



# The Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

SUPPORTING ALL WHO SERVE & HAVE SERVED

DECEMBER 2022

Our Christmas dream ...



## Royal Commission exposé:

'... been dismayed to come to understand the limited ways that Australian Governments have responded to these previous enquiries and reports.'

And also.....

Improving the TPI pension:  
A better way

The Veterans' Suicide Royal Commission speaks :  
Were veterans used as political pawns?

And ... what must be done **NOW!**

**NEXT ISSUE  
APRIL 2023**

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**DVA - Military Compensation**

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

**Asbestos - Dust Disease Tribunal claims.**

**Industry super claims - income protection - TPD appeals,**

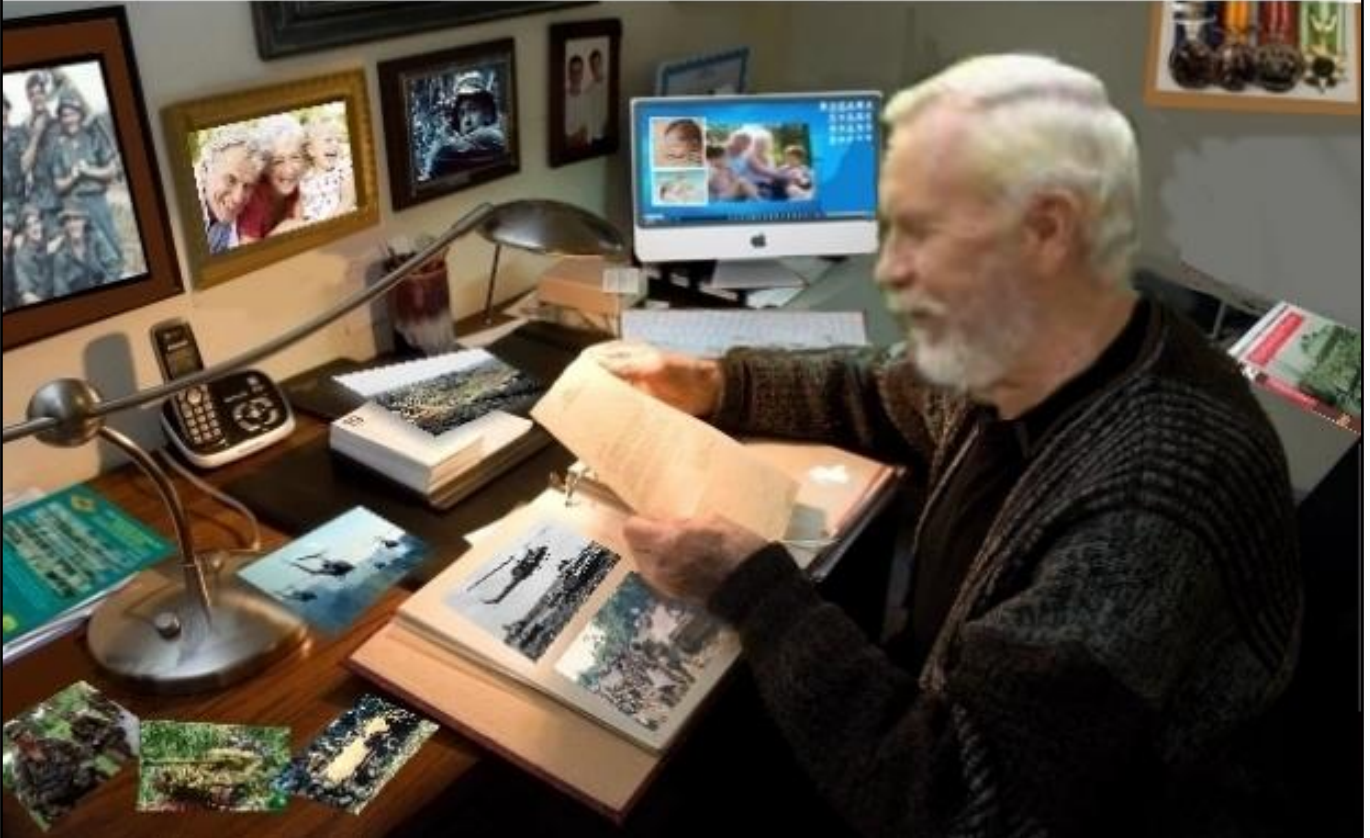
**Coroner's inquests**

**claims for Detriment Caused by Defective Administration - CDDA**

## Our Readers love Vietnam Veterans' Stories

Gleaned from letters diaries and memories

'The grandkids have been bugging me to get my stories in, so here goes!'



We welcome new veteran author Ian N Brookes with a surprising tale about an elephant in a minefield. Also another story of his part in the invasion of Cambodia.

We welcome back John Ingram with the next episode of the story of the Vung Tau Ferry, HMAS Sydney, the ship that took so many of us to Vietnam and/or returned us home.

New author Paul Davison gives us a pictorial as well as narrative account of his time as a Nasho.

Please keep those stories coming in; they are very popular.



**VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION  
of AUSTRALIA Inc.**

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**Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and  
Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW  
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# 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. ■***

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## CLOSE-OFF DATE FOR APRIL 2023 ISSUE 1 MARCH 2023

For items of publication contact  
editor@vfvfagranville.org

## APOLOGY

Our sincerest apologies and condolences are sent to Margaret Bulloch, her family and friends, for the error in our July issue 'Last Post' listing.

We posted the incorrect date of death for her late husband **R62968 (LM) W J Bulloch**, who served on HMAS Brisbane. The unfortunate error is corrected in this issue, and appears as amended in the website version of the July 22 edition. [ED].

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## 2023 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!

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

Members of our various State Branches and sub branches except Queensland, should receive membership renewal notices from their respective organizations. NSW membership subscription renewal forms for 2023 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.vfvfagranville.org](http://www.vfvfagranville.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, all members of the NSW Branch, who renew by 30 January 2023, will have the chance to enter into the draw to win 1 of 3, \$100.00 gift vouchers from Bunnings Hardware. So, NSW Branch members get your application in quickly to Granville 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 2023 and thank you for your on-going support and patronage of the Federation.

**Ron O'Connor, NSW Secretary** ■





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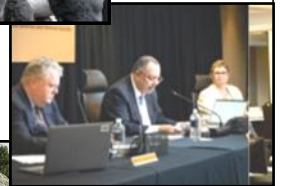
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Merry Christmas to all.  
Health, happiness, and prosperity in 2023



# *The campaign for a more generous TPI pension.....*

## *Is a different approach needed?*

For some nine years now the TPI Federation has been gallantly trying to convince the government to increase the value of the TPI pension (or TPI Compensation Payment as it can now be called).

Commendably, it succeeded in having two independent reviews established; the Tune review and the KPMG review. They reported in 2019.

Unfortunately neither of these reviews supported the model proposed by the TPI Federation.

Despite the adverse findings of the reviews, the TPI Federation still finds the TPI payment inadequate.

So do we.

So it is time to examine the model espoused by the TPI Federation, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and identify an alternative model which might find favour.

So what are the weakness of the TPI Federation's proposal.

It is important first to note that the TPI payment is subject to neither means testing nor tax and is paid for life. These make the payment very valuable. We should be cautious about tampering with these qualities. Indeed, we should probably do nothing to endanger them.

So a weakness of the TPI Federation's proposal is that it *does* tamper these valuable



qualities.

The TPI Federation's idea is to first split the TPI payment.

The first half would be 100% of the General Rate which is to be identified as 'Compensation for Pain and Suffering'. Being compensation, it would not be counted when calculating income support.

The second half of the TPI payment would be designated 'income support' (or sometimes referred to as 'economic loss') and





should, the TPI Federation argues, be increased to equal the 'Minimum Wage'.

Sounds good?

It certainly does.

But there's a catch. The splitting of the TPI payment into 'Pain and Suffering' and 'Income Support' makes it vulnerable to Departments of Finance and Treasury advocating the income support element be subject to means testing, tax and to cessation at retirement age (currently 67). And it is likely they would revel in doing so because its exemption from being 'taxed', 'means tested' and it being 'for life' is rare if not unique amongst government pensions and payments.

As precedent, the government would be able to point out that the income support element in the compensation system for younger veterans (MRCA) is subject to means testing against the Service Pension.

So splitting the TPI payment is a risky business.

Then there is the government's approach.

The government, when calculating the amount TPI pensioners receive, always includes the Service Pension to which qualified TPI

pensioners are automatically eligible. It points out that the TPI payment plus the Service Pension is close to the Average Wage. Protests that many TPI pensioners don't get the Service Pension or not all of it, is countered by the government pointing out that this is because those who miss out have other means and don't need it. These arguments have been hard to counter.

On one occasion the Minister for Veterans Affairs went further, complaining that TPIs were being paid more than most of those who worked in her office.

This outburst, of course, missed the point that TPI pensioners will never have the chance to rise through the ranks to reach good wages like those young people who worked in her office.

But these are the objections that governments have made and will raise in the future.

So we just cannot see the government agreeing to pay TPI pensioners a base rate of more than the average wage, including, as it always will, the Service Pension in that calculation.

But we agree with the TPI Federation that the TPI pension needs improvement.

So what is another way of arguing that the

*(Continued on page 8)*

TPI payments should be more generous?

The government's own comprehensive 2002 Review of the adequacy of the TPI pension may hold the answer.

The 2002 Clarke Review reported that the base rate TPI payment itself, with a small top-up, would be adequate when the Service pension was added. But Clarke saw TPI pensioners, especially young TPI pensioners, as requiring additional opportunity to help themselves and to getting additional temporary government help at certain stages of their lives. (This issue was also raised in the KPMG review). Clarke also saw the need for more help for carers.

**Self Help**

- spouse's wage earned from actual work not means-tested;
- veteran's wage from the allowable 8 hours work not means-tested for up to 25% of the average wage.

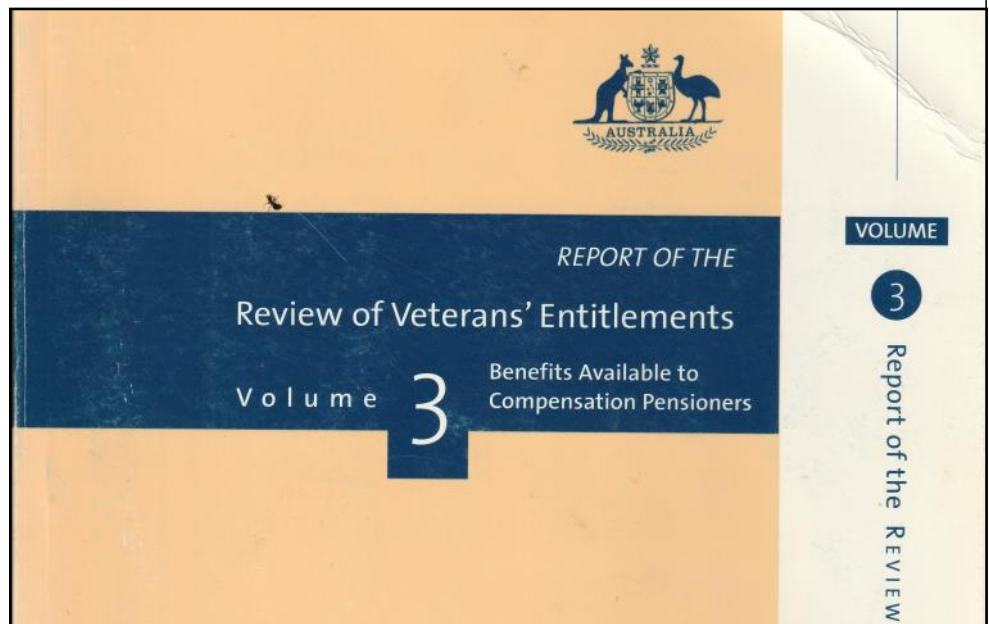
**Temporary Additions**

- help with buying a house;
- 20% of the veteran's general rate pension for each student child;
- VCES [already secured but less than satisfactory].
- a subsidy for private health insurance cover for the veteran's family (in compensation for the veteran himself/herself being covered by the Gold Card);

**General Additions**

- improved carers allowance.

That spouses earned income should not be means tested is a particularly important recommendation. It is noted that most households now require two incomes to financially cope. This normal situation is denied TPI families as the



spouses' income can be halved by means testing. Exempting spouses' incomes from means testing would allow TPI families to enjoy a more normal financial situation.

This exemption plus the limited means testing of veterans earned income, student children's allowance, private health subsidy and somehow helping with the purchase of a family house, are imaginative responses to the substantial financial difficulties TPI families (especially young TPI families) face.

By approaching the inadequacies of the TPI pension in this way, the valuable current TPI payment structure ('not means tested', 'not taxed' and 'for life') could remain undisturbed and not vulnerable to Department of Finance and Treasury dabbling.

And as the recommended changes come from the government's own review, and are based on need and self-help, they may be more favourably considered.

Nine years of gallant attempts by the TPI Federation to convince government to accept its proposed changes have not succeeded.

Perhaps it is time to consider a change in direction. ■

# Book Review

## DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

'The path of a baby boomer'

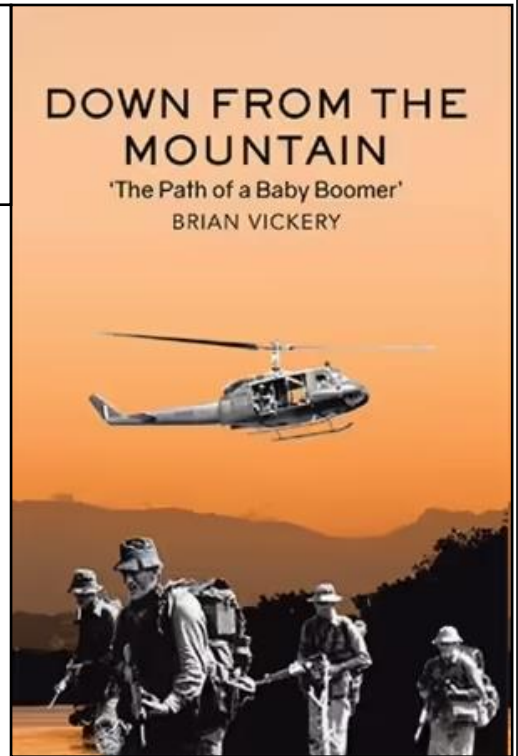
Brian Vickery brings us a well constructed, autobiographical, account of a boy, coming to manhood under the shadow of a family with a history of soldiering. So it is no surprise for him to accept, almost expect, the call-up into National Service that was the Australia of the mid 1960s, to early 1970s.

Most of the book details Brians life as an Army officer in command of an infantry platoon, with 9 RAR on a tour of duty in Vietnam. Anecdotal images of Officer training at Scheyville quickly give way to the rigours of war in steaming jungle heat. Night ambushes set along trails identified as possible *Viet Cong* supply lines. Clearing well disguised networks of bunker systems, or nervously sweeping a minefield. All told with a skill, leaving the reader little to imagine.

Most of all, along with the humour and a desire to solve problems as he saw fit, Brian shows consistency and an honesty in his own outlook and perceptions without losing sight of the objectives and dedication, with an optimism that is refreshing. Yes, it is a book about getting the job done and having fun in the process. However, Brian keeps the reader enthralled, even in the chapters away from warfare, as he continues his life in the military, and his selfless service to others in retirement.

[I enjoyed the read immensely – Ed.]

R Freshfield OAM August 2022. ■



### **Book and Order Details**

The book can be purchased across the counter at the Kurrawa Surf Life Saving Club Qld, Boardwalk Books at Kingscliff NSW or by mail out. Details are provided below:

**Book Title:** Down From The Mountain ISBN  
**Hard Cover** 978-1-9845-0652-8  
**Sub Title:** The Path of a Baby Boomer  
**Softcover** 978-1-9845-0653-5  
**Author:** Brian Vickery  
**E-Book** 978-1-9845-0651-1 (Amazon)

### **Prices below are for mail-outs only**

Electronic sales of the book are to be made through [Orders@Xlibris.com.au](mailto:Orders@Xlibris.com.au) or through [www.amazon.com.au](http://www.amazon.com.au)

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## Part 1 Breaches of Trust?

At the hearing of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide on 4 August 22, Kate Pope PSM, Deputy President of the Repatriation Commission was asked questions about the locating of veterans' Wellbeing Centres. The following exchange took place.

Royal Commission: Okay. Now, if I can just turn to ask about the program proper. Am I correct that the Veteran Wellbeing Program was announced on about **24 April 2019**?

Ms Pope: That's correct.

Q: And that was just prior to the Federal Election in May 2019?

Ms Pope: That's right.

Q: And is it correct to characterise that announcement as an election commitment?

Ms Pope: That's correct.

Q: The announcement on 24 April 2019 identified the location for six wellbeing centres, namely Townsville, Darwin, Nowra, Perth and Wodonga; is that correct?

Ms Pope: And Adelaide.

Q: And Adelaide. To your knowledge, was the Department of Veterans' Affairs consulted before the initiative was announced?

Ms Pope: No.

Q: To your knowledge, was any research or studies undertaken to provide data in relation to the establishment of those centres?

Ms Pope: Not to our knowledge, no.

Q: To your knowledge, why did the Federal Government choose those particular locations for funding of Veteran Wellbeing Centres?

Ms Pope: We're not aware.

So there's the question; why did the previous government chose those locations.

Surely if the object had been to ensure the maximum contribution to the care and welfare of veterans and their families, the government would have sought advice from the experts, DVA.

So what were the selection criteria?

Could the criteria have been political, choosing the locations purely based on gaining political advantage in certain electorates in the upcoming Federal election?

We hope not.

If that were the case we would be very, very disappointed.

\*\*\*\*\*

On 11 August 22 the Royal Commission released its Interim Report (the final report being



scheduled for 2024).

It exposed something definitely disappointing.

The Royal Commission’s research found the following:

We note the considerable number of previous reports delivered and inquiries conducted since 2000 that are relevant to the topics of suicide and suicidality among serving and ex-serving ADF members. We have identified over 50 previous reports, and more than 750 recommendations. While we acknowledge that many of these reports and inquiries were about discrete topics, we have been dismayed to come to understand the limited ways that Australian Governments have responded to these previous inquiries and reports.

Yes, the Royal Commission reported they were ‘dismayed’, a condition even worse than ‘disappointed’.

So we can only hope that the findings of a Royal Commission will be somewhat harder to ignore.

Certainly, the new Federal Government has started well with its useful response to the claims backlog scandal and have indicated it will take seriously the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

We can only hope this stated resolve lasts the distance.

But the Royal Commission itself is not happy just to leave it to the resolve of a government. ‘Trust’, with good reason, is lacking. It states:

We have already noted the number of previous reports and inquiries into matters relevant to our terms of reference. We consider there is a compelling case for a permanent entity to monitor and report on the progress of implementation of inquiries and reviews, including this Royal Commission's Interim Report and final report

The Royal Commission seems determined not to give governments and DVA wriggle room to once again avoid their responsibilities. ■



## Part 2

# What must be done — NOW

## From the Royal Commission Interim Report

The Royal Commission released its Interim Report on 11 August 22 with its final report not due till 2024. There are concerns, it says, that must be addressed now.

‘The Commissioners heard that delays in claims processing compounds trauma for ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members. It is therefore essential to reduce the complexity of the claims process, to improve the timeliness of claims processing by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and to address the backlog of claims.’

A call for the backlog of claims to be reduced is not new. Such calls go back to at least 2017 in the Senate Committee’s report, *The Constant Battle: Suicide by Veterans*.

It is also a call we have been making for some years.

Already the new government has taken steps to reduce the backlog.

It has added 500 staff to help but these will take many months to recruit and train.

The new government has also removed the cap on the number of permanent public servants doing the job. It was a ridiculous restriction which meant half of the staff were casuals who took six months to train but often left the job after a

relatively short productive period.

Increasing staff and removing this ridiculous restriction may well help but the elimination of the backlog (standing at 60,000 in September 22) is predicted not to be completed till mid 2024.

It is a scandal.

\*\*\*\*\*

Another obstacle to faster processing of disability claims identified by the Royal Commission is that veterans are covered by three distinct compensation schemes. Some veterans’ come under more than one of these schemes.

This complicates and delays the process.

This insight is not new.

In 2019 a Productivity Commission report identified having the three separate acts as an obstacle to the efficient working of disability claims processing. Harmonisation into one act was recommended.

The Royal Commission pointed out that while the Productivity Commission report was released in June 2019, DVA did not seek ex-service organisations’ feedback till December 2020 and that it was not till May 2021 that the government announced that a roadmap to harmonising the three pieces of legislation would be developed.



*It is clear to us that Australia's veteran compensation and rehabilitation legislative system is so complicated that it adversely affects the mental health of some veterans ...and can be a contributing factor to suicidality.' (Royal Commission Interim Report)*

In September 2022, more than three years after the Productivity Commission recommended harmonisation, it seems little progress has been made.

DVA believes the problem is that the three compensations systems vary in their generosity on certain entitlements. So that when DVA comes up with a solution it receives objections from sections of the veteran community who are left worse off.

Thus DVA seems to be blaming veterans for its inability to get the done.

But surely the answer is simple. Include the most generous entitlements from each of the three systems in the harmonised single legislation. Why not? In the world of wage negotiations there has long been a rule that the eventual wage agreement must not leave anyone worse off.

To employ the same principle in construction a harmonised system is both just and simple.

So, DVA, for heavens sake get on with it.

As the Royal Commission Interim Report puts it:

**'We recognise that making change will not be easy, but the difficulties of reform provide no justification to delay any further.'**

\*\*\*\*\*

The Royal Commission sees obstacles to its task:

**'Despite our clear mandate, parliamentary privilege and public interest immunity claims have seriously, adversely constrained our ability to inquire into and receive the necessary evidence from prior inquiries conducted by and for parliament and to examine government decision-making.'**

Is 'parliamentary privilege' being used to unethically hide politicians' doubtful decisions?

There are also obstacles to the Royal Commission getting access to some DVA and Defence records.

The Royal Commission is also calling on the government to clear the way for ADF personnel and veterans to give evidence that they now be reluctant to give fearing being accused of a security breach.

It is urgent that the government removes these obstacles.

\*\*\*\*\*

We have understood the 'backlog' to mean the number of veterans' disability compensation claims received but not yet determined; claims, in other words, not fully processed.

The Royal Commission questioning has revealed that DVA has changed that definition to restrict it to mean only those claims not yet allocated to determining officer.

But how many claims do determining officers have in their in-trays; ten? twenty? more?

And how long will each take to process.

This redefining 'backlog' may make the numbers look less appalling but it clarifies nothing. It simply obscures the real situation.

There are two numbers that are relevant to understanding the magnitude of this scandal.

They are:

- 1 How many veterans' disability claims have been received by DVA but not yet determined; and,
- 2 How long are claims taking to be determined under each of the three compensation systems.

In September of this year, the answer to the first question was round 60,000 and increasing.

The answer to the second question was between one and two years for most claims.

We can only hope that by the time you are reading this, the situation has improved.

In the meantime we are calling for these two figures to be published monthly.

These are numbers veterans' have a right to know. ■

# **AUSTRALIAN ARMY NURSE MEMORIAL DEDICATION & OPENING**

**POINT WALTER RESERVE, BICTON**

**PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2023**

**9:45 am PERTH TIME**

To recognise the tragedy of 16 February 1942 when 21 Australian Army Nurses were murdered on Radji beach, Bangka Island, Sumatra, along with a number of sailors, servicemen, and civilians.

