



THE VIETNAM VETERANS' NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

DECEMBER 2020



Our New Official History
(after two decades of campaigning)

THE LONG SHADOW
Australia's Vietnam Veterans since the war
By Dr Peter Yule



Merry Christmas

BUMPER CHRISTMAS READING

ACHIEVEMENTS PART 3



GIRL OUT OF FOCUS

**THE ADF AND
VETERAN SUICIDE**



**THE SCUNGEEES AND
THE WHITE MICE**

RIVER AMBUSH



**THE ADVENTURES OF
THE ATOMIC TANK**

THE CREW OF MAGPIE 91



**THE FLIGHT OF
THE CARIBOU**

**THE GOVERNMENTS RESPONSE TO
PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION
REPORT**



**THE DAY LUCIFER
MET HIS MATCH**



**FINDING PRIVATE
CAMPBELL**

AND MORE.....

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claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA

See our article elsewhere in this issue

Veterans' stories edition

We really love your stories

Thanks to all our veteran authors.

Contributors to this edition are:

Ian Robertson, Ray (Boris) O'Brien, Harry Hoger, Al Wood, Graham Munsell, Barry Hodges, Thomas Hamilton, Graham Barnett BEM, Terry Harper and Ross Riddett.

Till this edition, all our authors have had an Army background so we are delighted to have an Air Force contribution this time.

We would be equally delighted to receive stories from the Navy for our next edition. ■

Are you
our next
new
author?





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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.

Great holiday reading

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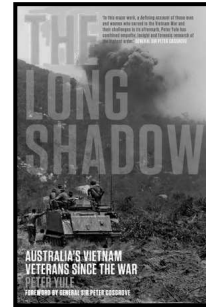
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(Image of a Dead Man, famous painting
by Vietnam veteran Ray Beattie)

Stop Press

The new history about the health
and medical legacy of the
Vietnam War has been published.
It's a beauty.
Review on page 6

REUNIONS & NOTICES

**DUE TO THE UNCERTAINTIES
OF CONDITIONS IN
RELATION TO THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC WE ARE UNABLE
TO REPORT ANY CONFIRMED
REUNION NOTICES IN THIS
ISSUE.**

**WE WILL BRING READERS UP
TO DATE IN OUR NEXT ISSUE
MARCH 2021**

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After 20 years of our campaigning, the new history is published

The Long Shadow, Australia's Vietnam Veterans Since the War

by Peter Yule

(NewSouth Publishing, 2020)

We campaigned for 20 years to have the War Memorial commission this book, then waited another five while it was researched and written.

And here it is at last.

The Long Shadow is a kaleidoscopic story of the health and medical legacies of the Vietnam War. Dr Peter Yule's vast research has resulted in the gathering of information to make a complete story of our homecoming.

The story is told with accuracy, compassion and eloquence. (Remarkably, there is only one suggestion on which we have a reservation).

Dr Yule's story begins with asking what it was like to be on a tour of duty in Vietnam.

This story is told not so much from archival document study; but through the eyes of the over one hundred veterans Dr Yule and his team interviewed.

So what was it like?

* There was a wide variety of views.

National Service signaller Colin Lamb believed his tour of duty in Vietnam was 'the best thing in the world' while another signaller, David Morgan experienced it as 'living a horrific nightmare from which there was no escape'.

* There was confusion.

Garry Graham was stressed by 'not knowing who the enemy was. The Vietnamese were

working in the rice paddies by day and saying 'Hello' and Uc Dai Lai [Australians] No. 1, Viet Cong No. 10, and then they come after you that night...'

* There was exhaustion.

Peter Winter told a tale of exhaustion, which will resonate with many readers, in a letter home: 'It's been fairly hectic for the platoon lately, especially in the night ambush roles which leave us tried and a bit on edge. Some of us have been out every night for the last nine nights. We've been going out at 1800 and coming in at 0630. Then its straight into our daily routine of strengthening our defensive area and when that's finished, preparing for the coming night's activity... The constant effort that is needed to keep ourselves alert and ready for any kind of action is really tiring'.

* There was the horror of mine warfare.

Gary McKay's platoon arrived to find: 'The APC had literally had its back taken off and most of one side. The men inside had suffered a similar fate....'

* There was the trauma of combat.

As [HMAS] *Perth* approached, she came under fire from batteries along the coast. Jones recalls that 'down below you could hear these sounds like someone with a

(Continued on page 7)

handful of rocks, big rocks going ...against the ships side...The crew felt extremely vulnerable as 'it doesn't take much to sink a 4,500 ton destroyer'...Perth suffered a direct hit on top of the aft gun mount...

* Graham Chandler recalls: Fifty four of us infanteers along with some engineers and some tracking dogs went to a secret location called the Hat Dich which was renowned to be a VC stronghold. It was our mission to find them, and either destroy them or bring in the heavy stuff and get rid of them. Yeah, we found them all right. Like I said, there were fifty four of us and in about three or four minutes we'd lost one dead and 37 wounded...'

Only a minority were combat troops. The book also canvasses the experiences of a wide variety of those in army, navy and air force support roles.

And what of the dangers?

Dr Yule describes in detail the ordeals of battle deaths and wounds, accidents, diseases and the self-medication of alcohol and tobacco as well as the sleeping monster, the trauma of war.

Here are some snippets.

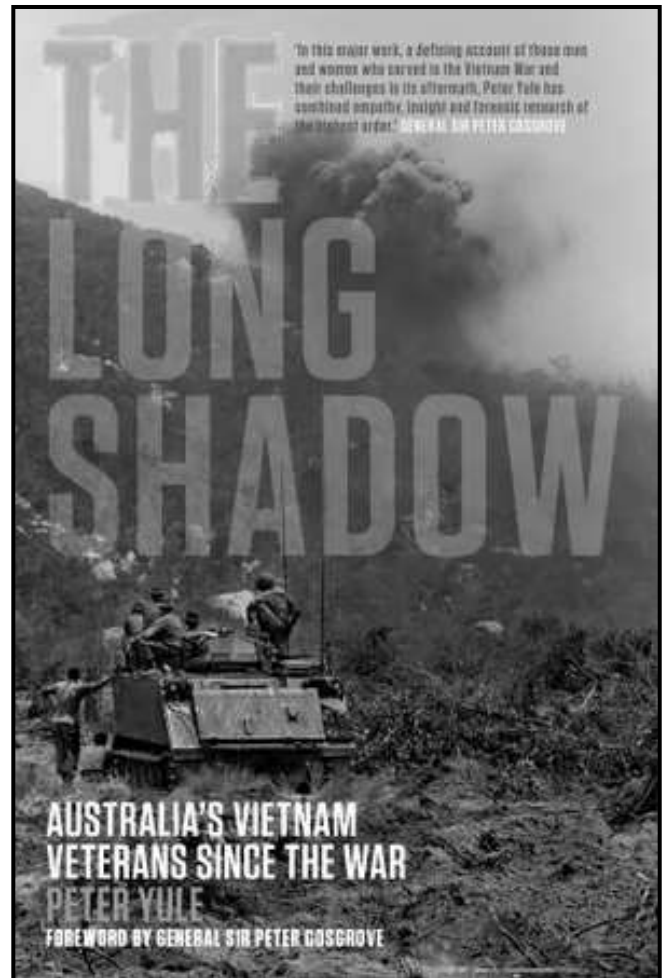
* On 21 September 1971, five Australians were killed in the Battle of Nui Le in the north of Phuoc Tuy, when D Company 4RAR attacked an enemy bunker complex without tank support...

* The high velocity blast of a land mine explosion caused traumatic injuries...'

* Ted Holden...was seriously injured falling into a newly dug weapon pit at Nui Dat...

* For many Vietnam veterans, particularly gunners and infantry, the most common long term medical legacies are hearing loss and damaged knees and backs.

* Vietnam was full of natural hazards. Snakes, scorpions, bees and ants were constant dangers. Kraits were the most dangerous of the local snakes and they appeared to be attracted to the dark corners of tents at Nui Dat.'



* ...dozens of Australian soldiers were bitten by possibly rabid dogs, monkeys and mongooses.

* Soon after arriving in Vietnam in June 1965, medical officers realised that most local strains of malaria were resistant to chloroquine and some appeared to be resistant to paludrine.'

* [A medical officer} was sent to Vietnam in February 1963 to investigate the disease environment, and he found that, even without the war, Vietnam was one of the most dangerous places in the world. A lack of public health facilities especially sewerage and safe water supplies, made hygiene-related diseases common, notably worm infestations, dysentery, gastroenteritis, infective hepatitis, cholera and enteric fevers. Leprosy, tuberculosis and even

(Continued on page 8)

bubonic plague were endemic, as were a wide range of tropical fevers additional to malaria, including scrub typhus, Japanese B encephalitis and dengue fever. In rural areas, leptospirosis, melioidosis and rabies were all common. Polio was still endemic...

* Combat fatigue cases peaked in 1969...

These experiences and dangers set the scene for a troubled homecoming.

With the scene set, Dr Yule delves deeply into what happened on our return to Australia.

Here's a couple of veterans' first impressions from the many related in the book.

* On his return to Australia, flying from Sydney to Canberra, Geoff Hazel reports:

'I had this big bandage round my neck. One bloke's got his arm in a sling. We're in uniform. The other bloke was on crutches with his lower leg in a cast. We sat down and talked to the hostess and said, 'Can we get three painkillers as soon as we take off?' She said, 'What flavour?' They arrived and 'That's paid for by so-and-so. We just got drinks the whole way home.'

* There were, of course, less uplifting experiences. Kev Tapper recalled: 'When we arrived in Sydney, we were fumigated by these cockroach spray things on the plane. We got off the plane. There was no one there at all. We were all going to different parts of Australia, so... we laid down in the passengers' terminal with whatever gear we had, and all that night, people just stepped over us or around us or whatever. No food: we had to buy our own food, till the plane picked us up to take us back to Perth.'

* And there was confusion. Vince Restuccia relates: 'I had got used to living with a group of blokes that by and large I got on with very well. And we trained together worked hard together and we formed a good team... and all of a sudden I was home and...I was living back with my parents and...I got on with my father OK but...I guess I'd changed a lot and...I didn't feel in a good



Historian Dr Peter Yule whose book has done so much to bring clarity to the troubled homecoming of Vietnam veterans.

space for a while I have to admit...I almost felt like going and re-joining.'

And where was the Department of Veterans Affairs in all this?

Dr Yule's answer seems to be, 'nowhere much'.

* The official history of repatriation in Australia hardly mentions Vietnam veterans until the late 1970s when the rising storm of anger over Agent Orange forced the department to recognise their existence.

The book's chapter headings, *Hitting the Wall* and *Everyone Has Their Way of Coping* may ring loud bells with many veterans.

Here are a couple more snippets.

* Peter Aylett recalled: 'I guess I covered everything by being a workaholic...then

(Continued on page 9)

about the age of 55 the flashbacks started...

* John Bertini in the midst of a successful career, 'hit the wall': 'One morning in early 1997, I got up to go to work, showered, dressed and had breakfast, but that was all I could do. I could not bring myself to get into the car and drive into the city to my office...'

* 'Tony 'bomber' Bower-Miles remembered his first psychiatric consultation. 'I was in an extremely agitated state. I was crying. It was a day of mixed emotions, being upset, being angry. All that shit. [The psychiatrist] later told me he was scared of me that day....I lied to him about how much I drank. I said 30 or 40 pots a day. I knew he wouldn't believe me if I told him the truth...'

Then there was the effect on families.

*Dave Morgan recounts. 'I am one of the lucky veterans to successfully maintain a close relationship with my family [though they] have all suffered because of my PTSD. I feel for them given what they have had to endure— my nightmares, depression, anger outbursts, and mood swings. I am aware how overprotective I was while [my children] were growing up. Because of my own exposure to dangers in Vietnam, I became suspicious and overly conscious of their safety. A parent out of control with my own emotions and feelings. I brought them up in a world of military discipline—drill, drill, drill and study and education.'

The book describes in detail the failure of DVA to take seriously veterans' health problems until the 1990s when, under more pressure, they sent their people to the US to consult experts there. What they found led them to realise they were guilty of neglect. From then they have been trying to catch up after those lost years.

Dr Yule goes on to explain in plain English the results of the multitude of studies on veterans' health and mortality. They show that as the decades pass, veterans' health problems do not recede but grow in magnitude.



Ross Mangano (an early VVAA activist) and colleague at the Welcome Home march 1987

(AWM photo reproduced in *The Long Shadow*)

Dr Yule's coverage of this intensifying and expanding ill-health of veterans and their families is engrossing, if disturbing, reading.

Dr Yule delves deeply, too, into the Agent Orange controversy.

Vietnam veterans, led by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (VVAA), demanded a Royal Commission to determine what was their exposure to herbicides and insecticides while in Vietnam and whether that exposure might have harmed them or their subsequent offspring.

Having examined the evidence available at the time, Dr Yule judges that: '...the scientific position in 1982 was one of 'uncertainty'.

The VVAA in 1982 held the same belief, as there was good evidence for and against the

(Continued on page 10)

harmfulness of the chemical agents.

That uncertainty was important because Repatriation legislation prescribed Vietnam veterans be given the 'benefit of the doubt' when claiming compensation for war caused illness. It was clear to the VVAA that this 'uncertainty' constituted 'doubt' of which they were to be given the benefit.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) in 1982 was rejecting almost all compensation claims on the grounds of chemical exposure. The VVAA believed that these rejections resulted from DVA not abiding by the legislation's 'benefit of the doubt' provision.

It was these rejections that motivated the veterans' successful demand for a Royal Commission.

It was established in 1983.

Dr Yule suggests that demanding a Royal Commission may not have been the campaigning veterans' best option.

In October 1981 the Nancy Law court case strengthened significantly the 'benefit of the doubt' provision. Dr Yule refers to a DVA First Assistant Commissioner writing that, in view of this court's decision, DVA may not be able to hold the line against 'chemical exposure' cases.

Dr Yule also refers to a 1998 interview with the RSL National President of that time who voiced his belief that the 'benefit of the doubt' provisions would eventually have been properly applied anyway, so the Royal Commission was unnecessary and risky.

The VVAA's experience led it to believe DVA would not simply 'roll over' and 'pay up' under pressure from the Nancy Law decision.

Indeed, the VVAA felt sure DVA would continue indefinitely to resist relaxing its hard line.

After all, there was a 'chemical exposure' case won on appeal in January 1982, well after the Nancy Law decision, giving DVA an ideal opportunity to change its hard-line policy. No such change was made or forecast. Indeed, DVA instructed staff that there was to be no policy shift as a result of the appeal decision.

Then there was a year and a half between the Nancy Law decision and the announcement of the establishment of the Royal Commission when DVA could have changed policy or indicated it was contemplating changing. It did neither.

As it turned out, far from contemplating respecting the Nancy Law case, DVA was developing amendments to Repatriation law to counter the decision and make it harder for veterans to succeed in disability claims. These amendments were passed into law during the final year of the Royal Commission.

As it turned out too, the very deep resistance DVA had to respecting the Nancy Law decision was revealed by the Royal Commission itself. It found that DVA had been training staff to find ways of circumventing the 'benefit of the doubt' provision in Repatriation law, a behaviour that continued even after this exposé.

And what of the Royal Commission?

In the Conclusions and Recommendations volume of its report (the only volume referred to by most readers) the Royal Commission declared 'Agent Orange—Not Guilty'. This verdict was not at the standard required by Repatriation law with its 'benefit of the doubt' concession, but at the higher civil court standard.

Some scientists rejected the definite Not Guilty verdict even at this higher standard, objecting there was too much uncertainty in the existing science to make such an unequivocal finding.

The Royal Commission had other weaknesses.

It was guilty of plagiarising large sections of the chemical company, Monsanto's, submission. Dr Yule's forensic examination shows that: 'Of the first four volumes of the report, dealing with exposure, toxicology, general health, birth defects and cancer, approximately 85% was virtually identical to the Monsanto submission.'

To make matters worse, Monsanto's dodgy criticisms of studies favouring the veterans' case were copied uncritically.

(Continued on page 11)

Dr Yule says that the VVAA was knocked for six by the Royal Commission's findings.

That is true.

This was because there was almost universal focus on the Not Guilty verdict.

The RSL crowed that the issue 'should never be raised again'.

But there was another finding buried in volume four of the nine volume Royal Commission report. It identified two cancers that, under Repatriation law with its 'benefit of the doubt' provision, could be linked with exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Almost no one noticed this favourable finding because the Royal Commission failed to point it out or explain its significance.

But a few years later, under Tim McCombe, the VVAA regrouped, changed its strategy and, encouraged by these hidden findings, had another go.

Dr Yule relates this resurrection in a chapter titled, *Fight it Case by Case*. He says:

* Thwarted in its attempt to obtain a blanket finding that Agent Orange was responsible for a wide range of veterans' illnesses, the VVAA set out to wind back the Royal Commission's findings and overcome DVA's resistance by fighting carefully chosen cases through the appeals system and the courts. As Tim McCombe told the Melbourne Herald, 'the commission's findings would be appealed against case by case'.

