



VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

JULY 2014

TWO GENTLE WAYS TO TELL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN OUR VIETNAM STORY



THE BOOK I WAS ONLY 19

And Townsville lined the footpath as we
marched down to the quay;
This clipping from the paper shows us
young and strong and clean;
And there's me in my slouch hat, with
my SER and greens...
God help me, I was only nineteen.

THE PERFORMANCE DUSTED OFF

And can you tell me, doctor, why I still
can't get to sleep?
And why the Channel Seven chopper
chills me to my feet?
And what's this rash that comes and
goes, can you tell me what it means?
God help me,
I was only nineteen.



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National President's Reflection

What the Prime Minister said about veterans and what his government has done to them

On Friday 25 April 2014 the Prime Minister said this:

“Members of our armed forces have done what most of us are never asked to do: they have been prepared to put their lives on the line for our country.”

On Tuesday 13 May 2014 the Federal Budget included:

- Foreshadowing the downgrading of indexation and thresholds that will, in time, substantially reduce the real value of Veterans Affairs pensions and payments. Affected are the Service Pension, the TPI pension, other veterans disability pensions, the War Widows Pension, the Income Support Supplement and the equivalent MRCA (younger veterans) payments.
- The government withdrawing its share of an agreement with the States to fund Service pensioners' concessions for travel, electricity, phone and council rates. It is not known whether the concessions will be reduced or the States will cover the shortfall.
- Axing the three month backdating of Veterans Disability Pension claims; a very long standing concession giving some flexibility for delays in obtaining medical evidence.
- The axing of the Seniors Supplement (\$876.20 a year) for Gold Card holders not receiving income support.
- The cancellation of indexation on the Clean Energy Supplement added to Veterans Affairs pensions and payments causing it to quickly loses real value over time.
- Military Superannuation not previously counted, now to be counted as income when applying for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

Other unwelcome developments:

- Some regional DVA offices are closing with clients sent to Centrelink.
- The government's intention to axe an education bonus of \$211 a year paid to the children of a dead or badly injured parent with overseas military service.

Comment:

Most Disappointing

Note: The government does not have a majority in the Senate so it is possible some of these impositions may be voted down there. We can only hope so. ■



VIETNAM VETERANS' FEDERATION of AUSTRALIA

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Phone (02) 9682 1788 secretary@vfvfagranville.org

Incorporating

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.

Vietnam Veterans Federation Queensland Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans & Veterans Federation ACT Inc.

Vietnam Veterans Federation Victorian Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans Federation South Australian Branch Inc.

Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Federation of Australia (WA Branch) Inc.

Vietnam Peacekeepers Peacemakers Federation of Tasmania Inc.

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From The Editor's Desk

Dear Reader,

This issue brings a change in format because we have so much to tell you.

Some of that is bad news as you can see from 'The President's Reflection.

We'd welcome your views on that.

But there's good news too.

And there are some fine articles from the likes of John Schumann and Dr Greg Lockhart.

So something of interest, something to smile about as well as something to get angry over. The change in format also means a move in the Index to page 7.



**NSW BRANCH
GENERAL MEETING
13 AUGUST.
SEE PAGE 37**

**VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2014
MONDAY 18 AUGUST
BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB
SEE OUR MIDDLE PAGE SPREAD !!**

Please note that the NSW Branch website has been amalgamated with the Federation website at www.vvfagranville.org.

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**OTHER COMMENT ABOUT ARTICLES
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:**

'The Secretary'.

Email: secretary@vvfagranville.org

- We represent former as well as current members of the defence force.
- We represent veterans of all conflicts from World War II to Afghanistan.
- We have many years of experience helping with claims in all the Military Compensation schemes.
- If your initial claim has been unreasonably rejected we have experienced Advocates to prepare and present an appeal to the Veterans Review Board.
- Should an appeal to the Veterans Review Board be unsuccessful we can, for entitled veterans, arrange legal representation and legal aid for Administrative Appeals Tribunal hearings.
- These services are free.
- Neither is there any obligation to join our Federation although you would be welcome to do so.

Contact any of our Branches or Sub-Branchees from the lists elsewhere in this Journal. Alternatively, visit our website, www.vvfagranville.org, and email from the lists included.

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

INSIDE



A slap in the face for veterans: pensions under attack

The government has announced that, if re-elected at the next Federal election, it will downgrade the indexation on Veterans Affairs pensions. The prospect is alarming. And just what is 'Indexation'. PAGE 16 and 18

Service Pension Concessions Under Attack.

There was a Federal/State government agreement to share the cost of Service pensioners' travel, electricity, phone and council rates concessions. The Federal government has withdrawn its share. Will the States make up the shortfall. (fill details in the next edition)

Backdating of pension claims scrapped

The longstanding practices of backdating Veterans Disability Pension claims three months in acknowledgement of the unique nature of military service has will be scrapped. (full details in the next edition)

The \$211-a-year income support payment to children of a dead or injured parent with overseas service will be axed.

Why would the government want to claw back this pittance from the most deserving of all. It is most disappointing. PAGE 7

DVA offices are closing in some regional areas and veterans being sent to Centrelink.

The government is closing some regional DVA offices and throwing the clients onto the tender mercies of Centrelink..

Is this the thin end of the wedge? PAGE 23

Seniors Supplement Scrapped.

Gold Card holders not receiving an income support payment were eligible for the Seniors Supplement of \$876.20 for singles and \$660.40 for each member of a couple. That payment has simply been scrapped. (No more to say)

Military Superannuation to be counted as income when applying for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

This may disqualify some military superannuants who are now eligible. (No more to say)

Phone book cuts

DVA information in telephone books has been reduced.

The reason given for these omissions is that more and more potential clients are sourcing telephone numbers from electronic devices. This may be so but what about the many aged technology is a mystery. PAGE 22



INSIDE



Commissioning of a new account of the Agent Orange controversy

Wonderful news.

The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson, in his letter says:

“At its meeting on 5 March 2014, the Memorial's Council approved the proposal for the Memorial to initiate a ... study, preparatory to commissioning an independent single volume history of the post-war medical and health issues affecting Vietnam veterans.. This work will have particular relation to the impact on veterans' health of exposure to herbicides; while on active service in South Vietnam.”. PAGE 10



Fair indexation of DFRB/DFRDB military superannuation pensions for over 55s delivered

News to celebrate.

The Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson was justifiably proud of his part in achieving this remedy to a long standing injustice. During the passing of the bill in the Senate he said:

“I signed a clear commitment on behalf of the coalition with the Prime Minister, and that was our commitment to those military superannuants ... that commitment now has the word 'delivered' on it”. PAGE 31



Assurance on Child Care for young mums visiting the Counselling Service

Good news (sort of).

The Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson in his letter to us says:

“I understand your point that the availability of child care is an important issue for parents of young children attending counselling and other appointments, and I agree that childcare should not be a barrier to receiving support”

“VVCS will continue to assist clients with young children and make special arrangements when needed to ensure that young parents are able to attend counselling.”

These are most welcome statements.

But we fear the Repatriation Commission may be half-hearted in carrying out this promise. PAGE 38



INSIDE



One gentle way to tell your grandchildren our Vietnam story.

It's the book *I Was Only 19* with the words of John Schumann's immortal song and illustrations by master illustrator, Craig Smith. Good for kids aged 8 to 12 years of age. PAGE 12



Another gentle way to tell your grandchildren our Vietnam story.

Troubadour and son of Frankie Hunt of *I Was Only 19* fame, tells our Vietnam story through his relationship with his father. He's on at the Australian War Memorial in August. It's a 'must see'. Good for kids 12 -16 years of age. PAGE 14



Shooley plays for the Navy on anti- pirate operations

Once again John Schumann and master guitarist Hugh McDonald play for the troops. This time for the crew of HMAS Darwin. They are as popular with the younger generation of warriors as they were with Vietnam veterans. PAGE 24



Tickets on sale for our Vietnam Veterans Day function in August.

Don't miss out. PAGE 28



On Anzac Day

Circumstances prevented this Anzac Day speech being delivered. We didn't want it to go to waste. PAGE 8



The Memorial and the Minefield

Our Honorary Historian Greg Lockhart, the author of that iconic book, *The Minefield*, spoke about that minefield at the dedication of a monument to South Australian war dead. Fascinating. PAGE 34



Before and after the election: the curious affair of 'fair' and 'unfair'

What they criticised as 'unfair' before the election became government policy after. PAGE 32.



Living longer so retirement age is going up

What should that mean for military superannuants? PAGE 22

WA needs e-mail addresses

Our WA Branch President, Milton Kirk, had his computer crash. He lost his e-mail list. PAGE 39

Help him out by sending him an e-mail at vvppwabranch@primus.com.au PAGE

News from our NSW Branch May AGM. PAGE 41





War orphans' bonus scrapped



The government intends to axe a small payment being made to the children of dead or badly injured veterans with overseas service.

Now it's true that these children get an allowance from the government. This small additional payment is for those unanticipated education expenses. And it's small indeed. In fact it's only \$211-a-year. But its handy for that needed computer programme or school excursion you weren't expecting.

And it's \$211-a-year to very few recipients;; only round 1,240. That means it is costing the government only round \$260,000 a year. That is an amount that would hardly register in the budget accounts.

It's a payment that makes almost no difference to the Federal budget but might make a significant difference to a child's education.

And it's not just the children's loss that's upsetting, it's the mindset of the decision makers who would approve such a mean spirited measure.

We have reason to be concerned. ■

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On Anzac Day

Circumstances prevented our Research Officer, Graham Walker, from delivering a planned ANZAC Day address.

(We thought it an important speech, so publish it here — editor)

Recently, Vietnam veteran and historian Dr Greg Lockhart came across the graves of the crew of a Bomber Command Stirling aircraft which crashed on the Island of Ile d'Yeu off the French Atlantic coast on 16 October 1942. The crew included four New Zealanders, two Britons and a Canadian. For some years the families knew only that the crew was Missing-in-Action. And for three aged siblings of the pilot, Canadian John Ekelund, the first effective confirmation of their brother's death came from Dr Lockhart in 2012

Even after 70 years it was a relief for them— at last they were able to grieve.

Today, in remembering the fallen, we honour the sacrifice of that bomber crew.

At the same time we recognise the families' sacrifice— the agony of waiting.

INDEED, WAITING is the lot of every family whose loved one goes off to war. They wait— quietly dreading a knock on the door and a uniformed officer and padre saying 'We have some bad news...'

AND THE bad news is not always of the fallen.

On Sunday the 25th of April 1915 Vernon King, a former Albany resident, landed on the Gallipoli Peninsular with the 11th Battalion. 'We got a hot reception', he writes: 'I got in the hottest part of the firing line and saw all my best cobbles falling... a shell blew up the bank that I was on & tossed me over a steep hill about 200 feet deep'. Vernon was evacuated, returning however in June to more fierce fighting and artillery bombardments. 'I had a bad turn', he writes, and 'went stone blind for a while'. He was evacuated again, eventually returning to Australia suffering Shell Shock. He was a changed man. Distressed by his memories, Vernon was reluctant to speak of these experiences and avoided Anzac Day commemorations.