Sister Vivian Bullwinkle, many of us will remember, was the sole survivor of the massacre on Radji beach, and went on to bring home Australia war orphans at the end of the Vietnam war.

This event in Perth will be streamed live across the world by A professional television crew, to present picture and sound. East coast viewers in Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania can catch the event from 12:45 pm DST.

The website will be ready for a check closer to the date at

<https://vimeo.com/event/2297560>

Please spread the news to all you know to show support for this very worthwhile ceremony.

You may also like to consider purchasing a copy of the book "Call Sign Vampire", that tells the story of the Australian Field Hospital, Vung Tau, 1968-71.

<https://www.callsignvampire.com.au/copy-of-book>

it's \$150, but well worth it for anybody who were saved by this establishment. Many of the nurses who looked after you were probably trained or schooled at the hands of practices that Vivian taught.

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL VIVIAN BULLWINKLE AO MBE ARRC ED FNM**

**LEST WE FORGET**



# Government responds quickly to the Suicide Royal Commission's Interim Report

The government has been quick to respond to the Suicide Royal Commission's Interim Report.

It supports all but one recommendation.

- It supports harmonising the three compensation schemes.
- It supports reducing the claims backlog. To this end it has already added 500 staff and eliminated the cap on the number of permanent public servants.
- It supports reducing the complexity and enhancing the efficiency of the claims system.
- It supports DVA reporting regularly its funding needs to government.
- It agrees that those giving evidence which risk breaking security laws should be protected.
- It supports removing or reducing the obstacle of 'Public Interest Immunity' claims in the Royal Commission seeking information.
- It supports making the release of DVA information to families easier.

There is one Royal Commission recommendation which was not agreed to. It is removing the obstacle of Parliamentary Privilege. This denies the Royal Commission the ability to scrutinise some government decision making. Such a restriction will hamper the Royal Commission's research.

More on this and other disappointments can be found in *From the Editor's Desk* on page 34.

But it is promising that the government has been so quick to respond.

And, of course, this is early days and we must give the government time to develop a more detailed response and to ramp up remedial action.

But I hope we are able to report real progress in the March 2023 edition of this magazine.

It is, after all, a matter of veterans' life and death.

Sadly, however, it is hard not to be somewhat pessimistic and cynical.

The Royal Commission reviewed 50 relevant enquiries since 2000 with 750 recommendations.

The Royal Commission says:

'we have been dismayed to come to understand the limited ways that Australian Governments have responded to these previous inquiries and reports.'

\*\*\*\*\*

The Minister also announced some other welcome initiatives; establishing additional Veterans' and Families Hubs; expanding the eligibility criteria for the Defence Home Ownership scheme; developing a comprehensive veteran employment program; providing greater support for military families; and providing more emergency housing for veterans experiencing homelessness through the government's Housing Australia Future Fund.

\*\*\*\*\*

We hope for the best. ■



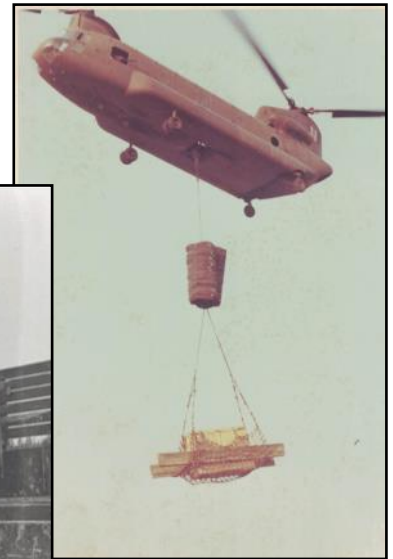
# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

This is what Ian Brookes was involved in until an elephant got into the minefield.



Photos by Ian B Brookes



## SVN (South Vietnam) : The Elephant

From Ian N Brookes (INB)

The elephant, or more correctly, The Dead and Badly Decomposing Asian Elephant in a Minefield.

Location – Nui Dat – 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF) base, Phuoc Tuy Province, (now Baria Phuoc Tuy Province) 111 Corps, SVN. 1969.

Radio call – Tell Sunray 176 AD [Air Despatch] that Sunray TFMA (Task Force Maintenance Area) wants to see him next five minutes..... Roger – Out.

Five minutes or so later.

Sunray Det 176 AD Coy aka INB:... Morning Sir.

Company Commander (CC):...Morning INB, you've got a problem.

INB:...I have, sir?

CC:...Yes INB. There's a dead elephant badly decomposing in the mine field protecting the Popular Forces Post at Xuyen Moc and it smells to high heaven and the Popular Forces (PF) are about to desert the post. That can't be allowed to

happen and your job is to “neutralise” the dead elephant, and fast. Understand?

INB:...Yes, Sir!

CC:...Let me know what you are going to do about it and what, if any, support you need.

INB:...Yes Sir! ...Salutes and leaves 1 ATF TFMA (Task Force Maintenance Area) Company Command Post (CP) – an underground bunker with a bamboo and thatched palm roof over it.

Apart from trying to keep a straight face at this unusual order, it was obvious that I was not going to take a couple of my Diggers and tip toe into the uncharted mixed Anti Personnel and Anti-Tank (AP and AT) minefield with chainsaws and cut the badly decomposing beast up into lumps, and then extricate same slimy lumps of badly decomposed Asian elephant by driving a forklift in to the minefield. No Sir. So what to do?

The unit had a load of old and unserviceable Aerial Delivery Equipment (ADE) such as badly torn and stressed A22 air drop 1 Ton cargo container canvasses and slings. Easy solution. I'd use this unserviceable ADE to deposit a large quantity of Quick Lime and Lye - available from the TF (Task Force) Hygiene Staff. The Quick Lime and the Lye would, in theory at least, rapidly strip the elephant of all of its remaining flesh and end the putrid stench. All I needed at short notice was a Bell *UH-1 Iroquois* (nicknamed "Huey") helicopter.

A visit to the IATF HQ Air Cell quickly secured me a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) UH-1B Iroquois helicopter, which would arrive at the Pelican Heights LZ (Landing Zone) from another task after refuelling at Kanga (Kangaroo) Pad (LZ) in about 1 hour or so to conduct this elephant bombing mission. In the American army in SVN it was the army that owned and operated the helicopters. But for the Australian 1 ATF it was the RAAF that operated all but the very small reconnaissance helicopters operated by 161 Recce Flight (I think we had about six of them).

The chopper duly arrived, landed at the side of the Pelican Heights LZ (Landing Zone) shut down its engine and the two pilots and the crew chief came across to see me.

RAAF: ....What's all this about us “bombing” a dead elephant for you?

INB:...Repeats story – There is a dead and badly decomposing Asian elephant that wandered in to the minefield protecting the PF Post at Xuyen Moc to feed on the wild bananas growing within the minefield. It stepped on a mine and blew a foot off, then when writhing on the ground rolled on to other mines and sort of blew itself up. How it got so far in to the mine field without blowing itself up we shall never know but it's pretty much in the centre of the mine field and up wind of the PF Post.

RAAF:...What sort of a minefield is this?

INB: ....Mixed AP AT (Anti-personnel and anti-tank)

RAAF: ....Shit! So if we miss the elephant or the load slides off the elephant we could set off a mixture of AP and AT mines and there will be crap and shrapnel flying everywhere?

INB: ....Yep.

RAAF: ....Hmmm! So what length sling are you going to use?

OML: ....60 Ft (3 x20 ft slings joined).

RAAF: ....Hell no! Can't you make it a 150 foot sling? That way we should be out of ground effect of any mines if they go off.

INB: Have you ever tried to place a load on target with a 150 ft sling? We normally only use a 20 ft sling. With a 150 foot sling the oscillation will be uncontrollable. You might as well just come to a hover and we kick the stuff out of the door and hope to hell it lands on or near the dead elephant and not on any mines.

RAAF: ....Mmmm! Good point. Let's try the first load with an 80 foot long sling and see how it goes.

Chopper starts up with me on board and

*(Continued on page 18)*



comes to hover. An air despatcher hooks up the external A22 Container load of mixed Quick Lime and Lye and off we go to Xuyan Moc and the decomposing elephant.

Chopper comes to the hover over deceased elephant. Load is oscillating like the pendulum of the town hall clock, as predicted, but starts to slow. Crew Chief and I both lying on floor and gingerly looking down from our respective door spaces – no doors on operational choppers. Crew Chief on head set and trying to predict load oscillation. Gives command to pilot to release load which, fortuitously, sort of straddles the decomposing elephant. This is repeated for two more loads of Quick Lime and Lye and, by sheer arse and not class, all three loads are “more or less” on the dead elephant and no mines have gone off.

Now for the fun bit. In order to burst and spread as best as possible all of the bags of Quick Lime and the drums of Lye, we needed to “brass

up” the released slung loads “on” the elephant with the two M60 machine guns, one on each side, on board the Huey chopper. So, with 1000 rounds or so on board for each M60, the pilots flew lazy circuits so the Crew Chief and I could alternatively “brass up” the elephant and loads until ammo expended or “Winchester” as the then saying went. Best and undoubtedly the most expensive “Yippee Shoot” I ever enjoyed.

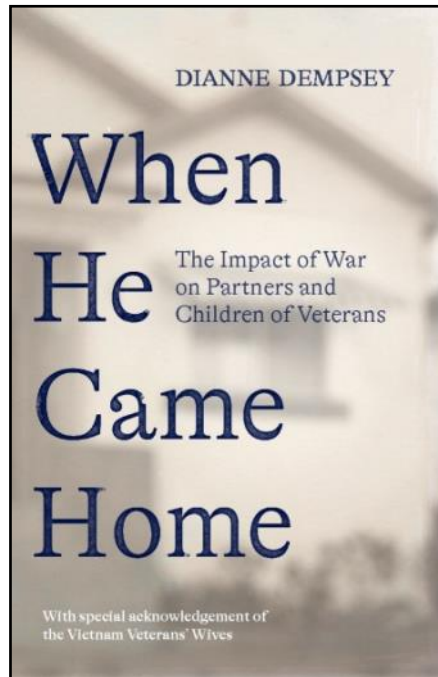
About four or five days later my Company Commander came up to me and said – Well done – it worked. The PF are still there but now complaining that your brassing up destroyed the tusks and that they are worthless! Oh well. You win some and you lose some!

All in a day’s work in SVN. Never a dull moment! Par Oneri!

Ian N Brooks (INB) ■



## Excerpt from:



'I wanted him to see a psychiatrist after I had been nursing women who had been married to WW1 and WW2 soldiers. These ladies were all saying the same thing about their marriage. There was the same theme of walking on eggshells. Bloody eggshells. Do they give them out when the veterans are released from the army? Then there were nightmares. Fights over money. The need for control. I started thinking, they're all the same symptoms. We've all been married to the same man.'

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

## One Nasho veteran's story with pictures.

How like your story is it?

### **SURF TO JUNGLE**

*by Paul Davison*

**RAAC B Sqn 3 Cav 69-70**



I thought my life had ended— from surfing every day to this! Having Corporals who thought they were God yelling, swearing at you all the time. Food that I couldn't hold down (I survived on milk). Being taken to the limit of endurance on cross country runs (something I was never much good at). But I did get to play with big boy's toys, hundreds of SLR rounds, and SMGs.

Recruit Training Kapooka December 1968 after being called up on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1968

That's me below, top right.





We marched everywhere by numbers. I found that my old Police boots looked like army boots and were only half the weight so I used them for cross-country running. The PT Instructor could see that something was wrong but never figured it out!

A pleasant lunch out, thank goodness for the Salvos! Whenever we were out on the range and bugged, around the next corner there would be the Salvo in his Land Rover with a cold drink. So when you see a Salvo put a coin in their box, they never preached at us, they just helped.

I so never wanted to be here—I thought I should be on the beach. My life certainly changed. I tried hard to get out but had no luck. I always had some schemes up my sleeve, however none of them worked.

All they wanted was “Yes Sir” or “No Sir”. They didn’t want anybody who thought for themselves. However, I did enjoy learning new things, like map reading, field craft, shooting, etc. I never took to the Chaplains at compulsory Church Parade as they preached “God said it was all right to go to Vietnam and kill the VC as they were heathens, raping, pillaging and plundering” I thought they were being hypocrites so they could be a Captain in the Army.

That’s me on the right having a drink near the end of Recruit Training. (Below). I am the only Nasho there. I had put in for a Medical Discharge the day I was called up and ended up in a regular platoon when my scheme to get out failed. They were a good lot. I was lucky to get one of the only two postings to the Armoured Corps. My travels on the Manly Ferry did not qualify for small ships.



A lean mean fighting machine, boys with Toys. My freedom had gone for a whole two years.

After Recruit Training it was off to Puckapunyal in Victoria for Corps Training. I was going to be a Tank Driver but when I saw the size of the tools they used on the Tanks, and that they took eight hours to maintain for every hour of driving, I decided that it looked like too much hard work, so I chose to drive Armoured Personnel Carriers. The photo below is of my driving instructor.





The driving side of the training was fun; I enjoyed learning these new skills. I never liked the radio side of it though. It was so hot we knocked off in the middle of the day and came back in the afternoon when it cooled down a little.



That's me all set for river training. We had to swim the carriers over the river. Not bad for an eight-tone vehicle, swimming. I don't know what the helmet was for if I sunk!

I was posted to the 3rd Cavalry Regiment at Holdsworthy with John Evans, Dave Barnes, Butch Standley, Ray Piper, Bob Heggie, Vern Judd, Mick Elliott and others. Now it was training for Vietnam. We went on exercises all over the state and Queensland. At times we didn't even have blank ammunition to fire and had to yell out 'bang' to simulate the firing of the rifles. It was just like playing Cowboys and Indians as a child, but you had somebody yelling at you if you didn't yell 'bang' loud enough. We never had any blank firing attachments when we did have blanks so you had to cock the rifle every time you fired before firing the next one. One day, when we didn't have blank amo, I kept yelling "Bang, Cock Bang" and when the Troop Sergeant said, "What are you doing Trooper Davison?" I said, "Since we never have blank firing attachments if we did have blanks you would have to cock the rifle, I'm simulating cocking the rifle". I liked to stir the possum when I thought I could get away with it.

Then off to Canungra for Jungle Training, I passed the course carrying around two buckets half filled with water while everybody else ran up and down the sides of mountains. But that's another story...

I was back in Puckapunyal driving on a Crew Commanders Course out in the bush. I was dressed up in a Winter Tank Drivers Suit, looking like the Michelin Man or Armstrong when he landed on the moon. I was sitting on the ramp making a coffee, listening to the radio broadcast "One Step" etc. I thought to myself, how stupid is this. They are putting a man on the moon and here I am training to go to war. You would think they could get life on earth going peacefully if they can put somebody on the moon!

I didn't land in Vietnam until December 1969. They had me going earlier but I got lost in the system in Australia. I was living at home, no room inspections, so I just started going to the beach. But then I decided to see what was going on. The SSM wanted to know why I was back and when I told him I hadn't gone anywhere they found out my name was in a group that had gone over several months ago. I've often wondered why the Squadron in Vietnam didn't miss me, anyway they had me on the next flight out which was on the following Wednesday.

At South Head, they told me there was no record of my inoculations so I had to have them again in a cocktail all in one. I realized what a mistake I had made when I walked down the stairs and saw my mother at Mascot. The look of worry on her face was nearly enough to make me cry. I could see what I was going to put her through over the next twelve months. On a stopover in Singapore, we had to put on civilian shirts so we wouldn't look like soldiers going to Vietnam, as if a plane load of males with short back and sides in an era of long hair, walking around in army trousers and shoes would fool anybody. When I arrived at Nui Dat I was sent straight to the Squadron instead of the Forward Delivery Troop where you would spend three weeks getting acclimatized. I was put in the Officer's Mess serving food. I thought this was an easy way to see the war out safe and sound in the base.

The first night our artillery fired, the vibrations knocked my rifle over and hit me on the head. I thought it was incoming and nearly shit myself and thought it was no use hiding under the stretcher I was sleeping on.

The next day I was sent out to 2 Troop as a replacement driver for 22A; a Trooper had been



killed after hitting a mine. I was driving the lead APC most days and every time I heard a bit of static in my headphones I thought it was a mine going off and nearly leapt out of the APC. It took me about a week to settle my nerves. I thought if I kept worrying, I would end up a nut case.



You can only do your best and the rest is fate. We would be out in the bush for six weeks at a time and come back for R & I at Vung Tau, servicing the APC, then go out again. I looked very happy in the early days.

I never got into the turret—I was the driver. I had been asked back in Oz if I wanted to be a Crew Commander, but I thought I didn't have enough experience. If I had known what would take place later, I would have accepted the position.

I thought it would be better to drive than walk in the Army, that was until I found out what landmines can do! I was very lucky because I never hit one. This is 20A which hit a mine in the Long Hai's, driver Corporal John Graham was thrown about 20 meters out of the APC, and

Captain Murphy was uninjured. Trooper Graham was Medi-Vaced backed and then flown to Australia. I had driven Capt. Murphy in Australia, but he got John to drive him in Vietnam because it meant Corporals pay and John was married with children.



Mines were one of our biggest dangers.



That's me with no shirt on. We were waiting for a great big bomb to be dropped by parachute on the mountain behind us. It ended up taking the top off it. A very costly way to get one sniper, but effective.

Helicopters—I thought, what a way to go to war— come back home to a bed and a hot meal every night! They were good to have around with their firepower. The Mini-Gun fired 3,000 rounds per minute.



I am having breakfast in Fire Support Base Barbara, this was the first FSB I had been to. We used to

*(Continued on page 24)*

patrol most days and ambush during the night. At least I got to sleep in a hammock! The infantry had to dig fox holes.

The two grunts next to us spent all day digging their fox hole and as they went to get in, out came a Cobra Snake which made it safely out through the wire despite numerous shots being fired at it!

One night we had the U.S. Artillery firing from Nui Dat about 8km away and landing just in front of our wire during TET. Not much sleep with one hour on and two off during the night depending on what you were doing. We were sent out on silly tasks just because some big wig was visiting and they never wanted to see us sitting around. It didn't matter if you had been out all night.

Patrolling through an illegal village near the FSB. There were never any men around only women and children.



Two prisoners were captured in a free fire zone, as you can see they look very dangerous. Just out doing what they have done all their life, now they are not allowed to go there.

Out patrolling with the infantry, it was interesting driving through the high grass at speed and you



came up against a tree trunk. One way of losing your front teeth.

I was fortunate, I drove through a creek near the Long Hai Mountains, the VC waited until after I went through and hit 22, the APC behind me, with a Rocket Propelled Grenade. Mick Elliott and Dave Davies the Section Sergeant were wounded and had to be winched out by a Medivac Chopper.



It was an intense day with plenty of action and we were constantly on the move. We were pulled out after three days and were later told the order came from Prime Minister Gorton as too many were killed and wounded, it looked bad in Australia. That was it for me, **why were we here?**

A helicopter that brought in Engineers to explode a mine we found. The engineers did a fantastic job sweeping for mines, it was always good to have a Mini Team on board.

Every six weeks we would get 36 hours of leave and go to Vung Tau. Some of the villages we would drive through gave me the impression the poor local people did not care who ran the country as long as they had their rice paddy.





The SVN Army in my view consisted mainly of the poor who were not willing to fight. You would see the young wealthy driving around in a Mercedes. I thought that's not fair we are here allegedly fighting for their freedom and they do nothing.



We had the occasional Concert Party performing at Luscombe Bowl, Nui Dat.

We were at the Horse Shoe, a Fire Support Base, for a couple of months before I came home. We



had a small dugout in the centre of the base and would be out most night ambushing. There was one fixed US Gun there and it fired constantly, they had a crane to load the shells however the African American soldier could load them by hand.

The Strangers, a Melbourne Band, was the first to play at an FSB. The Guitar Player is looking around as a Fire Mission had just commenced and he had jumped. Reminded me of my first night in country.

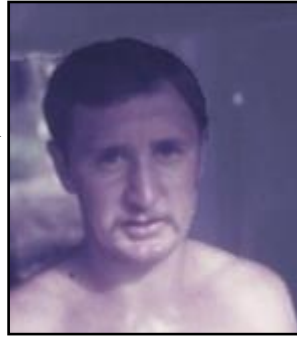


Some US Self Propelled Guns came for a while. They would fire over us and the shock wave would rock your hammock and made your ears hurt. This is a prisoner taken after we had assaulted a bunker system with the aid of Tanks and Infantry, The Tanks were firing Canister and it cleared the bush. There were brave acts performed by Armoured and Infantry and a couple of MIDs were earned, they probably should have received a higher commendation but that's the system for you.



*(Continued on page 26)*

I was looking a bit haggard when my tour was nearly over.



Here we are the 14th Intake of National Service waiting at Luscombe Field for the freedom bird to take us to Saigon for the first part of our trip home.



Time over, the Freedom Bird had arrived. The only worry was whether we could take off with all the excess luggage we smuggled on, but we made it.



Although I never wanted in, I had no regrets as I thought we were going to help. Little did I know how wrong it was for us to be there. I have never trusted a politician since. But I was proud of my fellow Troopers, Regulars and Nasho we fought as a team and they would have done anything to help a fellow soldier, and I made some lifelong friends.

The Government did not learn from these mistakes and continued to send our troops to conflicts we should not be involved in. ■



1970



1987

At the Welcome Home Parade



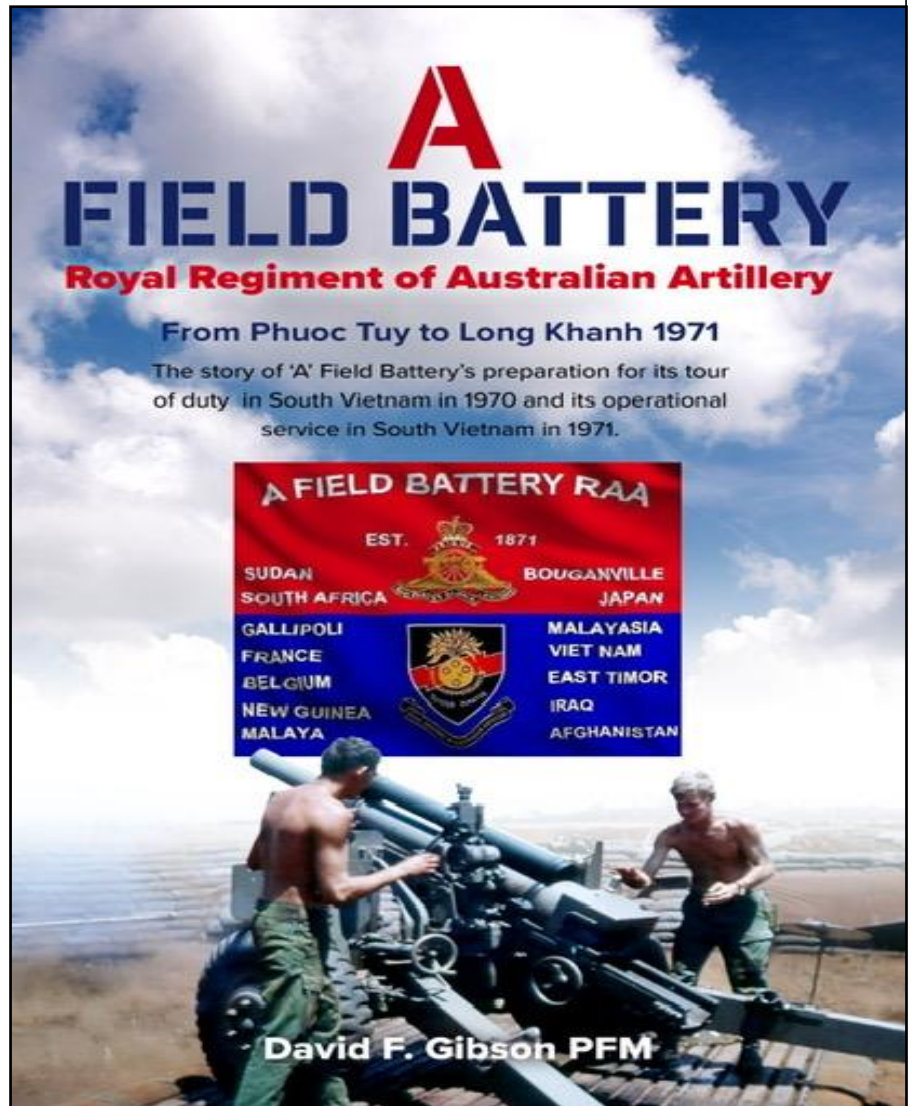
# New Book

In late 1969 the 12th Field Regiment was warned to prepare for active service in South Vietnam in 1971-72. 'K' Field Battery replaced 102 Field Battery in the regiment and moved to Townsville in late 1969. For the next twelve months 'A' Battery undertook the task of fully manning the battery and training both regular and national servicemen in a variety of artillery

## roles for active service.

David Gibson, a national serviceman, joined the battery in March 1970 and was told very early on that he "was now in 'X' Battery, we have to better than the rest." He tells the story of life in Townsville and of an artillery gun battery working hard on High Range in Townsville.

