels right up to the end, even when she was not well enough to come to our gatherings any more.

I am sorry to say that, due to commitments, I was not able to spend the time with Sue that I would have liked but her good friends, Maureen and Ann, kept up the tradition of the weekly cuppa at Sue's place.

Sue has been a loyal friend, not only to myself, but to many other people in the community. She was always there to make a cuppa and to listen. Her home was open to all.

Sue will be sorely missed.





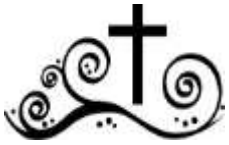
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But each one, man by man, has won imperishable praise!

Each has won a glorious grave - not that sepulchre of earth wherein they lie, but the living tomb of everlasting remembrance wherein their glory is enshrined. Remembrance that will live on the lips, that will blossom in the deeds of their countrymen the world over. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of heroes. Monuments may rise and tablets be set up to them in their own land, but on far-off shores there is an abiding memorial that no pen or chisel has traced; it is graven, not on stone or brass, but on the living heart of humanity. Take these men for your example. Like them, remember that prosperity can be only for the free, that *freedom is* the sure possession of those alone who have courage to defend it. Pericles

PLEASE NOTE

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

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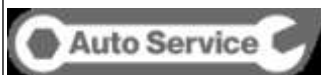
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