On Anzac Day 1969, Roy Mundine, of the Bunjalong people, was on an operation with the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment in Phuoc Tuy Province, Vietnam. While moving forward to clear a bunker system, Roy tripped a mine. 'I was engulfed by a huge explosion', he says, 'then realized my leg was in tatters'. He continued to direct his troops but later lost the leg. 'I had hoped for a continuing career as an infantryman,' he says, 'but I had to think again'.

On the 14th of August 2006 Sarah Webster, from Brisbane, was in the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq. A 122mm Katyusha rocket crashed into a concrete wall nearby. There was a devastating blast. 'I remember nothing', she says, 'till regaining consciousness in hospital'. Among other wounds her leg was seriously damaged... Sarah's career has been limited and shortened.

The wounded— so often denied the dreams of their youth— Today we honour their sacrifice.

AND THE FAMILIES of the wounded, so often their worlds turned up-side down, finding themselves with the life-long task of care and support— Today we honour that sacrifice.

And consider that chilling statistic from the Vietnam war, that the children of Vietnam veterans



have had a 300% higher suicide rate than their peers in the Australian community— Today we might shed a tear for them.

INDEED, ANZAC DAY is a day on which we might remind ourselves that the cost of war does not end with the warriors' homecoming.

WHAT CAN WE salvage from the tragedy of war?

Under the threat of death on the battlefield, the Anzacs aspired to the values of courage, loyalty, trustworthiness, rejection of pomposity and above all, selflessness. From this code of behaviour come the deeds we so admire; William Earl, on the HMAS Parramatta during the battle of Crete; with bombs landing nearby and risking being drawn into the ship's propellers, diving into the water to rescue a crew member of HMS Auckland who was near the point of exhaustion; Mark Donaldson in Afghanistan exposing himself to enemy fire to protect his wounded comrades, then beating almost impossible odds to rescue one of his party from no man's land.

It is this code of behaviour, too, that fosters those bonds of friendship that remain iron-clad for a lifetime.

It is a code whose rewards money cannot buy.

And, it is a code of behaviour whose validity transcends the battlefield. It is a code we can all aspire to, regardless of gender, ethnicity or creed.

PERHAPS IT IS this set of values that is the beating heart of the ANZAC tradition. ■



Breakthrough: New Agent Orange History to be Commissioned

The War Memorial Council has ordered a new Official History account of the Agent Orange controversy be commissioned.

That means the flaws and unjustified insults in the existing Official History account can be corrected.

What are those flaws and insults?

Back in the late 70s and early 80s Vietnam veterans became concerned their exposure to chemical herbicides and insecticides while on active service in Vietnam could cause cancer in themselves and birth defects in their children.

The Department of Veterans Affairs rejected these claims.

The veterans knew that there was much evidence for and against the chemicals' harmfulness. But Repatriation law demanded veterans be given the benefit of any doubt. This, the veterans believed, the Department of Veterans Affairs was failing to do.

In the face of official intransigence, the Vietnam Veterans Association was formed and successfully campaigned for a Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission reported in 1985. In spite of the law being made tougher while the Royal Commission sat, it found that, under Repatriation law two categories of cancer could be

linked with veterans' exposure to Agent Orange and that the Department of Veterans Affairs had been training Determining Officers 'to find ways around Court statements of what the law was' and of emphasising 'ways in which a claim could be "knocked-out"'. (disappointing in the extreme)

These findings were just what the campaigning veterans had been claiming. It meant their campaign was vindicated.

But the Department ignored these findings and continued its intransigence.

The veterans turned to the appeals tribunals, and over some years won case after case.

He said the campaigning veterans (the Agent Orange lobby) exhibited some of the worst aspects of Australian behaviour in the 1980s.

In fact the reverse was true .

And what did FB Smith say in his Official History account?

He said the veterans had no case and that they were motivated by greed. He said the '[the clash epitomizes many of the worst aspects of Australian behaviour in the 1980s.'

He said what?????

He said the campaigning veterans (the Agent Orange lobby) had no case and exhibited some of the worst aspects of Australian behaviour in the 1980s.

In fact the reverse was true. The campaigning veterans had won their case and their behaviour in fighting for the welfare of their



Vietnam veteran Phil Thompson was the leader of the 'Agent Orange lobby' that successfully campaigned for a Royal Commission.

The Official war history unjustly denigrates the veterans' 'Agent Orange lobby' and wrongly claims they had no case.

These distortions of the truth can now be remedied.

fellow Vietnam veterans was in the best ANZAC tradition.

So you can see why we wanted a new study done, one that can wash away the flaws and insults of the account in Volume 3 of the Official History of the Vietnam war.

We were informed of the Council's momentous, historic and warmly welcomed decision in a letter from the AWM Director, Dr Brendan Nelson. Here's what he said:

'At its meeting on 5 March 2014, the Memorial's Council approved the proposal for the Memorial to initiate a scoping study, preparatory to commissioning an independent single volume history of the post-war medical and health issues affecting Vietnam veterans.. This work will have particular relation to the impact on veterans' health of exposure to herbicides; while on active service in South Vietnam. It will of course be informed with the knowledge gained about this important and complex issue over the past twenty years.'

Of course that's not the end of it. A Terms of Reference has to be developed and a historian

appointed.

And it's not as though all opposition to us has relented. There is a rear-guard action going on by those supporting FB Smith's account (hard to imagine why anyone would continue to champion FB Smith's account, but they are).

But we have been assured the process will be fair, so we are optimistic.

We shall keep you informed. ■

Postscript

Not only was FB Smith's account flawed and unjustly insulting when it was written, it has lost more and more credibility as time has passed.

Now veterans' exposure to Agent Orange is linked to a long list of cancers and more and more evidence is accumulating for a link with child abnormalities.

An Australian government study found an increase in the incidence of spina bifida manifesta, cleft lip, cleft palate, adrenal gland cancer and acute myeloid leukaemia in the children of Vietnam veterans. The study was not specifically designed to find a link between the children's ill health and Agent Orange but it did establish a firm relationship with 'service in Vietnam' ■



A gentle way to tell your grandchildren our Vietnam story

The book is suitable for 8 to 12 year olds

(In the book, illustrations are in colour—see a preview at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW5egFsyIRo>)

It's a question often asked: 'How do I tell kids about the war I fought in? How do I tell them without unduly frightening them or making them feel insecure?'

Many of us have grandchildren and some even have great grandchildren. If they are between 8 and 12 years old, this book might be the answer.

The book, titled *I Was Only 19*, has been put together by publisher Allen and Unwin using the words of John Schumann's song, with pictures by master illustrator Craig Smith that are sensitive to the age of the 8 to 12 year old readers.

I Was Only 19's resilience is amazing.

It not only remains the anthem of Vietnam veterans, it has been embraced by a new generation of servicemen and women and veterans.

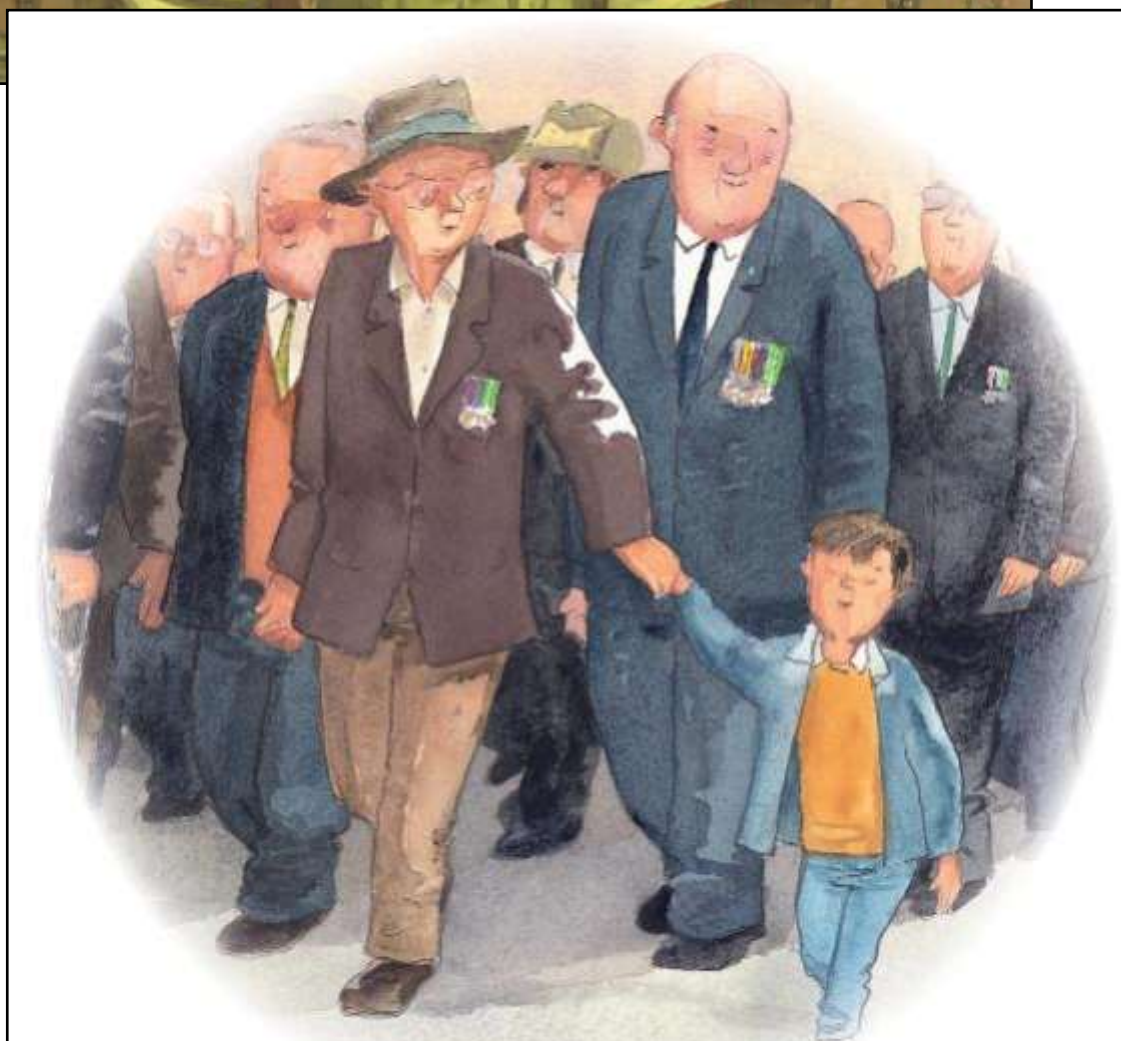
As well as that, a band called *The Herd* did a Hip-Hop version some years ago that rocketed to number one and stayed there for many weeks. The music video of this version was used by the Melbourne *Shrine of Remembrance* to introduce its presentations to school children.

Now *I Was Only 19* continues its long and important journey in this book, gently telling our 8 to 12 year olds our Vietnam story.