The battery moved to South Vietnam in February 1971 and was to be the direct fire support battery for 3RAR who were also on their second tour of duty in Vietnam. David gives a very detailed view of how the battery performed in its shortened tour of South Vietnam from official records and from personal anecdotes. Battery members were involved in the Battle of Long Khanh both with the infantry as a forward observer party and on the gun line providing much needed fire support from Fire Support Base Pamela.



"This book tells the story of what the battery did in South Vietnam, the highs and lows, and how those times banded a group of men together, men who are still good mates all these years later.

"You are 'A' Battery....You Have To Be The Best"





# NSW President has this to say ...



## Vietnam Veterans Day

Following a two- year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic we were finally able to resume our normal Vietnam Veterans Day service and function on 18 August 22 at Bankstown Sports Club. Guest Speaker Air Vice-Marshall Kym Osley AM CSC gave an excellent speech on the RAAF's major contribution to the allies' successes during that long and bloody war. Our Vietnam War allies were well represented at the service by former members of the New Zealand, South Vietnamese, and South Korean Forces. The service was followed by lunch and entertainment and was very well attended.

NSW Committee members continue to represent members at a variety of memorial services including those run by former members of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (the ARVN) where they always pay the utmost respect and thanks to the Australian participation in their battle for freedom.

## NSW Branch Elections

You may be aware that each two years all positions on the NSW Branch Committee are declared vacant, and will be the subject of an election. Nomination forms for all positions are included in this Newsletter. The AGM will be held on Wednesday 27 May 2023 at the Veterans Support Centre, 8 Mary Street, Granville. See pages 68, 67 for Agenda and Nomination form.

## 50th Anniversary

2023 will mark the 50th anniversary of the last Australian military contingent withdrawing from South Vietnam. The last Australian troops remained in Saigon guarding the Australian Embassy until 1 July 1973. We can look forward to National recognition of this occasion.

## The Passing of Peter Corney

**Peter Corney** was a much loved and competent volunteer Compensation Officer in our Granville Veterans Support Centre. Sadly, he passed away on 26 September following complications arising from a medical procedure. Peter joined the RAN as an Ordinary Seaman and rose through the ranks to Lt. Commander. His 20 plus years of service included being Captain of Navy Patrol boats. Peter is survived by brothers David and Graeme He will be sadly missed.

## Association Membership

We continue to excel in the services we provide to current and former ADF members but cannot do so without your continued support. This is a gentle reminder that membership fees are due from 1 January each year and you will find a membership renewal form is included within this Newsletter.

## The Festive Season

On behalf of the NSW Branch Committee I would sincerely like to wish all members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful New Year. We look forward to 2023 being a much better year for us all.

With the exception for public holidays our Granville Veterans Support Centre will remain open during this period albeit with some reduced staffing.



## FROM THE SECRETARY



Once again, NSW 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:

\$1,000	<b>Sandy Sahyoun, Andrew Wilson</b>
\$500	<b>Derek Sims, Mr &amp; Mrs Zarb Elton Robinson, Anonymous</b>
\$300	<b>Hy Xuan Trinh</b>
\$250	<b>Richard Croall</b>
\$210	<b>Rowan Gillard</b>
\$200	<b>John Worrada, Albert Brown, Harold Ford</b>

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, including:

\$5,000	<b>Bankstown RSL sub-branch</b>
\$5,000	<b>Club Blacktown</b>
\$5,000	<b>Hunters Hill RSL sub-branch</b>

We would also like to thank the following Clubs, businesses and individuals who generously donated prizes towards our 2022 Vietnam Veterans Day raffle. The raffle was a great success and all profits from it will be used to assist current and former Australian Defence Force personnel and their families in their time of need.

**Bunnings Michinbury  
Bunnings Rydalmere  
Bunnings Smithfield  
Bunnings Padstow  
Bunnings Villawood  
Bankstown Sports Club  
Dooleys Catholic Club  
Cabra-Vale Diggers  
Bankstown RSL Club Ltd  
Bankstown RSL Sub Branch  
Campsie/Chester Hill RSL Club Ltd  
Club Liverpool  
Fairfield RSL Club Ltd  
Merrylands RSL Club  
Penshurst RSL Sub Branch  
Ingleburn RSL Club  
Hearing Australia  
Canterbury/Hurlstone Park RSL Club  
Club Ashfield  
Petersham RSL Club Ltd  
Ted Tokarczyk (Granville Volunteer)  
Romina Betvardeh (NSW Admin Mgr)**

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### **2023 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!!**

See page 3 for details and page 79 for a NSW State Branch Membership form.

There is no need to pay for membership at multiple State Branch, Sub-branch, and NSW State branch HQ. One membership payment to any one entity will guarantee a copy of this newsletter is delivered to your address. We are all members of the National Federation.

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

Here we have Part 4 of the story of HMAS Sydney told by one of the crew, John Ingram

## HMAS SYDNEY: the bloody "American War" 1966-67



(In which readers are reminded of the ship's poor attempt at air conditioning)

Storing (and de-storing) an aircraft carrier at Garden Island had always been a hugely manpower intensive evolution. The Navy saw the wisdom of a Bailey Bridge arrangement which would enable vehicles to drive onto the flight deck and descend into the ship via the two aircraft lifts fitted amidships. This changed the dynamics immensely and enabled rapid loading to be conducted 24/7 in all weather conditions. In terms of bulk goods especially it was a "game changer" as the volumes and numbers were substantial.



Note destroyer escort patrolling astern.

Each deployment involved convoys of trucks arriving dockside loaded and covered (discreetly in the case of Foster's Lager in 26 oz cans) while Naval Stores trucks would deliver materials essential to wage war. Only then could the Army vehicles and **appurtenances** of military operations be embarked, fuelled to 90%



capacity, and tightly secured to ring bolts in the enclosed hangars and on the exposed flight deck. Every item had to be weighed and assigned a specific location according to the stability sensitive Cargo Plan.

In the heat and humidity of a non-airconditioned ship in the tropics shaving caused skin rash, an excuse to grow a beard. However, beards were not encouraged as it was difficult to guarantee an air tight fit when wearing a gas mask. Irrespective of rank the approval of the “Old Man”, the CO had to be obtained.

The most irritating noise emanated from the several hundred electric fan motors installed throughout the ship which provided ventilation to spaces and compartments. These large fan motors frequently overheated and a strong smell of burning rubber cable would affect the immediate area necessitating a crash shutdown plunging cabins, offices, store-rooms and compartments into total darkness until safe to restore power.

The direction and intensity of the forced air trunking system could be controlled by a brass “punkah” louvre, a 150 mm hemisphere which, when rotated, directed air via an aperture which, when opened or closed, adjusted velocity. The large intakes for the ventilation network were located on the outer hull at near flight deck level. Those aft of the funnel ingested fumes comprising carbon monoxide and dioxide as well as sulphur gases. Every hour our huge boilers burnt many tonnes of heavy furnace oil the consistency of treacle. At night the boiler tubes had to be cleansed (“blown”). This required the ship to turn cross wind and belch clouds of smoke and ash particles. Inevitably, fumes and ash particles would find their way into the ventilation system and be trunked around the ship. This was the air we breathed day and night as in an aircraft carrier its very design means personnel are confined within the hull.

Oftentimes sleeping below decks was impossible due the heat and humidity. When approved to do so, men slept on camp stretchers on the upper deck or in gun sponsons.

On one occasion I visited VAMPIRE, one of our escorts at her mooring in Vung Tau Harbour: the air-conditioning was such a relief when compared with the primitive conditions onboard SYDNEY where heat, humidity, stale air, congestion and noise were the “norm”.

In the Tropics fuel spills from vehicles were an everyday event and constituted a threat to ship and personal safety. An Army vehicle, such as an APC loaded in Sydney, for example, would be fuelled to around 90% capacity but by the time the ship entered the Tropics the tank would be at 100% and venting vapours. Whenever a spill was reported to DCHQ (Damage Control Headquarters) a distinctive bell would toll throughout the ship and the Fire and Emergency Damage Control Party ordered to the location to clean up, reduce the fuel load, ventilate vapours and render the area safe.



APCs secured on flight deck aft



Assorted wheeled vehicles



In the 1960s cigarette smoking was especially commonplace. While sailors were conscious of the need to exercise fire precautions, this was not necessarily the case with soldiers who often smoked to relieve boredom or stress, unaware of the inherent dangers of fire aboard a warship.

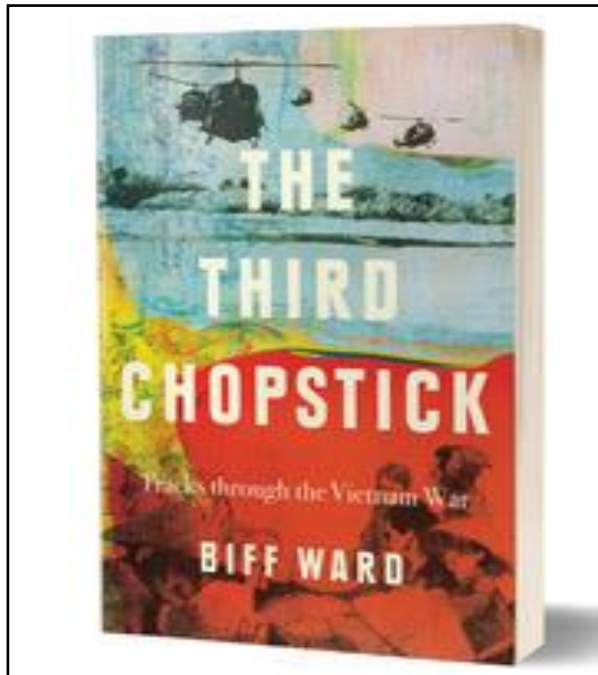
On passage to South Vietnam tension onboard was palpable, especially the process of conditioning the embarked battalion of 600 soldiers for combat. Apart from the daily military routines, classes would be held to brief soldiers on the Vietnamese language, customs and so forth additional to intelligence briefings relating to the progress of the war. Weapons and uniforms, vehicles and equipment would all have to be checked and maintained. Physical exercise groups would use the gym equipment set up in “C” hangar to help acclimatise bodies to tropical conditions. At other times one would encounter soldiers playing cards, writing up diaries, reading and relaxing as best they could in the crowded spaces onboard.

A boxing ring had been set up in “C” hangar for those who wished to demonstrate their physical abilities in this contact sport. On one memorable occasion SYDNEY’s “XO” (Executive Officer and No.2 in command), asked a young Private if he “fancied himself as a fighter”. The lad responded in the affirmative and quite brazenly challenged the XO to enter the ring. I didn’t witness the fight but a few hours later I was in the Wardroom when the XO entered the Mess sporting a very conspicuous black eye. Not a good look for the President of the Mess who clearly had an inflated opinion of his physical abilities in the ring. Decades later I can admit most of his subordinate officers felt he deserved the belting he received for he was inclined to bullying tactics and got his just desserts on this occasion. There were no repercussions! ■



VAMPIRE’s fast RAS approach on SYDNEY while RFA GOLD RANGER kept our boilers alight

## Excerpt from:



So the author, Biff Ward, organised a visit to Vietnam then returned again and again with tour groups she organised herself.

We are not given so much a travelogue but a story of the effect of being in Vietnam on individuals in those groups, some of whom were veterans.

Here is an excerpt:

That afternoon, we travelled further west to Black Lady Mountain. On the way, Ed filled us in. During the war, he said, hundreds of both sides died here. Many were not buried, and the Vietnamese believe their souls are hanging around the mountain, waiting to go home.

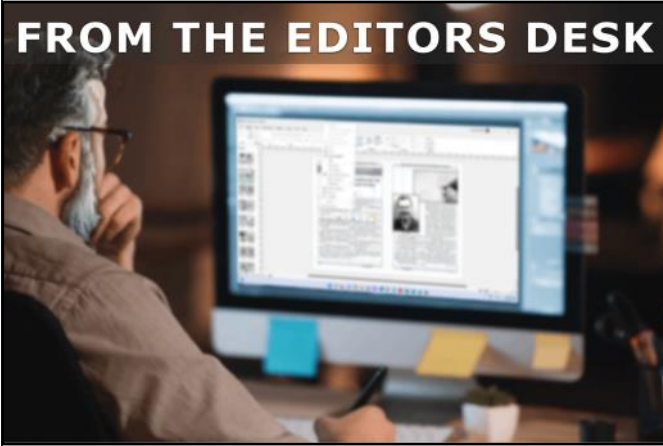
Ahead, a gigantic conical hill rose out of the plain, singular and menacing.

A chairlift deposited us three-quarters of the way up at a pagoda where the Vietnamese pray for the release of the souls of the dead. I joined Ed and Bob and Beth-Maree, a nurse veteran, in the doorway.

Ed was explaining to Bob that the fourteen-year-old guerrilla whom he killed could be with him, could become part of him. Bob could take the strength and talents of that boy inside himself, could let them live through him. It's the shamanistic way, Ed added, warrior honouring warrior.



**FROM THE EDITORS DESK**



**Here we go again?  
(I hope not)**

**(Comments on the Interim Report of the Suicide Royal Commission)**

It is encouraging that the government has made a quick response to the Interim Report of the Suicide Royal Commission, and we must give them time to make a more considered reply.

But there are some worrying signs.

It is three years since the need to harmonise the three, sometimes conflicting, veterans' compensation systems was officially recognised. The Productivity Commission identified that the resulting complexity slows the processing of claims. The resulting long waits for decisions has been identified as a factor in veteran suicide. It needs fixing urgently.

This is pointed out in the Royal Commission's Interim Report.

In its response, the government agrees.

But whilst agreeing harmonisation is essential, the Minister laid the grounds for inaction with political gobble-de-gook:

'Funding will be considered in the context of budget processes and fiscal constraints. The timing of implementation will be informed by what is required for necessary

consultation and the passage of legislation.'

But this is a matter of life and death. 'Budget processes' and 'fiscal constraints' are not a reasonable excuse for inaction. And remember that the need for harmonisation was first officially recognised in a Productivity Commission Report three years ago (and it is much longer since the ex-service community blew the whistle) and there has been consultation, if unreasonably delayed, ever since.

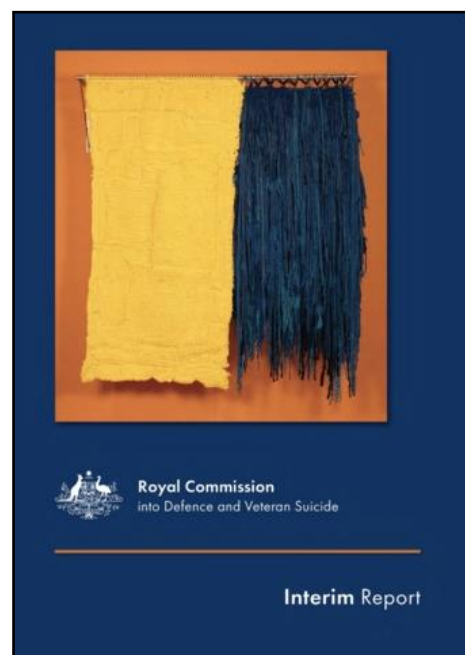
We fear it's back to the 'same old –same old'.

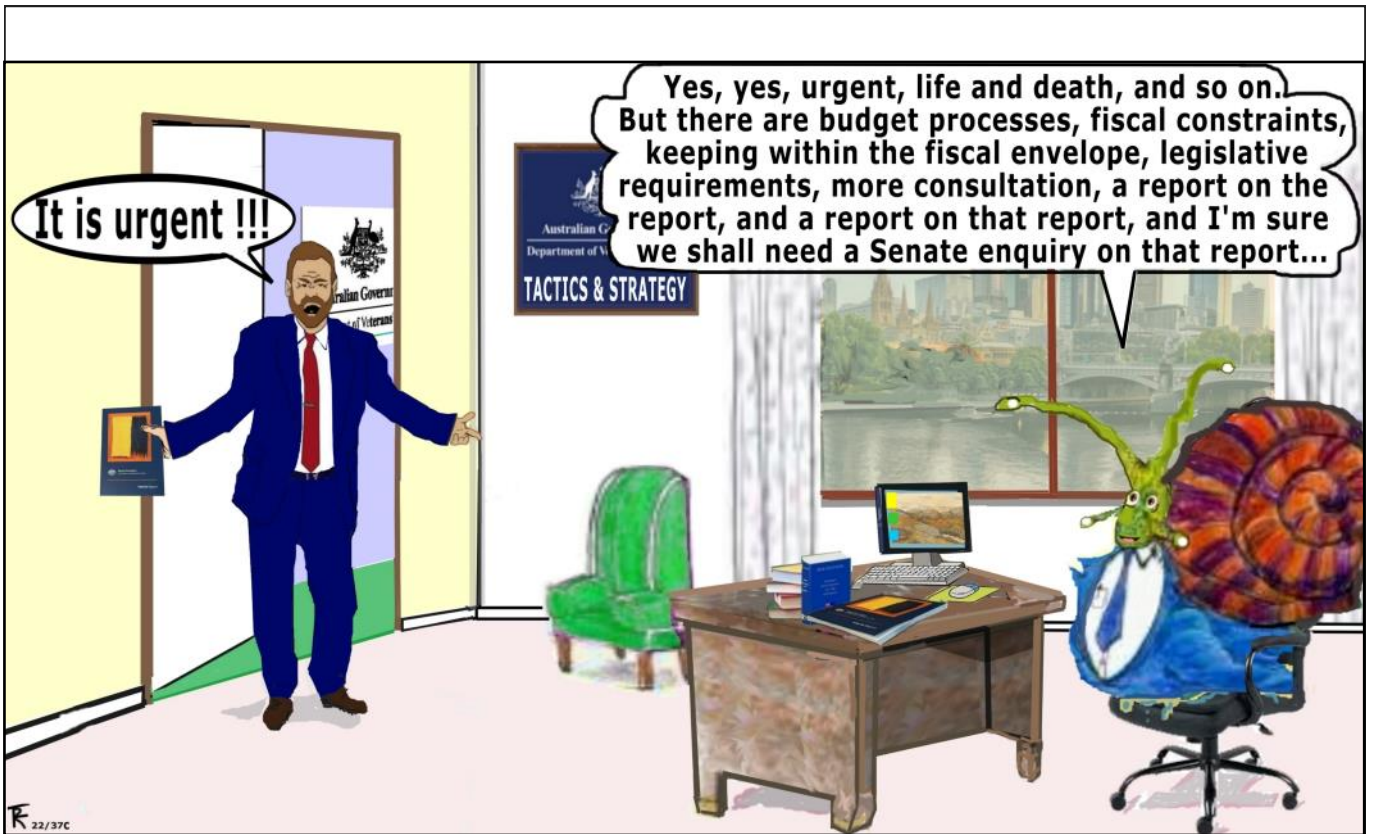
Another worrying sign:

The Royal Commission's Interim Report decries the Commission's inability to do its job because it cannot get access to government documents because of 'Parliamentary Privilege'. It recommends, very reasonably, that the Royal Commission be given an exemption to this obstacle on matters connected with veteran suicide.

The Minister's response is disappointing, even lame:

'There are alternative approaches available to the Royal Commission to engaging with materials to which Parliamentary Privilege might apply.'





Once again we would remind the Minister this enquiry deals with the life and death of veterans. Just give the Royal Commission an exemption and let them get on with their vital work.

It is true however that the government in its response has committed to a list of useful initiatives.

The question is, will the government implement these promises without delay or will the government continue to prevaricate and weasel-word their way out of taking immediate decisive action.

\*\*\*\*\*

**And another thing**

DVA for a while now has blamed the backlog of compensation claims on its claims processing being unable to keep up with rapidly increasing claim submissions.

The question of course is, 'why didn't DVA predict this growing number of claims and plan for it'.

After all, the ex-service community (and certainly this ex-service organisation) understood that the 3,4,5,6 and more times our troops were being deployed to Iraq/Timor/Afghanistan, sometimes without the stipulated one year in Australia between deployments, would result in a tsunami of disability claims later on.

But DVA knew best and didn't prepare.

\*\*\*\*\*

**And another**

Claims submitted incomplete has always been a source of delay

One of the reasons for claims being submitted incomplete is the introduction of on-line claiming open to anyone. Too many of these claims are frivolous and too many are incomplete because of the claimants lack of understanding of the system.

Perhaps this predicament will give DVA a better appreciation of ex-service organisations' Pension Officer system which both filters and helps.

The irony of this is that DVA introduced on-line claims to speed up processing. ■



## Out of the archives



### EDITOR'S NOTE

Dr Peter Edwards was the Official Historian for the War Memorial's series on the Vietnam War.

He was far from sympathetic to the veterans' Agent Orange concerns and supported the outrageously wrong and insulting section in the Official History's Medical volume authored by Professor E B Smith.

Dr Edwards claimed, for instance, that:

'The prolonged arguments over the possible link between cancers and Agent Orange led to delay and obstruction in the provision of compensation of the rather more common ailments associated with post-traumatic stress, alcoholism and smoking.'\*

This was simply not true.

Kel Robinson unfolds the story of the VVAA's successful efforts in the late 70s and early 80s to have counselling centres established to address just these problems.

So successful were these efforts that the first counselling centre was opened in 1981. Many more followed.

That the VVAA's successful efforts were not acknowledged by Dr Edwards until many years later is disappointing.

\*Edwards, P. (2009). *A Tangle of Decency and Folly, Courage and Chicanery, but above All, Waste: The Case of Agent Orange and Australia's Vietnam Veterans. Body and Mind: Historical Essays in Honour of F. B. Smith.*  
<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.212720667687766>



# The Founding of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service

## VVAA HISTORY DRAFTS - PART 1

By Kel Robertson

Welfare services were an important component of the early work of State branches of the Vietnam Veterans Action Association (later to become the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia) and counselling was soon recognised as the most significant of these offerings.

Some branches were advantaged in their provision of free counselling by members who were welfare or social workers, or who were training to be welfare professionals. Some of these individuals were veterans; others were the wives of veterans. Branches which lacked members who were qualified to provide counselling services established links with external professionals instead, or bravely ran sessions without professional help, sometimes organising training for non-professionals.