How these cases succeeded is analysed by Dr Yule in fascinating detail. One key to their successes was that not only Agent Orange's harmfulness was advanced in evidence. Selections of herbicides, insecticides and anti-malarial tablets, were also included.



Graham Edwards MP and Patrick 'Bull' Mahoney. Both lost their legs serving with 7 RAR in Vietnam.

(AWM photo reproduced in *The Long Shadow*)

Dr Yule describes in detail too, the intricacies of Repatriation law, with its 'benefit of the doubt' provision, as each case unfolded.

1993 saw a dramatic twist.

The US Veterans Administration began a list of certain cancers it would attribute to Agent Orange exposure. This caused the DVA's wall of obstinate denial to come crashing down.

Dr Yule tells the fascinating story of the science, politics and passion that led to the US Veterans Administration's acceptance.

There is so much more that could be said about this information and story block-buster. But space dictates this review must end.

So here's two of the many possible extracts from the book that offer food for thought..

* When Ted Harrison (5RAR, 1966) and a mate were talking about Vietnam, Ted's wife told them to get over it because 'Vietnam was a long time ago'. Ted's mate replied simply, 'Vietnam will never be a long time ago'.

When the US Veterans Administration accepted the link between Agent Orange exposure and certain cancers, the VVAA put its pursuit of

(Continued on page 12)

toxic insecticides on the back-burner. Dr Yule comments:

* In recent years there has been an increased interest among Australian veterans in the possible health impacts of some of these other agents to which they were exposed. In particular, the work of John Mordike has drawn attention to large scale misuse of insecticides in and around Australian bases. Not only were these bases regularly sprayed with malathion by American aircraft...but fogging of bases ... with inappropriate and undiluted insecticides took place on an industrial scale... some epidemiological studies have found links between malathion exposure and some of the cancers often linked with exposure to dioxin [in Agent Orange]... Exposure to Agent Orange is uncertain, but there is no question that all Australians in Vietnam were exposed to malathion.

This review of only a few pages can give but a bite-size taste of Dr Yule's story telling feast.

That feast is 568 pages long (not counting the annexes).

But don't be put off by the book's length.

It is readable, enjoyably so, because of Dr Yule's clear writing and his explanation of studies and statistics in understandable terms.

Our ex-Governor General and Vietnam veteran, General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC (Mil) CVO MC (retd) [Cozzie] said this in his Forward to the book:

'When I first picked up *The Long Shadow*, noting its length and great detail on the subject of 'Australia's Vietnam veterans since the war', I thought I would read it over four of five days, but once I started, I read it through in one go. I couldn't put it down.'

It is both a good read and also a reference book.

The book, *The Long Shadow*, is highly recommended. ■

Why was the book written?

In the late 1970s the Vietnam veteran movement began a campaign for a Royal Commission into the effects of veterans' exposure to herbicides (the best known of which was Agent Orange) as well as insecticides, whilst on war service in Vietnam.

In 1983, a Royal Commission was established.

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

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

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

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

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

In fact, the Royal Commission had vindicated the veterans' concerns by recognising two cancers which, under Repatriation law, could be linked to exposure.

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

(Continued on page 13)

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

brothers in arms.

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

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

After 20 years, in 2015, the campaign succeeded. That success was helped by Australian War Memorial Director, Dr the Hon Brendan Nelson AO while Vietnam veteran The Hon Graham Edwards AM, a member of the War Memorial Council, was active in support.

As a result, the Council commissioned the writing of a new ‘official’ but independent history about the health and medical legacy of the Vietnam war. The council gave the job to historian Dr Peter Yule.

After five years of research and writing by Dr Yule and his team, the book was launched in October 2020.

We had, of course, been wondering what Dr Yule would make of FB Smith’s account of the Agent Orange controversy with which we so emphatically disagreed. Perhaps he would find Smith’s work reasonable and credible. After all it was strenuously defended by Dr Peter Edwards who had been head of the official history Vietnam War project. Ashley Ekins, then AWM head historian, also inexplicably defended FB Smith’s account.

We need not have worried.

In his book, *The Long Shadow*, Peter Yule devotes a chapter to a forensic examination of Smith’s account. He is scorching in his criticism. Here’s just a taste.

On Smith’s dishonesty (or at least gross incompetence), Dr Yule writes:

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

In reference to FB Smith not seeking the veterans’ point of view, Peter Yule writes:

‘The two veterans he interviewed were employed by the government, and neither interview is cited in the text. Beyond them, he spoke to no veterans, although this did not prevent him making defamatory assumptions about their motives for pursuing the Agent Orange issue.’

Of Smith’s bias when dealing with scientific evidence Dr Yule writes:

‘Smith was emphatic in his judgement of scientists who researched Agent Orange-related issues. Those whose evidence supported the official narrative of Agent Orange were uniformly ‘eminent’, ‘leading’ and ‘authoritative’, while those who questioned it were relentlessly disparaged.’

On Smith’s incompetence or malevolence (or both) in dealing with the science, Dr Yule spends many pages.

This whole chapter should be read if just to experience being gob-smacked. ■

Achievements

Part 3

What has the Vietnam veteran movement achieved?

What happened in the early days?

NATIONAL Headquarters of the Vietnam Veterans Association moved to its Sydney, Granville office in May 1981 with Phil Thompson as the new National President.

But before Granville became the centre of the Vietnam veteran movement, there were several years of agitation and campaigning to have the government acknowledge Vietnam veterans had been exposed to herbicides and insecticides including Agent Orange with possible consequent harm to them and their children.

This agitation was led by Bernie Szapiel, Gary Adams, Robert Ford, Holt McMinn, Adrian Bishop and others advised and assisted by scientist John Evans and politician Clyde Holding.

(John Evans had sounded the alarm in 1979 about a cluster of birth abnormalities at Yarram, Victoria that he linked to aerial spraying of herbicides. He saw the similarities with veterans' exposure.)

This agitation led to meetings of veterans and their wives held in Sydney and Melbourne resulting in the formation of the Vietnam Veterans Association in early 1980.

Holt McMinn was elected the first National

President.

The Association campaigned for a judicial enquiry, a demand that later became specifically for a Royal Commission.

The government refused this demand saying it was unnecessary

because it was launching an epidemiological

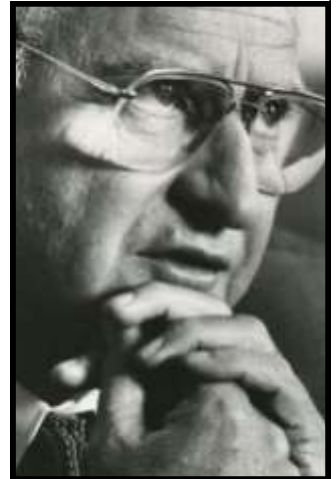
study. The Association's scientific advisors warned the study was untenable and was not, in any case, designed to test the link between the number of cancers found and exposure to Agent Orange.

The study collapsed two years later as the VVAA's advisors predicted.

Time wasted.

In any case, the issue was not solely a scientific one.

Repatriation law required war veterans be given 'the benefit of the doubt' in assessing whether an illness or injury was war-caused. The Association accused the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) of failing to give this 'benefit of the doubt' when it continually rejected any link between certain cancers and exposure to Agent Orange and



Hon Clyde Holding

**Vietnam veterans
were abandoned
by the three
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government, DVA
and the RSL**

other chemical agents.

To prove its point, the newly formed VVAA appealed a DVA rejection to the Repatriation Review Tribunal in the famous 1980 Simpson case. In a landmark success, the Association won the appeal, the tribunal finding Colin Simpson's cancer was linked to his exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam.

Conflict with the Department of Veterans Affairs became bitter when the Department refused to accept the appeal findings as a precedent and continued to reject claims.

The Association expected the RSL to come on side and support its call for a Royal Commission but the RSL sided with the government. This refusal both disappointed and angered the Association.

(It is important to note that while the RSL National Headquarters was antagonistic to the VVAA's goals, the VVAA received support and assistance from a number of RSL sub-branches especially Granville.)

When the headquarters moved to Granville in 1981, the stage was set for Phil Thompson and the crew to intensify the campaign and expand the Association's work into neglected area of need.

Ambrose Crow in his book, *The Battle After the War*, summed up the work of the Association in those early years:

...the VVAA was established in ...response to the unique health and social problems facing Australia's Vietnam veterans and their families. However, while the association spent considerable time and effort conducting a search for medical and scientific evidence into the biological and psychological effects of war on its members, and demanding recognition and repatriation rights for those problems, it was by no means all consumed by this. It fought for its members on a number of other fronts as well, initiating action to correct anomalies in repatriation legislation, and lobbying government ministers for the introduction of a counselling service, for improving psychiatric



Phil Thompson OAM

care, and for halfway houses for ill veterans. It also played a central role in galvanising the other ex-service organisations to oppose changes to repatriation legislation it saw as disadvantageous to members.

The association acted as the first port of call when a veteran or his family experienced any difficulty—be it financial, marital, health-related or emotional. Many veterans worked in a voluntary capacity at the various association headquarters in each state to provide emotional and therapeutic support to other veterans who were in a crisis situation. This often meant organising immediate hospitalisation, free legal advice, short term accommodation for children or a dependent spouse, contacting a local community organisation to step in, or merely make a call on behalf of a distressed veteran. The New South Wales branch of the association had four part time counsellors working from its office at the time, while other office bearers made themselves available on weekdays and weekends, day and night, to help in continual crises involving veterans.

(Continued on page 16)

These, in more detail, are some of the VVAA's early achievements:

- Of prime importance was the VVAA successful campaign to remedy a disadvantage in Repatriation legislation covering Vietnam veterans compared with legislation covering WWII veterans.

If, for instance, a WWII veteran had 'nerves' as an accepted condition and those 'nerves' caused a heart attack, the heart attack was accepted as war caused even though it was war related only indirectly. This is because the legislation covering WWII veterans included the vital 'arising out of' clause.

This vital clause, was missing from the legislation covering Vietnam veterans so in a similar situation the heart condition would not be accepted.

The VVAA lobbying brought all political parties on-side, and the anomaly was remedied.

- Equally important was the VVAA's eventually successful campaign for a counselling service.

These days, it is hard to imagine not having the thriving, helpful VVCS ameliorating the traumas of war. But then, even the RSL was initially against its establishment.

The VVAA knew from practical experience that a shop-front counselling service, separate from and independent of DVA, was sorely needed.

The VVAA's campaign succeeded and the first centre was opened in Adelaide in 1982 with Phil Thompson making the keynote speech.

The VVAA, however, was forced to periodically intervene to prevent DVA corrupting the VVCS's independence.

- It became clear to the VVAA that half-way houses were needed for troubled veterans. These were veterans having trouble coping but not badly enough to need admission to hospital. They needed a place to chill out, to calm down.

Veterans Affairs Minister, the helpful Arthur Geitzelt, agreed and provided a grant. Soon most States had their own versions.

Having a place to chill-out saved the sanity



Hon Arthur Gietzelt AO

and the lives of many Vietnam veterans.

- Meanwhile the campaign for a Royal Commission into veterans' exposure to herbicides and insecticides continued with the government and the RSL rejecting the proposal.

But the VVAA, through Clyde Holding, had the establishment of a Royal Commission included on the Labor Party's electoral platform. When Labor won the 1983 election, its establishment was one of the new government's first initiatives.

The RSL made a submission to the Royal Commission denigrating the VVAA's case (this may have been the initial stages of the RSL's steady decline on display).

In its report, the Royal Commission found that, given the 'benefit of the doubt' demanded under Repatriation law, there were two classes of cancer that could be linked with exposure to Agent Orange. Surprisingly, no such finding was made for the deluge of chemical insecticides such as dieldrin, chlordane, lindane and malathion to which veterans had been exposed.

But shockingly, the Royal Commission accused the Department of training Determining Officers "to find ways around Court statements of what the law was" and of emphasising 'ways in which a claim could be 'knocked-out' '. In other words, breaking the law.

Unashamed, DVA continued its policy of

rejection.

Undeterred, the VVAA took its fight to the appeals tribunals, the story of which we shall visit later.

- 1983 was also the year John Schumann brought his song, I Was Only 19 to Granville for approval.

Of course, what followed is well known .

The song leapt to number one on the charts and stayed there for a record time, informing millions of Australians that all was not well with their Vietnam veterans.

It became Vietnam veterans' anthem.

- Meanwhile in the US, a class action had been mounted by veterans against the makers of Agent Orange: the chemical companies Monsanto, Dow and others.



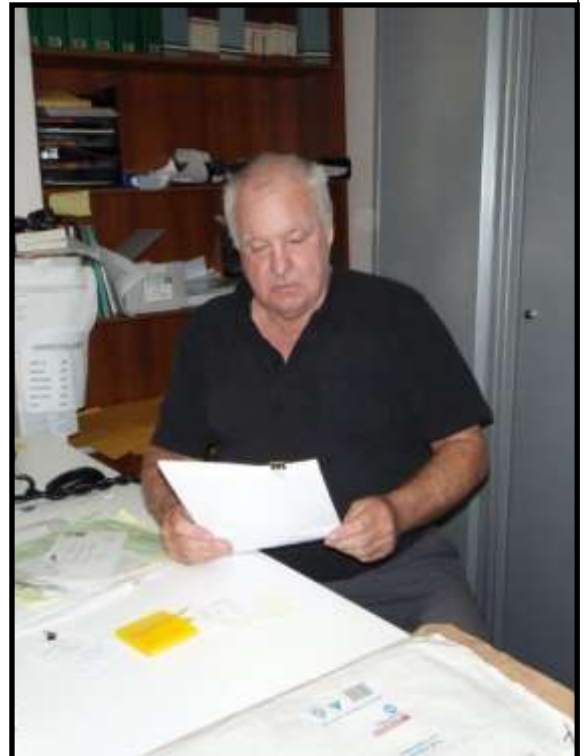
John Schuman OAM and guitarist
Hugh McDonald playing
I Was Only 19

The process was a long one resulting in 1985 with a record negotiated settlement but with the chemical companies denying responsibility.

The judge decided that veteran groups should control the settlement funds and allocated some \$3 million to Australia.

The VVAA naturally expected to be allocated the money but the RSL, despite its previous antipathy to the issue, applied to the US court to take control.

To avoid an unseemly fight in the US court, the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Arthur Gietzelt brokered a compromise and established a committee with representatives of both



Tim McCombe OAM

organisations.

In line with VVAA's policy, the money was distributed through grants to veterans doing it tough and eventually to scholarships for the children of Vietnam veterans.

- Phil Thompson died in 1986.

Plagued by severe PTSD (after two tours with 1 RAR including being wounded) and a disabling cancer (and no doubt depressed at the lack of an appropriate response by DVA to the Royal Commission findings), Phil committed suicide.

After a short interregnum Tim McCombe became National President, with Granville remaining the National office.

- In 1977 the Australian Parliament had confirmed that veterans claims for compensation for war caused injury or illness must be given the 'benefit of the doubt'. Legislation clearly stated that if DVA could not prove beyond reasonable doubt that a medical condition was not war caused then the veteran's claim must succeed.

DVA believed the test should be much

(Continued on page 18)

tougher, and in 1985, before the Royal Commission brought down its findings, it succeeded in making claims' success more difficult with the introduction of the 'reasonable hypothesis' test.

Even then DVA was not satisfied.

In 1992 it took the Bushell case to the High Court. There it argued for a definition of 'reasonable hypothesis' that would seriously disadvantage the claiming veteran.

The High Court rejected DVA's spurious arguments.

It seemed DVA used the rejection to unreasonably panic the government into legislation that would do what the high court would not; redefine 'reasonable hypothesis' to make it much more difficult for veterans' compensation claims to succeed.

Disappointingly most ex-service organisations fell into line, perhaps not understanding the dire ramifications of the legislation.

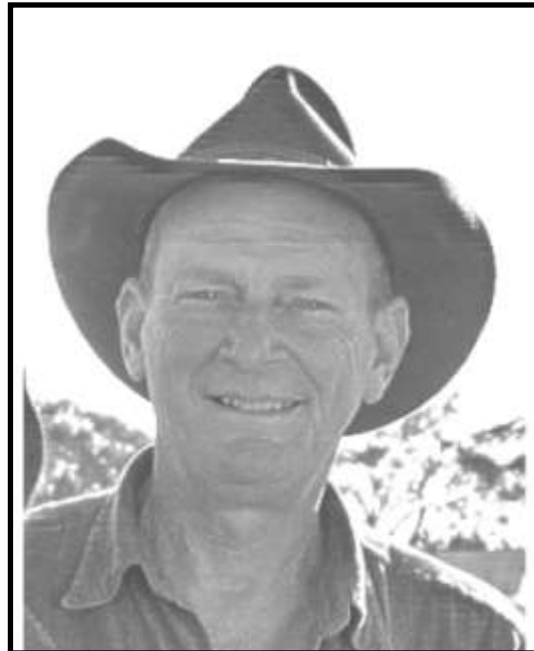
The offending bill was snuck through the House of Representatives in the dead of night. But the government did not have a majority in the Senate.