We've reproduced here some of the illustrations, though in the book they are in colour.

This is a book worthy of the song. ■







Another way to tell your grandchildren our Vietnam story

The performance is suitable for 12 to 16 year olds
(and, we think, adults)

There's a troubadour touring schools telling the 'Vietnam story'. He tells it in music, in song and actions that keep his audiences enthralled. And its not only the kids; the teachers and any parents who watch come under this story-tellers spell.

The troubadour is Brett Hunt, son of Frankie Hunt. That's the Frankie in our song, *I Was Only 19*:

*And Frankie kicked
a mine the day
mankind kicked the
moon...*

Brett relates how Frankie joined up and headed for Vietnam. It's a story told with pop music in the style of the time and set in the attitudes of a country town of the 60s. For us it's nostalgia, for the kids a window into our youth.

And, of course, there's the drama of the soldiers caught up in the horror of exploding mines. It's told with compelling tension by this fine actor and musician.

Perhaps, most importantly, Brett tells of growing up with a father whose body was agonised by shifting pieces of shrapnel and who was plagued by recurring nightmares. And of his wife Connie's fight to have Frankie's plight acknowledged by the Veterans Affairs.

But also growing up hearing the laughter, camaraderie and tall tales of Frankie's many mates who frequented Frankie's and Connie's welcoming Bega home.

Brett's show is called *Dusted-Off* and in recognition of its quality and importance, the Australian War Memorial is hosting it from 18th – 20th August 2014.

The weather is lovely in Canberra in August so book a seat. Then bring the grand-kids, tour the new exhibitions at the War Memorial and see the show.

Even if you can't bring the grand-kids, come along yourself. You'll enjoy it. ■

Dusted Off
Performance Dates: 18th – 20th August 2014.
Sessions: 10.15am, 11.45am & 1.30pm.
Seating Limited.
Cost: \$6.60. Tickets through Starrs Productions.
02-95193573
pstarrs@optusnet.com.au



Dust off



In concert



Frank Hunt with
Brett and Brett's
brother and sisters -
Kerry-Rae (eldest)
and fellow triplets
Pamela and James
at the Welcome
Home Parade, 1987.





Slap in the face for war veterans

Unfair indexation to be inflicted on the Service Pension, the TPI and other veterans disability pensions, the War Widows Pension, the Income Support Supplement and equivalent MRCA payments

We fought for ten years for fair indexation for the TPI Pension.

We won concessions along the way and in 2007 we succeeded in having fair indexation applied to the whole pension.

Now, because of those successes, the TPI Pension is worth some \$5,000 a year more than it would have been without them.

In the May Federal Budget it was announced that, in 2017, should the Coalition win the next election, fair indexation will be stripped back to its previous unfair form.

That means that over time, that hard won \$5,000 extra a year will be eroded away. And the erosion will continue after that.

And not only the TPI Pension will suffer. The Service Pension, other veterans disability pensions, the Income Support Supplement, the War Widows Pension and the equivalent MRCA payments will also have their fair indexation scrapped.

This is a slap in the face for war veterans.

What is 'indexation'?

Present indexing of the Service, TPI, other veterans disability pensions, the Income Support Supplement, the War Widows Pension and equivalent MRCA payments keeps them abreast of community income standards. To put that another way, the present indexation method keeps

pensioners sharing Australia's rising standard of living.

Twice a year the percentage increase in the cost of living and the percentage increase in the average wage are calculated. In simple terms, the greater of these two increases is then applied to those Veterans Affairs pensions.

Say the cost of living in the previous six months rises by 1% and the average wage goes up 2%, then, in simple terms, these veterans' pensions are increased by 2%.

And nearly always the average wage rises more than the cost of living. This has been so for many, many years. It is why Australia's living standard has been rising.

So if our pensions had not been able to mirror rises in the average wage they would be





Blue Ryan addressing a protest outside Parliament House during the ten year campaign to get fair indexation for the TPI pension. The government want to rip away that hard won indexation in 2017.

much less than they are now and would be falling further and further behind community income standards.

But this is what will happen in 2017 should the Coalition win the next Federal election. Our pensions will be indexed only to cost of living increases, condemning them to fall further and further behind those community income standards.

Perhaps the government is hoping no-one will understand what is happening. After all the concept of 'indexation' is a complicated one and there will continue to be six monthly rises in the pension. So even though those rises will be less than they would have been, and will be less than the rise in community incomes, the government may hope the difference may not be noticed.

But whether noticed or not, over time the degraded indexation compounds and pensioners' financial position deteriorates significantly.

But, I hear you say, our pensions are hardly lavish. Surely it would be a mean act to reduce their real value. Yes, it certainly would be a mean act. But that is what the government wants to happen.

And it is not only 'indexation' which is under threat. 'Thresholds' are also to be attacked.

This attack will affect Part Service pensioners; that is, those who have other income from wages, investments or military superannuation.

Part Service pensioners can earn a certain amount before their pension is reduced by 50 cents for every dollar earned. This is known as the 'means-test-free' area. This means-test-free area is presently \$156 a fortnight for singles. It is indexed so as to keep its real value. The Coalition, should it win office at the next election, will suspend the indexation of the means-tests-free area for three years.

The Coalition will also suspend indexation of the assets-test threshold for the Service pension.

The Deeming Rate threshold cops a double whammy. In 2017 the Deeming thresholds will be cut by 35% and that savagely cut rate not indexed for three years.

All this suspension of the indexation of thresholds and the straight out cutting-back of them will significantly reduce the real value of your Service pension over time. Your income will fall behind community income standards.

But, as we have pointed out, these changes are insidious because pensions keep rising at a slower rate, so the reduced value is easily overlooked.

But be assured these indexation changes matter. Over time they will seriously erode pensioners' financial position.

That the government would do this to its war veterans and war widows is disappointing. ■



More you should know about Indexation

(If you don't want them to pull the wool over your eyes)

Every six months you get a letter advising you of any changes to payments made to you from your military superannuation pension, your Service Pension, your TPI or other veterans' disability pensions, your War Widows Pension, your Income Support Supplement or your equivalent MRCA payment.

Usually the letter tells you there has been a slight 'increase' in the pension payment.

This change results from the pension being 'indexed', which means they are periodically raised to catch up with increases in the cost of living or increases in the average wage, whichever is the greater.

So the change to your pension is not a 'real' increase, it is a 'catch up' because while your pension has remained static for that six month period, the average wage and/or cost of living have been rising.

The average wage is measured by Male Average Total Weekly Earnings (MTAWE). The cost of living is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). These indexes are put together by the

Australian Bureau of Statistics.

It is fair to be indexed to increases in the average wage as well as the cost of living because wages nearly always rise faster than the cost of living. Wages have been rising faster than the cost of living for many years which is the same as saying Australia's standard of living has been rising.

It is a great disadvantage to be indexed only to increases in the cost of living because wages nearly always rise at a faster rate.

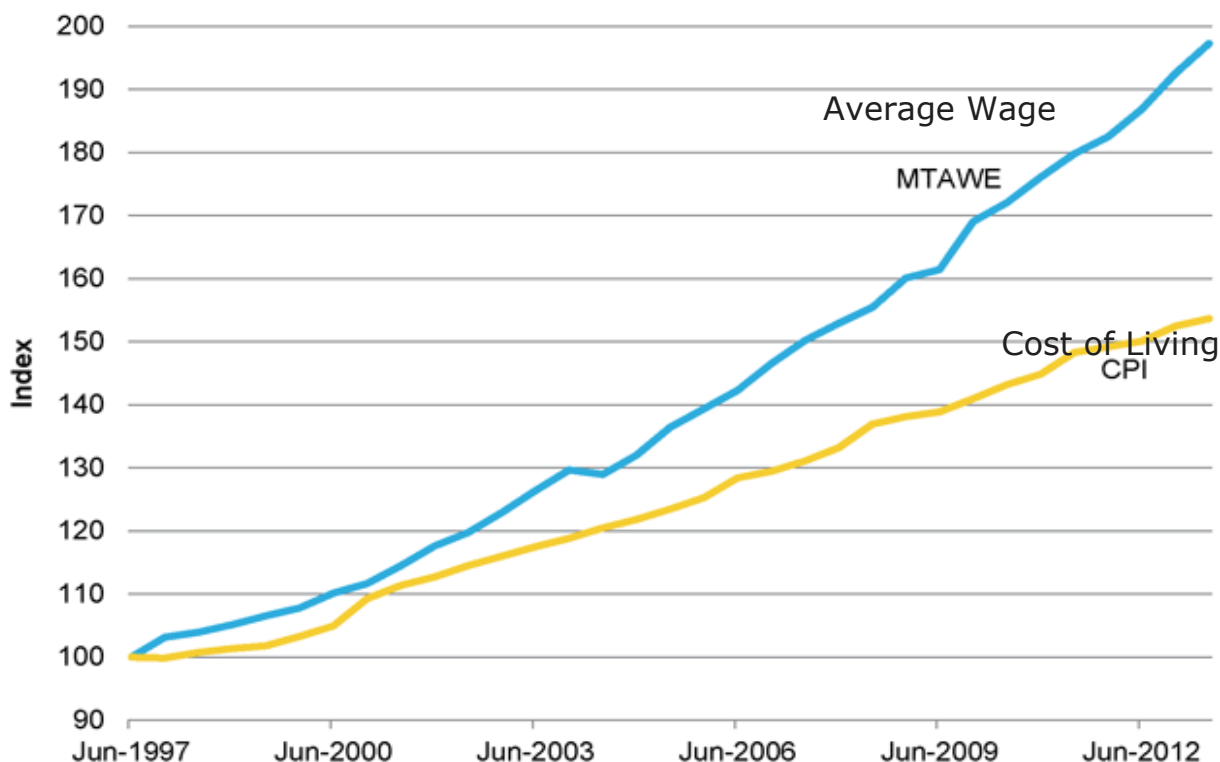
Prior to 1997, pension catch-ups were linked only to the cost of living (CPI). Then the government acknowledged that this had caused a backward slide in pensions compared with Australian's rising living standards. Put in another way, pensioners were not keeping up with community income standards.

The accompanying graph shows the increasing losses pensioners would have suffered had the indexation not been changed in 1997.

The top line is the increase in the average wage (MTAWE) and the bottom line the increase in the cost of living (CPI).

You can see how much faster wages have risen.

And you can see how Service, TPI and other



veterans disability pensioners, War Widows, recipients of the Income Support Supplement and recipients of the equivalent MRCA payments would lose if indexation is changed to mirror only cost of living increases.

The government has announced that, in 2017, it will change the indexation on Veterans Affairs pensions so they are linked only to increases in the cost of living.

We must do everything we can to prevent that happening.

Why should Veterans Affairs pensions be indexed to wages as well as the cost of living?

The point of indexation should be to ensure payments keep up with community income

So pensions and benefits are not just ‘pensions and benefits’; they are pensions and benefits indexed in certain ways.

standards or, to put it another way, Australia’s rising standard of living. A rising standard of living means, in simple terms, being able to buy more goods and services. But if these items are indexed only to the cost of living, you can, for ever, only buy the same amount.