Most State branches providing counselling persisted with their local arrangements even after January 1981, when the new Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Tony Messner, announced that counselling service would be provided to Vietnam veterans by DVA professional staff (see below). Outside the capital cities where Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS) centres were later located, there remained an ongoing need for ad hoc and emergency counselling, which sub-branches did their best to meet in later years.

The claimed reason for the continuance of VVAA counselling services after DVA ones were in place was, unsurprisingly, veteran distrust of the service provided by DVA; some potential clients apparently regarded the departmental counsellors as representatives of a hostile repatriation

bureaucracy. It was hardly surprising, too, that veterans in need of counselling would better relate to counsellors who were, themselves, veterans or



Senator Hon. Anthony (Tony) Messner AM,  
1980.

the wives of veterans. Habit and the fact that Association counselling services were mostly provided on VVAA premises were doubtless also factors in the persistence of in-house counselling after January 1981. So, too, was loyalty to the volunteer counsellors (who were evidently reluctant to discontinue their services).

*(Continued on page 38)*

*In short, the sub-committee supported Minister Adermann's recommendation that the grant request be refused...*

The volunteer counsellors' desire to expand the services they'd begun, but to have them appropriately funded and run (albeit independently of the Department), was inevitably an important driver for the counselling funding proposals put to governments in 1980 and 1981. Counsellor exhaustion in the face of increasing demand was probably a shadow catalyst for funding applications, as was the chronic shortage of Association funds for other purposes. To explain this last point: a number of early requests for counselling funding were piggy-backed with smaller requests for funding to support the other operations of state and/or national bodies. It was evidently hoped that Government support for counselling would materially aid the Association (if only by paying the rent for shared premises), in addition to providing the Association with an uncontroversial ongoing reason for being.

A good indication of the importance of welfare services for the early VVAA, beyond the publicising of counselling and other assistance in branch newsletters, was the appointment of a National Welfare Coordinator at the first Association National Congress in Sydney in May 1980. It is not possible to state with certainty what events prompted the appointment of Victorian social worker, Dirk Van Neuren, to the new position, as no minutes of the first Congress appear to have survived. For the same reason it's not possible to say what the Association hoped to achieve by the creation of the new role, beyond the provision of peer support and the sharing of useful information among counsellors.

A report in the very first (August 1980) issue of "Debrief" – at that time the NSW Branch magazine – may point to the reasons for Van Neuren's appointment. Carla McCallum, who was a welfare worker, the wife of a veteran and the

early driver of professional welfare services in the NSW Branch, wrote of failed attempts to interest the Federal and NSW Governments in funding of Association counselling services. Van Neuren's role, as National Coordinator, may well have been to escalate the struggle for counselling funds.

**Early Application to the Commonwealth**

No detailed information appears in early VVAA files about what seems to be the initial failed funding approach to the Commonwealth. However, Carla McCallum's papers at the Australian War Memorial include a letter dated 26 March 1980 from the VVAA inaugural National



Evan Adermann AO, Minister for Veterans Affairs July 1978 to November 1980 opposed the VVAA's request for funding for a counselling service, saying there was no need for it.

President, Holt McMinn, to the Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs, Evan Adermann, suggesting

cooperation between the Government and the Association to establish an Australian version of the US “Outreach” program.

The body of a funding submission appears as an attachment to a May 1980 Cabinet submission by Minister Adermann. Adermann had acknowledged, in the House of Representatives on 15 April 1980, that he (a) had received a submission on counselling from the Action Association; and (b) was to receive advice on US counselling arrangements from a Repatriation Commission member who’d recently visited the US. Counselling was evidently an activity which the earliest incarnation of the Association saw merit in.

The submission from the Action Association – an application for a grant-in-aid – took an enterprising each-way bet by requesting two sums of money (either \$500,000 or \$2.5M) to be paid to a not-yet-existent incorporated entity for - if the larger sum was granted - one year’s operation of an Australia-wide version of the US “Operation Outreach.”

Minister Adermann’s opposition to the proposal was detailed in a Cabinet Memorandum dated 16 May 1980 in which he argued that:

(a) there was no need for any Australian duplication of the US program (because Australian veterans weren’t isolated from society like US veterans);

(b) the recently formed VVAA, unlike the RSL, lacked the capacity to manage and deliver such an ambitious program, assuming it to be necessary; and

(c) owing to overlap with other Government activities, the application didn’t comply with grant guidelines.

The application was reviewed in some measure on 22 May 1980 by the ad hoc committee of Cabinet previously established to consider matters relating to Vietnam War chemical exposure. The committee’s decision to not grant the request was noted (affirmed) by Cabinet on the same day. In short, the sub-committee supported Minister Adermann’s recommendation that the

grant request be refused, and Cabinet, in turn, supported the sub-committee’s decision.

### **Other Applications**

Soon after Holt McMinn’s original letter to Minister Adermann seeking an Outreach partnership, Carla McCallum wrote to McMinn, advising him on welfare contacts and referring to an impending meeting with a prominent member of the NSW Legislative Council about a submission for welfare funding to the NSW Government. The sum sought from the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services was to be \$70,000 “to pay for 3 project officers and administrative staff.” This approach would seem to have followed a NSW Branch committee decision to seek funding for just two welfare workers to perform a wide range of functions, including training volunteer counsellors. A handwritten note by McCallum, probably in May 1980, indicates that the sum eventually sought by NSW was in the vicinity of \$49,000, instead of \$70,000, but a handwritten copy of a completed Youth and Community Services Grant form “handed to N Wran [NSW Premier] on 25/4/80 at Bass Hill RSL” was for \$63,000.

The McCallum papers also include a complete but undated version of a document that was incomplete on VVAA files seeking funding for NSW-based counselling services under an initiative called the Family Support Program. This application was prepared by the NSW Branch of the VVAA and, if the version in the McCallum papers is the final one, would have seen the funded organisation devise and deliver a range of counselling and related services. The submission covered a three-year period and sought nearly \$50,000 per year. Services were to have a family focus and be reliant on volunteers trained by a modest, substantially part-time staff: a Project Coordinator, two part-time project officers and a secretary. Services were to include 24-hour crisis care and be managed by the elected (State) Executive.

*(Continued on page 40)*



This proposal was certainly more modest than the national one put to Adermann – requiring either \$500,000 or \$2.5M – and was in various ways more sophisticated; it contained a philosophical framework, a staffing structure, analysis of the problems experienced by veterans’ families and suggestions for program evaluation. However, some aspects of the document, indicating that professional and non-professional authors were involved in its preparation, were unlikely to have aided its approval. It’s early focus on the problems of veterans, rather than their families, may well have persuaded the NSW decision makers that the proposal – if it was, in fact, the one lodged - did not meet the program’s family focus.

Until related Government records are located, isn’t possible to establish what feedback the NSW Branch received on whichever of the above-described documents was its actual application. (Finding out why the application didn’t meet with success is made complicated by the fact that the Family Support Services Scheme seems to have been transferred to Commonwealth control in the early 1980s.)

**Continuing The Funding Struggle**

Despite the failure of early proposals mentioned by Carla McCallum, hope for government-funded Association counselling lived on. In late September 1980 a news release from the Action Association’s National President, Holt McMinn, and four State Presidents publicised a range of issues on the cusp of a Federal election. The Federal Government’s rejection of the earlier application for a grant-in-aid was mentioned in the punchy, single-page release, while three urgent matters were listed in the lengthy supporting statement as ones to be raised with the Prime Minister and other party leaders:

- (a) the continuing major medical, psychological and social problems of Vietnam veterans;
- (b) the continuing difficulties faced by the VVAA in providing welfare services to Vietnam veterans. (The Government has

previously rejected our application for a grant-in-aid, and consequently individual members have spent many thousands of dollars and suffered great personal hardship in providing these services because the Government has failed to meet its obligations); and  
 (c) the provision of an immediate grant-in-aid to overcome these problems.

Attached was a questionnaire which was later sent to election candidates and that asked



In late September 1980 a news release from the Action Association’s National President, Holt McMinn, and four State Presidents publicised a range of issues on the cusp of a Federal election.

whether they would “support immediate Federal Government aid to the Vietnam Veterans Association to enable it to carry out necessary welfare and counselling work, in view of the medical, psychological and suicidal problems facing Vietnam veterans”. Copies of completed forms on an Association file show ALP candidates agreeing to provide support and some Liberal candidates also agreeing.

This support counted for little when the Coalition was returned to office on 18 October

1980. However, on the day after the Fourth Fraser Ministry was announced, Holt McMinn indicated to the media that he was keen to discuss a grant of \$500,000 for crisis counselling centres with the new Minister for Veterans Affairs, Tony Messner. Messner responded that he was willing to meet and talk.

### **Progress of The Not Necessarily Desired Sort**

Six weeks later, in mid-December, Messner put a submission to Cabinet which proposed a strategy for dealing with an embarrassing problem for the Government: delays in progressing an epidemiological study to settle the chemical harm question without the need for any independent or judicial inquiry. The provision of “limited” counselling for Vietnam veterans was suggested by Messner as part of the proposed strategy. Indeed, the draft media release put to Cabinet to acknowledge the epidemiological study’s poor progress and to propose an alternative way ahead was to be cheekily headed “Counselling For Veterans”. (The brief, early ‘good’ news about counselling was clumsily intended to offset or even obscure the later, lengthy ‘bad’ news about the epidemiological study.)

Cabinet was provided with Messner’s submission on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, just days after the new minister’s first meeting with the RSL National Executive: a meeting mostly devoted to discussion of the chemical issue and at which the Executive emphasised “the need for more extensive medical treatment for Vietnam veterans pending actual identification of any complaint they might have with their wartime service.”

Cabinet decided to return to Messner’s submission at its next meeting, on 13 January 1981, by which time an Association request “for about \$400,000 for a counselling service, operated by veterans in each State” had been foreshadowed in the media.

Cabinet approved Messner’s strategy for management of the epidemiological study difficulties at the 13 January 1981 meeting, including a “limited counselling service” (staffed by DVA) and enhanced access to repatriation

services. It wanted the relevant media release “to avoid any possible suggestion that the establishment of the counselling service is related to claimed health effects of herbicides on veterans and their families.” It also required reference in the final version of the release to consultation with the RSL (not the VVAA) on the appointment of counsellors.

Cabinet doubtless hoped that the announcement of counselling arrangements would soften public perceptions of the Government as hard-hearted in its treatment of Vietnam veterans. The counselling actions were also very much in keeping with parliamentary enthusiasm for this form of assistance at this time; the late 1970s and early 1980s were boom years for Australian counselling.

Cabinet may even have hoped that the announcement would go some way towards placating the disagreeable VVAA, just as increased access to repatriation services, in response to the RSL National Executive’s request, could, in theory, have done. If this was the case, though, the assembled ministers had failed to appreciate how much the VVAA wanted funding of **its own** counselling services.

The VVAA was predictably underwhelmed by the counselling announcement: National President McMinn suggested that the details were inadequate but that services needed to be informal, that they needed to be delivered away from DVA offices and that counsellors needed to include qualified veterans. Matters were not helped by the fact that the accompanying increase in access to Repatriation hospitals was said to have been irrelevant in Queensland and NSW, and to be no real advance on health access by non-veteran Australians.

There is evidence that Messner soon sought to obtain the views on counselling of the NSW Branch President, Phil Thompson, addressed in correspondence as “President of the Vietnam Veterans Association”. The Minister doubtless met with McMinn at around the same time.

*(Continued on page 42)*

## Vietnam veterans list demands



Members of the Vietnam Veterans Association met the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator Messner, at Parliament House yesterday. From left are the Secretary of the Department, Sir Richard Kingsland, Mr M Letts, Mr Phil Thompson, Mr M Kehoc, Senator Messner and Mr F Donovan.

### **Another VVAA Proposal**

A negative VVAA reaction to the Cabinet counselling decision was inevitable: not least because the NSW Branch had, as detailed above, invested significant effort in submissions to establish counselling services of its own. More importantly, though, the Victorian Branch of the VVAA had been working in the final months of 1980 on a new submission to the Federal Government to establish an independent counselling service. (It was this proposal that McMinn presumably had in mind when he'd foreshadowed, in mid-January, a request for \$400,000 for Association-run counselling.)

A draft of the Victorian proposal, stirringly named Operation Simpson, was circulated to persons unspecified – probably VVAA Branch presidents and the RSL National Executive – in January 1981 with the request that comments be provided in writing to McMinn by the end of the month. In this tentative form the proposal did not disguise its origins in the US Outreach program, the relevance of which had been disputed, it will be recalled, by Minister Adermann 8 months earlier. The most significant of the stated objects of the project was the provision of “a professional and peer-based counselling service, accessible and acceptable to veterans and their families”. Other



aims were to “effectively achieve outreach contact”, “to promote mutual therapeutic support and self-help programs”, to encourage confident interactions with other care services and, finally, to encourage research and support “innovative approaches to helping.

The draft was comprehensive, outlining reasons why the (national) VVAA should be the sponsoring body, explaining how the Association had arrived at an understanding of veteran’s problems and specifying how delivered services would be different from DVA counselling. It also justified delivery outside DVA (by an independent service operating casual, shopfront branches), while referring to relevant studies and explaining the link between the proposed organisation’s broad approach and staffing. Service locations, proposed staffing and organisational structure were detailed, with the intended delivery organisation being an incorporated company (run by a national board of management on which a wide range of interested parties would be represented). Appointments to (and decisions by) the Board of Management would be subject to veto by the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and by Vietnam veterans. Consultative and liaison opportunities were identified.

The index to the draft proposal referred to a budget component but this is no longer present on the RSL file on which the only remaining copy appears. However, soon after the final proposal was presented to the RSL and Minister Messner, a first-year cost of \$607,000 was mentioned in the media by McMinn.

Importantly, bearing in mind the Fraser Government’s refusal to link veterans’ problems with wartime chemical exposure, the proposal avoided the issue of causation of those problems. Follow up correspondence would disclose the intentional nature of this omission (in order to enhance the prospects of approval) and would reveal the principal architect of the proposal to be the National Welfare Coordinator, Van Neuren.

What is probably an extract from the final version of the Operation Simpson submission –

just the proposed staffing structure and management arrangements, reduced to a mere one and a half pages – is attached to March 1981 correspondence from the RSL National President, Sir William Keys, to persons unspecified and is referred to therein as “the basic plan that the Vietnam Veterans Association put to the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs.”

### **A WA proposal**

At the same time as the Operation Simpson paper was being refined (and slightly before a final version was formally presented to the Government and the RSL), a Western Australian proposal was put to Minister Messner. Its architect was a Vietnam veteran and final year social work student, Frank Donovan, an important figure in the early WA Vietnam veterans’ movement. Donovan had become involved in counselling fellow veterans and their families after a request from the Perth late night radio host, Graham Maybury to assist Brenda Francis and her veteran husband, Kevin. (Donovan and Brenda Francis went on to establish the Vietnam Veterans Family Association of WA which would, in due course, become a State branch of the VVAA.)

No copy of the WA proposal has been sighted by the author. It, like a final version of the Operation Simpson paper, has not been located in DVA or Ministerial records. However, Frank Donovan has indicated that it included a submission written by him, an appendix by psychologist Jenny Drake (on her conclusions about veterans’ problems) and a further supportive appendix by the lawyers representing WA veterans in the US class action, Ross Lonnie and Brian McMahon. Donovan has, further, pointed to the common but independently arrived at, attributes of the WA and Victorian proposals.

These independently arrived at attributes could only have reassured the two architects of the proposals, Van Neuren and Donovan, that the suggested method of providing counselling services – one characterised by independent, informal, shopfront, substantially veteran-reliant

*(Continued on page 44)*

delivery – was the right one, regardless of what was being done in the US.

The WA proposal must also have confirmed to Minister Messner the likely value of counselling as a therapeutic tool for troubled Vietnam men and their families. Messner will almost certainly have noted that the proposal was shaped by a veteran professional (Donovan) who, like Van Neuren, had first-hand knowledge of the utility of counselling for his veteran colleagues, and who, again like Van Neuren, was able to marshal the contributions of other professionals. That the proposal was soon associated with a different organisation to the feisty VVAA - one whose principal goal was “the establishment of an independent counselling service for the family” – can only have made the essential proposition (Outreach style counselling) more persuasive.

Importantly, too, the WA proposal added to the Operation Simpson pressure on Minister Messner to abandon the DVA-based counselling model of January 1981. It earned the WA organisation involvement in subsequent discussions between the VVAA and Messner, and ensured that special efforts were made by Messner’s staff to keep the Western Australians informed of developments.

It was, though, to be overshadowed in the following months by the Victorian VVAA submission: perhaps because the latter was (a) national in scope; (b) emanated from a noisier, multi-state organisation; (c) included the essential elements of the WA submission and (d) was presented to the RSL National Executive, in addition to the Minister.

### **Early Reactions to Operation Simpson**

The refined Victorian proposal was reportedly provided to Minister Messner, and to the RSL National Executive by VVAA National President, Holt McMinn, in Canberra in March 1981. McMinn’s early involvement of the RSL can be seen as a smart tactical move, as Messner would almost certainly have consulted the major national veterans’ organisation before responding to the VVAA; McMinn may consequently have

concluded that it was better to have the RSL on-side from the outset.

However, this was also a time when McMinn, whose power was waning, was hoping the RSL would fund the attendance of States he believed to be supportive of him at a national congress he was organising. Sharing the document might, consequently, have been a useful display of amity at a time when he hoped for material assistance from the RSL. Independently of any need for support, though, he may have exposed the document to the League to demonstrate how collaborative and collegial he’d become (at a time when he was seeking closer relations).

Initial discussion between Minister Messner and William Keys, followed, and Messner was said by Keys to be well-disposed towards the proposal. This was in one sense surprising; Messner’s own DVA-centred arrangements had not long been in place.

In another sense, though, the Minister’s support was unremarkable. He was forming the view that the social and psychological problems of Veteran veterans were related to their war experiences and were, perhaps, attributable to community attitudes on their return to Australia. Any further Government support for counselling would be consistent with this position, rather than with one linking veterans’ problems to chemical exposure. Also, it was clear that the January counselling arrangements hadn’t made the VVAA any better disposed towards the Government or prompted the media (whether reflecting or shaping public opinion) to portray the Fraser Government as any more sympathetic to Vietnam veterans; additional effort from the Veterans’ Affairs Minister was evidently necessary, if the Government was to seem more caring. ■

The next instalment in this series will track the Government’s responses to and adaptation of the Operation Simpson proposal to create the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service.

**Kel Robertson is a Canberra writer. He is currently researching the history of the VVAA. The views expressed in this article are his and not those of the Association. He would like to thank Graham Walker for pointing to an additional source of materials which enabled improvements to be made to this article in the period since it was originally published, elsewhere.**

**The aim of "VVAA History Drafts" is to inform readers about progress made with the Association's history and encourage people who have extra information to contact the writer. Readers who have additional information about matters mentioned in this article can contact Kel at [vvhistory99@gmail.com](mailto:vvhistory99@gmail.com).**



**A version of this article (with extra material and notes on sources) will be available once additional research has been completed in late 2023. © 2022 Kel Robertson**

## WHAT WE DO

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

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

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

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

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

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





**Dear Editor,**

(Reference: 'The Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter  
July 2022

*What the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran  
Suicide has been digging up, p6.*

*From the Editors Desk Back to Basics 2, p 32.)*

Back to Basics

From information disclosed in the references and my very recent experience with DVA/  
Repatriation Commission (Repat), not only are we going back to basics but we have gone back to the start due to deliberate DVA / Repat action.

Issue of Concern - Date of Clinical Onset

DVA / Repat considers the date of clinical onset as the date on which the medical problem is diagnosed by a medical practitioner. This is contrary to published DVA policy.

This action by DVA/Repat detrimentally affects veterans. For example, an unknown illness, reported but not diagnosed until years later.

Medical Records

This action means that service medical records are worthless as are medical specialist's opinion and in my case even the DVA/ Repat Contracted Medical Adviser's opinion. These medical records contradict the DVA/ Repat arbitrary date of clinical onset.

DVA Resources

In veteran's publications and in the Media, the Secretary of DVA is frequently reported claiming that the backlog of claims is due to the Government reducing funding and resources for DVA as well as the difficulty of finding staff to reduce the backlog.

From my recent experience, DVA / Repat has unlimited resources for lawyers to challenge claimants, and also to fund secretive and intense medico-legal examinations at which neither I nor my Advocate were permitted to know the objective. Neither was I permitted to have a copy

of the examination report.

Most veterans rely on volunteer Advocates to assist with claims. Our Advocates are not lawyers and do the job in their own time.

DVA Assistance for Veterans

In my opinion there is an agreement that DVA would assist veterans with health problems related to service.

Why has DVA / Repat decided to ignore their own policy and persist in pursuing legal processes to reject legitimate claims relating to Defence service?

Peter Johnston

Member VVFA. MERIMBULA

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**Dear Editor,**

Just a little positive feedback on your article in the April edition headed "Worth checking out".

I read the article and believed in the merit of getting tested for the parasitic worm Strongyloides. I went to my GP and he said no, no, no; it wasn't worth the test. After much haggling I convinced him a blood test was worthwhile. I had the results back in three days and lo and behold I tested positive for the worm. I took the two doses of 'pills' and will be tested again in 6 months to check their effectiveness. I wonder what damage these little parasites have inflicted on my body over the past 52 yrs.

Michael Quinlan

Nui Dat 1968-1969

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**Dear Editor,**

Reading The article 'Tribute 08', took me back to Sydney 2002 when 4RAR held a Reunion in Sydney

At the Perth Reunion 1999, I was called upon to set up and run the next reunion. We had changed from 5-year reunions to 3 years so we

could make the 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2014.

Upon return to Sydney a group of us met and formed a Committee. It consisted of Borneo, Malaya, 1st Tour Vietnam, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Tour Vietnam, Officers, Senior NCO's, Privates, Regulars and Nasho's.

We centered the Festivities around the Bankstown Sports Club which had its own accommodation and there was plenty of other accommodation in the area.

As a committee we made the deliberate decision to include the Kiwis who had served with us on both tours, and we were able to contact some former members we knew and start the preparations for 2002

All our merchandise carried the RAR badge and the RNZIR badge.

We also had a new granite memorial made with the names of the Fallen on it, including those Kiwis who were KIA. The Memorial was updated when 4RAR(CDO) suffered casualties in Afghanistan

Fast forward to late January 2002, the Battalion birthday is Feb 1, and our members were pleasantly surprised at the modern Sports Club. Some thought it would be a tin shed at the end of an oval.

They were also surprised at the beer prices.

Most of the merchandise was preordered and we had hundreds of bags to hand out to the members.

As usual we had a lot of the diggers just turn up and pay on the day, so we escorted the treasurer out to his car with thousands in cash in his bag.

That also meant I had to get more of the merchandise made up and it was delivered after the reunion was over.

On Feb 1 we were hosted by 4RAR(CDO) at Holsworthy, unfortunately it was a rainy day but the parade went ahead. The PA System failed so the new CO walked out in the rain to address the troops and the audience.

The ex-soldiers then formed a Guard of Honour and clapped the Battalion off the Parade

Ground.

We then held a dinner at the ballroom in the club with over 400 in attendance.

The entertainment was Little Patty, Lucky Starr and "Wally the Worker".

Raffle prizes were drawn, and a great time was had by all.

In a surprise the Kiwis put their hand up for the 2005 Reunion and it was run at Rotorua with great success.

There were three ANZAC Battalions during Vietnam. 2RAR, 4RAR and 6RAR.