Tim McCombe lobbied the Opposition and the Greens in the Senate, alerting them to DVA's ploy. This resulted in a Senate enquiry being called.

The bill was put before a Senate enquiry where its true nature was exposed. Later, the Senate voted to defer consideration of the bill while the Minister negotiated with the veteran community. No agreement between the Minister and the veteran community could be reached and the bill sunk without trace.

During the Senate debate to consider the Senate enquiry report, Senator Durack, who had been the Minister responsible for the 1977 legislation, made the following claim:

"I believe that over the last 10 years or so there have been very strong attempts by the Repatriation Commission to subvert the longstanding intentions of Parliament. This Bill is the last [most recent] and worst example of



Ray Fulton

that attempt."

The VVAA had saved the day and the malign intentions of DVA exposed.

- Despite the findings of the Royal Commission that two categories of cancer could be linked with Agent Orange exposure, and its damning finding that the DVA had flouted Repatriation law, DVA continued to reject veterans' chemical exposure claims.

But the Royal Commission was not the only institution that disagreed with DVA's harsh interpretation of the law; the appeals tribunals also disagreed. So the VVAA took the fight there.

Ted Warner of the Sale sub-branch was the first to appeal a case. He was soon joined by Tim McCombe.

The result was that by 1992 some ten cases had been won at the first level of appeal, the Veterans Review Board, and some five at the second level, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The cases involved veterans' exposure to a variety of herbicides and insecticides.

These appeals would have continued probably with continued marked success but for developments in the US.

There, the US Academy of Science released

a study linking certain cancers with veterans' exposure to Agent Orange. The US Veterans Administration accepted the study.

Meanwhile in Australia legislation was passed prohibiting the kind of cases the VVAA had been arguing in appeals courts; instead establishing an authority that would determine what conditions could be linked with war service and under what circumstances.

Being denied its 'day in court' did not please the VVAA.

But the new authority followed the example of the US Veterans Administration and accepted a list of cancers as being linked to Agent Orange exposure.

- Meanwhile, even though the VVAA had succeeded in having the VVCS set up, it recognised more mental health support was needed.

Led by the indomitable Ray Fulton and Tim McCombe, the VVAA researched and lobbied for courses for the intense treatment of PTSD.

The result was the St John of God Hospital's and the North Side Clinic's live-in PTSD courses that have helped so many veterans and their families.

- And all the while, Granville published the highly respected magazine, *Debrief*, which pulled no punches in criticising the failures and shortcomings of governments and bureaucrats.

- 1993 saw John Printz, based in Melbourne, elected as National President.

Discontent with the Melbourne based National leadership grew in the NSW Branch. The NSW Granville office, it believed, continued to produce all the important submissions and reports while Melbourne was contributing very little.

Granville also complained that the standard of the magazine, *Debrief*, now being produced by the Melbourne office, had dropped to an embarrassing low level.

The NSW Branch pointed out that it had half the Association's membership so its payments to the National Office were carrying it financially with little benefit to veterans.

There was no point, the NSW Branch argued, in continuing to belong to the VVAA.

In 1996, the NSW Branch withdrew from the Association and formed the Vietnam Veteran Federation. Equally disillusioned groups in the States and Territories joined the NSW withdrawal and became State Branches and sub-branches of the new Federation.

What can be said of those early days?

Sadly, Vietnam veterans were abandoned by the three institutions they thought they could rely on: the government, DVA and the RSL National Headquarters.

The VVAA fought back achieving some remarkable results and developing a welfare network that has helped many thousands of veterans. ■



The original VVAA Granville office which was the self-renovated store-room at the back of the old Granville RSL hall.

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Girl out of focus

I was in 4 RAR (2 Section, 7 Platoon, C Company, Alec Illin Section Leader, Blue Wicks Platoon Sergeant).

I took this photograph while my platoon was on operations in early 1969.

We had passed through a small village and the girl was standing alone, watching us - strangers carrying weapons.

I didn't ask to take the photo, which was another intrusion. It wasn't until many years later, when I had the film processed, that I realised the girl was out of focus with the rest of the photo.

It seemed then, and now, that her ghost-like image was appropriate in that pointless war.

Photography was not a hobby I continued after the war, but I was pleased to be able to extract some of my wartime images from slides and into print to share with the Australian War Memorial.

When we came home it was the middle of 1969 and there was a lot of anti-Vietnam sentiment.

Our battalion marched through Brisbane and we got a lot of congratulations, but we also got a lot of booing.

We wanted to just get out of our uniforms. We had five day train trip back to Perth and coming out of Adelaide there were a lot of uni students who were very abusive to us.

At the time, in late 60s and early 70s we didn't stick our head up very much.

Girl out of focus epitomised the suffering and fear experienced by children in war.

Kids suffer most in every conflict. We had



See colour version of this photo
on the front cover

contact with a Viet Cong battalion and afterwards we went through a pineapple plantation and there was a little girl similar to the age of the one I took the photo of, sitting on an old man's knee in the kitchen and we came in with our rifles and rounded people up.

A lot of veterans carried a lot of guilt. Society changes and there's a lot of upheaval. War is pointless before, during and after. No good comes from it.

Ian Robertson

Editors Note:

The photo is a finalist in the Napier Waller Art Prize run by the Australian War Memorial.

They may still be on display on-line on the Australian War Memorial web-site: awm.com.au

Look for the **2020 Napier Waller Art Prize** and seek *Girl Out Of Focus*. ■

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Veteran Suicide

The most important problem facing the veteran community



The government promised in February 2020 to appoint a **National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention**.

The government stated the Commissioner would have all the powers of a Royal Commissioner and would be a permanent fixture.

In recognising the importance of the issue, the PM said:

'The Government is committed to ensuring ADF members, veterans and their families have access to the right support, at the right time, especially those who are vulnerable or at risk.'

So we were pleased when legislation to set up a Commissioner's office was presented to Parliament in August.

Comments were invited on the legislation. We responded with our views.

We were pleased too that an interim part-time Commissioner,



Dr Bernadette Boss CSC was appointed in October to begin a study of past suicides.

Dr Boss served as a Magistrate and Coroner of the Australian Capital Territory Magistrates Court since 2012.

At the time of writing, early November 2020, the legislation was in the Senate awaiting a vote.

We hope that the legislation is passed soon and a permanent Commissioner is appointed.

This is the most important issue in the veteran community today. ■



FROM THE EDITORS DESK

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON TO ALL.

Great to welcome the new authors to our Veterans' Stories section. We now have Army and Air Force represented but no Navy yet.

Maybe someone out there has a personal story they would like to submit from the attack on HMAS Perth or about a ship on the off shore gun line or their take on the Vung Tau Ferry.

Readers may have noted the lack of advertising for 'National Car Brokers' on our back cover, or the usual article inside this issue. After more than a few complaints, and a lack of response from the proprietors, we have chosen to withdraw our support of BCB for the foreseeable future.

Much to read about in this issue, but I couldn't resist the urge to point our NSW readers to the 2021 AGM notices on centre pages. 2021 is a Committee election year and we encourage your participation and vote for NSW members.

And here's a thought about soldier suicides; Why not include the 2 day ASIST course into all forces basic training, with those already in service doing the course at a convenient time. They may save a buddy's life.

Why have \$millions gone to ADF Health Care then the welfare of service personnel handled by DVA? Surely the ADF is responsible for its' employees from enlistment to discharge.

We wish everyone a Covid free future, and remind you to keep practicing safe protocols during the festive season. Take care.....

ED.

MEMBERSHIP

**Belonging
Advocacy
Success**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We thank you for your kind support.

The Minefield

Another extract from the book

Two man ‘splinter teams’ were deployed with the infantry from the CETs [Combat Engineer Teams]. These teams would clear and tape ‘proven’ tracks and side areas leading to possible enemy installations. The infantry would ‘rock-hop’ along the flanks and in front of the splinter teams to provide them with protection. Rogers observed: ‘They were looking too.’ Many of the some 50 M16 mines found had VC markers, often consisting of bits of wood driven into the ground two or three metres in front of them. Not all those found in ones and twos and threes were obviously marked, and one vigilant A Company scout noticed that pieces of wood from rubber trees, which had been brought into the area where there were no such trees, were used as markers in some cases. At least two mines were pointed out and also helpfully deloused by 1ATF’s original informant, Kiet. Still, with shrapnel a continual problem, the advance was always very slow, often not more than 30-40 metres an hour. No A or C company patrol probably went more than a kilometre from its company base. Although it was not ‘rock-hopping’ at the time, one C Company patrol had only moved a few hundred metres in over three hours on 22 March when it took fearful casualties on waiting M16 mines. ■

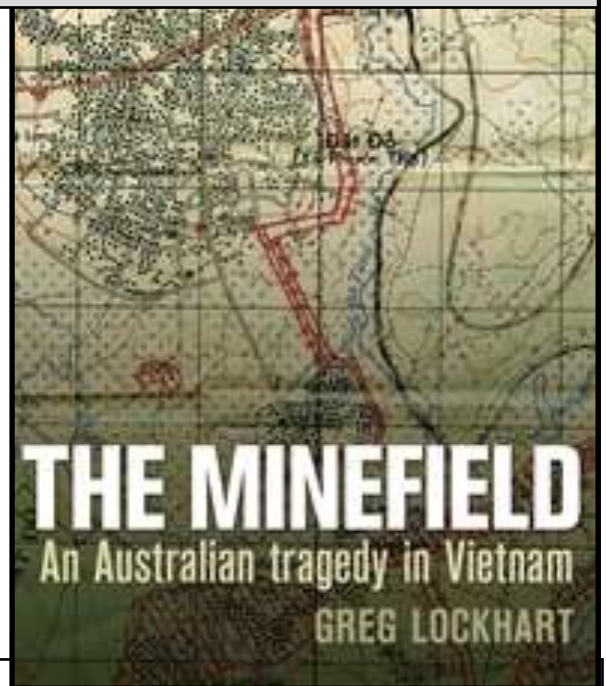


Dr Greg Lockhart is a Vietnam veteran, having served with AATTV.

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

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

He is the VVFA’s honorary historian. ■



It is the best book so far written about Australia’s participation in the Vietnam war.

Written ten years ago and still selling well.

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

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

The Scungees and the White Mice

6 Platoon B Company 1RAR were known as Scungees. They were trained by one of their Platoon Corporals who later became their platoon sergeant in about 1962-64. He was 'Dasher' Wheatley.

Dasher taught them ways to survive in the jungle from lessons he learned while he was posted to Malaya.

In October 1965 the Scungees, then in Vietnam, received a visit from WO2 Dasher Wheatley who was with AATTV as an advisor. He had come to Bien Hoa to see his old platoon. The thing was, Dasher was on R and R and could have gone to Bancok or Hong Kong but came to visit his old platoon instead.

He stayed for about five days with everyone swapping old stories - Dasher at the Civic Hotel in Sydney and him telling us about the Training Team. Good times.

About mid-November 1965 we had a visit from an ABC/BBC reporter, Mr Don Simmons, who used to come out on some operations with us. Don lived in Saigon but had travelled to Bien Hoa because he wanted to speak to the platoon as a whole group.

After we had gathered round our platoon headquarters tent, Don told us Dasher and another Aussie advisor, WO2 R Swanton, had been killed the previous day. In Saigon, Don had read a copy of the contact report and informed us that Dasher would receive the Victoria Cross for his actions.

None of us could believe Dasher was dead. Terry Loftus and Ross Mangano were completely devastated by the news.



'Dasher' Wheatley VC

Three days later Terry received a letter from Dasher – scary. In the letter he told Terry he had a very good time and seeing his old platoon mates was great and said to tell everyone to keep their heads down and make sure we all got home safely.

Dasher's platoon survival training paid off in the end. After completing our 13 months tour including going on 21 operations with the US 173rd Airborne Brigade, our platoon was very lucky because we had only seven WIA and NIL KIA.

The Americans in charge of the Saigon docks were getting worried. The Vietnamese workers were going to take holidays and there was no-one to unload the ships coming from the USA. The call went out to the units and B Company was given

the task. The job was to last for only seven to ten days.

Our platoon sergeant, Sergeant Merv Kirby, was in charge of 40 or 50 soldiers divided into two groups – one day on, one day off. We were to live in Cholon, the Chinese part of Saigon, and travel each workday to the docks.

When the first group arrived and started to work, the Vietnamese got worried they might lose their jobs so they didn't go on holidays, they kept on working.

After sitting around for a few hours, Group 1 were given the rest of the day off. This was great – Day Leave. 'Saigon, here we come!'

In Cholon we lived next door to the Ductan Hotel. This was where the Signals Corps



Sergeant Merv Kirby
Saigon docks 1965

soldiers lived after finishing work at Army Headquarters.

To beat the curfew, soldiers having a few ales in Saigon used to hire rickshaws to get back to Cholon on time. The Diggers would have chariot races, thinking they were Charlton Heston in Ben Hur, to make it back first without falling out of their rickshaw, drunk. Very funny sights.

Sergeant Kirby didn't like the idea of staying in the American sergeants' mess as the only Aussie, so he asked one of our platoon, Private Tony 'Hipshot' Brennan to join him. Hipshot said 'OK' but what

was he going to wear? Merv gave him one of his sergeants' shirts but it was three times too large for him.

'If anyone asks questions about your age etc',



'Gunner' Ramma (6 Platoon) and Ed Somers

Both B Company, 1 RAR, outside the Duc Tan Hotel in Cholon

Both on Saigon Guard

Sergeant Kirby told Hipshot, 'just tell them some crap – in the right place at the right time, did very well on your courses etc.'

Hippy admits he looked like a bag of crap but he got away with it, though his three times too large shirt did get him a lot of funny looks.

Next day Group 2 arrived at the docks. Same result. Vietnamese still working. They wouldn't take a holiday. Another day off. 'Saigon bars, here we come!'

Our holidays came to an end after four days; the Vietnamese wharfies never taking theirs. No more day leave in Saigon for Aussies. Back to Bien Hoa. 'Bugger'. At least we got those days in Saigon. Can't complain about that.

Kevin 'Okey' O'Kane and I, on our first day off the wharves, decided to go into a Saigon Bar for a

(Continued on page 26)

few cold ones. There were about ten US soldiers



Saigon Hotel 1965

there. We asked for two beers and received the Vietnamese crap called 'Bar Muio Bar' (which means '33'); a very warm beer in a glass with a frozen bottle top in a chunk of ice.

After having one beer each we asked the Yanks where we could get a cold beer and not this crap.

The Yanks told us that they were leaving to go to Tan Son Nhut, Saigon Airport, where there was the very good Airmen's Bar and we could go with them if we wanted to. 'Great. Let's go!'

The airmen's bar was excellent, lots of



Kevin 'Okey' O'Kane (left)
John Whitaker (centre) and Peter Peddie (right)
B Company, 1RAR

different types of cold beer and good company.

There were about 80 in the bar.

After a couple of beers with the Yanks we noticed two pool tables at the far end of the room. One table had about seven players and the other about thirty players. Okey and I went to the table with seven and I placed a Quarter coin (25 cents – we were being paid in US currency) on the table to reserve our place in line.

This US soldier comes over and tells us both that this table belongs to the 'Brothers' and the other table belongs to 'Whitey' and we should go and play at the other table.

Okey and I look at one-another then the penny drops. We tell them we are both Aussies and we don't have this Brothers and Whitey shit in our army – no black and white, we only see soldiers. After a short while they tell us we can play with them. We stayed playing for an hour or so.

We find out that both tables, black and white, are all in the same rifle company – all on Day Leave. They all go on operations together but can't play pool or drink together. 'Work that one out!'

After a few more cold beers we decide to go back to Cholon and we are shown the back gate of the Airmen's Bar – easier to get a cab/rickshaw there.

Outside the rear gate there are five White Mice checking passing traffic.

We ask the White Mice boss could he stop a cab for us to go to Cholon. 'OK', he says.

Along comes a cab and they try to flag it down. But it goes faster when it sees us and the White Mice.

The White Mice boss has a Thompson machine gun, like Eliot Ness. The cab is going like a rocket down the road. The White Mice boss fires a whole mag at the retreating cab. Doesn't hit the driver – I don't think he even hit the taxi. What a piss-poor shot – 30 rounds, NIL hits. If he was a digger in our Company our OC would have sent him to the rifle range for a week to improve his

skills – like our OC did with one of my mates, Blind Billy (no names, no pack drill).

While the White Mice boss was changing his magazine I ask could I have a shot with his sib-machine gun – but the spoiled sport said, ‘no’.

Okey and I had no trouble getting the next cab. We kept an eye out for the first cab but didn’t see it on our way home.