Look at it this way. In 1909 when the Age Pension was introduced, pensioners’ standard of living was, by today’s standards, abysmal. In fact, everyone’s standard of living was very low by today’s standards. Today’s pensioners, indeed today’s population at large, would find living at the 1909 standard almost impossible. But that would be pensioners’ position if the 1909 pension had been indexed only to the cost of living from that time

(Continued on page 20)



MARK RILEY, 7NEWS APRIL 11, 2014

to this.

In other words, a pension or any part of it that is indexed only to the cost of living, will fall further and further behind what is considered by the community a fair standard of living.

So pensions and benefits are not just 'pensions and benefits'; they are pensions and benefits indexed in certain ways. If 'increases in wages' is not part of the indexation calculation, then you're on a loser, and over time, a very big loser

As we have said, the government intends, in 2017, to change the indexation on Veterans Affairs pensions so that they are linked only to cost of living increases. If this happens, the Service Pension will lose some \$100 a fortnight by 2020. (See the picture above). Other Veterans Affairs pensions will lose proportional amounts. And those losses will get greater and greater as the years pass.

We expected better. ■



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DVAOHIS2_VVN



Living longer? Retirement at 70?

What should that mean
for military superannuants?

The government is increasing age of eligibility for the Age Pension to 70.

The justification advanced is that we are living longer; life expectancy has increased markedly over the last 50 years.

This, of course, is true.

DFRB/DFRDB military superannuants who elected to take part of their pension as a lump sum had their fortnightly pension reduced by an amount calculated on the expected number of years each had to live. The longer you had to live, the less is taken out of your pension each fortnight to recoup the lump sum.

But the life expectancy tables being used are 50 years old. We are living longer than those tables predicted. So more is being taken out of your DFRB/DFRDB superannuation pension than is justified by your real life expectancy.

We have repeatedly pointed this out to governments and the Department but have been studiously ignored. Now the government is using the same argument to justify raising the age of eligibility for the age pension.

Perhaps the new government will acknowledge the injustice being done to DFRB/DFRDB military superannuants who took a lump sum, and apply the same up-to-date life expectancy tables that justify the move to a pension eligibility age of 70.

We can only hope that with the government's new understanding of the issue, it will. ■



Reduced DVA information in phone books

But there are still plenty of us not using
smart phones



There is reduced information about DVA in the most recent telephone books.

The head office may be listed but local VAN offices omitted.

The VVCS office may be listed but with a less detailed address.

Omitted altogether may be the part-page block (see below) showing a comprehensive list of DVA services.

The reason given for these omissions is that more and more potential clients are sourcing telephone numbers from electronic devices and fewer from the phone book.

This is no doubt true. There remains however a cohort of over 80 years old WWII veterans, their over 60 years old children and Vietnam veterans, the youngest of whom is round 67 years of age, many of whom continue to seek telephone information in the traditional way.

This non-tech-savvy cohort should not be treated in this cavalier fashion. ■





Some regional DVA offices closing.

Veterans sent to Centrelink offices.
The Thin End of the Wedge?



Some regional veterans are losing DVA offices and will be joining Centrelink queues.

Some veterans will still be dealing with DVA staff at Centrelink offices, whilst others will have to deal with Centrelink staff.

Here are the details:

- Morwell VAN office will be co-located into Centrelink Morwell;

- Ballarat VAN office will be co-located into Centrelink Ballarat;

- Frankston, Gosford, Bairnsdale and Wollongong VAN offices will close. Veteran information services will be provided by Centrelink service centres sites in Frankston, Wyong, Nowra and Morwell.

- Bendigo, Mildura and Warrnambool agency contracts to cease and Centrelink service

centre arrangements will be put in place in those locations.

In Ballarat and Morwell a DVA staff member will continue to provide the same services as they do now, but co-located with Centrelink offices.

In other locations Centrelink staff will provide information services.

This is bad and worrying news.

It comes on top of the closure of the Launceston VVCS and cutting of staff at the Newcastle VVCS.

And that's just what we know of.
Where will it stop?

Is this the thin end of the wedge? ■



Shooey and the Pirate Chasers

(John Schumann and Hugh McDonald performed for the crew of HMAS Darwin in Dar Es Salaam)

John's story

Early in 2014 I received a call from Lt Col Ian Robinson (a.k.a. Robbo) asking whether Hughie McDonald and I were available to entertain some troops "...somewhere on Anzac Day, mate. Can't say where just yet, but it'll be good. Leave it with me."

Hughie and I had been on a couple of Forces Entertainment tours previously with our band, the Vagabond Crew; East Timor, Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands. We're old hands. We knew what we were up for and we also knew how much ADF members appreciate entertainment from home.

"We're in, Robbo. No worries." Our enthusiasm was in no way compromised by the fact that we had no idea precisely where we were going or even when. Op-Sec. We get it.

There were the inevitable hoops to jump through: photographs, passport applications, medicals, vaccinations and the usual pre-deployment, death-by-PowerPoint briefings. We observed wryly to each other that it was just as well that people didn't have to negotiate with the

ADF before going overseas. No one would ever go anywhere and the entire international tourism industry would collapse in on itself.

As departure time drew near, we learned we were to play for the crew of HMAS Darwin on

Anzac Day in Dar Es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania. Darwin is on assignment along the East African coast, patrolling for drug smugglers and protecting the shipping lanes from pirates. The plan was for us to attend the Dawn Service on board, go to a commemoration service at a Commonwealth grave site just out of Dar Es Salaam and then perform a concert on board Darwin that night.

Our little entourage assembled at the Perth

Airport on the evening of Monday, 21 April. As well as Hughie, Robbo and me, there was comedian Mick Molloy, his Triple M producer Jay Muller, Nine News journalist Sophie Walsh and her cameraman, Tim Fernley. Robbo wrangled us onto the plane and we took off into the night, headed for the Dark Continent. Bob Carr might whinge about Business Class. I am pretty sure that everyone in our entourage would have sold their first-born for an upgrade in a heartbeat.



John Schumann, Wilfred Samoan Thor Bowie (or Willie) and Hugh McDonald on HMAS Darwin



An F/A-18F Super Hornet and Hawk 127 conduct a low level fly past of HMAS Darwin (Defence image)

We landed at Dar Es Salaam about 2 PM (African time) on Tuesday the 22nd. The Dar Es Salaam airport is not foremost among international airports in terms of facilities and organisation. Changi International Airport it is not. However, it was Africa, none of us had been there before and it was all pretty exciting!

Naval Liaison Officers were on hand to meet us when we cleared customs and immigration. Unfortunately for the Nine News crew, the customs officials took an immediate dislike to Tim's camera and impounded it. This was very disappointing for Sophie and Tim as they weren't able to file any of the stories they'd planned. Everybody - Robbo, the Naval Liaison Officers, the African contractors - worked hard for several days to get the camera released but all efforts were in vain. As Morris West once wrote, "Bureaucrats are the accursed of God".

The trip in from the airport was marked by gridlocked traffic, rain and huge, water-filled potholes which, we learned, are a feature of the roads in Dar Es Salaam. The traffic jams also are such a feature of life that there's a thriving little economy consisting of people selling everything from mobile phones to cashew nuts to the occupants of the stationary cars.

Eventually we lobbied at the Hotel

Kilimanjaro - one of the Hyatt chain. Easily the best accommodation we've had on a Forces Entertainment tour, it was just as well as we were confined to barracks most of the time. Robbo was not keen on us wandering around Dar Es Salaam though we did pop out a couple of times, escorted, to have a poke around during the day. Dar Es Salaam is not much of a tourist destination anyway and there's not much to see or do. Nocturnal activities were absolutely off the agenda: apparently Dar can be a bit dodgy at night.

One thing we've learned on Forces Entertainment tours is that you have to roll with the punches. Again, just as well because there were a few punches to roll with. As well as Nine's impounded camera, HMAS Darwin had just intercepted a vessel in the shipping lanes carrying no less than a tonne of heroin. Nice bust. However, that meant that Darwin was a day and a half late getting into port and when she did get close, the Tanzanian port authorities declared there was no berth available. The Dawn Service was cancelled as was the ceremony at the Commonwealth gravesite. It was only at about 4 PM on Anzac Day itself that the evening's performance on the helo deck was confirmed.

The Naval Liaison Officers picked us up from the Hotel Kilimanjaro Prison Complex about 5 PM and we wove around the potholes towards the Tanzanian port where Darwin had eventually tied up. Getting into the port complex was marginally more difficult than getting into the country itself. Somebody somewhere didn't have a piece of paper with our names on it so there were many phone calls, much arm waving and plenty of scuttling about before we were finally waved through. Frankly, given the undisciplined nature of the traffic in the Tanzanian port complex, I'd felt much safer in Tarin Kowt. Workplace health and safety are concepts that the Tanzanian port

(Continued on page 26)



HMAS Darwin near a vessel which was found to have \$132 million worth of heroin on board

authorities have yet to grapple with.

Finally - on-board Darwin! It was fantastic to be surrounded by a bunch of Australians so far from home on Anzac Day. All crew members, from the Commander down, made us feel very, very welcome and very special.

We set up our PA at the very stern of the ship on the helo deck and tried to crank it up to out-muscle the volume of the tankers on the wharf pumping diesel into Darwin. About 7 PM, the entire ship's complement assembled on the helo deck. Some of the crew had cushions or chairs but, mostly, people just sat on the deck. Bathed in the wharf lights, in an atmosphere reeking of diesel and dust, it was one of the most memorable concerts Hughie and I have ever performed.

Mick Molloy went on first and demonstrated to us all why he is a prince among Australian comics. One of Darwin's crew, a very talented young bloke rejoicing in the name of Wilfred Samoan Thor Bowie (or Willie) played a few songs on his guitar before we came on. He was great – and clearly a favourite of the crew!

In many ways our part of the Anzac Day performance was quite emotional. We played

Lawson's "Glass on the Bar" in memory of Sapper Jamie Larkham (from Kangaroo Island in my home state of South Australia) who was killed in Afghanistan in February 2011. When Hughie and I played "I was only 19" you could have heard a pin drop.

There was a real sense of camaraderie throughout the entire crew. I felt it the moment I came on-board - a sense of mateship, irrepressible Aussie humour, hospitality, pride in doing a job well and a great affection for the ship itself.

After the show, we were shown through the ship by the commander and crew. It was absolutely fascinating and we all felt very special to be on board Darwin on this very special night. It was warm and muggy and I was particularly delighted to be issued with my ration of two freezing cold Pure Blondes (my poison of choice) from the Petty Officers' mess.

Robbo dragged us off the ship about midnight and bundled us into the Land Rovers for the trip back to the hotel. Had he not, we might still be there yarning to the crew.

The next day the long-suffering Naval Liaison Officers picked us up from the hotel and drove us back to the airport to get our flight back to Johannesburg and then on to Perth.