All of them have plaques on the wall at Regimental Square in Sydney.

4RAR dedicated their plaque on Feb 1 2019, we included the Kiwi KIA on it and New Zealand was represented by two of their Army Officers at the dedication.



David Morris  
President  
4RAR/4RAR/NZ(ANZAC)  
Association NSW/ACT

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**Dear Editor,**

I wish to voice my gratitude to the Federation for making the effort to produce downloadable past issues of this illustrious publication, available on your website.

Now there is no need to contact the Editor for a copy of a past article for research. A quick look in the index of the issues available, and they go all the way back to 2014, and I usually find what I want in a reasonable amount of time.

The recent addition of the original full colour images in some issues is also enlightening and amusing.

Keep up the great work.

Anon. ■

# Vietnam Veterans' Stories

From letters diaries and memories

## My part in the invasion of Cambodia

(Operation Commando Vault)

by Ian N Brookes

Although in the Australian Army, in late 1969 I became involved with the preparations for the US/ARVN "Incursion" into Cambodia in early 1970 because of Operation Commando Vault.

Because of my then ECN (US MOS) in late 1969 I was seconded from my command of Detachment 176 Aerial Delivery Coy at IATF Nui Dat, when Captain Kevin Plew RAASC arrived to take over from me, to US army 109 Quartermaster Company (Aerial Delivery), at Cam Rahn Bay, and commanded at that time by Major Basil J. Hobar 3<sup>rd</sup>, and was involved with "Operation Commando Vault".

The Cam Rahn Bay military complex at that time comprised the major deep water port for the region as well as a huge all-weather airfield and operational logistics base and was commanded at that time by Brigadier General Henry R. Del Mar, a one star, and to whom I was very promptly paraded before on arrival on stepping off the 123 Provider aircraft, a mini Hercules C-130, on which I had arrived and refusing to surrender my personal side arm and ammunition, my Australian army issue 9 mm Browning pistol and a quantity of ammunition, not knowing that he had disarmed

all troops under his command – but that is an entirely different story. Commando Vault was classified for quite a number of years after the Vietnam War but details are readily available on the internet these days. The Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System – LAPES – from C130 Cargo aircraft was undergoing further development in SVN, following its limited use with very mixed results during the 77 day siege of Khe Sanh in 1968, and I went to the delta region to observe my first LAPES delivery

In brief, we were involved in rigging surplus ex WW11 10,000 pound bombs that had been sold as surplus in Europe, in Germany I believe, after the war so that the explosives could be reclaimed and turned in to fertilizer and the metal bomb casings used as scrap iron and recycled. However, some of these had to be repurchased by the US military at a considerably higher price and then shipped to Vietnam for Operation Commando Vault.

These 10,000 pound bombs were then fitted with a three or six foot fuse extension and then rigged on Oregon and plywood combat expendable platforms (CEP). Once rigged, they





were then fitted with a small drogue chute. We loaded two combat expendable platforms, each with one 10,000 pound bomb, in to a USAF C130 aircraft.

Sorties to Cambodia were mostly over Kien Svay province, the Parrot's Beak area as we called it then, and were always very early in the morning with take-off well before first light, and with bomb release shortly after first light, when ground and other winds were usually at their stillest for the day and the air moisture content was at its maximum

and had not been burned off by the early sun. These were as close as one could hope to get to "still air" conditions in the tropics. You have to remember that this was all done long before GPS became available.

On the way to target area, the C130 would fly at various altitudes so that the controlling ground radar stations using the radar Doppler Effect could accurately calculate wind speed and directions and calculate a precise release point. All

*(Continued on page 50)*



very clever indeed and all done long before GPS became available.

On the final run in, the pilot would start well out from target area and the master ground radar station, there were three radar stations I believe, would give precise directions to the pilot as to altitude, airspeed and bearing/heading and he would correct and fly the aircraft accordingly. Then would start, from memory, a twenty second count down to release. On the "execute" command, which was oddly called something else, the load master popped the small drogue chute which immediately acted as an "air anchor" and extracted the CEP from the aircraft as the aircraft flew on. The very small drogue chute had only two purposes. Firstly to extract the loaded CEP from the aircraft by acting as a brake as the aircraft flew on and secondly to keep the 10,000 pound bomb falling vertically, fuse extension down. It was not intended to slow the fall of the bomb in any way at all as this would have exposed the falling bomb to any wind drift.

Once load was released, I would race back from the cargo hold in to the cockpit flight deck to stand between the pilot and co-pilot to observe the

point of detonation and observe the semi-circular blast shock wave come very rapidly up from point of impact and through the aircraft and beyond. Now, the moisture in the early morning air made this huge semi-circular, rapidly expanding blast wave very easy indeed to see and it moved at a highly impressive speed. On my first release, the passing of the shock wave blast through the C130 really caught me by surprise and it felt and sounded to me as if every rivet in the aircraft had fallen out! Of course, the more seasoned aircrew always looked forward to having a first timer on board! We are all a virgin at something in our lives, even when it comes to dropping 10,000 dumb bombs from a C130 aircraft over Cambodia! Thereafter it becomes fun. Later in this operation a 15,000 pound bomb was used for the same purpose but I had no involvement with this.

So accurate was the ground triangulation by the ground radar stations that we could place overlapping blast zones on to the desired future Landing Zones (LZ). It was impressive to see the results and especially so in dense forested areas. The denser the vegetation the cleaner and neater the future LZ.



President Richard Nixon  
on the incursion into Cambodia

Now, back to the secrecy question.

Unfortunately, it would appear, either Generals Westmorland or Abrams, and I forget which now, had not fully cleared any Invasion/Incursion plans into Cambodia with POTUS or Congress, never mind the preparatory work we were actively involved in. So to this extent it was far from being public knowledge and therefore secret. This secret state of affairs was to prevail for the first week or so of the actual incursion in first quarter 1970 due to COMMUSMACV's total control of the accredited press corps and their total exclusion from involvement or observation or reporting of the Incursion/Invasion, call it what you will. Of course, once the proverbial excreta hit the fan all hell broke loose at the highest political levels in Washington and at the Pentagon. But by this time I had completed my tour of duty in SVN and RTA/DEROS'd out of country and was back in Australia at Puckapunyal.

I hope that this provides some background and context.

Best regards. Ian N Brookes ■

PS. The Incursion in to Cambodia is well worth reading about if you are interested in Vietnam War military history. Here is one such account:

<https://www.historynet.com/nixons-cambodian-incursion.htm>

PPS. This is also worth reading for background and context: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodian\\_campaign#Parrot's Beak and Fishhook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodian_campaign#Parrot's_Beak_and_Fishhook)

See also:

<https://www.airforcemag.com/PDF/MagazineArchive/Magazine%20Documents/2016/April%202016/0416herculean.pdf>

[The bomb fuse extension is very clearly visible in the CEP extraction photo.](#)

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196739/bomb-live-unit-blu-82b/>



# Australia and the Vietnam War

by

Vietnam veteran and historian Dr Greg Lockhart

On 29 April 1965, Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies sought to justify in parliament the sending of a combat battalion to Vietnam by claiming famously that the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists) in southern Vietnam were the strategic spearhead of 'a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.'

We know this was nonsense; that Menzies got the idea from the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff Field Marshall Sir John Harding in London a decade before on 2 February 1955, when there was no supporting evidence for the claim. In fact, no major Australian strategic intelligence assessment between 1950 and 1964 concluded that communist China had the strength to threaten Australia in that way; all three – in 1950, 1957 and 1964 – concluded it did not.<sup>1</sup>

So, what was the government's anti-communist 'red peril' rhetoric all about? As I have explained elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> it was a political cover for the threat the government really feared but could not name: the emergence of independent Asian nations in the region to our north in the 1945-1975 period of what historians call decolonisation.

As Menzies had said in 1946, he wanted a 'political barrier reef' of white, western powers from outside the region to reinstate the pre-1941 western imperial order inside the region in a new form. In the Cabinet Meeting of 17 December 1964, he then made the decision in what he later said was 'five minutes' to send a combat battalion to Vietnam to encourage and support an American presence there.<sup>3</sup> As Deputy Prime Minister Sir



John McEwen is noted in the minutes of the meeting as saying, US military 'formations' in Vietnam would be 'the only barrier between us and China.'

McEwen realised that 'Govt [government] of SV [South Vietnam] would have to ask us' to send a battalion. But, still, the Vietnamese themselves were irrelevant in Cabinet calculations. He is also noted in the meeting as saying that the 'US has to decide whether to make Vietnam a battlefield and to hell with Vietnam'.<sup>4</sup> Note well, therefore, the purpose of sending Australian troops to Vietnam was simply to be there to encourage the Americans to be there.

Little surprise that the government then overlooked the nature of the battlefield onto which they would be sending Australians, and that, indeed, once into battle, the Australian Army was unable to name its enemy: the People's Army of Vietnam, PAVN. Following Free World usage, readers will recall that 1ATF referred to the 'North Vietnamese Army' (NVA). As the government and high command sent the Australian army to Vietnam, they were ignoring the first principle of war: know your enemy.

Of course, the Free World naming reflected the remarkable slogan of the day that 'the north was invading the south'. It also paralleled basic errors in official thinking that I've raised



1 RAR landing at Vung Tau

before in this magazine.<sup>5</sup> There was no state of 'North Vietnam' and thus no 'North Vietnamese Army'. In any case, the Australian authorities failed to ask why an army that was fighting to unify northern, central, and southern Vietnam, as 1ATF's enemies were, would call itself the 'North Vietnamese Army'? It wouldn't have.

Australian post-war writing thus notes the existence of the 'PAVN', even as much of it continues by habit or for ideological reasons to refer to the 'NVA'. This practice is usually justified by the mantra that 'PAVN may be correct but common Australian soldier usage and understanding was NVA, so we'll leave it as it is.' Such political rationalisation, however, cannot be sustained in objective history. There, as in the real world, naming is – or should be – a fundamental, not an arbitrary thing. When something is unnamed or named wrongly, the error displaces its nature, which can then become menacing.

When it comes to naming armies, basic issues of allegiance and strategy are involved. By being unable to name PAVN, which is to say by fixating incorrectly on 'NVA', the Australian government and high command denied themselves the main portal on the history, political motivation, relationship with the society, and operational methods of the enemy they had sent 1ATF to fight. By not naming PAVN, the Australian high command was blindly setting its army adrift in a war where it wrongly assumed

American power would impose American political will on Vietnamese strategic reality. As it happened, Saigon fell.

Let us consider some of the main implications of this history.

### The deployment

In 1948, the formation of the Royal Australian Regiment represented the first regular standing army in Australian history. By 1965, the force was built around nine infantry battalions, and based on a limited industrial and recruiting base for operations with larger British and American armies. The operational capacity of this force was expanded when

conscription, which was introduced in December 1964, was essential to maintain the government's Vietnam commitment. Still, the quality of the original professional army was retained when national servicemen were included in the well trained, well-armed, and tactically proficient army the government sent to Vietnam.

The initial attachment in April was of a single infantry battalion of roughly 1,000 troops to the US 173rd Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa. In 1966, the force was expanded for various reasons to the establishment of a two and, later, three battalion Task Force, known as The First Australian Task Force (1ATF) at its Nui Dat Base in Phuoc Tuy Province.

1ATF's strength peaked in 1969 with some 8,000 people. The US army peaked around the same time at over half a million troops. Thus, the Australian force, which one rarely sees in the indexes of American books on the Viet Nam War, had no strategic initiative.

This was especially so, when the government's dependence on the politically unpopular expedient of conscription to maintain its Vietnam involvement made it fearful of the political backlash if 1ATF sustained significant casualties. Even with conscription, the government's capacity to provide reinforcements was limited. When the government expanded the battalion to the Task Force, it then contradicted its

*(Continued on page 54)*

stated reasons for being in Vietnam – to protect the people of Vietnam from communism – by wanting a quiet province with little fighting.

Phuoc Tuy, a coastal province in MR III south and west of Saigon, seemed to fit the bill. With sizeable rice growing plains, it supported in 1967 a population of some 102,000. With the Long Hai Mountains in the southwest, the most populous area in the centre, and jungle and mountains in the north and northeast, the province was suited to small-scale guerrilla war. From time to time, guerrilla forces were bolstered by the appearances of large, regular, main force PAVN units, or those of the Peoples Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF) that had been formed in the southern provinces. But these incursions did not tend to mean encounters with large PAVN formations that could inflict heavy casualties on 1ATF, as might have been the case in, for instance, US Military Region 1 in northern Central Vietnam.

There is, however, a major qualification to this comment: given the Australian high command's ignorance of Vietnam, particularly of its long war of decolonisation, 1ATF's commanders did not adequately understand the nature of its enemy's strategy of *protracted war* to mobilise people using the key political-military method of *armed propaganda*.

Frank Frost, whose book *Australia's War in Vietnam* (1987) is still the best history of 1ATF, makes the salient point that the government was unable to provide instructions for 1ATF. As Frost's work further shows, official ignorance was embedded in Australian military training doctrine for Vietnam. This was most notably in the contradictions of the Army's training manual *The Division in Battle*, Pamphlet No. 11, *Counter-Revolutionary War*, Canberra, 1965.

While correctly recognising the *revolutionary* nature of the enemy's strategy, although not its context, which was one of post-1945 decolonisation, the pamphlet was blinded to Vietnamese conditions by its frankly acknowledged counter-revolutionary bias. This



Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN) troops often incorrectly called 'NVA'.

was particularly in relation to the pamphlet's claim that the methods used by communism to achieve its goals – 'propaganda, threats, black mail, extortion, terrorism, and armed attack' on the local authorities – were almost entirely coercive and violent. Indeed, Frost's work also underlined the pamphlet's conflicting claims that 'The main part of the struggle is political,' and that 'Counter-insurgency operations are simultaneously political- and military ... There is no pure military solution.'

Compounding this confusion, Frost explained further that the counter-revolutionary doctrine saw no significant Australian role in the political affairs of the country. Rather, it envisaged that the Australian army should avoid involvement in what the pamphlet identified as the 'purely civil sphere'. But the confusion grew, as the pamphlet offered no idea of how one might discern such a sphere.

Hence the point of my own work, which shows that, in the long history and theory of Vietnam's revolutionary war for national independence, there was in fact no 'purely civil sphere'; just institutions combining a political and military process for mobilising people in a highly



evolved strategy of *protracted war*.

Implicitly, the war would have to be protracted because the foreign armies seeking to reimpose colonial control would be regular forces that were initially stronger than the irregular and semi-regular forces of national resistance. It would then take a long time for the resistance forces to grow from 'small to large' in the popular resistance war, while it progressively weakened the initially stronger counter-revolutionary armies and inevitably forced them to withdraw.

And here we need to revisit the Vietnamese strategy for mobilising people, which the Australian government and high command had little idea 1ATF confronted.

### **Vietnam's Protracted War of decolonisation**

Vietnamese strategy had a global pedigree going back to Clausewitz, Engels, Jean Jaurès, Trotsky, and the Chinese military thinker Jiang Fangzhen, for whose ideas Mao got the credit when he applied them in China's protracted guerrilla war against the powerful armies of Japan between 1937 and 1945. From 1939, Vietnamese translations by Nguyen Duc Thuy and Nguyen Van Thay of the writings of the Chinese strategists, which I found in 1980 in the French National Library, had begun seriously to transpose the method into Vietnam.

Central to the translations was the idea that resistance against superior invading forces was essentially 'a political problem'. Therein, the translations said, military strategy and tactics were about stimulating 'the participation of the masses in the resistance war.' As it developed over the following decades, this point about the mobilisation of people cannot be emphasised too strongly, as it was essential to the political-military process of small-scale guerrilla war evolving into large unit regular war in long term campaigning.

By around 1942, following Chinese models, communist cadres formed village guerrilla units in remote areas in Vietnam to strike fast at enemy targets and disperse among the people. By energising villagers politically, this kind of war often had a larger impact on the local populations than on the stronger enemy, who might only have

noticed the strikes as pinpricks. Meanwhile, as indicated above, the key method for mobilising people and support, in the form of recruits, rice and intelligence, built on that popular reflex was the political-military technique of *armed propaganda*.

In Vietnamese, the term 'propaganda' does not necessarily suggest 'misinformation', but something closer to religious or, indeed, political proselytising. As such, *armed propaganda* had been going on in Vietnam from 1942, some two years before the official birthday of the PAVN on 22 December 1944, the day its first main force unit was named 'The Vietnam Propaganda and Liberation Unit.'

As it happened, the interacting *small and large unit wars* became the mutually reinforcing methods of fighting encapsulated in the single strategic form usually described as *protracted war* or *people's war* – in which the stronger enemy would get progressively weaker and, in the long run, withdraw. This was as the militarily weaker forces of national resistance learned by 1947 to disperse and disappear into the villages when confronted by stronger foreign forces of neo-colonialism and to concentrate when the foreign forces were weaker. Thus, in 1954, after nine years of interactive small and large unit fighting, the revolutionary strategy finally pumped up out of the villages a notional 50,000 soldiers and all the rice and supplies necessary to support the five main force PAVN divisions that defeated the French in a classic case of siege warfare at Dien Bien Phu.

Fast forward to the period after the country had then been divided into the two Vietnams at the seventeenth parallel pending elections, which the Americans and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) they bankrolled in Saigon sabotaged in 1956. This is also the period when the peoples' committees in the villages were supporting in Phuoc Tuy as elsewhere the emergence of the National Liberation Front (NLF) and its PLAF to fight the Saigon government with the support of PAVN.

One local Phuoc Tuy Province history,

*(Continued on page 56)*

that of *Long Dat District* (1986, 94), underlines the revival of efforts in 1960 'to organise armed forces' by 'establishing armed propaganda squads'. On the night of 25/26 November a few weeks before the formation of the NLF in late December, we learn that an eight-man squad from the armed propaganda unit ambushed an enemy jeep on Route 44, killing two enemies including an American adviser:

That was the first time the armed propaganda team had killed an American. News of the victory spread and strongly stimulated the movement. Only a few days later, the district armed propaganda unit burst into Tam Phuoc [village] ... We got nine [RVN village guards] gave them a long lecture then released them on the spot after collecting their nine rifles and two grenades. ... In a number of villages the local guards handed over their weapons and went home and returned to work.

By December 1964, local guerrilla units were at a sufficient level of development to be involved in a major NLF armed propaganda display of the growing incapacity of the Army of the RVN (ARVN). This was when district companies C40 and C45 combined with PLAF units from outside Phuoc Tuy Province to rout a divisional sized ARVN formation around the Catholic village of Binh Gia in the north of Phuoc Tuy Province. On 19 May 1965, Ho Chi Minh's birthday, C40 and C45 amalgamated to form the local D445 Battalion.

### Conventional Australian barrier base and minefield

Meanwhile, for all the talk of Australian experience in guerrilla war, Brigadier O.D. Jackson had little idea of his enemy's interactive 'small unit-large unit' strategy. As he occupied Nui Dat in 1966, he knew little about how an ARVN division had been routed at Binh Gia some six months before. Rather, reflecting the conventional war focus of the ANZAC tradition in the two world wars and Korea, he epitomised that outlook by following up Menzies' 'political barrier reef' strategy. This was



Armed propaganda team

Note loud speaker

by positioning 1ATF, as if it were in a barrier base.

Jackson located the base at Nui Dat to the north of the main population centres in the province. His aim was to protect those centres from the regular main force units he understood to be invading the province from the north. By placing his two combat battalions as shields on the north and north-eastern sectors of the Nui Dat position, he also confirmed the conventional war role of what was, even if it was not called his 'barrier base'.

This shows he had overlooked the mutually supporting actions of his enemy's small and large unit wars within the overall strategy of protracted war. PAVN and PLAF main force units did enter the province from time to time. But the strategic significance of what they were doing was blocked out of Jackson's thinking, as it was of *Pamphlet No. 11*. Therein, as we have seen, there was no understanding of the battlefield reality that 1ATF's enemy would tend to dissolve any barriers it tried to set up between the population and the enemy it could not name: regular PAVN or PLAF units from outside the province interacting with irregular, semi-regular, and regular units inside the province, supported by the bulk of the population.

A rare Australian work that complements Frost's political and military insights is a 2012

essay, in which historians Bob Hall and Andrew Ross dissect the combat.<sup>6</sup> They tell us that 1ATF had some 3,900 fleeting contacts with guerrilla and other units and that these did far more to damage 1ATF's enemy than the sixteen 'landmark battles' they have also identified. These 'very few' battles involved at least an Australian company and supporting arms against elements of D445 Battalion and larger formations, sometimes PLAF 274, and 275 Regiments or PAVN 33 Regiment, which entered the province and chose to stand and fight, often for several hours.

Because of its advantages in heavy weapons, particularly artillery, 1ATF usually inflicted many times more casualties on those enemy main forces than it suffered. Yet those casualties did not necessarily dampen the resilience of enemy operations. PAVN/PLAF units were prepared to take casualties in infantry assaults to achieve their goals, which were, in keeping with the strategy of protracted war, primarily political. In sum, Hall and Ross emphasise that most Australian writing on the war tends to understand the 'landmark battles' wrongly as, 'conventional war: in simple terms of military contests stripped of political import'.

What Jackson did not understand about the first 'landmark battle' 1ATF would fight under his watch comes into focus, just as it does for the other fifteen landmark battles. In fact, Australian commentaries on Long Tan have overlooked the battlefield reality that PAVN/PLAF force actions were integrated into the politically astute strategy of armed propaganda.

On 18 August 1966, some 108 men of D Company 6RAR stood and delivered as they held off a perhaps 2,500 strong enemy force, including elements of D445 and PLAF's 275 Regiment, which had come into the province not long after 1ATF arrived there. Well over the 245 enemy bodies counted after the battle – possibly as many bodies again were dragged from the battlefield – compared with 17 Australians who were killed. No doubt the enemy commander would have overrun the Nui Dat base, if he could have. But still,

1ATF's tactical victory at Long Tan has largely obscured in Australian writing its enemy's strategic success.

The mere presence of main force units in the province was enough to warn people not to get close to 1ATF. And the sounds of a battle such as at Long Tan – particularly the sounds of the Australian and New Zealand artillery, which were a crucial factor in the 1ATF tactical victory – certainly reinforced that message. With NLF cadres talking up the battle in the villages, the sounds of the gun fire left the people in them believing that the revolutionary side won. As at Long Tan and most other 'landmark battles', Hall and Ross provide an evidence-based corrective to much speculation in Australian Vietnam War writing when they conclude that PAVN/PLAF units in Phuoc Tuy 'unreservedly won' the political struggle for the 'hearts and minds' of the people.

As the armed propaganda campaign developed to mobilise people – and dissolve barriers 1ATF would seek to interpose between them and the revolutionary forces – some other examples from it may be gleaned from the 1966-69 period. In fact, Ernie Chamberlain's helpful translation of *Heroic D445 Battalion: History/ Tradition*, which can be found on the internet, instances the following: the abduction/kidnapping of '187' ARVN recruits from firing range in the Province Capital Baria in mid-November 1966; the raid by D445 elements on the Farmers' Bank on Baria's western outskirts on 26-27 November 1967; and a D445 show of force around the Dat Do Church on Christmas Eve 1969 – which included, 'for about an hour', the delivery by cadres of a homily on the politics of the NLF to the highly attentive congregation inside the Church. This was as everyone knew the US withdrawal was on. The operation is typically said to have made a 'deep impression' in the province.

