



VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA

MARCH 2014

One brick at a time

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
New rules for compensation claims

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welfare.

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Our Cover

One Brick At a Time

Computer graphic by Bob Freshfield

CIRCULATION



For many years now the circulation of this magazine
has been over 8,000

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A Word From The Editor

Welcome readers, to 2014. I trust by now many of you have thrown off any hangovers, and this edition finds you all in good health.

With regrets I must report that the last Post in our last issue contained 3 errors. The parties have received our sincerest apologies and we refer readers to page 17 for our corrections.

If you want to check up on our scholarship recipients turn to pages 38/39 for Bill Robert's report.

Thank you to the many making very appreciative donations to the cause, and we list some of the donors on page 32. Please feel free to be encouraged by their efforts, beat their kind offers if you will, but never lose sight of giving to improve the status of your fellow veterans.

THANK YOU.

We are trying to sell 2 relocatable caravans and annexes on site in the Lake Macquarie NSW area. See page 33 for photos and details.

FOR NEW MATERIAL and COMPLIMENTS

Write, phone, or email:

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

'The Secretary'.

Email direct secretary@vfvfagranville.org

Telling the Vietnam story to your grand children

Here's a great way for your grandchildren to hear about the Vietnam war.

There's a troubadour touring schools telling the 'Vietnam story'. He tells it in music, in song and actions that keep his audiences enthralled.

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

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.

Cost: \$6.60. Tickets through Starrs Productions.

02-95193573

pstarrs@optusnet.com.au

'Shooey' Honoured



Shooey and the Vagabond Crew performed for the troops in Afghanistan

John Schumann, who wrote and performed the song that became Vietnam veterans' anthem, 'I Was Only 19', has been honoured on Australia Day.

The song, which ran at No1 for a record time in 1983, alerted millions of Australians to the unsatisfactory plight of so many Vietnam veterans.

His contribution did not stop with the song. He donated the Artist's Royalties and the proceeds of a concert to help us with our fight to have exposure to Agent Orange recognised as harmful. He has performed free for countless veterans' gatherings and has always been on hand to give us help and advice (especially when he worked in the political arena).

More recently 'Shooey' has been involved in a programme to educate our troops about PTSD.

In short, 'Shooey' has been, and continues to be, a valuable supporter of Vietnam veterans as well as veterans of more recent conflicts.

His service to the veteran community has been invaluable.

For this and his contribution to Australian music, 'Shooey' was appointed to the Order of Australia (OAM).

This was 'Shooey's' response.

"If, you know, I can use this award and the profile that it brings, to just continue to raise the care and support for the men and women we send away to fight our wars, then it'll be worthwhile."

We congratulate him.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Very Long Road to the Right Decision

There they are, infantry patrolling round the Long Hi mountains or out from Tarin Kowt.

They know there have been plenty of mine incidents there. In fact they have a splinter team of engineers with them trawling for mines or maybe there's someone out front prodding with his bayonet to clear a path.

And there's the casevac helicopter fitting itself into an improvised landing zone, its rotor blades clipping the branches. Or perhaps it's balancing with one skid on a rock and the other in mid-air for fear of detonating mines on the ground. The crew has taken these risks before to get the wounded to safety.

And there's the engineer, laying mines, lifting mines, defusing booby traps, clearing tunnels with a pistol and torch.

And what about the sailor. It's the Gulf War and the enemy threatens his ship with Exocet missiles and chemical agents. He fears being trapped below the waterline.

The thing is, they may not tread on a mine, or crash the helicopter or set off the booby trap or be hit by a missile but they all know they

are in real danger of those things happening. They know there is a real threat to their lives and the

lives of those around them in those dangerous environments.

The Vietnam Veterans Federation has believed for a long time that such experiences should be accepted as the cause of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, but they have not been. What has been necessary for acceptance has been an actual event like stepping on a mine, a helicopter crash, the booby trap explosion or a missile strike.

As readers may know, the Repatriation Medical Authority puts out lists of causes of illnesses known as Statements of Principle. To receive compensation for an injury or disease, the cause of that injury or disease must be one of those listed. In January 2008 a new Statement of Principle was issued on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. It again insisted on a single traumatic event.

As readers may also know, ex-service organisations can appeal against the contents or omissions in a Statement of Principle to a body of

It was a great win that will have a profound effect on the way compensation claims from veterans of the conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan are judged.



Afghan National Army and the First Mentoring Task Force (MTF1) soldiers cross an ADF-built bridge in the Mirabad Valley Region.