For a couple of hours there we thought that we weren't going to get Nine's camera released to take home. However, after another million phone calls and some firm but polite conversations with various officials on the part of Robbo and the Naval Liaison Officers, the camera was eventually released.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to play for that mob. As Australians, we can be very proud of the men and women who wear our uniform overseas.

How would I sum up the trip? Fascinating, exciting and utterly inspirational.

Robbo, you've got our phone numbers. We're waiting for the next call. ■



Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia, (NSW Branch) Inc.

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia



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PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION (NSW BRANCH) Inc.**
in conjunction with



BANKSTOWN DISTRICT SPORTS CLUB

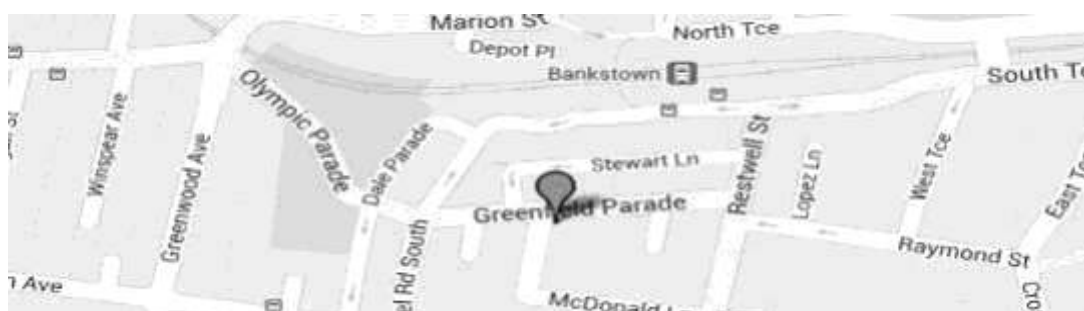
PRESENT

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2014

MONDAY 18 AUGUST



This year the VIETNAM VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE, organised by the **VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION and THE VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION of AUSTRALIA (NSW BRANCH) Inc.**, will once again be held at the **BANKSTOWN DISTRICT SPORTS CLUB**, located at 8 Greenfield Parade Bankstown. If arriving from the station use this entry. If arriving by vehicle, use the Mona St., car park entry. Doors open at 0900hrs. Make your way to the **Grand Ballroom**.



TICKETS ON SALE FROM 7 JULY 2014

We would prefer that tickets were sold out prior to the event, and the Committee realises that there may be some who will turn up on the day without prior arrangement. However, be warned, seating is limited, tickets are numbered and issued per table number. If you chose to arrive without pre-ordering a ticket you will have to wait until ticket holders are admitted first, and catering staff alerted to any extra seating arrangements. We hope the majority will avail themselves to one of the options of pre-payment/ordering and make use of the following points:

- Pre-purchase tickets at the Granville office
- Pre-pay via Credit Card by phone or with the form at bottom of next page
- Pre-pay by Cheque or Money Order
- Order your ticket by phone or letter, fax or email, and advise your intent to pay on the day

Using any and all of these methods will provide accurate numbers for catering purposes, and function logistic controls. If you require a table of 10 for your mates, no problem, but please let us know **prior** to the day and **when ordering** your ticket/s. Advise how many will be in your group, and a table will be reserved for you. Remember, we require all reserved tables of groups to be **paid by 11 August**, and a name for the tickets to be held in, if collecting on the day. If no particular seating is required, simply sit at the table designated on your ticket.

Making use of the **TRAVELODGE HOTEL** located within the club premises is available at special rates for those attending the function. You can stay with or without breakfast, the prior evening or following the function on Monday. However, we advise to book early.

YOU MUST MENTION THE VIETNAM VETERANS FUNCTION TO ACHIEVE THESE RATES

Room Rates: **\$155.00** per night room only
\$170.00 per night & breakfast for one
\$185.00 per night & breakfast for two
 3rd person & \$15.00 extra breakfast by negotiation.

(Pricing is subject to change and are as quoted at time of going to print, we apologise for any inconvenience).

For bookings call **02 9793 0000** or **1300 886 886**.

Contact the Granville office for further information: Ph 02 9682 1788 Fx 02 96826134 or email to secretay@vfvgranville.org



**VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION &
VIETNAM VETERANS, PEACEKEEPERS &
PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION (NSW BRANCH) Inc.**
in conjunction with



BANKSTOWN DISTRICT SPORTS CLUB

PRESENT

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2014

MONDAY 18 AUGUST



Come and join us at the **Bankstown District Sports Club**, selected again to hold the function this year. The club has assisted us tremendously in the past, and continues to do so. Free car parking is available, or it is only a short walk from Bankstown Railway Station. There also bus services from Parramatta, Liverpool and Hurstville. A map and further directions can be found on the previous page.

The function will be held in the **Grand Ballroom**.

ITINERY 0900hrs

Doors open. Meet & Greet at the Grand Ballroom entry hall.

Bar opens 0930hrs to 1030hrs (at the discretion of management and closed for the service.)

1100hrs

Memorial Service & Guest Speaker

Major General (Retd) Simon V.L. Willis, AM, CSC.

Ex 4RAR/NZ ANZAC Platoon Commander, South Vietnam 1971.

1150hrs

Entrance to Grand Ballroom & function proper

1215hrs

Buffet Lunch

1300hrs

Entertainment provided by Bankstown District Sports Club

Featuring the fabulous **LUCKY STARR**

LUCKY STARR is one of the founding members of the Australian Pop Music Industry. A regular on television shows such as Bandstand and also hosted Six O'Clock Rock. His 1962 recording of *"I've Been Everywhere"* remains one of Australia's favourite songs. Lucky was also the first Australian performer to entertain the troops in Vietnam; in fact paying his own way there and made five subsequent trips into the war zone.

TICKETS

\$30.00 per person (Same as last year)

Tickets are to be pre-purchased (or ordered), and can be made by cash in person from the Granville office. Alternatively you may pay by Cheque, Money Order, or Credit Card. (using the cut-out form below). Tickets will be numbered and include your table number.

TABLES

Tables will be set for ten (10), and if you wish to organise a group, let us know when booking and all booked tables are to be paid for by Thursday 11 August for catering purposes. (REFER TO NOTES ON PREVIOUS PAGE)

ACCOMODATION

Special rates have been offered for those wishing to make use of the **TRAVELODGE HOTEL** located within the club premises, and is available for anyone wishing to stay overnight the evening before and/or following the function. See previous page for **Room / breakfast rates**

RAFFLE

Raffle prizes will be on display, and tickets will be sold throughout the day, with the draw to take place immediately following the entertainment. Please find a seller and make your purchases frequently.



Name of card holder _____ Card type _____ Ticket/s @ \$30 (qty) _____

Card number

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Card Expiry Date ____ / ____ Amount (this transaction) AUD\$ _____ Signature _____

Contact Number _____

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To help us maintain our records please complete this form if your address is different to that on the mailing list or if you are about to move.

Please print clearly

Family Name _____ Given Names _____

Membership No. _____

Signature _____

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Old Contact Number: _____

New details:

New Address _____

_____ State _____ Post Code _____

New Contact Number: _____

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' Name _____ Service number _____

SVN Unit _____ Tour date(s) _____

Cause of death (if known) _____

(**SR** Service Related **UK** Unknown **S** Suicide **O** Other)

Date of death (if known) _____ Location at time of death (State & Town) _____

Your name _____

Address _____

_____ State _____ Post Code _____

Phone no _____ Signature _____

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PO Box 170,
Granville, NSW 2142**

Ph **(02) 9682 1788** Fax **(02) 9682 6134**
E-mail to **secretary@vfvagranville.org**



DELIVERED

Fair indexation of DFRB/DFRDB military superannuation pensions for over 55s

If you have read the articles in previous pages you will have some understanding (we hope) about 'indexation'.

You will understand, then, when we say ex-servicemen and women on DFRB/DFRDB and MSBS military superannuation pensions have been getting the rough end of the pineapple for years because these military superannuation pensions have been indexed only to increases in the cost of living (CPI) and not to increases in the average wage (MTAWE).

In other words, these military superannuants have not been sharing Australia's rising standard of living. They have simply not been keeping up with community income standards.

The then Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs, Hon Senator Michael Ronaldson, in

2010, recognised this and convinced the then Opposition to make a promise. That promise was that fair indexation (linked both to living cost and

wages) would be applied to DFRB / DFRDB superannuants over 55 years of age, should they win government at the September 2013 federal election.

They won.

And the promise has been kept.

The Government passed the Fair Indexation Bill on Thursday 27 March 2014. The new indexation has been applied since 1 July 2014.

Whilst improvements still need to be made to military superannuation

(including those under 55 not having to continue to suffer unfair indexation), this change is much needed and much appreciated..

We are grateful to Senator Ronaldson, as well as Assistant Minister for Defence, Hon Stuart Robert MP for their championing the change. ■



Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson



“Fair is foul and foul is fair” (The three witches in *Macbeth*)

How ‘foul’ became ‘fair’ after an election

It was before the 2013 Federal election.

He really took it to the Labor government.

He was the Coalition Opposition spokesman for Veterans Affairs introducing a bill into the Senate that would replace the **unfair** indexation of DFRB/DFRDB military superannuation with **fair** indexation for over 55 year olds.

Indeed, the Bill was called the Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits Amendment (**Fair Indexation**) Bill 2010.

In berating the government Senators for not supporting the bill he explained :

‘The measures in this Bill will ensure that over 56,000 retired Australian Defence Force personnel who are members of the now closed DFRDB and DFRB schemes have their superannuation pensions indexed **more fairly** and in a manner which better reflects changes in the costs of living.’

Senator Ronaldson rammed home the point:

‘Currently, DFRDB and DFRB superannuation pensions are indexed according to the **CPI [cost of living index] only**. If the indexation rate had increased in line with the aged pension, in March 2010 military superannuants would have received up to an extra \$28.40 per fortnight in their pension.’

Unfair indeed.

What Senator Ronaldson considered **fair** was an indexation that linked catch-up increases in the pension to increases in

the average-wage as well as increases in the cost-of-living.

This is a **fair** indexation because, as Senator Ronaldson pointed out, wages generally increase at a faster rate than the cost of living.

The government, however, was unmoved, so Senator Ronaldson tried again in 2011.

Introducing the bill again into Parliament, Senator Ronaldson castigated government senator

But in a staggering about face after the election the government has embraced its previously declared unfair indexation.



Penny Wong saying:

‘Senator Wong, I would like you to go back to South Australia and explain to the DFRDB men and women why you opposed **fair** indexation.’

That was **before** the election.

Before the election, indexation that was linked with increases in the cost-of-living only was declared by the Coalition to be **unfair** whilst indexation that was linked to increases in the

average-wage as well, was declared by the Coalition to be **fair**.

But in a staggering about face **after** the election, the Coalition has embraced its previously declared **unfair** indexation. It has announced it will, after the next election, on 1 September 2017, scrap the ‘**fair**’ indexation now applied to the Service Pension, TPI and other veterans disability pensions, the War Widows Pension, the Income Support Supplement and equivalent MRCA payments, and replace it with the indexation it declared **unfair before** the election.