Armed propaganda also worked at the national and international levels. Notably, Long Tan was also timed to coincide with the important elections of the Saigon National Constituent

*(Continued on page 58)*



Assembly on 11 September 1966 – although the impact of the battle on those elections is unclear. In some cases, there is no data on the exact political aims and outcomes of the larger battles. The strategically decisive political success of the Tet Offensive is, nonetheless, well known. In Phuoc Tuy, Hall and Ross highlight the political and diplomatic dimensions of the combat in other cases. As they say, correctly referencing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) - not 'North Vietnam' – and RVN:

The battles of 'mini-Tet' in May 1968 were timed to maximise the DRV's bargaining position at the beginning of the Paris Peace Talks. The battle for Binh Ba on 6-7 June 1969 was linked to the meeting of US President Richard Nixon and [RVN] President Nguyen Van Thieu ... at Midway Island on 8 June 1969. Similarly, the battle for Nui Le on 21-22 September 1971 was connected with the RVN presidential election less than two weeks later. Although specific political or diplomatic outcomes may or may not have been achieved through these battles, the socialist revolution survived in the South.<sup>7</sup>

As 1ATF entered Phuoc Tuy, therefore, it became a far more dangerous province than the government had imagined. And it became even more dangerous when the second 1ATF commander Brigadier Stuart Graham still did not know who his enemy was. In June 1967, he attempted to reconcile what he rationally understood to be 1ATF's central tactical problem, which was its shortage of troops to cover a large province. His solution then involved making a disastrous blunder that stemmed from official ignorance of the war.

As indicated earlier, Frost raised the government's inability to provide meaningful instructions on how 1ATF might create security in the province, or even what that might mean. I also describe in *The Minefield: An Australian tragedy in Vietnam, 2007*, 60-61, the remarkable misunderstanding of no less a figure than



'The battles of "mini-Tet" in May 1968 were timed to maximise the DRV's bargaining position at the beginning of the Paris Peace Talks.'

Graham's superior, the Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Daly of what was going on in Phuoc Tuy. In 1967, he claimed that 1ATF's role there was to keep open the lines of communication between Bien Hoa and the port at Vung Tau. As he spoke, however, he did not realise that 1ATF's designated area of operations did not cover Route 15, the main highway between those places. He was thinking in outdated 'Lines-of-Communications' terms from his own involvement in the regular war in Korea that could hardly have been of any assistance to Graham in understanding the interactive, small, and larger unit war in Phuoc Tuy Province

Unable to receive guidance from his high command, Graham then thought – reasonably – that he needed to free up Australian troops for offensive patrolling and other tasks. To do that he fell back on a measure, which he knew was risky but felt obliged to employ: lay a long 11 kilometre 'barrier minefield' containing some 20,000 lethal M16 landmines around Dat Do village.

Such minefields are specifically designed for use in conventional war settings. By extending Jackson's barrier base concept, Graham calculated he would be creating a defensive barrier that would shield the villagers around Dat Do from 'NVA' main force units, invading from the north. The problem, however, was that to free up Australian troops he left the mine field unguarded in a situation where he did not understand that the

peasants in the villages he was trying to protect were substantially his guerrilla enemy. And note that these village guerrillas were potentially supported by main force PAVN/PLAF units from outside the province.

Remarkably, like Jackson, Graham was *trying to protect his enemy*. The difference was that Graham's barrier minefield *also* had the devastating consequence of arming his enemy. He did not realise that Dat Do guerrilla forces – initially young women – would enter the minefield and, feeling around with their toes, find the mines and begin the process of lifting over 5,000 of them. The guerrilla enemy, which 1ATF had not previously noticed, and which could not in any case have lain a glove on 1ATF, now armed itself with large quantities of powerful M16 mines to turn against 1ATF.

A recent history of pacification in Phuoc Tuy clouds this. Indeed, Thomas Richardson's unlikely title *Destroy and Build* (2017) has no conception of PAVN/PLAF protracted war strategy, and thus little idea of their mutually cooperative small and large unit wars. Indeed, Richardson evades the indisputable point that neither Jackson nor Graham understood the extent to which they were attempting *to protect their enemy*. Next, he offers a naive misreading of a passage in the *Dat Do* history to argue that it was because of 'the immense difficulties' the minefield caused the NLF that the Dat Do guerrillas 'accepted so many casualties trying to breach [it]'. But however emotively one wants to describe the 'immense' difficulties and number of casualties, which is thought loosely to have been around 30 or 40, but which is not known, Richardson's formulation overlooks the fact that the guerrillas breached the minefield rapidly – within a week of its completion.

Twisting his story further, his reckoning does another loop-the-loop before it comes out in convoluted praise for *barriers*: he concludes that 'although the minefield proved a failure, the idea of "barriers" proved fundamentally sound'.<sup>8</sup> Note here how he fails to specify that 'the minefield' was



'...Graham's barrier minefield had the devastating consequence of arming his enemy'

by definition a 'barrier minefield'; and that, with the disastrous failure of that glaring barrier in 1ATF history, his argument hardly justifies his wrong-headed working assumption of the efficacy of an Australian barrier mentality.

The operation to lay the minefield ended on 30 May 1967. By 5 June, 1ATF reconnaissance reports were showing five-foot wide gaps in the minefield's wire fences, with 'heavy foot traffic' through them. On 29 July, The Second Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment or 2RAR/NZ – there were in Vietnam a number of so-called ANZAC Battalions from the RAR that included a New Zealand Rifle Company – found at least 17 M16 mines and other ordnance from the minefield in three locations east of it.<sup>9</sup>

By 1971, M16 mines from the 1ATF minefield had then killed and mutilated more than 300 Australian and a further 200 Allied soldiers and civilians. This tally was roughly ten percent of all Australian battle casualties in the war, rising to 80 per cent for some major operations. The tactical implications were also far reaching. Operations were skewed by, for instance, the creation of no-go areas and the reduction of rates of advance for infantry patrols to 100 meters an

(Continued on page 60)

hour as the scouts prodded with their bayonets for mines.

Let me indicate the chaos that 1ATF had to endure in a situation where the government's fear of casualties was combined with the high command's ignorance of the battlefield leading to the minefield disaster.

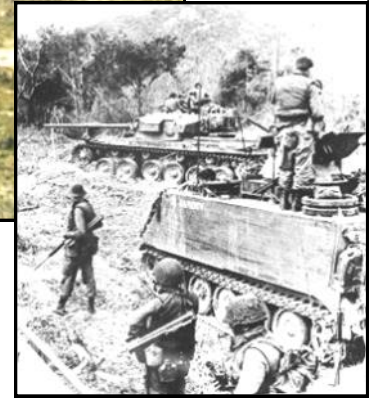
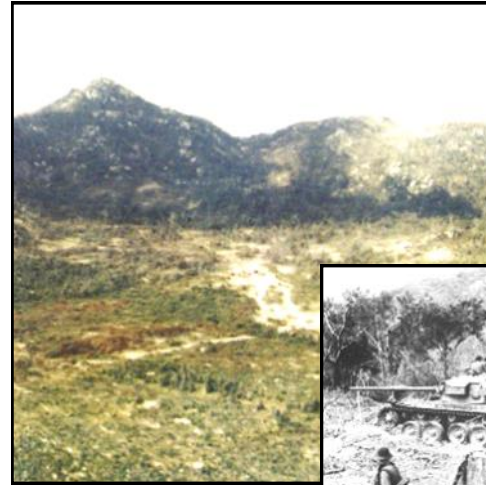
### Some Chaos

Between 8 May and 15 August 1969, the worst run of Australian mine casualties on M16 mines 'almost certainly' from the 1ATF minefield, occurred in what *The Minefield* calls "The battle for "the box"". There, in the central lowland part of Long Dat District in Phuoc Tuy Province, 19 1ATF soldiers were killed and at least 80 wounded. While 1ATF inflicted negligible casualties on its enemy, those Australian losses represented approximately 54 per cent the total 1ATF casualties of 35 killed and 141 wounded over the fifteen-week period.

1ATF losses in 'the battle for "the box"' were caused by a radical NLF *offensive* use of mines in what Australian soldiers called a 'deliberate mine battle'. The point of contrast being the traditionally *defensive* use of mines, as covered in Australian mine warfare doctrine. And why that 'deliberate mine battle'?<sup>10</sup> Because local NLF guerrilla units, supported by D445, sought to prevent 1ATF from dominating the province's vital population center in western Long Dat.

As the resulting mine casualties compounded the official fear of casualties in Canberra, it then compounded 1ATF's tactical problems. A major example of how that happened in 1970 can then be extracted from Chapter 14 of *The Minefield*.

On 18 February 1970, the Eighth Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, 8RAR cornered the entire enemy provincial battalion D445 in a re-entrant. To have destroyed the battalion would have been a major military set-back for the NLF in the province. Fearing casualties with Canberra breathing down its neck, however, 1ATF Headquarters ordered a B52 air strike on the enemy battalion, which 8RAR's



The Long Hai Hills

'On 18 February 1970, the Eighth Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (8RAR) cornered the entire enemy provincial battalion D445 in a re-entrant.'

Commanding Officer Keith O'Neill had not wanted, because his troops would have to pull back 3,000 metres, the safety distance for such a strike, and D445 would get away.

It did. And intersecting with that outcome on 'Black Saturday' 28 February 1970 was the worst mine incident in 1ATF history, involving two M16 mines from the 1ATF minefield. One of my informants on the incident was Sapper Terry Binney, who I interviewed in 2002.

The Long Hai Hills were one of D445's base areas. O'Neill thus sent 1 Platoon under Sergeant Bill Hoban to ambush some tracks leading into the Hills. Around 11.00 am, the patrol stopped near the top to rest and removed their packs. Thereupon, one of the soldiers dislodged a rock and revealed a booby-trapped grenade, which did not go off. Sapper Binney had a look, returned to his pack to get some plastic explosive to blow the grenade and, suddenly, he thought "'Fuuuck" – I've heard a "click". There must be a mine beside my pack. It exploded. Dirt, and shit flew up and I got thrown into the air. A bone came out of the bottom of my boot. I was





Elements of D445

walking for a moment, too shocked to feel pain, and collapsed near the radio.'

In an instant, the scene had changed violently from soldiers resting around their packs to one in which eight were killed and thirteen wounded, some screaming in agony. The blast probably blew Binney above most of the shrapnel, which also missed some as close as 2 metres away but killed and wounded many 30 or 40 metres away. Bill Hoban, who was in talking distance of Lance Corporal Bob D'Arcy, looked at D'Arcy and dropped dead. Another soldier, who was wounded as he was blown into the air, watched and heard a young soldier die as a jet of blood shot out of his ear.

Binney distinguished himself, despite his heavy wounds. Although loosing, as he put it, 'the Popeye tattoo on my foot', he instructed another soldier named Barrett to use the mine detector to clear a path to a Landing Zone from where medical evacuation helicopters known as 'Dustoffs' could evacuate the wounded. While Barrett did this, a 'Dustoff', came in with another soldier named Miller being winched down from the air into the position. Then, Barrett stepped back out of the area he had cleared and stood on the second M16 mine. 'And 'CRUMP', Binney told me. 'He got it up the back and died almost immediately. The chopper took some shrapnel and had to clear out with Miller dangling on the winch, wounded. That would have been a ride!', said Binney. Then, no one probably heard, as he shouted into the radio handset, 'Get the fucking

Dustoffs in.' With total casualties of 9 killed and 15 wounded, the platoon had been wiped out.

Within five hours of this monstrous event on 28 February, there was another. This time, 1ATF headquarters, which had inadvertently facilitated D445's escape ten days before, ordered 6RAR/NZ, 'to destroy D445 ...Battalion,'. Now, however, D445 had the advantage of local knowledge in the jungle and of being able to move between the myriad of defensive bunker systems that had been developed in it.<sup>11</sup> And so it was that, at around 5 pm on 28 February, in the jungle perhaps 20 kilometres northeast of the Long Hai Mountains, D445 caught 2 and 3 platoons from 6RAR/NZ with heavy small arms, machine gun, and rocket propelled grenade fire in a bunker system. Fifteen soldiers were wounded before the platoons were extricated.

In March and April, the casualties mounted in several other bunker contacts and mine incidents with many variations on the horror as 1ATF units kept up the pursuit. On 15 March, for instance, Trooper N.P. Tognolini ran his Armoured Personnel Carrier over an 18-kilogram anti-tank mine near Xuyen Moc in the hunt for D445. At least ten were wounded, some seriously. Tognolini lost a foot and had his other leg trapped under the stricken vehicle as fuel sprayed over it. He later died from burns and the trauma of the double amputation 8RAR's Medical Officer Bill Josephson had to perform to cut him from under the vehicle, 'with a raging fire coming out of the turret.'

On 22 April, there was yet another bunker contact after 1ATF ordered yet another unit 'to destroy D445 Battalion'. This time, D445 Battalion lured B Company, 7RAR into some fierce crossfire about 13 kilometres east of Nui Dat. B Company sighted two enemy, and a reconnaissance party led by Lieutenant Doug Gibbons from 5 Platoon followed them up. Suddenly, at 1.39 pm, while moving through bamboo thickets, the party received heavy AK47 fire from bunkers at a range of 15 metres. The volume of enemy fire

*(Continued on page 62)*

intensified, and the forward scout, Private Colin Tilmouth, was shot in the throat. Under covering fire from his patrol, Gibbons rescued Tilmouth. Company HQ and 4 Platoon attacked the bunkers to help extricate the reconnaissance party and was met by fierce small arms, 60 mm rocket and rocket propelled grenade fire - which hit one of the helicopter gunships also attacking the position. At 6.20 pm the attack was suspended. Tanks were brought up to the start line to resume the attack in the morning. By that time the enemy had withdrawn, leaving four bodies in the position that turned out to contain 18 bunkers. Six Australians were wounded and one, Pte R.R. Hughes, later died of wounds.

In the end, 89 1ATF soldiers were killed and wounded in operations that can be related to official reticence over casualties and the failure to destroy D445 on 18 February. If 8RAR had attacked decisively as it had wanted with its great advantages in heavy weapons, tanks, and artillery, it would certainly have taken far fewer and, perhaps, relatively negligible casualties.

### Some staying power

At the same time, we must not forget what Frank Frost, myself, and Bob Hall have all viewed as the 'tactical proficiency' of the highly disciplined, well trained, and armed 1ATF and its overall capacity to inflict heavy casualties on its enemy. More recently, Ernie Chamberlain has confirmed those earlier views in a helpful presentation of enemy perspectives.

We are talking about his 100 page 'Research Note', 2020, (hereafter RN) on communist views of 1ATF.<sup>12</sup> Herein, Chamberlain has translated and compiled all the Vietnamese communist sources he knows of from during and since the war. His translations thus go beyond the district histories that are best-known to Australian readers. As such, they include serious tactical observations on Australian operations and on the effect they had on the resistance mixed with enemy denigration of 1ATF, and wildly exaggerated claims of the casualties it suffered.

From our perspective, the serious tactical



'The great impression the guns made on the local people and on their PLAF/PAVN forces, which did not of course possess artillery, would seem to come through.'

observations are the most relevant parts of the translations. One exception is worth mentioning: the frequent denigration of Australian forces as 'imperialist mercenaries' and the like. For while that designation would not accurately reflect the ANZAC self-identification of Australian soldiers, it does underline the anti-imperial and anti-colonial, as distinct from communist, disposition from which their enemy disparaged them. The enemy's primary focus was its struggle for 'national independence'.

Meanwhile, the most interesting tactical observations, which are scattered throughout RN, are often repeated, far from extensive (in relation to 1ATF's five-and-a-half-year tenure in the province) and need to be read carefully. Chamberlain recaps a point I made in 2007: strong Vietnamese statements about the effectiveness of 1ATF's performance tend to be in some measure self-serving and, thus, exaggerated. Often, the authors of the statements are seeking credit among their audience for their hard time in the resistance.<sup>13</sup>

Still, credible Vietnamese perceptions of effective Australian operational methods are evident. Two examples from general histories will be enough to serve our purposes here. One is from a 2013 history of D440 Battalion, which explains that Australian forces:

were expert at ambush tactics, small-scale assaults at half-section and section strength into our rear areas. They also used artillery to fire interdiction missions (we called them the New Zealand Orchestra), and they adapted themselves quickly to the tropical climatic and weather conditions. They created many difficulties for the local Revolutionary Movement, and we suffered heavy casualties.' (RN, 4)

The other is from a 2010 Binh Ba Village history:

In the area of the Bau Sen base [north of Duc Thanh], the enemy's artillery fired continuously night and day. The US and the Australian commandos ambushed all the ways in and out of the base, and the enemy's mines, and all types of boobytraps were laid in the jungle and along all the trails and our liaison routes. Route 2 from Cam My past Xa Bang down to Binh Ba became a road of blood. The Australians camouflaged themselves and ambushed both day and night in the thick and difficult jungle as well the lake edges. Many district cadre and plantation cadre were killed. (RN, 71.)

The picture presented is, indeed, one of an Australian force with a high degree of training and discipline, (which is in turn indicative of the small standing army, reinforced for operations in Vietnam with conscription, as mentioned above). The main 1ATF methods, which its enemy's commentary confirms, were stealthy, small-unit tactics; those of an infantry section, platoon, or company patrolling through the jungle – taking 'short cuts' as the Vietnamese sometimes observe, on compass bearings through the scrub and using good field craft.

The Vietnamese perception was also one in which the salience of 'artillery' support for 1ATF infantry operations is clear. In fact, 43 pages in the RN refer to 'artillery', as distinct from 34 for 'infantry'. The great impression the guns made on the local people and on their PLAF/PAVN forces,



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL SHA-ES-0004-171

'The picture presented is, indeed, one of an Australian force with a high degree of training and discipline'

which did not of course possess artillery, would seem to come through.

Certainly, 1ATF's tactical use of artillery/mortar support provides a foundation for the Vietnamese impression. Artillery was used in all 16 'landmark battles' often to great effect, as at Long Tan. All 1ATF patrolling went on within artillery range (11,000 metres), and was used in heavy contact, including for example in bunker systems, where the tendency was to prop on initial contact and call on artillery for close support before attacking – or not finally attacking. It was also used as 'harassing' fire in which the guns speculated by firing at targets of possible enemy activity. In relation to the 3,900 small contacts registered by Hall and Ross, however, artillery and mortars were little used.

We see that RN supports a conclusion that the large impression artillery made on the Vietnamese resulted disproportionately from the larger 'landmark battles' as distinct from the plethora of small contacts. At the same time, it is generally true that all 1ATF infantry operations

(Continued on page 64)

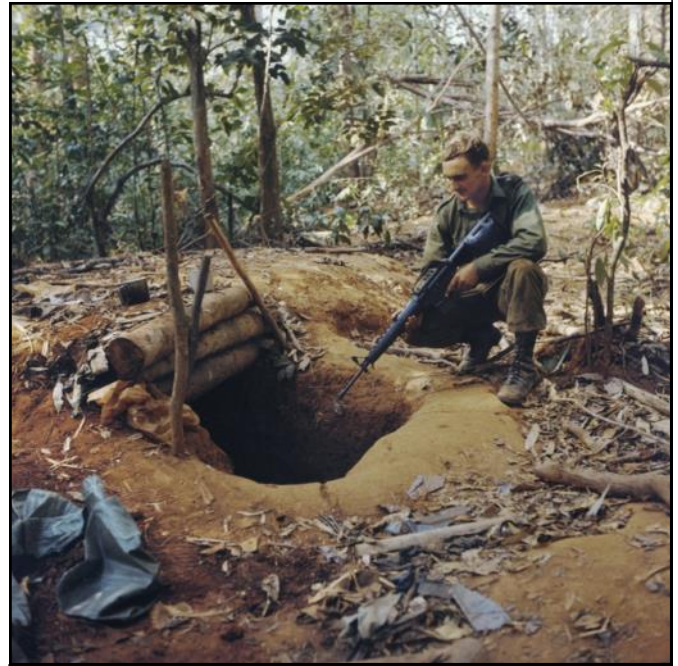
supported by artillery and mortars 'created many difficulties for the local Revolutionary Movement, and we suffered heavy casualties.' (RN, 4)

This general observation takes specific shape in another paper, where Chamberlain offers some estimation of the casualties suffered by D445.<sup>15</sup> We are told that 'D445's strength in August 1966 was 392 – but was down to 157 in September 1971 when 1ATF began to withdraw.' How, then, assuming these figures are accurate, did D445 manage this 60 percent depletion in its strength over some five years?

Chamberlain stresses that the battalion 'was "dispersed" into three companies and attached to the VC districts,' and only revived in 1972 after 1ATF departed. Although he doesn't name PAVN/PLAF strategy, he has nonetheless noticed a part of it: the tactic we raised earlier of dispersing in the face stronger forces and concentrating when they were weaker within the strategy of *protracted war*, or, in the strategy for mobilising people with *armed propaganda* in the interactive *small and large unit war*.

Implicitly, Chamberlain's paper points to the explanation for what might be described as D445's ability to remain operational in decline: it found on-going refuge in and support from the villages in the main districts. This is how it maintained the armed propaganda actions we have instanced in the province. In 1969, village guerrillas were enough to lay the mines that caused so much damage to 1ATF in the 'deliberate mine battle'. In 1970, we have also seen that D445 was still able to out-manoeuvre and inflict heavy casualties on 1ATF with M16 mines and in bunker contacts. Altogether, as Chamberlain notes, D445 would be revived after 1ATF withdrew from the province – as the strategy of protracted war predicted foreign forces always would.

Chamberlain's writings do not conceptualise the political-military strategy of protracted people's war for national liberation. But that is what his translations of original texts and his presentation of raw data implicitly help us to do. In particular, RN helps us to dovetail both



A 'bunker'

'In 1970, D445 was still obviously able to out-manoeuvre and inflict heavy casualties on 1ATF with mines and in bunker contacts'

sides in the war. The compilation of communist views confirms the effective tactical side of 1ATF military operations, even as we have seen they could be afflicted with strategic incoherence. At the same time, the compilation underlines the political-military capacity of 1ATF's enemy to remain strategically alive, even in tactical military defeat.

1ATF was in a no-win situation. RN agrees with the flipside of the disbelieving American/Australian post-war observation that 'we won every battle and lost the war.' In keeping with the Vietnamese strategy for a protracted war of national liberation, that document's serious tactical observations of 1ATF confirm that the Vietnamese resistance lost many battles and won the war.

### Conclusion

We may conclude that the historical significance of 1ATF lay in its training, discipline, heavy weapons, particularly artillery, and small unit tactical proficiency. Those were the characteristics that kept the Task Force together as a coherent fighting formation, while its operations ran into



two brick walls: official fear and ignorance of the battlefield coupled with an absence of strategic initiative in the first place.

1ATF was in a no-win situation.

Dependence on the US position in Vietnam was always the strategic frame for the Australian presence in Vietnam. Official ignorance of the Vietnamese battlefield then caused 1ATF commanders to erect barrier defences against an enemy it could not name. Many skewed operations and grievous casualties followed, especially after the laying of the 'barrier minefield'.

Then, as the PAVN/NLF strategy of protracted war anticipated, 1ATF would inevitably withdraw once the Americans were forced to announce their withdrawal almost three and a half years before the fall of Saigon ended the war.