(Defence photo.)

experts known as the Specialist Medical Review Council.

So we immediately appealed arguing that the causes of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder should include the threat of serious injury or death and working in a malevolent environment, regardless of whether or not a life threatening event actually materialised.

The Repatriation appeals system does not, as many veterans can attest, move quickly. It was not till December 2010 that the Vietnam Veterans Federation was asked to answer a series of questions to clarify its position.

There followed exchanges of our claims and the Repatriation Commission's counter-claims and it was not till March 2012 that a hearing was held where VVFA National President Tim McCombe and scientific advisor, the eminent Dr Brian O'Toole, presented our case.

Having heard all the evidence and the concerns of the Repatriation Commission, the Specialist Medical Review Council made its decision.

At the standard of proof required for war and peacekeeping service (operational service) the Council came down on the side of Tim McCombe and the Vietnam Veterans Federation.

What the Council decided can be summarized as follows:

That Posttraumatic Stress Disorder might be caused by a person having a reasonable perception of threat and/or harm to the integrity of the self or a colleague as a consequence of being in any or all of a threatening, hostile, hazardous and/or menacing situation and/or environment.



And can you tell me,
doctor, why I still can't get
to sleep?
And night-time's just a
jungle dark and a barking
M16?

(Pension officers and Advocates should view the full wording now in the Statement of Principle at <http://www.rma.gov.au/SOP/main.htm>.)

It was a great win that will have a profound effect on the way compensation claims from veterans of the conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan are judged.

There is, however, room for interpretation and we are yet to see the guidelines produced by the Repatriation Commission for its Determining Officers. Perhaps the Repatriation Commission will attempt to squeeze the good will out of the decision by weasel-wording its guidelines. We hope not.

That's not the end of the story

And that's not the end of the story, or more correctly, that's not the beginning.

The story starts in 1994.

Before then, the Department decided on the causes of illnesses. If they rejected a veteran's claim for compensation on these grounds, the veteran could appeal to a tribunal, bringing along a medical expert to plead his case at the hearing.

In 1994 the Federal government moved to change this system. It introduced legislation establishing an independent body called the Repatriation Medical Authority. Its highly qualified members were to look at all available

medical evidence and decide on the causes of illnesses.

But the legislation did not include the right to appeal against the findings of the Repatriation Medical Authority.

This was disturbing to say the least.

Tim McCombe and the late (and very much missed) Ray Fulton went straight to the Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs, Senator Jocelyn Newman and advised her of this omission. As the government lacked a majority in the Senate, Senator Newman was able to block the passage of the legislation, sending it to a Senate Committee of Enquiry. Now alerted to the danger, all the major ex-service organisations argued before the Committee for an appeals body to be included in the legislation.

The government conceded and included the establishment of the Specialist Medical Review Council.

So far so good but in the Senate debate Senator Lees expressed a concern.

"... a number of veterans have expressed concern that there could be a delay in the consideration of an appeal. The minister's office has assured me that it will be an easy matter to ensure that these delays do not occur, certainly that there

are no undue delays in the consideration of appeals...”

It would, of course, be up to the Repatriation Commission to ensure this promise was kept.

That's still not the end of the story

In March 1995 the RMA produced the list of causes of prostate cancer in a Statement of Principle (SoP) but did not include smoking as one of those causes.

Believing the RMA was wrong to reject the link between smoking and prostate cancer, we lodged an appeal with the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC). That was in May 1995.

In January 1996 the Specialist Medical Review Council (SMRC) published its decision. It too rejected any link between smoking and prostate cancer.

But something was wrong.

Readers will know that the law provides for a special standard of proof when dealing with compensation claims from veterans with war or peacekeeping service. It is a standard of proof less onerous than that of a court.

We studied the Reasons for Decision and realised that the SMRC had made a fundamental mistake; it had not used the standard of proof applying to war and peacekeeping veterans in reaching its decision.

So we appealed the SMRC's rejection to the Federal Court. In November 1996, Justice Tamberlane ruled that, under the law as it then stood, his court did not have the jurisdiction to hear the case.

Immediately we transferred the case to the Supreme Court of NSW, but two years passed before the case was heard (August and September 1998). Another half year passed before the decision was delivered by Justice Greg James.

It was, however, a decision worth waiting for. In strong terms, Justice James agreed with our contention that the wrong standard of proof had been applied. This meant the case would be sent back to the SMRC to be reviewed using the correct standard. Or so we thought.