Were we taken for a ride?

Did the Coalition promise **fair** indexation for a restricted group of military superannuants numbering round 56,000 simply to get veterans on side **for the election** knowing they’d get much more than their money

back by inflicting **unfair** indexation on some 280,000 veterans and war widows receiving some 310,000 pensions, **after** the election?

‘Fair is foul and foul is fair’ indeed. ■

Postscript.

Keeping its promise, the Coalition government has **fairly** indexed military superannuation pensions. Does the government also favour military superannuation pensions reverting to their previous ‘**unfair**’ indexation in 2017 along with all the other Veterans Affairs pensions?

Perhaps we won’t know till 2017. ■

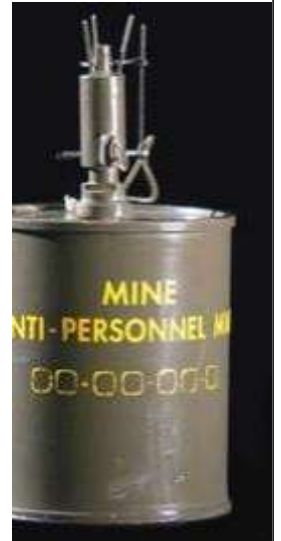


The Monument and the Minefield

Address – at the dedication of the memorial to the South Australian members of the Second Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, who died on active service – and for Tom Young who died after organising this event.

Adelaide, 24 April 2014

Greg Lockhart



This invitation to speak about why I wrote my book *The Minefield: An Australian Tragedy in Vietnam* is indeed an honour. This is especially in view of the battalion's extensive experience of mine warfare. In Vietnam, mines accounted for over a third of your people killed in action, including two of the nine South Australian members of the battalion listed on this memorial. So before I come to *The Minefield*, I would like to say something about this fine memorial to all nine of the South Australian members of the Battalion who have died on active service.

In Australian culture, memorials have long tended to have a dual function. They are sites of remembrance for everyone. For people like you, the families of the fallen and members of the wider battalion family, I would also say they are sites of sorrow. This is because your kind of grieving for loved ones and mates may be eased over time, but will never end.

I think people reserve a special kind of pride in and sorrow for those whose lives are tragically cut short in war. The fact that their

"I think people reserve a special kind of pride in and sorrow for those whose lives are tragically cut short in war. The fact that their names are embossed in metal and set on this stone shows that you believed their lives and deaths were special."

names are embossed in metal and set on this stone shows that you believed their lives and deaths were special. I know Tom Young did. And so it makes sense to think that those who pass this

monument a hundred years from now will still read their names and imagine that they must have belonged to special people – or just to ordinary people who did special things.

In that sense, I can now say that I wrote *The Minefield* to make a memorial for Vietnam veterans. Not one set in stone, although I hoped that the weight of the

research might make it as durable. The memorial I had in mind was a story that would give Australian Vietnam veterans and others interested in their war an independent context, in which they could judge what had happened.

To do that, I chose to write about the minefield. At the time, mining was generally thought to be a subsidiary form of warfare and was, without doubt, a darkly unglamorous one. Yet beginning in the late 1990s, I was impressed with the fact that the Vietnam Veterans' Federation led by Tim McCombe, who you all



Colonel (Retd) Gordon Hurford AM MID, Padre (Major) David Harding and Dr Greg Lockhart

know was seriously wounded on a mine with 2RAR in 1967, had been dealing with many mine casualties and asking unanswered questions about 'the minefield'. When I began to look into the issue, I became convinced of the need to bring the minefield out of the historical shadows. Far from being a secondary form of warfare, it became clear that the mine battle associated with 'the minefield' was central to the history of Australia's Vietnam involvement in more ways than one.

As I went on to show in the first part of the book, 'the minefield' was a projection onto the battlefield of the barrier mentality that established our strategic settings in relation to Asia in the 1960s. First Australian Task Force was deployed to Vietnam to help establish a strategic barrier

"One can criticise the decision to lay the minefield from many angles. But the overriding point is that the Australian commanders of the day did not know whom or where their enemy was."

against the perceived downward thrust of Communism in our region. In Vietnam, the Nui Dat base was established in central Phuoc Tuy province as a barrier to protect the main population centres in the southwest of the province from the communist main force units entering it from the northeast. The 11-kilometre long barrier minefield containing 20,000 powerful M16 mines was then designed as an extension of the barrier base into the south to further protect those population centres, mainly the village of Dat Do.

The laying of the mines revealed the fatal flaw in that barrier thinking: the commander who ordered the mining and those of his superiors who had concurred in his plans prior to it had not realised that the people he was trying to



people. Of these, 'our own' M16 mines killed at least 55 people, or something approaching a half of those 121, including almost certainly L/Cpl R.M. Woodford and possibly Pte J.C. Rivett who are listed on this memorial. The at least 55 killed on 'our own' M16 mines compares with the total of 77 Australians killed in bunker attacks. 'Our own' M16s also killed a further 42 Allied soldiers, plus an unknown number of civilians. In sum, M16 mines from 'the minefield' killed at least 97 Australian and Allied soldiers, while it should be added that over 420 of them were wounded, most seriously.

History might perhaps have been different. But it was not. By

shield in those villages were largely his enemy. Indeed, village people – initially young women from Dat Do – entered the minefield from the west, which is to say from within the villages the minefield was meant to protect. Once in the minefield, these village people and guerrillas would lift from 3000 to 5000 of the mines and turn them back against the Australian Task Force causing heavy Australian and Allied casualties. The disastrous flaw in the commander's plan could not be clearer: the enemy proved to be on both sides of the intended 'barrier'.

One can criticise the decision to lay the minefield from many angles. But the overriding point is that the Australian commanders of the day did not know whom or where their enemy was.

In the second half of the book I attempt to clarify the disaster, which is mainly to say, the mine incidents and casualties stemming from that astonishing high-level battlefield ignorance. The kind of battle encounters that caused most of the 500 Australian deaths in Vietnam were mine-and-booby trap incidents, including those on M16s.

All up, mines and booby traps killed 121

casting the story as an Australian tragedy, in which human folly was built into our strategic settings, I hoped that it would clarify some of the central aspects of the war, which have never been generally well understood. I also hoped that by highlighting the tenacity and staying power of the Australian Task Force in the face of the disaster, my story would align the sacrifice of its victims and the resolve of Vietnam veterans generally with the inspiring aspects of the story of Anzac, the centenary of which we are commemorating tomorrow.

To conclude where I began: I wanted to do much the same for the victims of the minefield as this monument does for the 9 members of 2RAR who died on active service. By carrying the story of those who perished and suffered on the minefield and mines generally into the future, I wanted my book to give them a stake in their own history. In relation to this, the existence here of a uniquely South Australian memorial reminds us of the strong communal feeling that the dead should rest among the living. ■

NOTICE

GENERAL MEETING

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

A General Meeting of NSW Branch members is required to vote on any change to the NSW Branch Constitution. The NSW Branch Committee has approved certain changes to the Constitution which seek to: 1. Clarify the rights of Life Members and 2. Correct a word which is inconsistent with the Constitution generally.

The General Meeting will be held at the office of the
**Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers
Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc.**
8 Mary Street ,Granville NSW
1030 hours on Wednesday 13 August 2014.

The proposals to vary the Constitution are:

AIM

To vary the NSW Branch Constitution to clarify the rights of a Life Member as eligible for election to the NSW Branch Committee.

VARIATION REQUIRED

Delete sub-section 20(2) in its entirety and insert the following in its place.

“(2) Persons eligible for election to the Committee are:

Ordinary members of the Association who are financial at date of election; and
Life members who have been awarded life membership by a NSW Branch Annual
General Meeting.

No employee of the Association shall be eligible for nomination to the Committee whilst
employed by the Association or within six(6) months of the termination of his or her
employment.”

AIM

To vary the NSW Branch Constitution to correct a word which is inconsistent with the
Constitution generally.

VARIATION REQUIRED

Delete the word “bi-annual” appearing in sub-section 20(d) of the Constitution and insert in-lieu
thereof the word “biennial”.

The variation will ensure that the above-mentioned sub-section is consistent with the
content of section 20(6) which states that “The Committee shall be elected each two (2)
years....”

No further business will be conducted at this meeting.

Frank Cole
Hon. Secretary
NSW Branch



Good News on childcare at Counselling Centres (sort of)



Readers will know that children of Vietnam veterans have had a 300% higher suicide rate than their peers in the general community.

As readers will understand, this tragic statistic arose partly from family dysfunction contributed to by veterans' war caused psychological illness.

There was no specialised counselling for those families till ten years after the war ended when the first VVCS centre opened in 1982.

But now there are some fifteen Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service centres round Australia. They are, we believe, at the front line in the effort to prevent that tragic statistic inflicting itself on the families of our Timor/Iraq/Afghanistan veterans.

So it is vital that all obstacles be removed that might impede young families seeking help there.

One obstacle for young mums is the need for child care while they attend counselling.

Often they will be able to have neighbours or family do the child minding, but sometimes these minders will not be available. Casual childcare at childcare centres is hard to find and, in any case, may be unaffordable for a family struggling with the effects of the trauma of war.

But the consequences of a young mum not receiving counselling could be family dysfunction

are suffering and welfare and health costs far, far exceed the cost of occasional child care.

We are pleased to report the Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson MP seems as concerned as we are.

He says:

"I understand your point that the availability of child care is an important issue for parents of young children attending counselling and other appointments, and I agree that childcare should not be a barrier to receiving support."

He also says:

"VVCS will continue to assist clients with young children and make special arrangements to ensure that young parents are able

to attend counselling."

For these sentiments we thank him.

So far so good.

His Department however is not so sure.

It seems to think that if by being flexible with timings or making other costless ad hoc arrangements can't solve the problem, then telephone counselling will do.

We disagree. It will not do. Telephone counselling, unless requested by the client or in an emergency, is no substitute for a face-to-face meeting.

The stakes are high. Those tragic statistics must not be allowed to reoccur. ■

**For these
sentiments we
thank the
Minister.
His Department
however is not
so sure.**



Western Australian Members

Computer crash.

E-mail addresses lost.

Please send an e-mail to the President to re-establish his data base.

Hello everyone and best wishes to you all, I sincerely hope that by now membership renewals are sorted and that you are receiving your journals from Granville.

I need to inform all WA Branch members that earlier this year my computer suffered a major nervous breakdown creating numerous problems for me.

Among many other things during the process of considering just how far I was prepared to go in spending more money on repairs to my relatively old computer I made the decision to convert to an Apple Mac as the spam and rubbish email traffic I was receiving was simply out of hand and a complete nuisance. Changing from Microsoft to Apple....No big deal however prior to the purchase of the Apple and in the meltdown on my old computer I lost a huge amount of information including all my email contacts and this included all the addresses for members of the Vietnam Vets Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Federation WA Branch which I had stored as a separate group for distribution of information. So you now know why you have not

received any email traffic from me for some time now.