As we saw at the beginning, Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War was determined by a geo-political deception, through which the government sought to disguise its desire to turn back the clock on the process of decolonisation in the region. ■

1 Denis Warner, "Our War Plan Ignores East Asia," *The Herald* (Melbourne), April 11, 1950. "Appreciation of the Australian Chiefs of Staff (September 1950)," 6–9, in *Minute by Chiefs of Staff Committee*, December 14, 1950, Agendum No. 17/50 "Australian Strategy in Relation to Communist Expansion in the Pacific, South-East Asia and the Far East during the Cold War Period," Series A816/52, Item 14/301/447, 14, AA. "ANZAM Intelligence Report on Probable Scale of Attack against Malaya up to the End of 1956," *ANZAM Intelligence Meeting*, Melbourne, November 1954, para 9, A1209/23, 1957/5980, AA. Chiefs of Staff Committee Minute No. 56/1964, April 6, 1964. Italics added. *Cabinet Submission 493*, "Strategic Bases of Australia's Defence Policy," Paltridge, October 22, 1964, CS file C3640, CRS A4949/1, AA.

2 Greg Lockhart, 'Made in Britain: the fantasy driving Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War', *VVF Newsletter*, April 2020,

3 Garry Woodard, 'Australia's virtual Vietnam: the importance of 17 December 1964', Post by Iraq War Inquiry Group Vice-President Garry Woodard, Tuesday, December 18, 2012, <https://warpowersreform.org.au/australias-virtual-vietnam-the-importance-of-17-december-1964/>

See also Garry Woodard, "Two Australian wars, two prime ministers: Australia's virtual Vietnam, and lessons for today", NAP-SNet Policy Forum, April 18, 2013, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-policy-forum/two-australian-wars-two-prime-ministers/>

4 Notetaker PJ Lawler 'Notes of Meetings 18 February -17 December 1964', 189, National Archives of Australia, A11099.

5 'Made in Britain.'

6 Bob Hall and Andrew Ross, 'Landmark battles and the myths of Vietnam', Craig Stockings, ed, *ANZAC's Dirty Dozen*, New-South, 2012, 186-209.

7 Ibid, 11.

8. *Destroy and Build: Pacification in Phuoc Tuy, 1966-72*, Cambridge, 2017, 78. For this work's dangerously inadequate reading of the above-mentioned Vietnamese passage on the effectiveness of the 1ATF barrier minefield, contrast it, 78-79, with *The Minefield*, 94-95.

9 *The Minefield*, 102-103.

10 *The Minefield*, Chapters 10 and 11 on 'The battle for "the box"'.

11 1ATF had 238 bunker engagements and discovered some 1,600 unoccupied bunker systems in the province.

12 E.P. Chamberlain, 'Research Note, Vietnam War: Communist Views of The 1st Australian Task Force', Point Lonsdale, 28 February 2020, which is addressed to and presumably available at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. Perhaps 25 percent of the text is devoted to bibliography, annexes, and notes. Perhaps another 35 percent, recycles Chamberlain's translations of enemy denigration of 1ATF and inaccurate, or wildly inaccurate remarks. His translations of serious enemy tactical commentary on 1ATF, which is the most helpful part of the text from our perspective, are interspersed with those other parts.

13 See *The Minefield*, 94-95; RN, 2020, 4. This is the point Richardson neglects in his treatment of the Vietnamese quote on the minefield in *Destroy and Build*. See Endnote 8.

14 I am grateful to Bob Hall who has provided me with the following information. In the smaller contacts, artillery was used much less. Take 1ATF ambushes of the enemy. Of 776 ambushes by 1ATF only 59 reported use of arty/mortar fire support. Those that did use fire support were almost always against enemy forces larger than the Aust/NZ ambush patrol strength, which was rare. During pacification operations there were many ambushes quite close to villages and 1ATF policy was not to apply artillery or mortar support within 1000 m of a village unless the Aust/NZ patrol was taking casualties, which was rare.

The story is similar with patrol encounter contacts. Again, average enemy strength – a notional six people – in contact is very low and almost always less than 1ATF strength – a notional 18 people. Although about one third of all 1ATF contacts were encounter contacts (about 1000), in only 208 cases was artillery/mortar fire used. Of those 208 cases, 120 were ones in which the enemy was seen at ranges too great to effectively engage with small arms, so a fire mission was called.

Ambushes and encounter contacts together represent about two thirds of 1ATF contacts.

15 E.P. Chamberlain, 'Memorial for our old Foe', *The Vietnam Veterans' Newsletter*, December 2019.

**VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.  
2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA**

The 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., will be held at the **Veterans Support Centre, 8 Mary Street Granville 10.30am, Wednesday, 24th May 2023.**

**AGENDA**

Opening of Meeting by the Chairman

Apologies

Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2022.

Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2022

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Membership Report

Changes to Constitution

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

**President**

**Senior Vice President (1)**

**Vice Presidents (2)**

**Secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Committee Members (10)**

Appointment of Association Auditors

Appointment of Association Legal Representatives

Appointment of Insurer

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 **Thursday, 27th April 2019.**

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2024.

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

**VIETNAM VETERANS', PEACEKEEPERS' & PEACEMAKERS  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) INC.  
2023 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, and remember 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 2023.**

**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 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.**

**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 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023.**

## PSK FINANCIAL SERVICES ARTICLE

### What happens to superannuation when you break up?

**Depending on the situation, you might get some of your ex partner's super, or they may get some of yours. See what you need to know.**

A divorce from your husband or wife, or a separation from your de facto, could mean a division of your assets and debts, whether they're held individually or together, and superannuation is no exception.

The agreement or decision to split super is part of the overall settlement process, which will consider all of the assets and liabilities of a couple.

Even if one of you hasn't contributed to super for a long time, that person could still be entitled to a percentage of the other's super.

Below we explain a few things you may want to know, noting that if you're a de facto couple living in Western Australia, different rules may apply, as you're not subject to the same superannuation splitting laws.

#### How is super split in a divorce or separation?

There are several ways superannuation can be split.

1. A super agreement can be put in place before, during or after your relationship, as part of a broader binding financial agreement, which can specify how super is to be split upon separation or divorce.
2. If you don't have a binding financial agreement in place but have agreed how you'd like your super to be split, an Application for Consent Orders can be filed in court, without your attendance, to formalise the arrangement you've both come to.
3. If you can't reach an agreement, you may instead consider applying for financial orders, where a court hearing will determine how super is to be split between the two of you, noting there are time limits in place to do this.

#### What's involved in the process?

You may need to get information regarding the value of the super money that could be split between you. You can do this via your or your ex's super fund, provided the request is for purposes related to the separation.

To get this information, you'll need to provide various forms to the super fund, which you can locate in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia's Superannuation Information Kit.

Once the super splitting order is made, whether by consent or after a court hearing, you'll also need to provide a copy of the order to the super fund for it to be effective.

Depending on the situation, if you want to defer making a decision around how super is to be split, or if you have an older style fund where splitting is not available until you're eligible to start taking the benefit, you could establish a 'flagging agreement' where the super fund is unable to pay out super until the flag is lifted.

#### What potential costs might you come across?

Super funds may charge an administration fee for carrying out any requests around splitting super. These are separate to any costs for legal or financial advice, or court fees.



With that in mind, it's worth checking what the super fund may charge for things like:

- an application for information
- a super split
- implementing a flagging agreement
- lifting a flagging agreement.

### When will the money be paid?

Because there are rules around when super can be accessed, be aware that splitting super won't necessarily result in an immediate cash payout, as super is treated differently to other assets and debts.

So, after the agreed amount has been transferred to your or your ex-partner's super account, the money must remain there until a condition of release is satisfied. What that means is, generally, you can't access super until you've reached your preservation age (which will be between 55 and 60, depending on when you were born) and you retire.

### What other things should you consider?

Some couples choose to leave their super untouched. Instead, they factor in the value of their super accounts while dividing up their other assets.

With that in mind, it's worth knowing the details of all your financial accounts, including your super, noting many Aussies have more than one super account.

You can search for lost or unclaimed super by doing a super search with your current super fund or by logging into your MyGov account.

Working out what you're entitled to can be complicated which is why it may be a good idea to get independent legal advice, even if things are amicable and of course we are here if you need us.

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To discuss further or to arrange a time to review your current financial position please contact:

**Paul Messerschmidt (Partner) MFinPlan  
PSK Private Wealth  
0414 811 777  
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paulm@psk.com.au**

Paul Messerschmidt of PSK Financial Services Group Pty Ltd trading as PSK Private Wealth ABN 24 134 987 205 is an Authorised Representative of PSK Advisory Services Pty Ltd - AFSL 234656. Any advice included in this document has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on the advice, you should consider whether it's appropriate to you, in light of your objectives, financial situation or needs.

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PO Box 170 Fx: 02 9682 6134  
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# Reunions & Notices

2023 TO DATE

## **HMAS Nirimba 2nd Sailstruc Apprentice**

**Intake –**

### **50 Year Reunion**

Date: 10 Feb 2023

Reunion details

Location: Gold Coast, QLD

Contact details

Name: Allan Dow

Email: Allan\_dow@bigpond.com

## **HMAS Sydney IV Commissioning Crew 40 Year Reunion**

Date: 17 Feb 2023

Reunion details

Location: Hobart, TAS

Contact details

Name: Derek Leecroft

Phone: 0409 632 961

Email: gimakide@bigpond.com.au

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/344780545578473>

## **Headquarters & Headquarters Company 1st Australian Logistic support group (1 ALSG)**

Date: 20 Mar 2023

For more details and accommodation, contact Tony.

Reunion details

Location: Broken Hill, NSW

Contact details

Name: Anthony (Tony) Brown

Email: tr4950@optusnet.com.au

## **HMAS Leeuwin 42nd intake Reunion Marks and Morrow Division 50 year anniversary**

Location: Fremantle, WA

Date: 30 Mar 2023

Contact details

Name: George Casey

Phone: 0409 103 989

Email: casey5556@gmail.com

## **RAADC 80th Shin Dig**

Date: 22 Apr 2023

Open to all past, present, family and associated friends of our outstanding Corps.

Reunion details

Location: The Portsea Camp, VIC

Contact details

Name: Sonia Thompson

Email: sonithompson1@gmail.com

## **2 SQN RAAF Reunion**

All former and serving members are invited to attend.

Location: Brisbane, QLD

Date: 25 Apr 2023

Contact details

Name: Arthur Rennick

Phone: 0408 064 042 (business hours)

Email: 2sqn.association.raaf@gmail.com

## **1 RTB Kapooka - B COY 11+12 PL - 10 year reunion**

Date: 13 May 2023

Reunion details

Location: Townsville, QLD

Contact details

Name: Rosie + Goody

Phone: 0455 531 599

## **2nd/4th Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment Association 50th Anniversary Reunion**

Townsville, QLD

Date: 15 Aug 2023

To be held around Townsville and Lavarack Barracks 15 - 20 August 2023. Further details are on the website or via email

[reunion@24rarassociation.com](mailto:reunion@24rarassociation.com)

Contact details

Name: Phillip Smailes

Phone: 0409 642 067

Email: [committee@24rarassociation.com](mailto:committee@24rarassociation.com)

Website: [www.24rarassociation.com](http://www.24rarassociation.com)

## NOTICES

*Anyone wishing to advise of a Reunion, or add to a Wanted Known list, should contact VVFA Head Office via [vvfanatsec@vvfa.org.au](mailto:vvfanatsec@vvfa.org.au) Remember that our Newsletters are published each April, July and December, however we are able to add to our website lists at any time.*

### NSW Police called up for National Service 1965-72

I am seeking details of NSW Police who were called up for National Service (or who maybe failed the medical) between 1965-72. I am compiling a list of these personnel and requesting details and experiences prior to, during and after their army service. I hope to provide what I gather in a printed form for the AWM and the NSW Police Department. I know there are tablets at the chapel at the Police Academy in Goulburn listing police who served overseas but unfortunately many of these details are incorrect. I am doing this because far too often activities and events that take place in our lives go unrecorded and as we pass those who follow know nothing about the past and what happened.

Contact details

Name: Ian Granland

Phone: 0412 798 521

Email: [iangranland@gmail.com](mailto:iangranland@gmail.com)

### Seeking members of A Company 8RAR

I was a digger in Operation Hammersley in February 1970. There was an incident on February 28 where my platoon in A company 8RAR received severe casualties. I am still great friends with the survivors of this incident and we try to meet up once a year. I am trying to contact the wounded soldiers from that day. We stayed in Vietnam until November 1970. 8RAR are having a reunion on ANZAC day 2023 in Melbourne and I would love to have as many of these heroes there.

Contact details

Name: Jo McGillion, Brisbane

Phone: 0429 826 425

Email: [jmccgillion@bigpond.com](mailto:jmccgillion@bigpond.com)



## 8th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (8 RAR)

### LONG HAI MEMORIAL SERVICE

#### SYDNEY

The NSW Branch of 8 RAR Association will hold their Long Hai Memorial Service on Tuesday 28 February 2023 at the Epping Club's Memorial in Boronia Park at 10.30am.

This year the branch will dedicate a plaque in honour of Lieutenant Bernard Anthony Garland who was killed in action on Wednesday 22nd April 1970, age 23 years, while serving with 101st Field Battery Royal Australian Artillery.

Lieutenant Garland was educated at the Epping Boys High School before he entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon on 24th January 1964 and graduated with a Diploma of Military Studies on 12th December 1967.

He was one of 3 Epping Boys High School to be killed in Vietnam, plaques are already dedicated to Dennis Hampton Bracewell 6 RAR and Alan William Ahearn 8 RAR.

We welcome former members of 101 Field Battery to join with 8 RAR Association in remembering Bernard and the 18 soldiers from 8 RAR who paid the supreme sacrifice.

Please advise of your attendance to the NSW Branch President Mick Carter OAM on 0432500632 or [cartercm@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cartercm@optusnet.com.au)

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

Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service

**FORMERLY KNOWN AS**



**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.

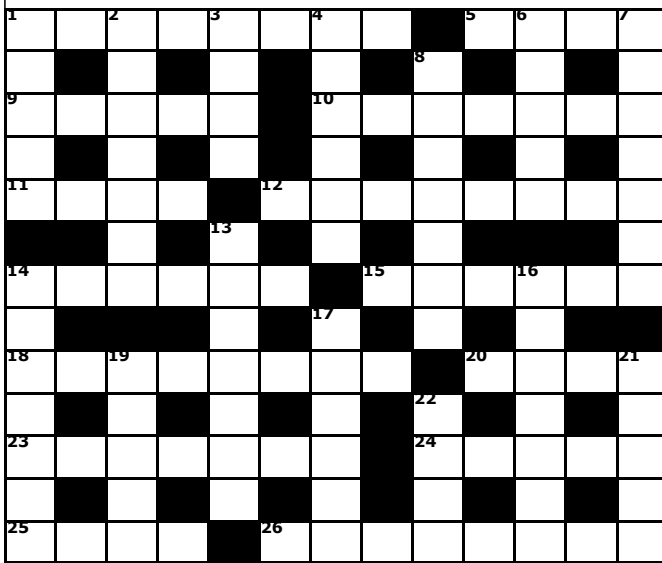
91 Milton Street,  
Ashfield NSW 2131

&

7 Blake Street,  
Kogarah NSW 2217



# CROSSWORD CORNER



**ACROSS**

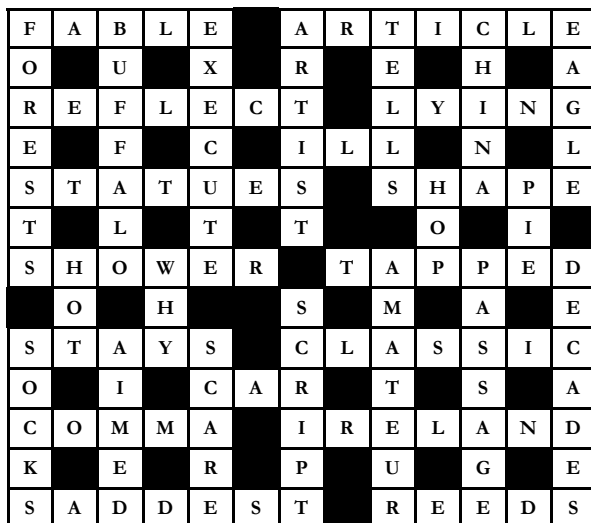
- 1. Attire
- 5. Bird of prey
- 9. Congregates
- 10. Reach out
- 11. Ships cloth
- 12. Countrywide
- 14. Penned name
- 15. The rest
- 18. Logical
- 20. Casserole
- 23. Print
- 24. Ruled (Paper)
- 25. Sketched
- 26. Put forward

**DOWN**

- 1. Draw near
- 2. Gap, fissure
- 3. Presenter
- 4. Sweet liquid
- 6. Over
- 7. Boilers
- 8. Worry
- 13. Payment inwards
- 14. Scoured
- 16. Lengthens
- 17. Amass
- 19. Furniture
- 21. Walked through water
- 22. Coupler

*[Solution next issue]*

**JULY 2022 SOLUTION**



# THE UNKNOWN COMIC

On a tour of Sydney in 1986, the Pope took a couple of days off. He was cruising along Bondi beach in the Pope-mobile when there was a frantic commotion just off shore. A helpless man, wearing a polo with 3 lions printed on it, was struggling frantically to free himself from the jaws of a 12 metre Great White.

As the Pope watched, horrified, a speedboat came racing up with three men, wearing boxing kangaroo T-shirts, aboard. One quickly fired a spear into the shark's side, while the other two reached out and pulled the bleeding, semiconscious fellow out of the water. Then, using cricket bats, the three heroes in green and gold beat the shark to death and hauled it into the boat as well.

Immediately the Pope shouted and summoned them to the beach. "I give you my blessing for your brave actions," he told them. "I heard that there was some bitter hatred between England and Australian cricket fans, but now I have seen with my own eyes that this is not the truth."

As the pope drove off, the Aussie holding the spear-gun asked his buddies "Who was that?" "It was the Pope," one replied. "He is in direct contact with God and has access to all of God's wisdom."

"Well," the spear-gunner said. "He may have access to God's wisdom, but he don't know nothin' about shark fishin'... How's the bait holdin' up?"

My neighbour asked me to let him know if his car blinkers were working so told him. 'Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no.'

Why do hotels offer disabled rooms with 'Walk-in showers' ?

A Beer does not contain many vitamins, and that is why you need to drink lots of it.

Sometimes your mind is the same as an internet browser. 17 tabs are open. 4 are frozen, and you have no idea where the music is coming from.

I think whiteboards are remarkable.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who couldn't control his pupils.

The guy who survived pepper spray and mustard gas is a seasoned protester, cops report.

# CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

SURNAME

FIRST NAME

SECOND NAME

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**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**

<p><b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b></p> <p><b>MEMBERSHIP REGISTRY                  DETAILS CHANGED</b></p> <p><b>DATE:</b>    ___ / ___ / ___</p> <p><b>INITIALS:</b>    _____</p>
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# 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
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SVN UNIT/S	TOUR DATES
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

CAUSE OF DEATH (If known)

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

DATE OF DEATH (If known)	LOCATION AT TIME OF DEATH	
<input type="text"/>	(TOWN) <input type="text"/>	(STATE) <input type="text"/>

YOUR NAME

SUBURB/TOWN	STATE	POST CODE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	SIGNATURE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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](mailto:secretary@vfvgranville.org)**

## VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

### FULL STATE AND SUB-BRANCH LISTING

#### NEW SOUTH WALES VETERANS SUPPORT CENTRE

#### VVFA Inc (National HO) & VVPPAA NSW Inc.

8 Mary St PO Box 170  
Granville NSW 2142  
Ph: (02) 9682 1788  
Fax: (02) 9682 6134  
www.vvfa.org.au

Nat President: **W Roberts OAM JP**  
natpres@vvfa.org.au

Nat Secretary: **Ron O'Connor JP**  
natsec@vvfa.org.au

#### VVPPAA NSW

www.vvfagranville.org  
secretary@vfvfagranville.org

President: **Frank Cole**

Secretary: **Ron O'Connor JP**

Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1600

#### CENTRAL COAST

PO Box 505 Ettalong 2257

Ph: (02) 4344 4760

Fax: (02) 4344 5467

centralcoastveterans@bigpond.com

President: **Alan Ball**

Secretary: **Eric Daniel**

Hours: Mon,Wed 0930-1330

#### CENTRAL WEST

7 March St

Orange NSW 2800

President: **Lindsay Wright**

(02) 6362 5959

Secretary: **Warren Willis**

Mob: 0447 006 996

Email: warren.willis@gmail.com

#### CLARENCE VALLEY

PO Box 137

Grafton 2460

Ph: (02) 6649 4186

President: **Ron Shoebridge**

Secretary: **Lorraine Burt**

nswpva@skymesh.com.au

Hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1700

#### EUROBODALLA

28 Emmott St.

Moruya 2537

Ph: (02) 4474 2362

Mob 0419 201 788

President: **Russell Graham**

Secretary: **Helen Kop**

eurobodallavietnamveterans@yahoo.com.au

#### GREAT LAKES

Unit 3, 80-82 Kularoo Drive

Forster, 2428

Ph: 0480 283 744

vvaglforster@gmail.com

President: **Graham Kelly**

Secretary: **Paul Dawson**

Hours: Mon & Thur 1000-1300

#### HASTINGS MANNING

##### MACLEAY

PO Box 5330, 22/35 Merrigal Rd.,

Port Macquarie 2444

Office Ph: (02) 6581 5230

Or (02) 6581 5509

Fax: (02) 6581 5509

hmmvppaa@bigpond.com

President: **Bill Wagner**

Office Manager: **Lyn Hancock**

Hours: Mon-Fri 1000-1400

#### ILLAWARRA

Legacy House 96 Market St

Wollongong NSW 2500

Ph: (02) 4228 6774

vvaaill@aapt.net.au

President: **Ian Birch**

Secretary: **Pam Bowmaker OAM JP**

Hours: Tue, Fri 9:30-12:30

#### MUDGEES & DISTRICTS

Inglis St, Railway Station

PO Box 511 Mudgee NSW 2850

Ph: (02) 6372 7740

President: **Ken Atkinson**

vvfamudgee1@bigpond.com

Mb: 0428 246 147

Secretary: **Renee Lamshed**

Ph: 0433 073 387

Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed 9:30-3:30

#### NEWCASTLE & HUNTER

15 Tyrell St., PO Box 288

Wallsend 2287

Ph: (02) 4951 2666

Fax: (02) 4951 2633

nclvets@bigpond.net.au

President: **Geoff Linwood**

Secretary: **Dave Hansen**

Hours: Mon, Thu 0900-1300

#### RIVERINA

PO Box 7120

Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

President: **John Ploenges**

Ph. (02) 6922 9766

Secretary: **Ralph J Todd**

Mob: 0418 446 590

Email: ralphjtodd@bigpond.com

#### SHOALHAVEN

PO Box 3229

North Nowra NSW 2541

President: **Clyde Poulton**

(02) 4421 2644

Secretary:

shoalhaven.vietvets1@gmail.com

#### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BOWRAL MITTAGONG MOSS VALE

PO Box 900, Moss Vale NSW 2577

President: **Phillip Moscatt**

Mb: 0420 864 133

Secretary: **Norman Austin**

Mb: 0427 854 141

shvppa@gmail.com

#### SOUTH WEST SLOPES VIETNAM VETERANS INC.

3 Thomas Street

Junee 2663

jc18746@bigpond.com

Ph: (02) 6924 1924

Mb: 0408 296 765

President: **John Curtis**

Secretary: **Barbara Curtis**

#### TAYLORS ARM

798 North Bank Rd

Taylors Arm 2447

President: **George (Stuart) Johnson**

Ph: 02 6564 2153

Secretary: **Stephen Spear**

Mb: 0439 642 181

cvpb16@hotmail.com

#### WENTWORTH-COOMEALLA

**Raymond Deed Veterans Retreat**

PO Box 397

Dareton NSW 2717

President: **Michael Chopping**

Ph: 0481 306 854

Secretary: **Sheryl Browning**

Ph: 03 5027 4447

rdveteransretreat@inet.net.au

#### ZONE REPS

#### FAR SOUTH COAST

**Gary Berman**

Bega RSL SB

Ph: 6493 0449

Mob: 0409 888 248

gandsberman@bigpond.com



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

**QUEENSLAND**

**VVF Queensland Branch Inc.**  
18 Leagues Club Drive  
PO Box 2817  
Nerang Business Centre  
Nerang Qld 4211  
Ph: 07 5578 2233  
Fax: 07 5578 2822  
**State President: Peter Handy JP**  
Mbl: 0448 195 050  
president@vvfqld.com  
Qld Sec.Treas:**Peter Cameron OAM**  
Mbl: 0408 276 044  
treasurer@vvfqld.com  
[www.vvfqld.com](http://www.vvfqld.com)