The Repatriation Commission, however, had other ideas. It appealed the decision to the NSW Court of Appeal. When challenged as to why it would take an action that would hold up a decision effecting hundreds, perhaps thousands of WWII and other veterans and their widows, the

Repatriation Commission claimed that, while it accepted the main decision on the standard of proof and the need to send the case back to the SMRC for review, there were peripheral issues that needed clarification.

More time passed. More time wasted. More WWII and other veterans died without knowing whether or not their wives would or would not become War Widows.

It was the best part of

another year before the case was heard.

When the case eventually came before the court, did the Repatriation Commission confine its arguments to peripheral issues? No it did not. Contrary to its pledge it argued that the standard of proof used by the SMRC was correct. Perhaps it hoped to gain advantage by springing a surprise.

But this deceit did it no good. When the judgment was delivered in March 2000 by Justice Jim Spigelman heading a bench of three judges, it came down firmly on our side and sent the case back to the SMRC.

More than a year passed before the SMRC revisited the decision. In August 2001, it declared it had not changed its mind; it still denied there was a link between smoking and prostate cancer.

But as far as we were concerned, the SMRC had done it again; it had employed the wrong

More time passed.
More time wasted.
More WWII and other
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or would not become
War Widows

standard of proof. It was very frustrating.

We appealed the SMRC decision to the Federal Court, which, because of a legislative change, was now able to hear the case.

Again time passed without a decision on whether or not those hundreds, perhaps thousands of veterans or their widows could apply for compensation.

It was not till June 2002 that Justice Moore brought down his decision. To our way of thinking it was a strange one. Whilst saying the wording of the SMRC decision did not obviously point to the correct standard of proof being applied, neither could he point to wording which showed it had not. He therefore found against us.

Not surprisingly, with the decision being so wishy-washy, we lodged an appeal with the full bench of the Federal Court.

The full bench of the Federal Court is an eminent body indeed. Its decisions are not taken lightly. The three judges hearing the case were Justices Branson, Emmett and Stone.

They brought down their judgement in November 2002. It was another one worth waiting for, confirming, as it did, that the SMRC had applied the wrong standard of proof.

Now there was the opportunity to decide the matter. It could go back to the SMRC which would follow the steps carefully and clearly laid down for it by the court. Surely, we thought, it would be in everyone's interests for that to happen.

But not, apparently, in the interests of the Repatriation Commission. It was not playing. It had a dirty trick up its sleeve in the form of a legal technicality. It pointed out to the court that the RMA had put out a new Statement of Principle listing the causes of prostate cancer, again rejecting any smoking-prostate cancer link. The Repatriation Commission argued that this new Statement of Principle superseded the previous one on which the years of court hearings had been based. Because that old Statement of Principle was superseded, the Repatriation Commission argued, all the decisions made by the courts over the last eight years were now null and



SOTG, After Afghanistan Painting by Ben Quilty

void.

The judges found in the Repatriation Commission's favour on this technical point. It

meant that the process would have to start again from the beginning.

Eight years of court cases for nothing.

Of course the Repatriation Commission did not *have* to present this argument. It could (and should) have been as keen as we were for the matter to be resolved. The Repatriation Commission should have let the case go back to the SMRC for resolution. But instead it blocked the process. We can find no other explanation than that the Repatriation Commission wanted to prevent the possibility of those veterans and their widows receiving compensation. We can find no alternative to labeling the Repatriation Commission's action as an act of bastardry.

Of course the Repatriation Commission's ploy made a farce of the appeals system. No matter to what point any appeal might progress, the RMA producing a new Statement of Principle would make all that progress null and void, making the appealing ex-service organisation start all over again.

A dog chasing its tail.

But we had no option but to start all over again.

In 2005 Tim McCombe again presented our evidence to the RMA.

The RMA again rejected the link and we again appealed to the SMRC.

In May 2011, the SMRC began hearing the appeal.

Yes, that's right, 2011. It took six years for the SMRC to get round to hearing the appeal on an issue vital to the future of so many veterans and their widows.

This was clearly not what the government had promised back in 1994, not what the Repatriation Commission should have ensured.

But this time, with the steps so clearly laid

down by the Full Bench of the Federal Court, the SMRC applied the correct standard of proof and decided that smoking and prostate cancer were linked.

The SMRC now follows the steps laid down by the Full Bench of the Federal Court in all its reviews.

It was because of this that we were able to win our appeal in the recently decided Posttraumatic Stress Disorder case.

Yes, our recent appeal in which we had 'threat to life' and 'malevolent environment' included as causes of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder could not have succeeded or even been made, but for those fights we had starting in 1994. Makes you wonder.