All is not lost and in the process of changing computers, and also due to the rubbish traffic, I thought it was also a good time to change servers so I am now with Bigpond and the new address for the WA Branch is vvfawabranch@bigpond.com

What I would ask members to do is to please send me an email to that address and I will hopefully be able to set up the data base and group address book for continued distribution of relevant material.

I look forward to hearing from you all in due course and wish you all the best, any one who wishes to contact me can ring me on 94096682 or mobile 0407420472, I haven't managed to stuff my phone number up so look forward to your emails.

Kind regards to all.

Milton Kirk
President
VPPF WA Branch ■

THANKS FOR DONATING

A MESSAGE FROM THE NSW BRANCH

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

Donors to the NSW Branch of \$200 or more since the last Journal were:

\$20,000 Raymond Hopkins
 \$1,000 Amelia Jenkins, Colin Major
 \$300 Name withheld on request
 \$200 Kerry Davis, Michael Close, Geoff Riley

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

(as at 27 May 2014)



LONGTIME MEMBER SHOWS HIS SUPPORT

Ray Hopkins of Bateau Bay, an ex Navy and Air Force member, recently made a significant donation to our Association by simply walking into our office and presenting us with a cheque to the amount of \$20,000 and walking out leaving a few surprised volunteers in his wake. Ray served his country on two trips to Vietnam on HMAS Sydney and also spent time with the RAAF. He joined our Association in the early 80's when we were located in a small office owned by Granville RSL. A quiet man, Ray wanted no fuss to be made, rather he only wished to tender his support in this way. In making his kind gesture, Ray has become one of our largest individual donors ever. He did however agree to accept a plaque to mark the occasion. We offer our sincere thanks to Ray and assure him that his gesture will be well utilised in the ongoing support of all war veterans and ex-service personnel in this community.

Thanks Ray



NSW 2014 AGM

The NSW Branch held its AGM at Merrylands RSL Club on Saturday 24 May 2014. With no elections taking place or required until next year, it was low on attendances, but informative.

The President, **T. McCombe**, presented his report which included, but not limited to, the following:

- A total of 1740 claims were processed in the past year despite an Advocate shortage.
- Briefing on the work being performed by individual Advocates and filling of a vacancy.
- Outlined the successes we have had in relation to the SoP's.
- Update on progress being made to correct the Agent Orange history at the Australian War memorial.
- National Office briefing.
- Outreach programs to Darwin made possible through the ClubGRANTS system.
- Complimented B Bannerman on his efforts in lodging ClubGRANTS applications.

The Secretary, **F Cole**, presented his report, which included paying tribute to all volunteer staff working in both Granville office and in all NSW sub-branches.

- Reminder of S Emerson's work with the VVCS and its benefit to members.
- The Air Despatch Association of Australia has been accepted as an affiliate of the Association.
- Successes of the Outreach Program.
- Provided details on the sources of funds for the Association being personal and club donations, RSL Sub-Branch donations, Sub-Branch donations, BEST Funding, ClubGRANTS and NSW Government grants.

The Treasurer, **R. Freshfield**, presented the audited financial reports for the year ended 31 December 2013. Copies are available for perusal at the Granville Head Office, and made available to Sub-Branch executives as requested.

Congratulations to **Ken Thistlethwaite**, yours truly, **Bob Freshfield** from HO, and Dubbo Sub-Branch's **Allan Russell**, who were all honoured with **Life Memberships** of the NSW Branch.

In other news the Secretary explained the proposals to vary the Constitution to remove any ambiguity. Discussion took place and the meeting decided to accept the changes subject to their ratification by a General Meeting to be held at 1030 hours on Wednesday 13 August 2014. See page 37.

DENTAL SURGEON

DR PAUL A MATUSKO

B.D.S. (HONS) UNIV SYD

**NO CHARGE FOR ANY WORK FOR
GOLD CARD HOLDERS**

All areas of General Dentistry and
Denture work performed.

Health Fund Rebates accepted for most
procedures

For an appointment phone

02 9790 3458

Dr P A Matusko

435B Hume Highway

Yagoona NSW 2199

(Opposite railway station)

Dr NADIA VARDE

B ChiroSc. M Chiro

CHIROPRACTOR

PH: 9823 5555

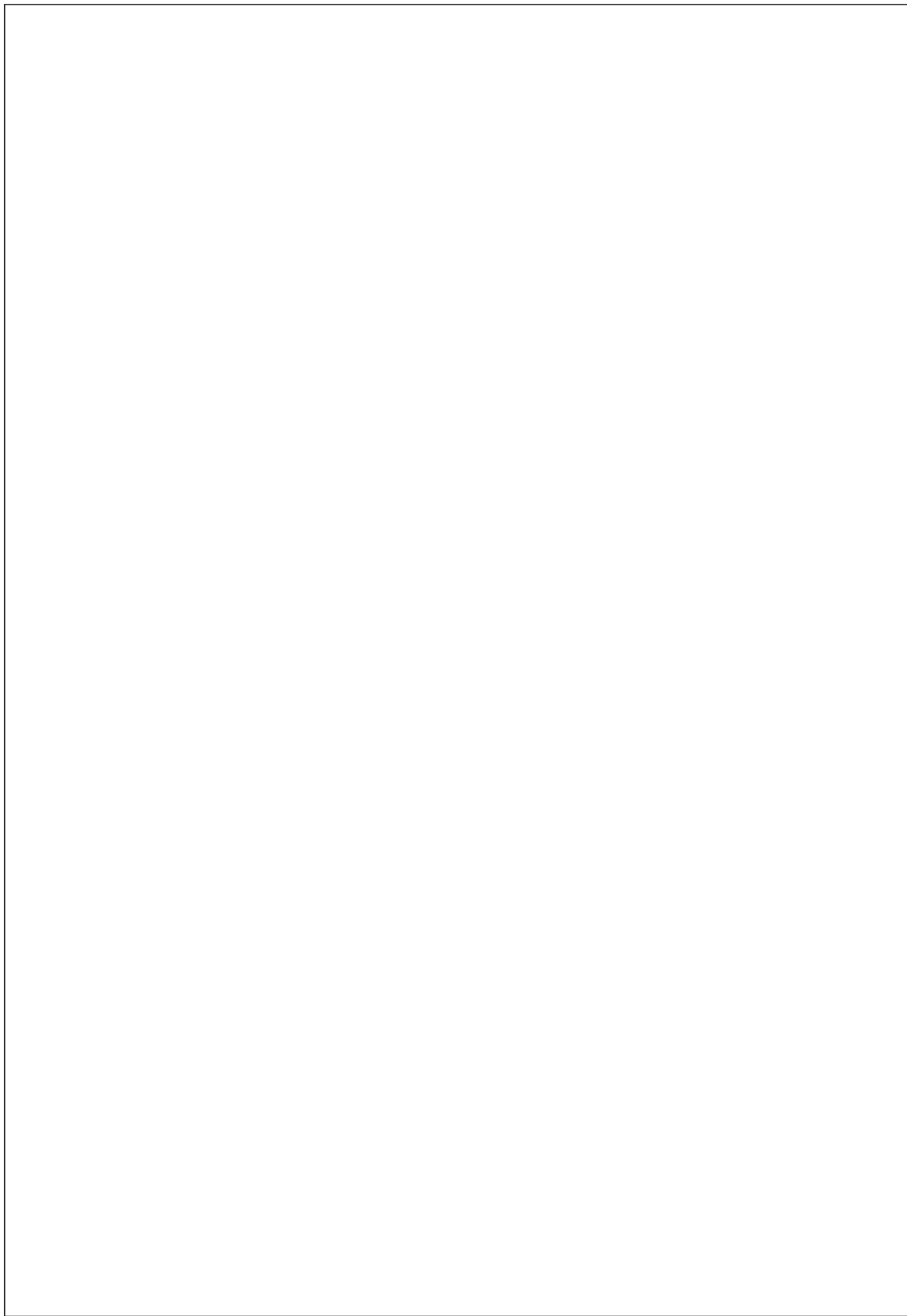
Greenfield Park Medical Practise

Shop 7 Greenfield Park Shopping Village
5 Greenfield Rd Greenfield Park NSW 2176

**NO CHARGE FOR ANY WORK FOR
GOLD CARD HOLDERS**

Ph: (02) 9823 5555

Fax: (02) 9823 5566



OUTREACH PROGRAM—PENSION TOURS 2012

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

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

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

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

The team will provide assistance and advice to ALL Veterans of ALL conflicts, including Peacekeeping and Peacemaking deployments. ALL personnel who served in the Armed Forces between 1973 and 1993

ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REPATRIATION BENEFITS. OUR SERVICES ARE FREE.

Contact: Dennis Hanmer (JP) Mob: 0428 388 221 Ph: 02 9682 1788 Fx: 02 9682 6134

Email: secretary@vfvfgranville.org Mail: VVPPAA (NSW Branch) Inc., PO Box 170, Granville. 2142



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**

DON'T THROW THIS JOURNAL IN THE BIN!!!!

When you have finished with this Journal, or, in some cases, when two are received in the one household, don't recycle through the rubbish collection. One option is to pass it on to a mate or leave it in a place such as your local doctor's surgery or some other public area. This will allow greater circulation of the Journal and inform others of our long-standing existence and of assistance which continues to be required to cater for the needs of current and former ADF members and their families.

LEAVE A GIFT 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.

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.



VVCS - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

A service founded by Vietnam veterans

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service provides counselling and group programs to Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families. It is a specialised, free and confidential Australia-wide service.

VVCS staff are qualified psychologists or social workers with experience in working with veterans, peacekeepers and their families. They can provide a wide range of treatments and programs for war and service-related mental health conditions including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Veterans Line can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and counselling.

Phone 1800 011 046.*

* Free local call. Calls from mobile or pay phones may incur charges.

The Cyclist & The Singer



Mateship

This is a story about two Vietnam veterans, David Murray and Clarence Ormsby who met by chance in a caravan park north of Pine Creek a few hundred kilometres south of Darwin in July 2012. It is a story about two men an Australian and New Zealander who became friends and will team up together during 2014 - 2018 to help Australians and New Zealanders reignite the ANZAC spirit as they commemorate the centenary of ANZAC.

The Cyclist

In May of 2012 David Murray set out from Narrabeen in Sydney on an Australian bike ride. The aim of the ride was to raise funds for the MIVAC TRUST, an organisation formed by Vietnam veterans, to clear landmines and assist victims of agent orange in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The route David chose took him to Townsville, three ways, Darwin, Broome, Perth and across the Nullabor to Ceduna. Unfortunately, during the ride from Penong to Ceduna David had a run in with a semi trailer which resulted in his being hospitalised, first in Ceduna, then in Royal Adelaide. Needless to say the accident put paid to the bike ride and David returned to Sydney via plane after spending five weeks in Royal Adelaide Hospital. An experience Clarence could well emphasise with as he had spent time in an Australian military hospital in Vietnam when injured at the Battle of Coral when 25 Australians lost their lives.