About a month later I was selected to go on the Saigon Guard for a week – it was B Company and A Company, day on/day off. We had to guard the Signal Corps living quarters in Cholon.

The fire escape was a tug-o-war rope hanging out of the top floor window. ‘Hope there are no fires whilst I’m here!’

The first shift, I was on duty with this gigantic d*** head – a White Mouse whose nickname was Cowboy. We would sit for two hours behind two forty-four-gallon drums filled with cement, outside the Sig Centre, watching all the locals go by.

Cowboy had a .38 revolver and I had an SLR.

Cowboy’s favourite pastime was to practice his fast draw – he had cut away part of his holster to do this.

At the start of our second shift that day, Cowboy tried his fast draw and fired a round into

the floorboards in the main reception area. The off-duty sigs have ‘heart attacks’ (probably the only angry shot they heard in their whole tour of duty).

The other guards all reached for their weapons thinking it was a VC attack.

I yelled out it was only this idiot having a UD. It turned out it was his third. ‘What a goose!’

Sitting behind the drums later on, a young boy, about eight years old, keeps on jumping out, poking faces at us from across the road – just having fun like little kids do.

Cowboy tells me that the little kid is a VC and I should shoot him with my SLR. I ignore the idiot.

Ten minutes later the kid does it again – poking faces at us. ‘Stupid’ fires a round at the kid saying, ‘VC, VC’ as he fired. The round missed by ten metres but did the job as the kid never came back.

The Guard Sergeant races out and asks me what happened. I tell him that Cowboy just shot at an eight-year old VC. The Guard Sergeant shakes his head and goes back inside.

I needed the next day off just to get away from Cowboy – I couldn’t believe anyone could be that stupid – but I found out there was more to come.

After my day off I was hoping for a different White Mouse but I got Cowboy again ‘How lucky am I?’

About 3 O’Clock in the afternoon, we are again on shift outside the hotel door. A bus pulls up right in front of the hotel and a young schoolgirl is stepping off the bus. Behind the girl is a very drunken off-duty A Company guard who has been in Saigon all day on the booze. As the A Company digger steps off the last step, he falls forward and pushes the girl onto the footpath – an accident. On seeing this, Cowboy cocks his .38, races forward and puts the barrel of his pistol against the digger’s head.

(Continued on page 28)



Bob Batt on Saigon Guard
B Company, 1RAR



'Scungees'
6 Platoon, B Company
1RAR
Vietnam 1965-66

A section of "B" Company's Six Platoon took time out to pose and grin just before the Australian Battalion attacked the Vietcong stronghold called the "Iron Triangle." From left to right: Lance Corporal Trevor Adams, Tasmania; Pte. Ray Earea, Sydney; Lance-Corp. Gunars Rama, Sydney; Pte. Bob Cross, Coff's Harbour; Corp. Dave Haines, Melbourne; Pte. Ray O'Brien, Brisbane; Corp. Terry Loftus, Sydney; Pte. Ross Mangano, Sydney. Corporal Loftus and Private Mangano were both wounded shortly afterwards, Mangano's wounds requiring the amputation of his left leg.

'Bloody hell!' says I. I yell out for the Guard Sergeant whilst lining up Cowboy with my SLR.

The Guard Sergeant comes out, I tell him what happened – an accident – he runs over and somehow everything goes fine. I think the Sergeant gave the school kid \$10 US to smooth everything out. 'Bloody Cowboy again!'

Cowboy sits down next to me again as if nothing's happened. He knew the digger was on the other shift but wanted to shoot him.

The next day, off-duty again, I saw the A Company digger on guard and asked him did he remember anything. I told him about Cowboy and to watch him and, when he gets back to Australia, to buy a Casket ticket (now Lotto).

'Tomorrow is my last day on Saigon Guard, then back to Bien Hoa. Surely, I can't get Cowboy three days in a row (that would be unfair). Guess what, Cowboy again.'

On our first shift, about 9am, we are sitting behind our drums watching Cholon pass by, checking out the chicks etc.

From our right side of the drums, three Vietnamese teenagers pass by giving us a mouth-full of lip. They kept yelling and screaming at us both.

We tell them to 'di di mau' (piss-off quickly) but they still gave us crap. After about five

minutes they decided to move on.

Within five minutes a Land Rover and trailer with three White Mice pulls up in front of the hotel, talk with Cowboy and wave at me.

Cowboy points down the road at the three people who were stirring us up, then the Land Rover moves on.

Cowboy grabs my arm and pulls me forward to get a better sight of what is about to happen. He keeps on saying, 'VC number ten, VC number ten.'

'What VC', I think.

The Rover pulls up next to the three. Two White Mice get out of the vehicle. One minute later three shots, three dead teenagers tossed into the trailer. Mice wave back to us then drive off. Cowboy is still saying, 'VC number ten, VC number ten.'

Next day back at camp I'm finally away from those bloody White Mice.

Weeks later my mate Hipshot, without his too-large sergeants' shirt, goes on Saigon Guard. When he comes back to the platoon he tells me stories of this idiot White Mouse named Cowboy.

Ray (Boris) O'Brien ■

Vietnam Veteran's Poem

DUST ON THE DRUM.

DUST ON THE DEEDS OF VALOR
DEEDS OF COURAGE, SCARIFICE, LOSS
MEMORIES OF OUR SUPPORT IN WARS UNBRIDDELED.
WHAT WAS ACHIEVED? WHAT WAS LOST?
DUST ON OUR NATIONS PRIDE IN OUR SUPPORT
FOR OUR MILITARY VETERANS.WHAT DOES IT TAKE?
A SPRING CLEAN, GUST OF FRESH AIR.
WAS DEATH A WORK OF FICTION? WHERE ARE OUR
WAR DEAD MISSING FROM ACTION?
WHY ARE OUR MINDS ASLEEP?
AN OPEN MIND,ENLIGHTENED MIND
ILLUSION, EMPTINESS, FREEDOM.
DRUM BEAT MISSING, HASNT BEEN HEARD IN YEARS.

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Yaama Editor and team

My name is Michael Bell, Indigenous Liaison Officer with the Australian War Memorial, I am trying to understand and research the contribution and service of people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. You recently, very generously published my request for information and names in your April 2020 issue.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity and also advise you that I have received a very positive response to my request. I was provided with 26 previously unidentified names of Vietnam soldiers from 16 different sources. Your Vietnam Veteran community have been extremely responsive, generous and willing to share their stories and recognition for their comrades. It is my intent to publish this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vietnam service list in the coming months and would like to share this with your publication. The list will not be exhaustive and will always be added to, but given the response from the veteran community I do not anticipate this being an very large problem. I as ever will be happy to continue to receive names and leads and will work closely with you in achieving this.

Yours in Unity

Yaluu

Michael Bell

Indigenous Liaison Officer | Military History Section

Michael.Bell@awm.gov.au | t 02 6243 4406

Australian War Memorial | GPO Box 345 Canberra ACT 2601 | www.awm.gov.au

The Editor,

I joined your organisation after I saw many of your motor-cycle members gathered at a service station on the northern outskirts of Canberra as I headed to the first big Vietnam Veterans reunion there back in the day.

I have always considered your efforts on our behalf to be invaluable, especially for us to know that there is someone with the same opinions as we veterans do, and with a voice to express them.

I had your magazine beside me when I wrote to The Australian online earlier today, as my guilty conscience had prompted me to check my situation with membership fees. So, after submitting the letter I decided to forward it to you to do with as you wish.

Best Regards,

Brian

<http://webandofbrothers.wix.com/brianwmcfarlane>

Brian included his letter to "The Australian;
Reading the story of the gallantry of Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean brings tears to my eyes. As an Infantry officer who saw war service in Malaya with 2RAR, at age twenty-three, for sixteen months in 1956-57, I witnessed the innate strength and endurance of the Australian digger. Later, in Vietnam, in a conflict on a much greater scale than Malaya, I was a rifle company commander with 6RAR, 1966-67, and later the commander of the 1st Australian Reinforcement Unit in 1970, then finally the senior operations officer of the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat through to the end in December 1971, a total of 809 days. During all that time I saw the extraordinary resilience, and you could almost say casual gallantry, of our soldiers in similar, and in many cases much more extended situations than those experienced by young Teddy Sheean. Riflemen and forward scouts in particular, on patrol day-in day-out, night-in night-out, in the mostly thick jungle, where visibility was invariably restricted, never knew when the flicker of light from a leaf may mean the end to their young lives. The soldiers were not aware from moment to moment of the overall picture as were their officers, thus adding to the stress placed upon them. Patrolling could go on for weeks without contact with an enemy and then in a moment of time all hell could break loose and all those green and red flashes would be whipping around their ears (with four ordinary rounds between the tracers).

These men are also unsung heroes, and I am sure Teddy Sheean would have been proud of them...

NEW SOUTH WALES PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Vietnam Veterans Day

Vietnam Veterans Day 2020 was commemorated in a much different way due to the restrictions imposed because of Covid-19. Nonetheless, appropriate commemorations were conducted where permissible. I had the honour of laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in Martin Plaza in recognition of those who died, were wounded and those who have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of their service to this Nation during the long and bloody war in South Vietnam. Hopefully, we will be able to resume our normal and much larger gatherings on Vietnam Veterans Day 2021.

AGM

The NSW Branch AGM was conducted on Saturday 25 July at the Veterans Support Centre, 8 Mary Street, Granville. A General meeting of members was held immediately prior to the AGM to consider a change to our Constitution to facilitate electronic banking. The change was approved by the meeting. Election of office bearers was not required as such election takes place biennially.

Suicide Prevention

We welcome the appointment of Dr Bernadette Boss CSC as the new interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. Her qualifications for the role are most impressive. Subject to the passage of legislation currently before Parliament Dr Boss's role will be formalised with powers broadly equivalent to a Royal Commission to inquire into the circumstances of past and future ADF member and veteran deaths by suicide, including suspected deaths by suicide. The Commissioner will make findings and recommendations to the Australian

Government. The National Commissioner will be an enduring institution and independent from Government.

Workload

The NSW Branch workload continues to be high despite the interruptions caused by the pandemic. I would like to congratulate our Compensation Advocates who continue to achieve great results for our clients. Likewise, our support staff who are mainly volunteers, continue to selflessly give of their time and skills to keep the Veterans Support Centre and indeed our NSW sub-branches operating in a most efficient manner.

41 years of dedicated service to the veteran community

Forty-one years ago a small group of Vietnam Veterans severely frustrated at the lack of support they were receiving from existing ESO's and the DVA took a decision to form their own Association. The birth of the now named Vietnam Veterans Federation ultimately led to much improved conditions not only for Vietnam Veterans but for veterans generally, of which we are extremely proud. Whilst the vast majority of our clients these days are those who have served since the 1990's the same dedicated services remain. We will always be indebted to that small group of Vietnam Veterans who provided the ground work for what has become the nations leader in the provision of high quality advocacy services to those who have worn a uniform of the Australia Defence Force. We continue to be here for you.

Frank Cole
NSW President

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

With 10 Platoon, D Company On the Song Thai Vai River Operation "Goodwood II" 10 Feb.'69"

We were called out to accompany 10 Platoon, D Company, to set a night ambush on the Song Thai Vai River. I was in a 90mm Recoilless-Rifle team from Tracker Platoon, commanded by Corporal. Milo Schlatter, along with Davy Coxhead, and several others who's names I no longer recall.

Walking out of Fire Support Base "Janice" late that afternoon with the Rifle Company blokes, we only had to travel less than a kilometre through young rubber plantation, then took up our position on a high bank where the river took a sharp turn away. We carried "splintex" rounds for the 90mm, these being canisters filled with hundreds & hundreds of tiny metal darts, which spread as they travel away from the barrel, much like a shotgun, but infinitely more powerful.

The hours passed through the moonless night, with no sound save for the breeze and the odd noise of the "creatures of the night."

Eventually, some time after 10 pm I think, we were silently alerted to movement on the river. We prepared ourselves for ambush.

As I recall, a flare was sent up by the "arties", and the firing started from both sides - but we held the initiative here. Two M60 machine guns and small-arms fire from Delta Company,

**Pte Wood, (A/
tank team),
displaying a
captured AK47.
At rear is an
APC, sent to
bring us 'home'**



was joined by our 90mm chorus. I recall the number of thuds felt more than heard, as the VC's RPG rockets crashed into the high bank below our position. They were firing too low.

All six sampans and their occupants, numbers unknown, were destroyed that night. They were "sitting ducks". But this was curfew time, the only people out there would be VC.

The following morning, the D Company lads made a sweep of this section of the river at low tide, and in the mud collected a number of weapons and other equipment, including AK47's, carbines, and RPG rockets.

Our team was assigned the job of searching other sampans as they passed our position.

As a reward for a night's job well done, we were given a ride back to "Janice" in APC's, that had been sent out to give us a hand.

Al Wood ■



Delta Coy/4RAR sweeping the river at low-tide at first light



Delta Coy/4RAR, the morning after, on the high point overlooking the river



A/tank team members/4RAR, checking passing boats for weapons.



Delta Coy/4RAR sig, checking an RPG found in the river mud



Taking a ride back to FSB 'Janice'. Pte Coxhead is at left, Cpl. Schlatter 2nd from left. Other members of 10 Plt D Coy/4RAR, with our 'cab' drivers of the Royal Aust. Armoured Corp. (RAAC), after a night's work done

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

The adventures of Tank 169041

Part 1

From birth, through atomic testing then on its way to Vietnam

By Graham Munsell and Barry Hodges



THE ATOMIC TANK **At its final resting place** **1st ARMoured REGIMENT** **ROBERTSON BARRACKS** **NORTHERN TERRITORY**

The initial journey to Puckapunyal

The Centurion Mk III design was first developed in 1948 and improvements over previous versions included an automated gun stabilisation system, more powerful engines and improved gun sights. The Australia Army was the first purchaser of the Centurion tank from Britain; however in 1950 the initial consignment was transferred to the 8th King's Royal Regiment, Irish Hussars at the outbreak of the Korean War.

169041 was built in 1951, to the Mk III standard, as number 39/190 at the Royal Ordnance Factory, Barnbow, UK. She was assigned the British Army number 06 BA 16 and supplied to the Australian Commonwealth Government in late May 1952 under Contract 2843. It was reported at the time that each

Centurion purchased under this contract was worth more than £20,000. On arrival in Australia, 169041 was off-loaded at Sydney and delivered by train to Puckapunyal, Victoria, where she spent some time allocated to the School of Armour and training tank crews.

The journey to Emu Field

In 1953, 169041 was transferred to Woomera test range to participate in the British atomic testing referred to as Operation Totem.

In a period where there were plenty of obsolete WWII tanks available, the British built Centurion tank represented top of the line, cutting edge military hardware. With less than 500 miles on the odometer, there was every expectation that she would be destroyed as part of the Totem I



detonation.

Simply getting the tank to the test site was an adventure which marked the beginning of her amazing operational life.

On 18th July 1953, a party led by CAPT J.G. Monaghan transported 169041 from Puckapunyal to the Totem test site. Initially moved a short distance to Dysart railway siding by road, she was then loaded on to a flat car for the journey via Melbourne to Port Pirie in South Australia, where she arrived on 23rd July. During this time, a tractor-trailer combination provided by the School of Armour made a road journey to Port Pirie to meet the train and then transported the tank to Woomera.

With a 1/4 ton jeep as escort, and three other vehicles (two 3 ton trucks and another 1/4 ton jeep) carrying fuel, water, rations, cooking equipment, spare parts and sleeping gear for the party of ten 1st Armoured Regiment personnel, the 200 mile journey from Port Pirie to Woomera

took three days.

Accompanying CAPT Monaghan in the escort party is reported to be a crew from 1st Armoured Regiment comprising SGT Jones and TPRs King, Cross and Fahey, and a prime mover/trailer team of SGT Auchatel and CPL Harris from the School of Armour.

From Woomera, the 169041 was moved through the sparse desert of South Australia to Emu Field.

The test site was so remote that the last few hundred miles were essentially made overland. 169041 had to be unloaded periodically to tow the trailer and truck across particularly rough stretches, then reloading before continuing



on. For the final 170 miles, the trailer was abandoned entirely, and she was driven straight to the test site under her own power.

At the test site, 169041 was loaded with ammunition, sensors and a mannequin crew. She was positioned about 350 yards from the epicentre of the Totem I detonation.

Operation Totem

On 15th October 1953, 169041 was started up (both the main engine and the aux generator), all her systems were activated and the hatches were closed.

(Continued on page 36)





Totem I was a 9.1 kiloton atomic weapon which was detonated as part of a trial to determine the acceptable limit on the amount of plutonium-240 which could be present in a bomb. The Totem I detonation took place at 0700h on 15 October 1953.

What happened to 169041 as a result of the Totem I detonation? According to Cecil's account, she only rolled back 5 feet. The side plates that covered the tracks were torn off, some plating and compartments on the outside of the tank were bent and battered, and anything small and light, like antennas, were blown completely off. Some canvas coverings burned away



altogether, and all the hatches were blown open. Anything facing the blast was literally sand blasted, which ruined the optics. When she was inspected, it revealed the engines had shut down, but only because they had run out of fuel.