**VVF Brisbane/Gold Coast of Australia**

**Regional Sub-Branch Inc.**  
18 Leagues Club Drive  
PO Box 368  
Nerang Qld 4211  
Ph: 07 5502 2836  
[admin@vietnamveterans.net.au](mailto:admin@vietnamveterans.net.au)  
President: **Andy Bryson**  
Mbl:0424 476 027  
Sec/Treas **Peter Cameron OAM**  
Mbl: 0408 276 044

**TOWNSVILLE**

**Veteran Support Centre NQ Inc**  
**TOWNSVILLE**  
PO Box 280, Hyde Park  
JC Butler Bldg  
1 Charters Towers Rd  
Townsville, 4812  
Ph: 07 4772 4655  
[vethelp@bigpond.com](mailto:vethelp@bigpond.com)  
President: **Barry Martin OAM**  
Sec/Treas **Chris Mills OAM RFD**

**ACT STATE BRANCH**

**VV&VF ACT Inc**  
9 Burkitt Street, Page. 2614  
Veterans Support Centre Belconnen  
Ph: 02 6255 1599  
office@vscact.org.au  
www.vvfact.org.au  
President: **Ward Gainey JP**  
Secretary: **Carrissa Ibbott CSM**

**VICTORIA**

**VVF Victorian Branch Inc**  
ALL MAIL TO: P.O. Box 167  
Newcomb 3219  
**OFFICE: "The Annex" NO MAIL PLEASE:**  
Barwon Health  
Myer St, Geelong 3220  
Phone: TBA  
President: **John Arnold**  
johnarnold@iinet.net.au  
Secretary: **Iris Cargill JP**  
Mb 0488 053 973  
ritscargill@yahoo.com  
Mon - Wed 0900 -1400

**VIC SUB - BRANCHES**

**GRAMPIANS**  
Secretary: **Ron Jensen**  
0409 023 487

***Respite Housing For Veterans in need***

Bowder Veterans Housing  
160 Coppards Rd Whittington 3219.  
03 5248 0996

**TASMANIA**

**VVPPF**  
Tasmania Branch Inc.  
**ALL PENSION ENQUIRIES**  
**DENNIS HANMER OAM**  
NSW HO 02 9682 1788

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

**VVF South Australia Branch Inc.**  
The Yerbury Centre  
Unit 1, 31-39 Norfolk Rd  
Marion SA 5043  
Ph: 08 8296 2411  
Mon – Thur 1000 – 1500hrs  
vffsa@tpg.com.au  
http://vffsa.org.au  
President: **Mal Thiele JP**  
Secretary: **Don Cochrane**

**SA ZONE REPS**

**BROKEN HILL**

**Des Kennedy**  
M: 0412 458 054

**MILITARY MUSEUM**

**BUBLACOWIE**  
Welfare Officer: **Chris Soar**  
0448 994 561/0428 377 287  
Ph: 08 8853 4379

**REPS**

**ALICE SPRINGS AREA**

**Alan Wilkes**

**KATHERINE AREA**

**Scott Landers**

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

*Contact SA Head office for Northern Territory contact details.  
Contact Granville Office for future Darwin Outreach Programs*

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**VVFA WA Branch**  
30 Cornish Ave  
Woodvale WA 6026  
Ph 08 9409 6682  
vffawabranh@gmail.com  
President: **Milton Kirk JP**

**Currently in the ADF, Transitioning, a younger Veteran?**

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

Simply select your preferred Branch or Sub-Branch from the list above, complete the form on page 29, and mail it, or email a copy, to the address indicated.

# MERCHANDISE LIST

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION	PRICE		ITEM#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
1101	NSW PLAQUE	\$ 50.00		1401	LAPEL PIN RAN	\$ 5.00
1103	NSW BADGE	\$ 10.00		1402	LAPEL PIN ENSIGN	\$ 5.00
1104	NSW PATCH	\$ 14.00		1403	LAPEL PIN ARMY	\$ 8.00
1105	NSW STICKER	\$ 6.00		1404	LAPEL PIN RAR	\$ 8.00
1106	NSW PEN	\$ 7.00		1405	LAPEL PIN RAAF	\$ 8.00
1108	NSW STUBBY HOLDER	\$ 8.00		1406	LAPEL PIN CROSS	\$ 8.00
1109	STUBBY HOLDER TRICOLOR	\$ 10.00		1500	STICKER TWIN SET REG	\$ 7.00
1110	VVFA PAD/PEN	\$ 6.00		1501	STICKER REGULAR	\$ 7.00
1111	VVFA GREEN CAP	\$ 22.00		1502	STICKER NASHO	\$ 7.00
1112	VVFA BLUE CAP	\$ 22.00		1503	STICKER DAMN PROUD	\$ 5.00
1113	VVFA WHITE CAP	\$ 22.00		1504	STICKER LOVE or LEAVE	\$ 5.00
1114	VVFA BLACK CAP	\$ 22.00		1505	STICKER PROUDLY	\$ 5.00
1115	PLATE SURROUND LGE	\$ 12.50		1506	STICKER SUPPORT	\$ 7.00
1116	PLATE SURROUND SML	\$ 12.50		1507	STICKER TWIN SET NASHO	\$ 7.00
1117	VVFA PEN/TORCH SET	\$ 6.00		1508	STICKER SUPPORT NAVY	\$ 7.00
1124	KEYRING VVFA GADGET	\$ 6.00		1509	STICKER NAVY VETERAN	\$ 7.00
1125	KEYRING NAVY	\$ 8.00		1510	STICKER SUPPORT ARMY	\$ 7.00
1126	KEYRING ARMY	\$ 8.00		1511	STICKER ARMY VETERAN	\$ 7.00
1127	KEYRING RAR	\$ 10.00		1512	STICKER SUPPORT RAAF	\$ 7.00
1128	KEYRING AIRFORCE	\$ 8.00		1513	STICKER RAAF VETERAN	\$ 7.00
1129	KEYRING VVFA	\$ 9.00		1514	STICKER AFGHAN VETERAN	\$ 5.00
1130	LANYARD	\$ 10.00		1515	STICKER IRAQ VETERAN	\$ 5.00
1131	BANGLE	\$ 5.00		1516	STICKER SOMALIA VETERAN	\$ 5.00
1201	THE MINEFIELD BOOK	\$ 45.00		1517	STICKER TIMOR VETERAN	\$ 5.00
1301	BUCKLE RAN	\$ 35.00		1518	STICKER SUPPORT/THANK	\$ 5.00
1302	BUCKLE SERVICE RIBBON	\$ 35.00		<p><b>ALL ITEMS (ABOVE) ARE FOR SALE VIA OUR WEBSITE,</b>                      (<a href="http://www.vvfaqranville.org/ecommerce/index.php">www.vvfaqranville.org/ecommerce/index.php</a>).  <b>AND AVAILABLE FROM OUR GRANVILLE OFFICE AND SOME SUB-BRANCHES. PHONE TO CHECK CURRENT STOCK AVAILABILITY. THE WEBSITE ALSO HAS FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PRODUCTS AND WE ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO USE THIS FACILITY BEFORE CONTACTING THE OFFICE. All proceeds go toward our Scholarships for the children and grandchildren of veterans.</b></p>		
1303	BUCKLE RAR	\$ 35.00				
1304	BUCKLE RAA	\$ 35.00				
1305	BUCKLE RAE	\$ 35.00				
1306	BUCKLE RAAC	\$ 35.00				
1307	BUCKLE RAAF	\$ 35.00				
1308	BUCKLE RAAMC	\$ 35.00				
1309	BUCKLE RAASC	\$ 35.00				
1310	BUCKLE RAEME	\$ 35.00				
1311	BUCKLE RAS	\$ 35.00				
1312	BUCKLE RAAOC	\$ 35.00				



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

**Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia Inc.**

1 JAN—31 DEC

**Website: [www.vvfagranville.org](http://www.vvfagranville.org)**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM**

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	SECOND NAME
---------	------------	-------------

STREET ADDRESS

SUBURB/TOWN	STATE	POST CODE
-------------	-------	-----------

HOME PHONE	MOBILE PHONE	OTHER PHONE
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EMAIL ADDRESS [PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY]

SERVICE NUMBER	SERVICE UNIT	O'SEAS AREA OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE
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NEXT OF KIN	RELATIONSHIP	CONTACT PHONE [NOK]
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ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL
MEMBERSHIPS SUBS	(YEARS)	@\$30.00 PER YEAR	\$
DONATION	(AMOUNT ONLY)		\$
RAFFLE TICKET/s		@\$2.00 EACH	\$
MERCHANDISE			
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
Contact Granville for Stock item lists numbers and prices		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$

PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD (Tick one only) CASH \_\_\_ CHEQUE \_\_\_ MONEY ORDER \_\_\_ CREDIT CARD \_\_\_  
CREDIT CARD DETAILS (Mastercard or VISA only)

CARD HOLDER NAME [PRINT] CREDITCARD NUMBER

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EXPIRY DATE	AMOUNT CONFIRMED	CARD HOLDER SIGNATURE
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(Mnth/Yr) /	\$	
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All cheques and money orders payable to VVPPAA NSW Branch Inc. Mail to PO Box 170 Granville, NSW 2142 CreditCard payments may be phoned in to (02) 9682 1788 Mon-Fri 9:30am – 3pm.

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT DATE:	DONATION RECEIPT DATE:
MEMBERSHIP RECEIPT N <sup>o</sup> :	DONATION RECEIPT N <sup>o</sup> :
MEMBERSHIP CARD NUMBER:	COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):
COMPLETED & ISSUED BY (PRINT):	BANK SHEET ENTRY BY (PRINT):

## 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





						
Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
APOLOGY						
R62968	LM	WJ	BULLOCH	HMAS BRISBANE (2)	6/7/21*	22/5/43
				See Page 3 of this issue		
R67099	MIDN	PR	CORNEY	HMAS SYDNEY	26/9/22	23/8/47
R64075	LEM	E	BORON	HMAS SYDNEY / BRISBANE	1/8/22	12/2/46
O3022	SBLT	BJ	BIRD	HMAS SYDNEY/PARRAMATTA	25/4/22	16/10/49
18538	CAPT (LTCOL-RTD)	TI	HEESOM	1 ALSC	5/2/22	20/6/38
2794132	PTE	PRG	BLAZLEY	HQ 1ATF	22/6/22	11/4/49
215961	CPL	AE	HOARE	1 AFH	4/1/22	8/6/47
4719701	PTE	MJ	HICKS	86 TP RAASC	1/4/22	16/1/47
43802	CFM	GA	HOWELL	102 FD WKSHOP	13/8/22	7/6/44
62016	SIG	GR	FYSH	104 SIG SQN	5/1/22	7/1/44
2150981	CAPT	DW	HARDING	110 SIG SQN	15/8/22	11/1/29
214157	GNR	PA	ANDERSON	HQ AAFV - RAA	23/7/22	17/6/43
3798485	GNR	BE	FOUNTAIN	DET 131 DLB / 12 FD REGT	12/5/22	12/10/49
3786887	GNR	IR	SKINNER	1 FD REGT	24/7/22	20/2/45
215827	2LT	BJ	DEAN	1 FD REGT	22/6/22	3/9/41
2783699	GNR	GR	JACKSON	4 FD REGT	27/12/21	11/10/45
16265	CAPT	JF	DIGWEED	161RECCE FLT/BSQN 3CAV	26/7/22	1/8/38
3112898	CPL	RC	THOMSON	HQ1ATF / BSQN 3CAV	8/4/18	6/8/43
38754	CPL	GA	ASTRIDGE	ASQN 3 CAV REGT	3/7/22	20/2/41
38734	CPL	RM	PELL	ASQN 3 CAV REGT	1/8/22	4/6/46
216382	LCPL	JMc	DUTHIE	A/BSQNs / 3CAV REGT	27/7/22	21/12/46
13979	WO2	LA	BAILEY	B/ASQNs / 3 CAV REGT	15/8/22	12/2/32
1202702	LCPL	DV	HILL	B/ASQNs / 3 CAV REGT	22/7/22	25/10/48



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
4719022	CPL	PJ	VORTRONALD	1ARU /HQAFV /1ARU	29/6/22	10/7/45
2789279	PTE	D	SWAN	1ARU /HQ1ATF	23/5/10	25/12/47
2412464	PTE	JS	BURROWS	1ARU / HQ1ATF	15/7/22	27/1/46
2411980	LCPL	AE	MIRANDA	1 RAR	14/5/22	8/4/43
37228	CPL	KG	SIMONS	1 RAR	22/6/22	28/6/39
29832	CPL	PV	WATERS	1 RAR	6/4/22	31/8/39
6709560	PTE	R	STEVENSON	2 RAR	17/8/22	22/8/45
1202977	PTE	KWG	ROLLINGS	1ARU/ 7 RAR/ 2 RAR	24/6/22	16/11/50
5715043	PTE	BS	WUILLEMIN	3 RAR	27/6/22	22/10/46
44573	PTE	O	BROCKENHUUS-SCHACK	5 RAR	28/5/22	16/8/40
2276406	PTE	PJ	MARSH	1ARU/ 5 RAR/ 7 RAR	4/9/22	7/3/48
1202552	CPL	RE	BRIAIS	1ARU/ 6 RAR/ 7 RAR	15/4/22	15/6/48
2790542	CPL	BP	FOLKES	7 RAR	15/7/22	15/1/48
1200733	LCPL	RA	FAWNS	7 RAR	11/5/22	18/3/45
14958	LCPL	GA	BEAN	8 RAR	UNK	11/3/41
4720953	PTE	JS	EVELEIGH	1ARU/ 8 RAR	2/7/22	31/5/47
1734284	PTE	DL	JOHNSON	8 RAR	UNK	16/10/47
1735188	PTE	LW	LAMBERT	1ARU/ 5 RAR/ 8 RAR	21/10/22	24/9/48
2793898	PTE	CJ	MASON	1ARU/ 8 RAR	2/8/22	5/6/50
4720606	PTE	JF	MODLINSKI	8 RAR	10/10/22	29/8/47
61838	PTE	CE	PEARCEY	8 RAR	1/4/22	9/6/50
2791471	PTE	NT	RHODES	1ARU/ 5 RAR/ 8 RAR	19/7/22	17/2/48
3790135	LCPL	KH	ROMICH	8 RAR	8/8/22	23/5/42
5716127	PTE	J	ROZENTALS	1ARU/ 1ALSG/ 1ARU/ 8 RAR	13/12/21	9/3/48
1734350	PTE	DA	STAFFORD	8 RAR	11/5/22	15/9/22
44691	PTE	WJ	VELDKAMP	8 RAR	11/1/22	18/4/50
55865	LCPL	RWR	WALKER	1ARU/ 6RAR/ 8 RAR/ 1ARU	27/9/22	8/12/42
1735307	PTE	PS	WILSON	8 RAR	10/5/22	25/3/48



Number	Rank	Intl	Surname	Unit	DOD	DOB
A44980	ACFTN	KJ	SHIPP DFM	Nº 9 SQN	30/9/22	20/11/48
A120455	ACFTN	MV	BALSTAD	1 OPS SUPPT	RSLNSW	27/2/52
A221027	CPL	WJ	HALLIDAY	1 OPS SUPPT	RSLNSW	1/5/30
A36487	SGT	WJ	JONES MID	Nº 35 SQN	RSLNSW	8/7/29
A222535	ACFTN	J	MIGUS	No. 35 SQN	16/7/22	23/11/47
			ASSOCIATION MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS			
103591		KE	KIELBICKI	WRAN	23/9/22	NA
128222	ACFTN	HA	BARKLEY	RAAF WW2	14/10/22	29/10/24

Loving Lord, bless them forever in Your eternal peace.  
 Let the sounds of strife, the cries of battle, the wounds of war  
 be calmed for all eternity in Your loving and endless grace.

Let these great warriors find rest at last,  
 Ever reminded that we who are left behind  
 Cherish their spirit, honor their commitment,  
 send them our love,  
 and will never forget the service that they gave.

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.*

# MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

## MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES

### CARNEEDS Pty Ltd

152 Parramatta Rd  
STANMORE  
Prptr: Robert Stenta  
Ph: 9519 1441

**10% discount**

**On mechanical repairs & competitive prices on tyres and batteries.**

To all Vietnam Veterans Federation Members.

### MALCOLM MOTORS

**Automotive Service Specialist. All mechanical repairs & servicing.**

**15% Discount for members on services and repairs.**

### JOE CARE

603-605 Parramatta Rd  
Leichhardt NSW  
MTA Lic. # 42198

## TRAILERS

## TOWBARS BULLBARS

### Fastfit Bullbars & Towbars

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

65 St Hilliers Road

AUBURN

Ph: (02) 9749 1209

**10% Discount on products**

## EXHAUST SYSTEMS

### Menai Mufflers

Unit 4/788 Old Illawarra Rd

MENAI

Ph: (02) 9541 4720

**20% Discount**

### Balmain Radiator Centre

### Mark Borghonzian

22d Crystal St

ROZELLE

Ph: (02) 9818 4920 Mbl: 0419 417 206

**10% Discount**

## NEW CARS

### carhelper.com.au

New car buyer's advocate

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

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

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

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

## MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES

### Motor Cycle Accessories

### Supermarket

Head Office.

321 Parramatta Rd

Auburn NSW

(02) 9648 1400

www.mcas.com.au

**CITY:** 9261 5182.

**LIVERPOOL:** 9601 8276.

**CARINGBAH:** 9574 5100

**PENRITH:** 4737 6100

**10% Discount except**

helmets and tyres

## NEW AD SOON

Know of a company that supports your local veterans with discounts.

Ads placed in this section are free  
0421 690 959

For advice

## BATTERIES

### POWER PRODUCTS

For all your power needs

### BATTERIES

### SOLAR POWER

### INVERTERS

### GENERATORS

*Motor Cycle battery specialists*

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

Inverters & Chargers 10%

3/3 Sovereign Pl

South Windsor

Ph: (02) 4577 7761

Fax: (02) 4577 7768

### Ashfield Battery Centre 110 FREDERICK STREET

ASHFIELD, NSW, 2131

02 9798-6166

GEORGE KAWAUCHI (owner)

### We sell:

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

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

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

OPEN SAT FROM: 9.30am- 3.30pm

Closed Sundays and public holidays.

**10% Discount to veterans**

## SMASH REPAIRS

### Wreck-A-Mended

### Smash Repairs

Unit 1, 20 Bosci Rd

Ingleburn NSW

02 9605 9008

### Ask for Alan

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

## FLOOR COVERINGS

### Waratah Floor Coverings

473 Burwood Rd

BELMORE

Ph: (02) 9759 6511

### Ask for Special Rate

## MOTELS

### Golden Chain

### Motor Inn Ltd

Ph: 1800 023 966

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

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

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

## TRAVEL TRANSFERS

### GROUP TRANSFER

Airport or Cruise Terminals

All Tours, All Services

**15% DISCOUNT FOR VETERANS**

For Bookings call:

Michael Viet

(02) 9723 2262

0404 754 899



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

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



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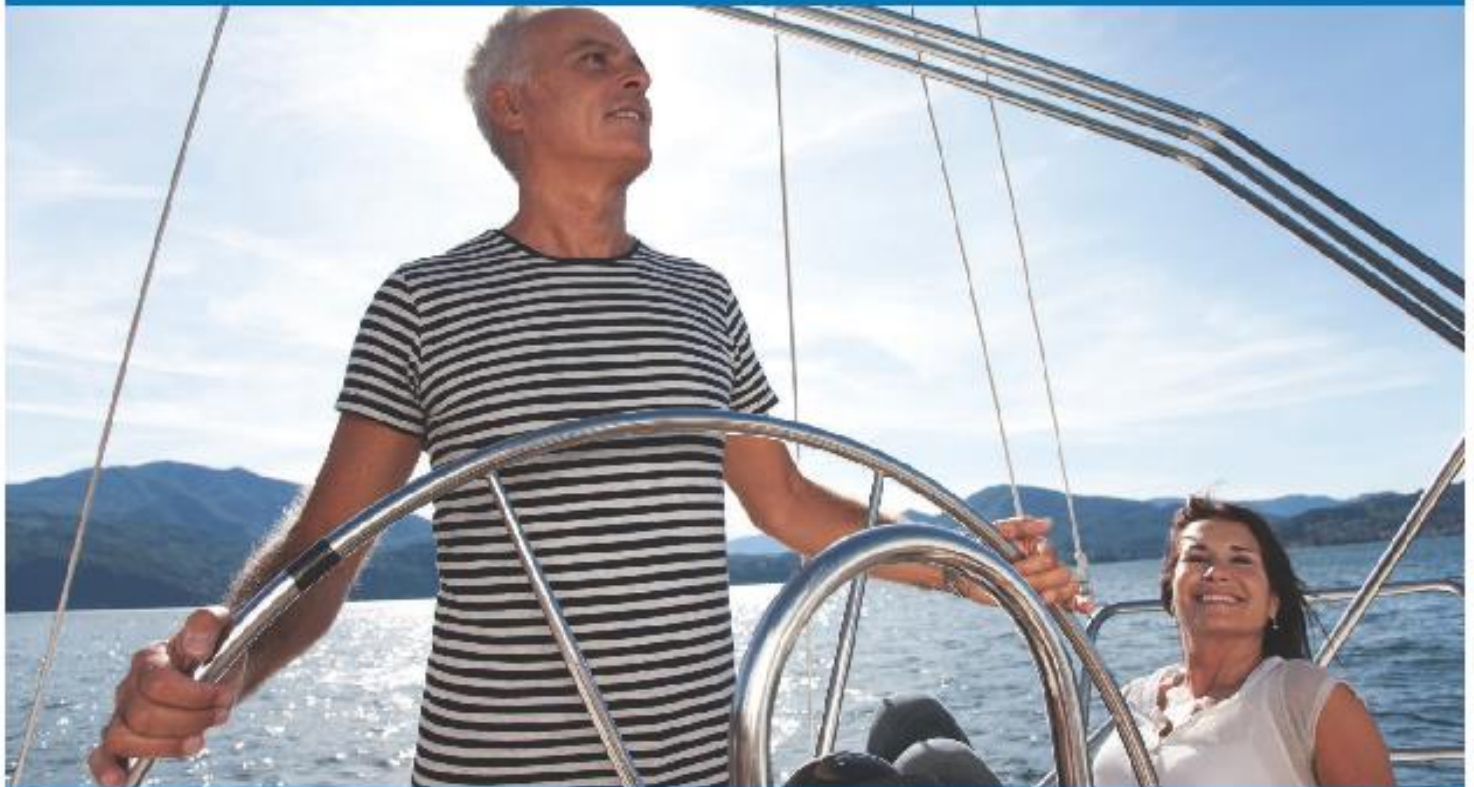
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SMSF • Aged Care • Investment • Estate planning

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