The Singer

Vietnam veterans are a hardy lot and in August this year David will return to Ceduna, where with the aid of his singer mate Clarence Ormsby, on the 18th August 2014 (Long Tan Day) David will resume his ride home to Sydney via Adelaide and Melbourne. This time David will not be towing a "bob" trailer. Instead he will have a support vehicle driven by Clarence, who in turn will be accompanied by his wife Janet and their poodle dog Pebbles. Along the way Clarence will conduct a number of small fundraising concerts the proceeds of which will be distributed to the two charities the boys support, namely the MIVAC TRUST and the safety of road users.

People can support this iconic ANZAC veterans journey making direct internet deposits to National Bank, 161 BTY RNZA 1ATF, Australia Group BSB: 082755 Account No: 145608375

Sponsorships for 2014 - 2018 ANZACS IN CONCERT projects can be directed to Clarence Ormsby JP NSW, P.O.Box 7072, Mannering Park NSW 2259 Australia. All funds will help young people develop their ability to perform in concert National and International sharing the pride of ANZAC.

Mobile 0447448636.....Email: crimehurts@gmail.com

The Cyclist & The Singer Ceduna to Sydney Tour



Day 1/	Ceduna to Poochera	132 kms	18/8/14
Day 2/	Poochera to Kimba	173 kms	19/8/14
Day 3/	Kimba to Port Augusta	153 kms	20/8/14
Day 4/	Port Augusta to Fishermans Bay	138 kms	21/8/14
Day 5/	REST DAY		22/8/14
Day 6	Fishermans Bay to Adelaide		23/8/14
Day 7	REST DAY ADELAIDE		24/8/14
Day 8	REST DAY ADELAIDE		25/8/14
Day 9	Adelaide to Murray Bridge	80 kms	26/8/14
Day 10	Murray Bridge to Pinaroo	157 kms	27/8/14
Day 11	Pinaroo to Ouyen	136 kms	28/8/14
Day 12	Ouyen to Arnaud	215 kms	29/8/14
Day 13	Arnaud to Ballarat	140 kms	30/8/14
Day 14	REST DAY AT BALLARAT		31/8/14
Day 15	Ballarat to Melbourne		1/09/14
Day 16	REST DAY AT MELBOURNE		2/09/14
Day 17	Melbourne to Benalla	150 kms	3/09/14
Day 18	Benalla to Albury/Wodonga	100 kms	4/09/14
Day 19	Albury/Wodonga	100 kms	5/09/14
Day 20	Tarucutta to Gundagai	60 kms	6/09/14
Day 21	Gundagai to Yass	140 kms	7/09/14
Day 22	Yass to Canberra	70 kms	8/09/14
Day 23	REST DAY CANBERRA		9/09/14
Day 24	Canberra to Goulburn	100 kms	10/09/14
Day 26	Goulburn to Mittagong	90 kms	11/09/14
Day 27	Mittagong to Sydney CBD	100 kms	Friday 12/9/14

David raised \$16,000 before he was swiped by a semi trailer at Penong. He has been rehabilitated and ready to revisit Ceduna to finish his fundraising journey Ceduna to Sydney. All funds raised will be donated to MIVAC TRUST to help victims of war in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and other areas. This is an ANZAC tribute project also acknowledging those who served World War One. This is also an opportunity over the next four years to say thank you to millions of families traumatised by war.

David Murray Mobile 0411292320

The Cyclist - Email: djyarrum@yahoo.com.au

Clarence Ormsby JP NSW, Mobile 0447448636

The Singer - Email: crimehurts@gmail.com

BRANCH LISTINGS

BRANCH LISTINGS

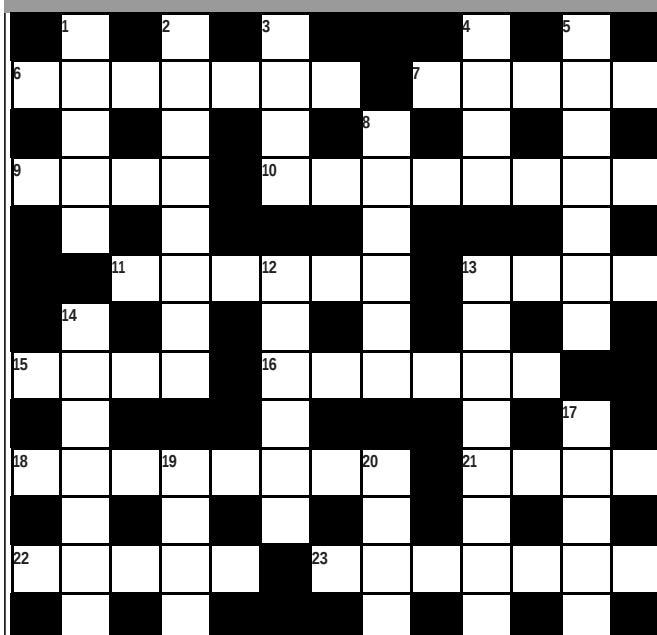
QUEENSLAND

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

REUNIONS, COMMEMORATIONS, NOTICES

CROSSWORD CORNER



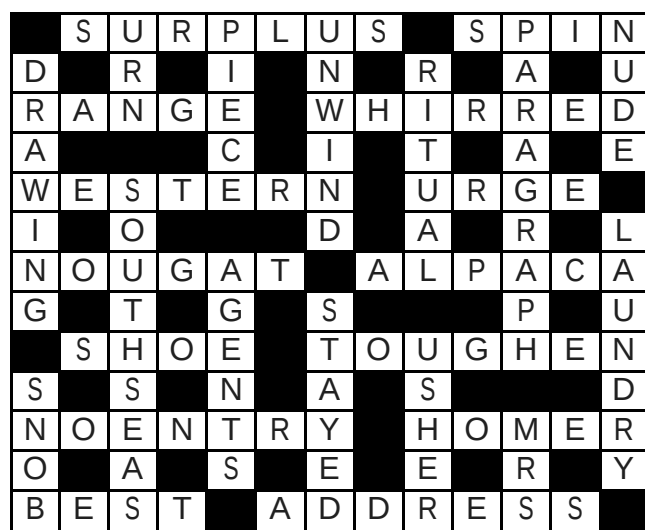
ACROSS

6. Frog larvae
7. Roman love god
9. Stereo
10. Eroded
11. Sign of zodiac
13. Evil giant
15. Major organ
16. Creature
18. Entering 6,2
21. Element
22. Enchantment
23. Meat cylinder

DOWN

1. Fundamental
2. Rebellion
3. Defect
4. Fish
5. Odd
8. Catastrophe
12. Cower
13. Obviously 2,6
14. Valentino
17. Wild dog
19. Girls name
20. Ark maker

Solution next issue



THE UNKNOWN COMIC

His Mum took five-year-old Johnny with her to the bank one busy lunchtime, and they ended up in a queue behind a very large woman wearing a business suit complete with pager.

After waiting patiently for a few minutes, little Johnny said out loud, "Wow, she's fat!"

His Mum, embarrassed, bent down and admonished little Johnny telling him to be quiet.

A few more minutes passed by and little Johnny stretched his arms out as far as they would go and said, "I'll bet her bum is this wide!" The large woman turned around and glared at little Johnny. His Mum, now quite mortified, gave him a good telling off, and told him again to be quiet. After a brief lull, the large woman's pager began to emit a 'beep, beep, beep'.

Little Johnny yelled out, "Run for your life, she's reversing!"

There is a new twist to the "Drive-By" menace in the area. Someone broke into my place and took nothing but the TV remote. Now they drive by and change the channels, or adjust the volume. Sick mongrels!

The Scottish wedding reception was well under way, and the DJ thought it was time for some fun. With a flourish he quietened the throng and asked, "Would all the married men please go and stand next to the one person who has made your lives worth living".

The bartender was almost crushed to death.

An Irishman had a bad start to the duck season. Everyone else was getting ducks and he wasn't. He finally realised his mistake. He wasn't throwing the dog high enough.

It was a bitter divorce, after five years of marriage and two children it was over. O'Reilly was before judge in Belfast with his ex to see what the verdict would be. Finally the judge hands down his decision, "I am awarding your ex-wife \$470 dollars a month." "That's really kind of you, to be sure" said O'Reilly, "I'll try to send her a little bit from time to time myself."

OPERATION Life



Operation *Life* workshops' emphasis is on suicide prevention – they aim to help members of the veteran community to recognise someone who might be having thoughts of suicide and to link them in with appropriate help. There are three types of workshops:

- Suicide alertness for everyone: (*Safetalk*) – half day presentation.
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: (*ASIST*) – Two-day skills training
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Tune-up: (*ASIST Tune Up*) – half day refresher workshop

Workshops are open to people who are concerned about veterans, their family, friends or mates in the veteran community. Welfare, pension officers and other helpers from ex-service organisations and the veteran community are encouraged to attend

REGISTER NOW!!

Phone Veterans and Veterans Counselling Service
on 1800 011 046 or 9761 5000



Veterans & Veterans Families Counselling Service
A service founded by Vietnam Veterans



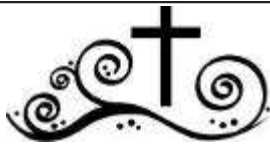
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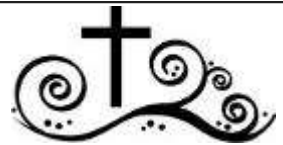


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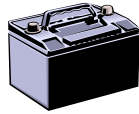
But each one, man by man, has won imperishable praise!

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

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	SMASH REPAIRS	BATTERIES	FLOOR COVERINGS
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. DO YOU KNOW ANY BUSINESS OFFERING DISCOUNTS FOR VETERANS. THEY COULD ADVERTISE HERE FOR FREE !! 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	 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 Ask for Alan Tell them you are a member and they will send us a donation.	 POWER PRODUCTS For all your power needs BATTERIES SOLAR POWER INVERTERS GENERATORS <i>Motor Cycle battery specialists</i> Russell is offering 15% discount to VVF Members on Batteries . 5% on Solar products, Inverters & Chargers 10% 3/3 Sovereign Pl Sth Windsor Ph: (02) 4577 7761 Fax: (02) 4577 7768 Motor Cycle Accessories Supermarket	 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 mem- bership card and ask for a “Golden Link” card to be issued. There is a 10% discount on room rates Australia wide
	TYRES	MOTOR CYCLE ACCESSORIES	
	 Beaurepaires Silverwater Cnr Silverwater Rd & Stewart St Now offering 10% Discount To VVF Members	Head Office. 111 Church St, Parramatta Ph: (02) 9633 1296 City Office 36-38 Wentworth Ave Ph: (02) 9261 5182 Liverpool Office 339 Macquarie St Ph: (02) 9601 8276 10% Discount except helmets and tyres	
	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		
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		YOUR FREE ADVERT HERE!! ENQUIRE AT 0421 690 959 <i>CONDITIONS APPLY</i>	BATTERIES 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