When started three days later by CAPT Monaghan and his recovery party, she ran smoothly and was driven from the site towards Woomera. A laden 5 ton trailer was towed by 169041 for the first 31 miles of the journey, and then a 3 ton trailer was added as well for the next 109 miles. During this time, a 1 ton 4x4 truck was assisted over the sand hills on several occasions.

For the next 120 miles, the going was better and the 5 ton trailer was transferred to the truck, leaving the tank towing only the 3 ton trailer.

At a point near Twins Homestead, 130 miles short of the destination, the engine had enough, throwing a connecting rod out through the side of the crank case. The concerns relating to the exposure of CAPT Monaghan and the recovery party are set out in the 1983-5 McClelland Royal Commission report, which examined British nuclear testing in Australia.

The dead tank was recovered some weeks later in mid-December by a RAEME crew using a Rogers Bros M9 trailer, rated to carry 90,000 pounds.

After experiencing a number of tyre blow-outs, the recovery crew arrived back at Woomera on Christmas Eve for some well earned rest and recreation.

The journey back to Puckapunyal

Decontamination of 169041 was carried out at Woomera during early 1954 in preparation for transport to Puckapunyal.

169041 began the journey back to Puckapunyal, initially by road to the Port of Whyalla where she was loaded aboard a ship to Melbourne, and then by rail to Dysart Siding.

The recovery team was led by SSGT S.V. Phillips. The final journey to Puckapunyal was by road transporter, where she arrived around 21st July 1954.

There were concerns about the degree of radioactive contamination so the Commonwealth X-ray and Radium Laboratory conducted tests at Puckapunyal on 26th July 1954. The result led the testing officer to conclude the tank was not severely contaminated, but that the turret ring should be tested again once the turret was lifted off. This was carried out sometime shortly afterwards, and the conclusion was the same.

By 11th September 1956 a new main engine had been installed and 169041, less turret, had become the 1st Armoured Regiment's tow tug. She remained in this role for the next couple of years, until sent for base overhaul in 1958. After the overhaul and an upgrade to the Mk V standard in 1960, 169041 was placed in storage.

Late 1962 saw her again issued to the 1st



Armoured Regiment at Puckapunyal, where she was used for training until late 1966, when she went for its second base overhaul. The overhaul would bring 169041 up to what was commonly referred to as the Mk V/1 (Aust) standard, and included the addition of .50 calibre ranging machine gun, the addition of appliqué armour on the glacis plate (on the front of the tank), an additional 100-gallon fuel tank and infra-red night fighting equipment for the commander, gunner and driver.

Deciding to send tanks to South Vietnam

Lessons from the operational commitment of 1st Australian Task Force over the years 1966 and 1967 prompted the decision to deploy a Squadron of Mk V/1 Centurions, in an Infantry support role, to South Vietnam. At the time this decision was met with considerable scepticism, with concerns about the ability of the Centurion to operate the monsoonal and jungle conditions present in South Vietnam. However, history would show that the decision was sound and demonstrate the effectiveness of the Centurion in a range of roles in this theatre, particularly when supporting infantry in dealing with prepared enemy defensive positions (i.e. bunker systems):

‘When Australian infantry used armour support with (or without) artillery to attack prepared defensive positions, their casualties fell further and those of the enemy rose higher. Tanks were versatile in that they could clear jungle cover away from bunkers, destroy bunkers with gunfire, crush them and give a large amount of protection to accompanying infantry....

...The addition of tanks to the Australian order of battle in Vietnam made a major contribution to the problem of fighting the enemy in his bunker systems. Tanks are likely to remain an important means of attacking prepared defensive positions in any future low-level war. Their continuing effectiveness derives from a combination of their armour protection (particularly against hand-held anti-armour weapons), and their heavy-calibre armament. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, given the ease with which bunker systems can be constructed, heavy armour should continue to be part of the Australian order of battle.’

(Continued on page 38)

From the infantry perspective, LTCOL Fairhead states, in *A duty done: a summary of operations by the Royal Australian Regiment in the Vietnam war*, that:

“Indeed, the longer the war went, the clearer it became that unless tanks were available attacks against bunkers systems should be avoided.”

The psychological impact on the enemy was also significant, with reports that 90% of the time the Viet Cong would break contact in a fight when they hear the tanks coming. The infantry being supported also were far more comfortable when supported by the Centurions.

The journey to South Vietnam

The first vehicles to be deployed to South Vietnam were two Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) and two bridge layers. The ARVs were moved by rail to Pyrmont Pier in Sydney, and loaded aboard AV1356 Clive Steele, an Australian Army Landing Ship of the 32nd Small Ship Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers. The Clive Steele then moved to the Port of Melbourne to load the bridge layers, which could not be transported by rail, before embarking via Darwin to South Vietnam. The ARVs and bridge layers were driven off the Clive Steele at the Song Dinh Hard, near Baria, on 12th February 1968.

The first element of C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment (which included a half squadron of 9 Centurions, plus 6 additional Centurions for Forward Delivery Troop) arrived in Vung Tau on 24th February 1968 on MV Jeparit, and was deployed forward to Nui Dat on 28th February 1968.

The Centurions were lifted off the MV Jeparit onto American LCU's (landing craft) by a huge American floating crane (known as “Big John”) which was floated down to Vung Tau from Saigon. The LCUs transported the tanks up river to the Song Dinh Hard (named for being on the Dinh river), which was located at a point midway between Vung Tau and Nui Dat. This became a

regular disembarkation point for the Centurions as the bridges between Vung Tau and Baria could not cope with the weight of the 52 ton vehicles.

The MV Jeparit had a mixed crew of both RAN sailors and merchant seamen, with the latter, as a result of union intervention, refusing to load or unload the cargo. The Department of Army refused to bow to union demands, and in December 1969 Jeparit was commissioned by the Navy as a HMA ship in order to solve the problem.

In future deployments Centurions (including 169041) would be offloaded by the large wharf cranes at Cam Ranh Bay, as “Big John” was not available for use by the Australians at Vung Tau. It was not until August 1968 that C Squadron reached full strength and was able to field 4 troops.

In 4th September 1968, 169041 was deployed to South Vietnam as part of a new consignment of Centurions, where she served as the troop corporal's tank with C Squadron, before they were relieved by B Squadron in early 1969.

Officer Commanding B Squadron, MAJ Alex Smith, assumed operational command on 11th February 1969. MAJ Smith had completed a familiarisation trip to South Vietnam in October 1968, after he had been recalled from his posting Fort Knox USA.

In all 58 Centurion tanks, three bridge layers, and four armoured recovery vehicles were deployed to South Vietnam, and all played a very important role in the Australian campaign in that theatre of war.

End of Part 1

Part 2 in the next edition of this magazine begins Tank 169041's operations in Vietnam

Quite a story. ■

50th Anniversary of loss of Magpie 91.

Following a night bombing mission in the Quang Nam region of South Vietnam, near Danang, on 3 November 1970, a Canberra aircraft of No 2 Squadron, A84-231, callsign Magpie 91, failed to return to Phan Rang Air Base, in the south east of South Vietnam, after bomb release.

I wrote this poem a few days after the remains of the crew were returned to RAAF Richmond. They were then forwarded to their home cities of Brisbane and Adelaide for internment.

This year makes the 50th Anniversary of the loss of Magpie 91. After 38 years the remains of the crew were located in the Vietnamese jungle. They were the last two Australian servicemen who had not been accounted for. This brought to an end the sad but proud Australian involvement in the Vietnam War.

If you google up Magpie 91 you will see the full story behind the loss and recovery of the crew.

This is quite a historical photo, as in the foreground is a Canberra bomber, now belonging to the RAAF Historical Flight. This aircraft is finished in the markings of 2 Squadron RAAF, the unit which lost the aircraft.

If you look closely you will also see, in the upper left side, the Hercules aircraft, carrying the remains of the crew of Magpie 91, about to touch down at RAAF Richmond.

Thomas Hamilton

MAGPIE 91

You've lain within your fallen steed
For nearly forty years
But decades cannot wipe away
The heartache and the tears
For we tried to bring our warriors home
At the end of that long fray
But sadly two were to remain
For we knew not where you lay

You were not to question why
The riddles of this war
You proudly wore the uniform
Of those who'd gone before
But you were spared the painful mask
Of those who had returned
Who were to face a jeering crowd
And our nation's flag being burned

There are some who'll say your name
At sunset and at dawn
And some will even see your ghosts
In the mist of Anzac morn
Your names are found on marble walls
Of heroes most long gone
But no-one ever leaves this life
When the memories live on

Through the help of former foes
Your sanctuary has been revealed
For sweat and hope and tears pushed back
What nature had concealed
The mystery has been put aside
We finally know the truth
And found the place where you have slept
In eternal youth

You'll be met by your old mates
Today well past their prime
Who recall you as they were
In that distant time
For now beneath that jungle damp
Your souls no longer roam
You will lie in native soil
Our Magpies have come home

TOMAS HAMILTON 4AUG09



Tribute to Mike and Bob

**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.
2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2021 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, 22 May 2021.**

AGENDA

Opening of Meeting by the Chairman

Apologies

Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2020.

Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2020

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Membership Report

Changes to Constitution [if any]

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 26 April 2021.**

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2022.

**Ron O'Connor
Hon. Secretary
NSW Branch**

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

2021 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 2021.**

Details of Nominee:

.....		
Print Name	Signature	Membership No

Details of Seconders (2)

.....		
Print Name	Signature	Membership No.

.....		
Print Name	Signature	Membership No.

NOTE:

All nomination forms must be in the Secretary's hands by COB 30 April 2021.

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 22 May 2021.



Please help the Partners of Veterans Association get the word out on children's study

Good morning,

My name is Hannah Wells and I am a Social Worker and PhD Candidate at the University of Newcastle. As part of my research into the Australian Veteran community, I am conducting a study which explores the experiences of young people aged 13-21 when their parents leave the Australian Defence Force and face the transition into civilian life.

To date, the experiences and support needs of young people during the military-civilian transition have been significantly underexplored, despite recognition that this can be a time of particular vulnerability for Veterans and their families. This study therefore aims to develop an improved understanding of these experiences and the resources young people draw on during this transition, so we can better support them into the future.

As part of my national recruitment strategy, and under advice from the Department of Veteran Affairs, I am contacting wonderful organisations like yours who work closely with ex-serving personnel and their families who may be interested in sharing their story with us as part of this important research. To be eligible for this study, prospective participants must be:

Aged between 13-21 years old, or, an immediate family member (excluding the Veteran parent) of a young person within this age range; and,

From a family where a parent has left the Australian Defence Force in the past 5 years; and,
Currently living in Australia with their family.

It would be absolutely wonderful if the Partners of Veterans Association could assist us with recruitment for our research by advertising, or sharing information about the study, with individuals and families who fit this criteria and may be interested in this research, or know others who are.

If you are interested in helping us recruit for this study and would like more information about how you can be involved, it would be my absolute pleasure to discuss the research with you in more depth and provide additional details about the study.

I appreciate your time, and very much look forward to hearing from you at the Partners of Veterans Association.

Warm regards,
Hannah

Hannah Wells | PhD Candidate

Social Worker and Research Assistant
Centre for Brain and Mental Health Research [CBMHR]
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W: <http://theloginlab.com/>



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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.

2021 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)

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Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

FLIGHT OF THE CARIBOU 35 SQN 1967-68

I volunteered for Vietnam service in 1967 and departed Perth in civvies to Singapore, then in RAAF uniform as a CPL aircraft Metal Worker to Saigon. Processed at Saigon then Caribou to 35 Sqn Vung Tau, my first contact with the aircraft I would work on for the next 12 months.

Great introduction to the Caribou, Charlie loved peppering the aircraft with small arms fire, the bullets 'disintegrated' on hitting the aircraft and departed in fragments leaving multiple small holes and tears to patch. Second night in country, drizzling rain, repairing a series of holes in the port side of the fuselage. No work stands so Dave Holley laying on top and holding my ankles, I was hanging down the side of the fuselage, torch in mouth and riveting patched over holes when Charlie popped a couple of tracers past us and the Yank guards screaming to turn the lights out or they would shoot them out. Welcome to Vietnam.

Amazed what you could "liberate" for a slab of Oz beer or a slouch hat. The previous members of RAAF Transport Flight/35 Sqn and us, "acquired" Caribou spares from the US Army. The

Having a yarn with two Army National Service Officers when one expressed his opinion that if he saw a yank without any decorations, he would kiss him. And in walked an American sailor, clean chest.

American supply system was amazing, the radiator in one of our jeeps needed replacing- easy, a complete jeep. I was the approved member for the wrecked aircraft dump; there were 3 Caribous in this enormous area of various aircraft, and we used many pieces of structure, brackets etcetera from the wrecks to keep our birds flying.

Our accommodation improved from a tent city to an ex French mansion on the coast then to new huts on the Vung Tau base complete with messing etcetera.

My hat's off to our cooks, when we were living in the "mansion", A Wiles cooker van and they worked tirelessly in clouds of steam in the tropics, making meals from American frozen food-square fish, square steak, square turkey etc. While we were on frozen rations (and ratpacks from the Army) we flew fresh vegetables from Da Lat to Nui Dat for the Army. However this changed when we shifted to Vung Tau Base.

A great break from servicing and repairing ground fire damaged aircraft was to fly as auxiliary flight crew. The normal crew on a Caribou was

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Pilot (aircraft Captain) co Pilot, Loadmaster and assistant Loadmaster. The Caribou didn't have an autopilot so it wasn't unusual for the co-pilot to have a spell and the auxiliary to fly the aircraft. On one flight on the delta run I was in the co-pilots seat when we landed at an 'American base just as the VC attacked the place. We had just taxied into dispersal when the S .. t hit the Fan, so a quick scramble to depart, a yank Major with an attaché case handcuffed to his wrist dived aboard. No time to change over, so I handled rudder and elevator and the pilot power and cleanup. As we lifted off a swarm of choppers were incoming so a few manoeuvres and we were off to Saigon. After we landed, the Major came up to the cockpit to thank us for his "rescue". Shook his head in wonder when he found I flew the take off etcetera and I was only a Corporal and not aircrew.

Work was constant, often into the night and weekends, between servicing and damage repairs, we repaired cowls etc. We had an inspection from some visiting "Brass" from Oz who considered we weren't taking the war seriously when we suggested fitting a 20' pole out the back of the

aircraft with a big bullseye target. Most of our ground fire damage was in the rear of the Caribou; Charlie used the big RAAF roundel on the fuselage sides as an aiming point. The only cable that ground fire cut was the rudder gust lock, not a flight control. So our idea of providing a target was frostily received.

Five-day break to Butterworth, Malaysia, official reason, a compass swing. No non-magnetic area at Vung Tau, all metal psp surface.

Went on a weeks detachment flying cargo and personnel for special forces out of various bases and locations in the Northern sector of South Vietnam, Na Trang, Pleiku, Plai Me etc. Great Saturday night with Mike Force (mobile indigenous killer element).

I commented to two Australian Army Warrant Officer advisors that I would like the Confederate flag that was on' the wall along with the USA and Australian flag. The riot between the north and the south was something else but the flag was safely in my pocket. I flew it from a broom stick through the top hatch of the Caribou

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(Continued from page 45)

as we taxied out next day. Our radio call sign was Wallaby Zero Two, the control tower cleared us as Confederate Air Force Caribou!

A welcome R&R to Australia, courtesy of America. While waiting at Ton Son Nuit there was a red alert so we were bussed to Cholon. Of course us Aussies were wearing our two ribbons, Americans needed braces to hold up the rows of awards. Having a yarn with two Army National Service Officers when one expressed his opinion that if he saw a yank without any decorations, he would kiss him. And in walked an American sailor, clean chest. Of course the Oz Lieutenant walked over and smooched him. Consternation amongst our allies! Finally the sailor came over to find out why? When he came into country from the USS Chicago, he wore all the awards for that ship, but he was drafted to a brand new riverine patrol boat, hence a clean chest.

The months ground by and finally my figmo was coloured in, departed Vung Tau by C130, left Saigon per QANTAS, on approach to Sydney we were thanked by the Captain and crew for our service to our country. Quite a difference to 1970 in Melbourne, when as a Sergeant I was ordered not to wear uniform to save being spat at and on, and abused for serving my country.

Ex A19198 WOFF G.T.BARNETT BEM



How's that Productivity Commission enquiry into dysfunction in DVA going?

It started back in September 2016

IN September 2016 the Senate referred *Suicide by veterans and ex-service personnel* to the Senate Committee for inquiry. They were to report by 30 March 2017:

In their report, the Senate Committee recommended, amongst other things, that the Productivity Commission be tasked to review the system of compensation and rehabilitation for veterans. In other words investigate DVA.

In March 2018 the government announced the review.

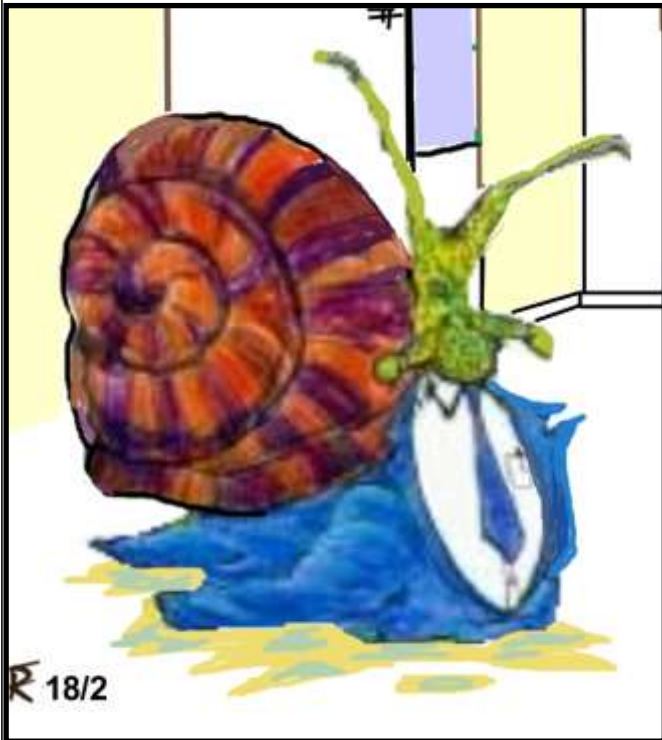
The VVFA was an enthusiastic supporter because the Jesse Bird case, delays in claims processing and a myriad of historical incidents showed improvements to DVA were badly needed.

In May 1918 the Productivity Commission issued an 'issues paper', much of which horrified us. We objected that 'the cure might be worse than the disease'.

We made our feelings known.

It was not until July 2019 that the Productivity Commission released its final report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*.

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How's it going now?

It was not until October 2020 that the government released its interim response to the Productivity Commission final report addressing 25 of the Commission's 69 recommendations.

The remainder of government response will be delayed till the budget 2021-22.

We asked our Canberra Research Group to investigate.

Canberra Research Group report

It has taken the government (through DVA) 16 months to provide an "interim" response to the final report of the Productivity Commission. It's response deals with only 25 of the Productivity Commission's 69 recommendations. No response will be published to the remaining 45 recommendations till the next budget. That means this process simply to announce solutions to fix a dysfunctional DVA will have taken five years.

Added to that will be the implementation of accepted recommendations which, DVA advises, will be 'evolutionary' rather than 'revolutionary'. That's code for doing it in its own sweet time. But DVA needs major reform. Major reform cannot

be left to 'evolve'. Such reform requires significant, planned, intervention and change management and must be boldly implemented

There are three major strategic directions announced in the response which we support.:

- increased emphasis on mental health and well-being;
- the creation of a Joint Transition Authority; and,
- a new emphasis on research, trial policy implementation and evaluation, and data collection/analysis relating to injury and rehabilitation.

But there is a frustrating lack of information to fill them out. As with all such broad statements, 'the devil is in the detail'.

As we have said, the DVA's interim response is silent on the 44 recommendations that are outstanding.

We know that the recommendation to disband DVA has not been accepted, and that Gold Card entitlements will not change, but what other recommendations have already been rejected? Is there a priority order for those that are still under consideration? Decisions must have been made in the last 16 months, and surely veterans are entitled to know.

There is nothing on the process of how decisions have been, and are being, made, and by whom; that has never been communicated. We should be told.

One Productivity Commission recommendation that we strongly approved of was the "harmonisation" of the several Acts that govern veteran support. The Productivity Commission recommended harmonisation occur over a time frame through to 2025. DVA can only offer that legislative reform will "pursue sensible elements of the Commission's legislative harmonisation plan over time." No strong commitment, and no timeframe. Sir Humphrey Applebee would be nodding and smiling in his grave. ■

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

FINDING PRIVATE CAMPBELL

The sadly neglected Rookwood Anglican Military Section And the campaign for refurbishment

Background

I was asked to find the grave of Private John Campbell, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, a Vietnam veteran, who had been killed in action on 03 August 1968.

John Campbell had been the uncle of Mrs Janice Collins, a close friend of my partner. Mrs Collins lives in Echuca, Victoria, and had wanted to visit John's grave for a long time, but was unsure how to find it.

After some research, I found that his grave was located at Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney, however, I was unable to ascertain the exact location.

My partner and I visited Rookwood Cemetery with Mrs Collins on 23rd May 2016 in search of Private John Campbell's final resting place.

We had difficulty finding the site and requested help from ground staff of the Office of Australian War Graves, (OAWG) who were working at Rookwood War Cemetery on that day. That area of Rookwood is immaculate with white headstones, beautifully manicured lawns, gardens, trees and sandstone structures.

To our disappointment, we were told that there were no Vietnam veterans buried at the Rookwood War Graves Cemetery (**at that time**) and that he suspected we might find John Campbell's grave at another location at Rookwood Cemetery.

It was explained to us that the location would be difficult to find, so the OAWG staff member kindly offered to escort us to the location, being the **Rookwood Anglican Military Section**.

This was to be an emotional time for Janice Collins and unfortunately the finding of Private John Campbell's last resting place was not what she had imagined it would look like.

After viewing the grave of Private John Campbell and other Vietnam veterans' graves at the site, I discovered that there were two 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment soldiers buried there. This was of particular interest to me as I had served with 7 RAR in Vietnam.

In total, there were 11 Vietnam veterans who were killed in action and 2 Vietnam veterans that had completed their tour of duty, but sadly, died soon after their return to Australia, buried at the **Rookwood Anglican Military Section**. The area had a total of 112 military gravesites dating back as far as 1885.

Vietnam veterans buried at the site are:

2412151	PTE William L Nalder	1RAR
217898	PTE William W Donnelly	1RAR
215745	CPL Robert B Hickey	1RAR
2787278	PTE John A Campbell	3RAR
216920	PTE Marvin W Ayres	7RAR
216115	PTE Paul Z Trzencinski	7RAR
213006	WO2 Ronald A Scott	AATTV



Before

212909 T/WO2 Ronald Seiler AATTV
 2412508 GNR Barry Tregear 4 FD REGT
 2412486 SPR Kenneth R Nicholson 1 FD SQN
 217762 PTE William McGoldrick 1 ARU
 3103843 GNR Verdun L Blazely 1 FD REGT
 216618 LCPL Michael J Connors 6 RAR

We were later to find out that this area has a significant military history. It contains the largest amount of Vietnam veteran graves, buried in the one location, in Australia.

Also, Warrant Officer Ronald Scott, who was killed in Vietnam in 1965, whose burial in Australia, at this site, was responsible for the change in Australian Government Policy. That is to say, that all soldiers killed in action from that point forward were returned to Australia for burial, at no cost to the family.

Findings

Our findings, on the day, revealed that the area was in terrible condition, overgrown and obviously neglected for some time. The majority of head

stones were weathered and, in some cases, washed away from their original spot. There was little lawn, and any lawn that was there was riddled with rabbit holes. Access to the area was also challenging, at



'Overgrown and obviously neglected'

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best, but potentially unsafe for most people visiting the area. Wheelchair access was simply not possible.

Suffice to say, we were most disappointed with what we found. It was as if these soldiers were hidden from the public and not worthy of a final resting place, as afforded to other soldiers interred at the Rookwood War Cemetery.

I discussed with Janice Collins and my partner Juliet, that it would be incumbent of me to report our findings to the Office of Australian War Graves. I wrote to the OAWG to advise our disappointment, and detailed our findings. We received a prompt response within just a day or so.

Reply

I received a reply from Mr Kel Pearce, Deputy Director Operations, OAWG, stating that he had requested his staff, in Sydney, to visit the area. He agreed with my findings and supplied additional photos of the area for me to add to the collection that I had taken myself.

A review of the site was instigated by Kel Pearce, to provide advice on what actions could be taken to improve the condition of the individual commemorations, presentation, site amenity and site access.

Following this, Kel Pearce met with Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust (RGCRT) to discuss options regarding the area. Kel Pearce agreed to escalate my concerns appropriately and advised that Mr Ken Corke, the Director, Office of Australian War Graves, had been apprised of the situation and he fully supported pursuing the matter further.

Kel Pearce sought approvals from NSW Heritage Office and Heritage Council. To this end, he sought to engage the services of a heritage consultant. He was assisted by Ms Kate Maynard from OAWG. We arranged a meeting at the Anglican Site at Rookwood, where we discussed a range of improvements that could be made to the area.

Ongoing

As with any project of this scope, progress was slow due to limited resources and the fact that other projects were also under way by OAWG. We never expected this to be a quick fix but it was fair to say that we were frustrated with the lack of progress at that time.

Kel Pearce's assistant, Ms Kate Maynard was

quick to move things along and she engaged an eminent heritage consultant specialising in cemetery heritage management and interventions. The Heritage Consultant was to liaise with the Heritage Office and the Heritage Council to seek approvals in conjunction with Rookwood Cemetery Trust.

A ground penetrating radar survey was conducted to determine any constraints or issues that may need to be addressed in relation to any excavation work. Initial engineering concepts were completed and specific enhancements to the site were discussed, including discussions with the RGCRT on improving access, amenity and visitor experience. We were told that Mr George Simpson, CEO Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust, had been extremely supportive.

A proposal for consideration was drawn up and distributed to me to share with other stakeholders. By this time, the list of stakeholders had increased considerably, and included:

Families of the soldiers (that could be contacted)

Kirribilli R.S.L Sub Branch
Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust (RGCRT)
Friends of Rookwood Cemetery
NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
Commonwealth War Grave Commission
Office Australian War Graves (OAWG)
Military Associations (7 RAR)
General veteran community.

Unfortunately, at this time, Ms Kate Maynard was moved to another position within the organisation. Ms Maynard had been a great asset to the project and was instrumental in getting the project to its current level, at that time. A replacement for Ms Maynard was sought by Kel Pearce, and Ms Tamsen Gregory was appointed to that position. Not long after, Kel Pearce advised that he was leaving the OAWG. Mr Martin Farrell was to be his replacement, and Martin Farrell along with Ms Gregory would continue with the project.

Around June 2018 OAWG completed a tidy up exercise of the Anglican site which included pruning of the surrounding hedges, hand weeding, filling in the rabbit holes with new soil, minor levelling and straightening of the headstones so that they were in their correct location. This was never meant to be a final fix and a full refurbishment of the area was still under

consideration and budget approval.

A Structural Engineering company by the name of "Contour" was engaged to draw up more detailed plans that would allow the project to go out to tender. These plans were specific and covered the full scope of the complete project. Consultation with RGCRT continued and the plans were sent to the Heritage Office and were duly stamped as "approved".

The services of a historical researcher were sought by OAWG and Dr Jacqui Donegan was assigned to this task. Dr Donegan was asked to research the 112 gravesites at the Anglican Site and to commence preparing information for the interpretative signage that was to be erected at the site as part of the planned work. After conducting extensive research Dr Donegan produced an amazing historical sketch of each person buried at the site. The research identified, among many other things, that there were two brothers, husband and wife, a female soldier and a 14 year old buried at the site.

Ms Gregory continued to seek Heritage approvals that included a Section 60 application for the site. (This is a formal application to carry out a Section 57(1) activity to an item or land listed on the State Heritage Register or to which an Interim Heritage Order applies). The application was fully

approved.

OAWG advised that they would continue to engage a heritage consultant during the project and the next step would be to re-engage a structural engineering consultant to go over the plans and the engineering structural drawings. In conjunction with "Contour", Ms Gregory provided an updated Bill of Quantities to assist in the procurement of services process for the complete project as per the plans.

We were advised that the project was now ready to go out to tender in January 2019 and included the full scope of work that we had been promised.

That work included but not limited to:

112 New plaques on pedestals, Pedestrian / wheelchair access, New sandstone walls, Crushed granite or grass walkways, Interpretive panels, Rellevelling and replacement of turf, Irrigation system and new border beds., New plants and or scrubs around pedestals.

Furthermore, we were told that DVA would be looking at dates in 2019, potentially prior to Anzac Day 2019, for an official opening day, including an official opening ceremony. We were told to advise all stakeholders and begin to look at who we should invite to the opening. Around Christmas 2018, the good news turned to bad. We

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After

were advised that there had been a change to what we believed, had already been planned, approved and funded by OAWG. In other words, after more than two and a half years of consultation and planning, we were told that the project was now on hold and under reconsideration due to conflicting information surrounding the ownership of the site.

Martin Farrell advised us that the Anglican Military section at Rookwood essentially consists of “private graves” even though it is unique and contains a number of war dead from a number of Australia’s conflicts including the Vietnam War. Without the clarification on the ownership of the land, the OAWG did not have the legal authority to undertake the works of the scale previously agreed to.

The OAWG did not have the authority to acquire a site of that scale and provide the care and maintenance, when it was a non-Commonwealth War Graves Commission war cemetery. The OAWG remained supportive and talks continued towards a solution, however they simply could not maintain any cemetery that is not owned by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

By that time Mr Ken Corke Director of the Office War Graves, had completed his tenure with OAWG. Among other projects, including the Anzac Centenary, Mr Corke was instrumental in having the remains of 33 Australians interred at Tekendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia and the one at Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore, repatriated back to Australia. Interestingly, of those 33 remains, eight Vietnam veterans were buried at the Rookwood War Cemetery in Sydney.

Brigadier Paul Nothard took up the role of Director of the Office of War Graves from 11 January 2019.

The Way Forward

During further discussions with Martin Farrell and his team, we agreed to get the major stakeholders into the same room and try and work towards a solution. A meeting was called at Rookwood Cemetery on 07th March 2019. In attendance were:

Mr Paul Nothard, AM CSC Director of the Office of Australian War Graves, Mr Geoff Taplin, State Manager Office of the Australian War Graves, Mr Martin Farrell, Director of the Office of Australian War Graves, Mr George Simson, CEO Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust, Mr Sach Killam, Monumental-Heritage Team Leader

Rookwood General Cemeteries, Mr Julian Robinson, President Kirribilli RSL Sub Branch, Mr Tom Richardson, OAM Secretary Kirribilli RSL Sub Branch and President Kirribilli Club, Mr Tony Keech, OAM Executive Officer, 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Association. Chair – Mr Terry Harper, Member 7TH Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Association and Member Kirribilli RSL sub Branch.

While robust, the discussions were amicable and conducted in a constructive and positive manner by all in attendance. The common goal and passion by all were to find a way to get the project moving again. Mr Paul Nothard and Mr Martin Farrell from the OAWG gave the stakeholders their undertaking to assist in any way they could, and Mr George Simpson from RGCRT told us they fully supported the project being completed.

While funding would come from OAWG, there was still a considerable amount of work that fell outside of their area of responsibility. That additional cost would be covered by RGCRT. We were extremely grateful for the ongoing understanding and support from the Office of Australian War Graves and Rookwood General Cemetery Reserve Trust, to get the job done.

Within the next few months, OAWG received the clarity they required, in respect to the ownership of the land that the Rookwood Anglican Military Cemetery was located, and engaged the services of additional resources to work on the project. The remaining part of 2019 was taken up with a myriad of checks and balances on the plans and engineering – structural drawings, further historical research and contacting family members where possible. By mid-January 2020, work had commenced on the total refurbishment of the site



and a completion date had been set for Anzac Day 2020. Work at the site continued until it's completion on 24th April 2020, as promised. The only missing part of the project is the interpretive signage that is planned to be erected prior to the official opening.

The final result is amazing, befitting the soldiers that are interred there, giving them a final resting place that reflects the families wishes and expectations. Well done to everyone that has been involved and shared the same passion about the completion of the project, particularly the families of these soldiers, Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch and 7th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Association.

A sign has been erected at the project site by the Department of Veterans' Affairs / Office of Australian War Graves that states, among other things, "These works will assist in ensuring that the cemetery reflects the significance of the service and sacrifice of those at rest within it".

We all say, they deserve no less.

So, on 16th June 2020, Janice Collins returned to Rookwood Cemetery with her husband Tod to see the fully refurbished Anglican Military Section. It had been exactly 4 years and 24 days since her last emotional visit to find her uncle, Private John Campbell.

While this visit was no less emotional than the first visit, there were tears of joy and happiness to see Private John Campbell had a final resting place, along with the other 111 souls, that we could all be proud of.

Due to the Covid 19 virus, an official opening or dedication ceremony has not been possible, however, at some stage in the future, the Office of Australian War Graves and other stakeholders will work towards conducting a fitting ceremony.

Terry Harper

7TH Battalion Royal Australian Regiment

Vietnam 1970/71 ■



The remarkable Team Rubicon has been renamed Disaster Relief Australia

Disaster Relief Australia unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency response teams.



PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

No Need to Guess

How many investment pundits picked that 2020 would be the year when the global economy and markets would be hit by a pandemic? Trying to second-guess markets requires you to predict news. But the truth is no-one can do that. The good news is you don't need to be able to tell the future to have a good investment experience.

Good investment policy is not about trying to outguess the market. It's about managing risk, staying disciplined and exercising humility

IT SEEMS EVERYONE has an opinion about the markets—and they are, of course, entitled to those opinions. But here's the irony: Some of the most successful investors have also been among the least dogmatic in expressing their views.

Perhaps it's the humility gained from repeatedly trying and failing to second-guess the financial markets. These veteran observers of markets are a stark contrast to the swashbuckling managers who flaunt their confidence about the likely direction of stocks and bonds—a sales strategy they use to encourage people to buy products they don't need.

If what people *need* is the promise of certainty, the latter group will almost certainly attempt to sell it to them. Meanwhile, the former group—the truth-telling veterans—will advise that, as in life more generally, there's no certainty in markets. Instead, there are only ways of mitigating risk.

The great American financial historian Peter Bernstein was one of the truth-tellers, warning people that—even with the most powerful computers—no investment model could ever perfectly factor in every risk or the possibility that

the previously unthinkable might become reality. “The essence of risk management lies in maximizing the areas where we have some control over the outcome while minimizing the areas where we have absolutely no control.... and (where) the linkage between effect and cause is hidden from us,” he wrote.

Warren Buffett is another of the truth-tellers. Constantly asked for his economic and market outlook, the Sage of Omaha takes a deep breath and says speculation is pointless. “I don't think anybody knows what the market is going to do tomorrow, next week, next month or next year,” Buffett told Berkshire Hathaway's annual meeting in 2020, during the pandemic. “I know America is going to move forward over time, but I don't know for sure.”

Addressing the question of risk on another occasion, Buffett said the flipside of uncertainty was the opportunity this presented to the long-term, disciplined investor: “An argument is made that there are just too many question marks about the near future. ‘Wouldn't it be better to wait until things clear up a bit?’ Before reaching for that crutch, face up to two unpleasant facts: The future is never clear and you pay a very high price for a cheery consensus. Uncertainty actually is the friend of the buyer of long-term values.”

Another champion of investment humility is the renowned consultant Charley Ellis, who founded Greenwich Associates in the early 1970s. Ellis's view, expressed in his book *Winning the Loser's Game*, is the futility of seeking to outguess the market.

“The best way to achieve long-term success is not in stock picking and not in market timing and not even in changing portfolio strategy,” Ellis said. “Sure, these approaches all have their current

heroes and war stories, but few hero investors last for long and not all the war stories are entirely true. The great pathway to long-term success comes via sound, sustained investment policy, setting the right asset mix and holding onto it.”

None of this is particularly sexy. It doesn't involve the promise of overnight success and it doesn't conjure up images of heroic figures pitting their wits against the world. It involves old-fashioned virtues such as humility, patience, discipline and keeping a level head.

On the positive side, it also means that you don't have to take falling markets personally, just as you shouldn't claim rising markets as vindication of your investment smarts. Much as the media might suggest otherwise, investing is not a competition.

For individual investors, a good plan is one they can live with and that allocates their assets to maximize their chances of reaching their goals in their desired timeframe. Risk is managed through diversification, while attention is paid to costs and taxes. The portfolio should be periodically rebalanced as markets change and as needs and circumstances evolve.

No plan will be perfect. It can never encompass every risk. Outlier events can always occur. But risk can be managed, at least up to a point, and there are strategies to help us deal with events that no one saw coming, such as a financial crisis, a geopolitical event or a pandemic.

These simple truths were expressed most eloquently and concisely by the great Jack Bogle, the founder of Vanguard Group and one of the pioneers of index funds. “The greatest enemy of a good plan is the dream of a perfect plan,” Bogle wrote. “Stick to the good plan.”

Amen to that.

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

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Powell, R. (2020). No need to Guess. [online] humbledollar.com. Available at: <https://humbledollar.com/2020/10/no-need-to-guess/> [Accessed 27 Oct. 2020].



See our advert on the back cover.

Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Different enemy, similar feeling.

THE DAY LUCIFER MET HIS MATCH

MY wife Marian and I were awakened at 1 am on New Years morning by Andrew, who lives on our property "Lemonthyme", near Cobargo, NSW. He banged on the front door shouting "It's on Ross". Andrews wife Bee attached their caravan to the 4wheel drive and evacuated with their two sons and Marian to Bermagui, and then on to the emergency evacuation centre at Narooma.

At first Andrew and I could only see the fire as a massive red glow to the west accompanied by a very loud roaring sound. In the meantime we organised and checked our fire systems including turning on the house sprinkler system and waited for the fire to arrive which it did at around 2 am. It arrived as a grass fire across the neighbour's open paddocks then ran up to the crowns of the eucalypt trees in the forest to our north west with flames reaching what seemed enormous heights at one stage and lit up the place as if it was daylight. Eerie, and as spectacular as this was, the main forest fire wasn't going to burn our house down but the spot fires coming off it were our biggest danger.

It is no understatement to say that I had been anticipating a major fire for over 30 years based on a conversation I had had with a local dairy farmer who had described the 1952 fire that had come off Murrabrine Mountain to our north west and how it had spotted fires right across the



Ross Riddett, 2RAR 2nd Tour

Dry River Valley.

As a result I had arranged metal shutters over the windows of our mudbrick house, fitted a sprinkler system to the eaves and under the roof of the verandah, a firefighting pump with two fire hoses at the back of the house, hose outlets by our cottage and sheds as well as barrels of water and metal buckets on the verandahs as a back-up in case the pump failed. Andrew organised a firefighting pump between his house and the forest 75 feet to his west.

Despite all our preparations the waiting for



the fire to arrive was a very tense time. It took me back to when I had to go out on patrol in Vietnam where my fear was converted into hyper alertness. So when the fire did arrive in earnest I was able to handle the chaotic outbreaks as the fire first came from the west then northwest off Murrabrine Mountain then swept around to the northeast and southeast until we were surrounded by fires. I had not anticipated that the fire would come from the back and east of the house in waves depending on the ever-changing winds. This meant that I ended up fighting the worst of the fire coming from the spotted gum trees only 30 feet from the eastern side of the house. To make things worse we had a great big pile of woodchips about 30 feet from the back of the house which caught fire and blew embers towards the house.

However by continuing to run almost to the point of exhaustion from one outbreak to the next and using the hoses by the cottage and sheds I was able to suppress all the fires that would have

taken out these buildings and the house if I had not been there. [The woodchip pile continued to smoulder for days until we spread it out using the tractor]. My safety gear was very basic: white cotton overalls, leather boots and gloves, safety helmet, paper mask and basic plastic safety glasses. The latter caused me the most grief because they did not seal around my eyes. I found the smoke quickly began to irritate my eyes to the point of distraction. The cotton overalls gave me good insulation against the heat.

Sadly, we lost our 40 sheep to the fire. We had brought them up into the house yard, but during the height of the fire they ran back into the paddocks and were burnt to death. The few that had survived were so badly burnt that we had to put them down. We had two vehicles, a box trailer and diesel log splitter burnt. The engine blocks on the vehicles melted leaving a silver trail of aluminium streaming from under them.

Of the 6 properties immediately around us

(Continued on page 58)

(Continued from page 57)

four were burnt to the ground as no one was in attendance to fight the fire. The General statistic for homes lost in bush fires says if you stay [mindful of being adequately prepared] and defend, there is an 80% chance of saving your house. However, if you leave there is only 20% chance of the house surviving. It should not be underestimated how serious the decision to stay and defend is, and consequently the thought and preparedness that needs to go into that decision beforehand. Four people died in the fires around Cobargo.

Sadly, we were about one hour too late to save our friend Rays house 2km up the road. The following morning Andrew drove up the road with our tractor to push the fallen trees off the road to clear a path to the local town of Quaama. On the way, he came across Rays house still intact but a wisp of smoke coming out of the roof. But, with no way to access the 5000 gallon water tank beside the house, [main power went off about 2am and was not restored until one month later] Andrew drove back to our farm and we attached our portable water tanker and pump to the tractor and drove back to Rays place only to find the house roof well alight. All we could do is watch it burn.

What have I learned from this experience?
[1] My overall fire plan worked. [2] Use sealed eye protection. [3] However, I totally underestimated that the fire would completely encircle us with the biggest threat coming from the southeast, which I had assumed was not a fire risk direction. [4] Don't have woodchips especially in a pile near your house as they catch fire easily and blow embers all over the place. [5] My hyper alertness from Vietnam was put to good use for once.

PS: We have had wonderful help from both Team Rubicon [now known as Disaster Relief Australia] and BlazeAid in clearing the burnt trees etcetera, and rebuilding our burnt fences.

Ross Riddett
(2RAR 2nd Tour) ■

Are you a Nasho who did less than 181 days?

Richard Barry is campaigning for you to received 'full-recognition'.

Your help would be welcomed.

I have been lobbying since 1996 under the National Service Act 1964 (as amended) to gain full recognition for over 3,000 Vietnam Veterans from all over Australia who lawfully served their country less than 181 days during the Vietnam War. The well-respected Senator Eric Abetz has kindly acknowledged the quest and has offered to receive emails so that he can adequately prepare a strong case to be considered by the responsible Minister. I will forward your story on to his Electorate Officer. Please be frank, honest and non-aggressive on how this matter of non-recognition may have affected you over the years."

Thank you.

Richard Barry OAM (6RAR SVN 1969) -
richyvonn47@hotmail.com



AVCAT

Ryan Balkin – Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Laws; Western Sydney University
2020 Mid-Year Review: 3 Distinctions
Once again Ryan has achieved excellent results in his course. He is extremely appreciative of extension to his scholarship, in light of the current situation and the effects on his family.

Previous Reviews:

2019 Annual Review: 1 Distinction; 2 Credits

2019 Mid-Year Review: 3 Distinctions

Thank You Note

Dear Mr Roberts and Members, VVPPAA NSW
I hope this letter finds you all in good health, especially considering the current state of the nation. I wanted to start this letter by saying thank you for choosing to extend my scholarship and the associated assistance in letting me continue my academic pursuits.

Like many other families, the pandemic affected the family business and for one stage I was the only one earning money. It was because of your support that I was able to in turn support my family, and I was glad I was able to repay the support in any capacity I could through your scholarship.

Although aforementioned, thank you again for the support and opportunity to continue to prove myself.

Sincerely yours, Ryan Balkin

Kirsti Young – Bachelor of Education (Primary) Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne
2020 Mid-Year Review: 1 High Distinction; 1 Pass
Kirsti has continued to achieve excellent results despite facing home challenges. She is extremely grateful for the support she receives from VVPPAA.

Previous Reviews:

2019 Annual Review: 1 High Distinction; 1 Distinction; 2 Ungraded Passes

2019 Mid-Year Review: 1 High Distinction; 2 Distinctions

Thank You Note

SCHOLARSHIPS MID YEAR REVIEWS

Our three recipients continue to perform above average, as indicated below. Due to space we have edited some of their letters substantially but hope still carrying their comments and appreciation....ED.

Dear Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia,
Thank you for your continued support, without it I would not be able to continue my studies.

I hope you have all been well during this uncertain time. I just wanted to provide a quick update on my progress. I have just received my results for the first semester and am about to start (hopefully) my last teaching period ever, graduating in December 2020.

Once the pandemic has settled and I have graduated, I would love to come and meet some of you in person if possible. It is nice to think someone has an interest in how I am going. Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Many thanks, Kirsti Young

Emily Hespe – Bachelor of Performance (Dean's Scholar); University of Wollongong
2020 Mid-Year Review: 2 Distinctions; 2 Credits
Emily has had a successful semester despite the challenges posed by Covid-19. She continues to enjoy her course and is working towards her passion of becoming a performer.

Previous Reviews:

2019 Annual Review: 3 Distinctions; 1 Credit

2019 Mid-Year Review: 2 Distinctions; 1 Credit; 1 Satisfactory

Thank You Note

Dear Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia,
I would like to thank you once again for the highly appreciated financial support you have graciously provided me. It has not gone to waste, that I can assure you. The scholarship, however, was a layer of security to ensure I had a roof over my head. Because of your continued generosity, I believe this degree will continue. I have no doubt you have made my Grandfather happy to see me happy,

Thank you so much, Emily Hespe



THIS just released publication (September 2020), is a short history of New Zealand's contribution to the ANZAC Legend from 1915 to the present day. It's author, **Paul (Angus) Bryant**, has brought together a wealth of research into a volume that will both entertain and enlighten those wishing to build on their understanding of the ANZAC legend.

The reader is invited to learn from the New Zealand viewpoint of the unity from the earliest involvement in **The Great War**, and how the acronym 'ANZAC' was born.

Then we are carried along on a tide that traverses every major conflict, battle, and involvement that our two great nations have shared since 1915. Paul has drawn upon years of study, and takes us on a journey that encompasses Egypt and the Gallipoli campaign, onto the Western Front and a great summary of WW1.

And so, ever onward through the major campaigns of WW2 and its excellent summary. Through the Malayan Emergency, the Korean War. The Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation, and the Vietnam War.

Paul then broaches Afghanistan from 2001 to the present day, Timor Leste from 2006-2013, The war on ISIL, 2014 to present, These chapters are followed with keen perception into the realms of

BOOK REVIEW

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Bryant spent over 13 years in the Australian Army Reserve, (Being too young for Vietnam service), gaining distinction with the Australian Defence Medal, and the Defence Long Service Medal.

He has served the City of Fairfield, (NSW) RSL Club and Sub-Branch, for more than 30 years, where is now President. He was awarded Club Life Membership and RSL Life Membership in 2014. For his services to the veteran community Paul was awarded the RSL Meritorious Service Medal in 2020.

valour with NZ's Victoria Cross winners and tales of their feats of bravery.

Before the Postscript, References, and Bibliography, Paul has set aside a marvelous chapter on the chronicles of the New Zealand Special Air Services, reminding us that NZSAS was founded two years before their Australian counterpart.

A quick read of Pauls' introduction includes the fact that it was a NZ Sergeant who came up with the pronunciation of the acronym ANZAC.

Covering more than 210 pages, the original manuscript was one of the best works your editor has read in over 5 years. 105 years of a bond that cannot be shifted. I am, you are, we are all better for the legend that is ANZAC.

Pauls' book is now available at a price of \$30 and after costs the proceeds and all profit will go to Homes for Heroes, to help homeless veterans. For your copy contact Fairfield RSL Sub-Branch (NSW) on 02 9727 5000 or email to FairfieldSB@rslnsw.org.au

Review by
Bob Freshfield



BOOK REVIEW

Here's a novel many of us
can relate to

A word from the author

Heavy Load is a work of fiction about a Vietnam veteran named Ed Costigan who helps a disturbed young Iraq War veteran named Tim Finnegan by sharing key moments of his life with him.

The inspiration for the story came to me through the words of a song named Heavy Load by the English rock band Free. It was the lyrics of the song that resonated with me and the story more or less formed in my mind from there.

I have always had a keen interest in that period of history and the story covers the period from the early 1960's to 2005.

The story begins when Yowie Bay resident Ed Costigan is attending a Christmas party at Doyle's restaurant at Watsons Bay in Sydney one Friday afternoon in December 2005. Ed receives a phone call from a mate of his named Fr. Frank Casey who is both a Catholic priest and recovering alcoholic. A friend of Fr. Frank's has come across a young Iraq war veteran named Tim Finnegan who is right on the edge and needs some help. Fr. Frank rings Ed to see if he can lend a hand a talk to the young man as Ed has been through much in his own life.

Ed ventures down to a caravan park at Kurnell on the shores of Botany Bay to talk to Tim. Tim is very defensive and resents anybody prying into his business. What follows is a violent confrontation which sees Ed stand up to the young man. The skirmish is only stopped when Ed notices something in the caravan which makes him realise there is a connection that links his days in Vietnam to Tim.



Ed sits down in Tim's dilapidated caravan and over the course of the afternoon shares key moments of his life. After a lifetime of fighting his own demons, Ed tries to connect with Tim by sharing his harrowing tale of surviving Vietnam, alcoholism, PTSD, and the terrible act that saw him jailed. But will Tim cool down long enough to hear him out? Will Ed get a chance to show him that love conquers all?

As the afternoon progresses Tim lowers his defences as he identifies with what Ed has to say and becomes more receptive with his message.

Although Heavy Load is fiction there are elements of my own life in the story. The story had been in my mind for some time before I was compelled to get it out and put pen to paper over twenty years ago.

Heavy Load is available through S.E. Nethery directly or through Amazon as a paperback or an EBook. \$1.00 for every copy sold will go to help veterans.

Contact: Phone: 0412324570

Facebook: S.E. Nethery – Author

Website: www.senethery.com

Email: stephen.nethery@bigpond.com



FROM THE SECRETARY



A MESSAGE FROM THE NSW BRANCH

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

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

\$750	Helena Turner
\$700	Robert O'Brien
\$500	Anonymous
\$200	Stephen Milledge Anonymous
	John Mogan Doug McLean
	Frank Petersen Anonymous
	Graham Lee

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.

Ron O'Connor

VVFA and NSW Secretary.



4RAR. 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC), 2/4 RAR and 4RAR (COO) NATIONAL REUNION CANBERRA

19-21 SEPTEMBER 2021

The reunion coincides with the 50th Anniversary of Operation 'Ivanhoe' and the Battle of Nui Le, the last major battle fought by Australians in Vietnam. The anniversary of the battle will be commemorated on 21 September at the Australian War Memorial during the Last Post Ceremony. All former members, partners, families and friends are invited to attend.

A special invitation is extended to:
NOK of members KIA in all conflicts.

Members and partners of V Coy and W Coy, IRNZIR. Members and partners of supporting arms and services associated with the battalions.

To register to attend or for further information contact:

The Secretary

**4RAR Assoc, QLD Inc
P.O. Box 7167**

Sippy Downs QLD 4556

Secretary@4rargld.org.au

and/or

0417715779

Or

Noel Fairley

President 4RAR Assoc, Qld Inc

0431 945 954.

[Enquire now to avoid disappointment later]

2021 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!

Dear Member

It is that time again when annual membership renewals are due.

Members of our various State Branches and sub branches should receive membership renewal notices from their respective organizations. NSW membership subscription renewal forms for 2021 have already been sent out to NSW Branch members under separate cover by the Granville office. In the event you do not receive a form in the mail you can use the Membership Renewal form included in this Newsletter or the one available on our web site at www.vvfagranville.org

To renew your membership just complete the membership form you receive and return it to your State Branch, Sub Branch or, for NSW Branch members, to the Granville office. Please check the Membership Application form to ensure your details are correct and amend any incorrect details so we can update our records.

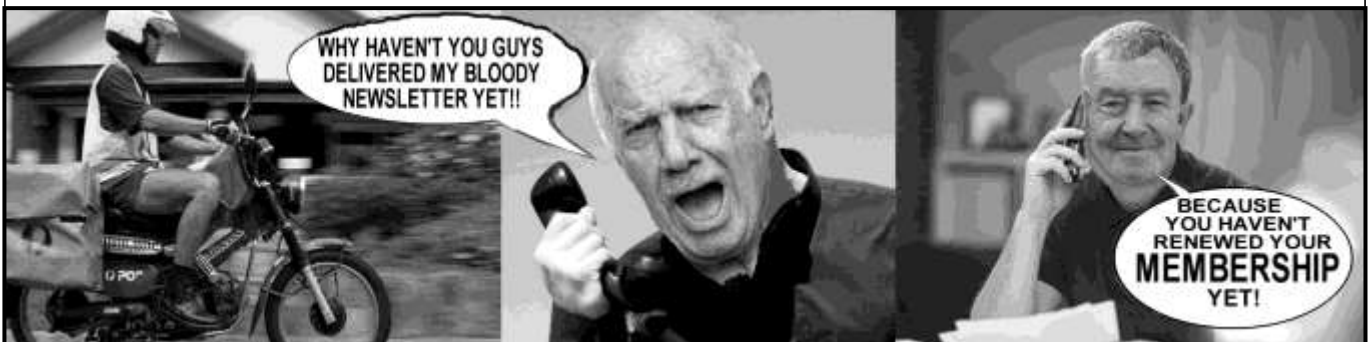
Once again we are offering all members of the NSW Branch, who renew by 30 January 2021, the chance to enter into the draw to win 1 of 3, \$100.00 gift vouchers from Bunnings Hardware. So get your application in quickly to ensure you don't miss out on this great opportunity. Cheques and money orders from NSW Branch members can be made payable to **VVPPAA NSW**.

Your financial support in the past has been most appreciative and we hope you will continue to support the Association and therefore assist our fellow Veterans and Service members in need.

It is through our membership subscriptions, fund raising activities and the many kind donations we receive from members that we are able to meet our increasing welfare/pension workload. Should you be able to help with a donation in this regard it would be greatly appreciated.

We look forward to receiving your renewal for 2021 and thank you for your on-going support of the Association.

Ron O'Connor
Hon. Secretary
VVPPAA NSW





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

2022 scholarships open in August 2021 and close at the end of October 2021. 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

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



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

JUST CALL 1800 011 046

If overseas call +61 8 8241 4546

FORMERLY KNOWN AS

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service



**Call
24/7**

A service founded by Vietnam veterans



1300 924 522

Our programs

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

Veterans services

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

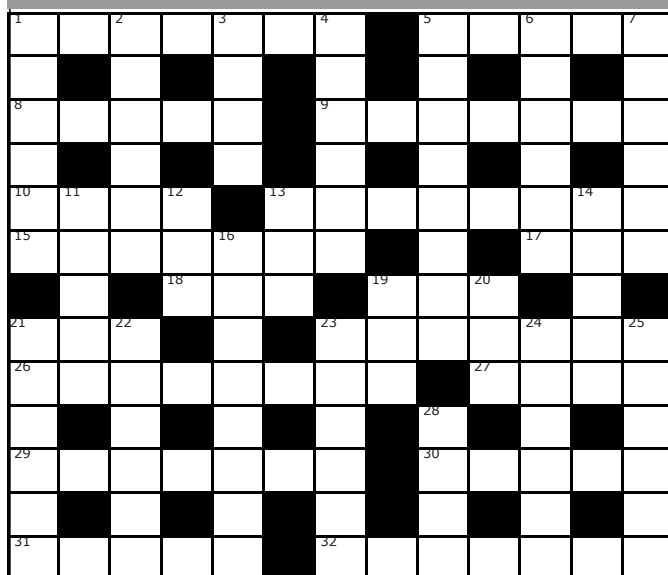
Wesley Hospital Ashfield and Wesley Hospital Kogarah are private psychiatric hospitals which offer both **in-patient** and **day patient** services. Our treatment programs combine medication, therapy and include life skills and support networks to ensure recovery is effective, ongoing and enriching.

**91 Milton Street,
Ashfield NSW 2131**

&

**7 Blake Street,
Kogarah NSW 2217**

CROSSWORD CORNER



ACROSS

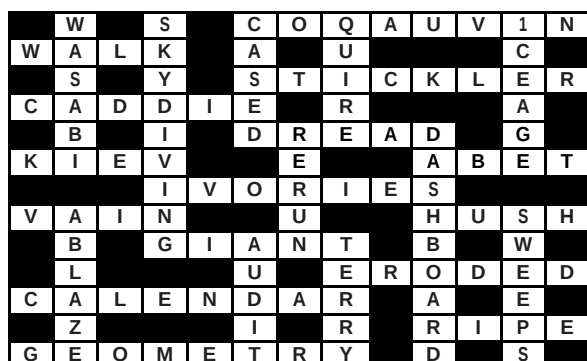
1. Jungle knife
5. Enchant
8. Wanders
9. Musical compositions
10. Aid in crime
13. Control flow
15. Spins
17. Cover
18. Whale school
19. A trap
21. Group of things
23. Started again
26. Well learned
27. Dreadful
29. Cuddle
30. Angry
31. Smooth and glossy
32. Hears

DOWN

1. Small Artillery piece
2. Ski home
3. Direction
4. Follows from
5. Eats
6. Real
7. Never hit
11. Drilled
12. Water valve
13. Danger colour
14. River (Italy)
16. Small axe
19. Marry
20. New flower
21. Drains
22. Trip
23. Say story over
24. Desert image
25. Turns aside
28. One-sided view

Solution next issue.

JULY 2020 SOLUTION



THE UNKNOWN COMIC

During the last lockdown I ran out of toilet paper and started using lettuce leaves. Today was just the tip of the iceberg. Cos if it lasts much longer....

Finland just closed its borders. You know what that means. No one will be crossing the finnish line.

A wife texts her husband on a cold winter's morning: "Windows frozen, won't open." Husband texts back: "Slowly pour some lukewarm water over it and gently tap edges with hammer." Wife texts back 5 minutes later: "Computer really messed up now."

A husband and wife were driving down coastal NSW. As they approached Bulahdelah, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the table, the husband asked the waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly?" She leaned in closer between them and said, "Rrrobbbys Caaaaaffe."

Two tall trees, a birch and a beech, are growing in the woods. A small tree begins to grow between them, and the beech says to the birch, "Is that a beech or a birch?" The birch says he cannot tell, but just then a woodpecker lands on the sapling. The birch says, "Woodpecker, you're a tree expert. Can you tell if that is a beech or a birch?" The woodpecker takes a taste of the small tree and replies, "It is neither a beech nor a birch. It is, however, the best piece of ash I have ever poked my pecker into." (I know you're smiling).

A woman was taking an afternoon nap. When she woke up, she told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a pearl necklace. What do you think it means?" "You'll know tonight," he said. That evening, the man came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it, only to find a book entitled "The Meaning of Dreams." You can still make out the McGraw Hill emblem embossed on his forehead.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

--	--	--

OLD DETAILS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

OLD ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

NEW DETAILS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

NEW ADDRESS

--

SUBURB/TOWN

STATE

POST CODE

--	--	--

HOME PHONE

MOBILE PHONE

OTHER PHONE

--	--	--

EMAIL ADDRESS *[PRINT CLEARLY]*

--

YOUR SIGNATURE

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Complete all sections and post to:

The Secretary
 VVPPAA NSW
 PO Box 170
 Granville
 NSW 2142

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

VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

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

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

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

Please print clearly

VETERANS DETAILS

SURNAME FIRST NAME SERVICE NUMBER

--	--	--

SVN UNIT/S TOUR DATES

--	--

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

--

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

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

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

YOUR NAME

--

SUBURB/TOWN STATE POST CODE

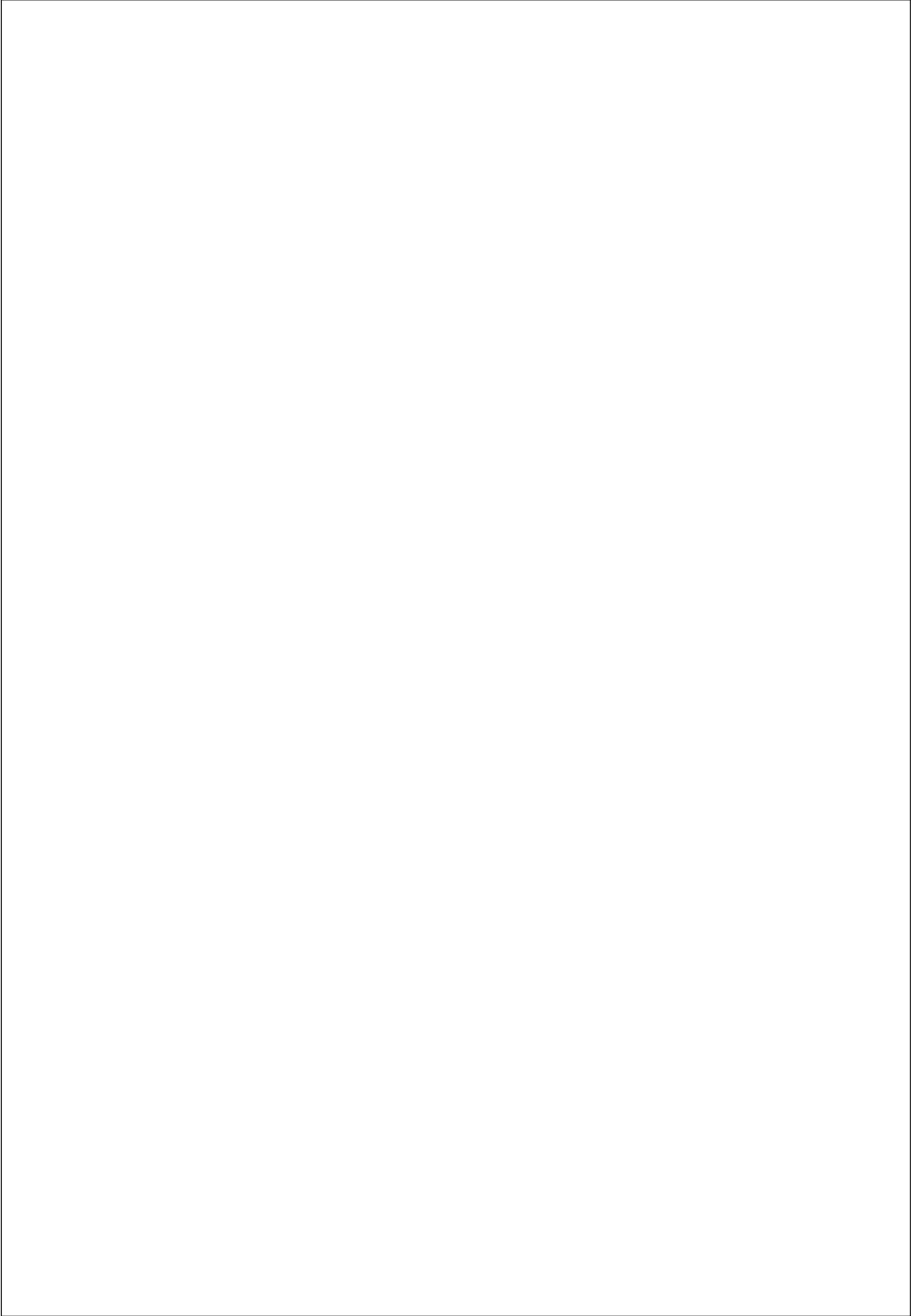
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HOME PHONE MOBILE PHONE SIGNATURE

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

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



Please consider leaving a bequest in your will

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

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

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

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

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

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

Operation Life



Register Now!!

CALL **1800 011 046**

OPEN
Veterans & Families
Counselling
ARMS

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

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

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

FORMERLY

Veterans and Veterans Families
Counselling Service



Vale a veterans' champion Frank Benfield OAM

HE was always there to help veterans with their compensation claims and other problems.

Indeed, so well regarded was Frank that he was often given the cases that were too hard for others.

And pension officers who chose to persevere with those hard cases might well ask Frank for advice.

There are many, many hundreds of veterans as well as many pension officers who have benefited from Frank's generosity.

After 20 years in the army as an aircraft maintenance technician and several years with the Royal Thai Air Wing, Frank returned to Australia and completed university courses in Asian Studies and helped form the 161 Recce Flight Association.

He then dived head first into veterans' welfare including from the early 1980s being a valuable contributor to the Agent Orange controversy.

Frank did a stint on the Veterans Review Board and was selected as a member of the Prime Minister's Veterans Affairs Advisory Board.

Alan Griffin was then the Minister for Veterans Affairs chairing that Board. He wrote:

'Am so sorry to hear of Frank's passing. A great advocate for the needs of veterans. A tireless worker on their behalf. I didn't know him personally until I appointed him to the PMAC, but we became and remained friends in the years since. Of all the veterans' representatives I met over the years he was one of the very very best. My sincere condolences to Clare and the rest of



Frank Benfield OAM and wife Clare

the family. You should be rightly proud of him and his selfless devotion to others.'

Vietnam veteran Graham Edwards, state and federal politician, member of the AWM Council, saving President of the WA RSL and great advocate for veterans' welfare, had this to say.

'So sorry to learn the sad news. Warmest wishes Clare to you and the family. Deepest condolences. Will miss Frank deeply and just hope he will rest in peace after a life of service and having done so much good for so many others. Let the flags fly at half mast,. Let he bugles sound a proud last post. Frank deserves all of the accolades he earned in life but never sought. Lest we forget. Lest we forget. Farewell friend.'

With both these tributes, the VVFA could not agree more. ■

VALE Colonel David Rankin MC, MID, VCOG

George Mansford AM, Brigadier (rtd)

David was a very popular and effective military officer and an outstanding citizen.

It is true to say that in any season of life, to achieve unity, good will, sense of purpose, tolerance and wisdom will require very strong leadership.

David was such a proven leader for any season. His love of country and pursuit of his dreams for tomorrow was beyond question.

He was an outstanding warrior in war and held in high regard by those he commanded, as well as being a very much respected citizen in his community.

Oh for a thousand David Rankin's in our troubled society.



A Warrior's Farewell

***Go now and travel beyond the void
Seek the green column and when you meet
See once more those smiling faces
Hear again laughter and sounds of marching feet***

***No more the visions of the bloody past
Gone are the nightmares and lingering pain
Soon you will be home at long, long last
United with fallen comrades once again***

***And when the final roll is called
Another page of history complete
Rest with brave spirits such as they
In a camp where you will find peaceful sleep***

***Go swiftly now and seek your past
Your duty done for all to tell
With pride of who and what you were
And now we bid you a fond farewell***

(George Mansford ©December 2007)



Last Post





Last Post





Last Post



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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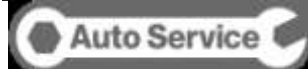
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