Yes, our recent
appeal ... could not
have succeeded or
even been made,
but for those fights
we had starting in
1994

But the fight's not over.

The Repatriation Commission still clings to rules that make the appeals system dysfunctional.

They cling to the rule that the SMRC may only use the evidence available to the RMA

when it made its decision.

Our recent appeal on PTSD was initiated in 2008. It was not heard till 2012. In that gap important new evidence emerged. The SMRC was not allowed to use that evidence in making its decision. If our appeal had failed, we would have had to start again even though with the new evidence our appeal would have succeeded.

They also cling to the rule that no matter to what stage an appeal has progressed, it is made null and void should the RMA produce a new Statement of Principle on that illness. Those appealing have to start the process all over again instead of the new Statement of Principle simply replacing to old and the appeal proceeding.

These absurdities can add and have added years to the duration of an appeal.

Why are they doing this to us? ■

Our New Minister

Senator the Honourable Michael Ronaldson

It's a great relief when a good Shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs remains in that portfolio when the Opposition wins government.

This is the case with Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson. He and his off-sider Robert Hardie made every effort in Opposition to understand veterans' issues.

More than that, Michael Ronaldson went in to bat for us, both in Senate Estimates Committee hearings and in the Senate itself.

There was an issue about which we felt strongly. We believed Counselling Service clients deserved privacy; they should be able to enter a counselling centre, have counselling and leave the centre without mixing with veterans and families visiting departmental offices. In Darwin, Lismore and Southport such privacy was sadly lacking. But the Repatriation Commission dismissed our demand that changes be made to afford privacy by stating veterans and their families were happy with the existing situation. Their intelligence source was certainly different from ours.

Senate Estimates Committees call senior

bureaucrats before them to answer questions. Senator Ronaldson was a member of the committee which brought before it senior bureaucrats of the

Department of Veterans Affairs. It was, we believe, his forensic questioning of them on the issue of counselling centre privacy that embarrassed the Repatriation Commission into action.

Now the situation in Darwin and Lismore is satisfactory, while action has been promised in Southport when the centre's lease expires.

In late 2011 a particularly odious piece of legislation came before the Senate. It gave the Repatriation Commission unrestricted powers on off-setting

compensation payments. For instance, take a veteran who has, some years previously, injured his ankle and received compensation. Now, he injures his knee. He is again compensated. However, under the new rules, the Repatriation Commission could 'off-set' the second payment against the first by saying that both injuries contributed to the same incapacity, namely, the 'mobility of the leg'.

In the end, the Senator didn't have the

What we found with Senator Ronaldson when Shadow Minister was that he listened and wanted to understand. And more than that, he was willing to take on the Repatriation Commission when he thought they were in error.

numbers to defeat the bill but did drag assurances from the government that guidelines preventing any such abuse would be drafted in consultation with the veteran community.

Then there is, of course, Michael Ronaldson's advocacy for military superannuation to be more fairly indexed. Over some years, the Senator introduced bills into Parliament seeking to give fairer indexation to military superannuants over 55 years of age. Indeed, it became a promise that should the Opposition win office at the 2013 Federal election, its first budget (May 2014) would include the change.

There are those who point out that this proposal unfairly excludes military superannuants under 55, does nothing to change the out-of-date life expectancy tables being used, fails to increase the percentage of superannuation payments for widows to align them with the more generous percentage paid to many parliamentarians widows, fails to make these pensions non-taxable in line with many other retirement pensions and certainly does nothing to remedy the money foregone while unfair indexation of military superannuation pensions have eaten away at their comparative value.

But fairer indexation for over 55s is a start and a most welcome one at that.

We shall continue to talk to the Minister about moving forward from this promising initiative.

Ex-service organisations that process compensation claims and provide advocates for appeals against claims rejected by the Repatriation Commission are eligible for some financial help from the government. The help only covers a percentage of the cost but it allows for a speedier service. Several years ago these funds were cut by about a quarter, putting enormous pressure on ex-service organisations straining to keep up with increasing workloads.

Amazingly, the new Minister has been able to restore this diminished fund. The extra money, or at least part of it, will go towards improving the pension officer and advocate training system.



What we found with Senator Ronaldson when Shadow Minister was that he listened and wanted to understand. And more than that, he was willing to take on the Repatriation Commission when he thought they were in error.

We hope this continues because we see the Repatriation Commission in serious error in its attitude to two issues in particular.

The first is their unexplained refusal to contemplate fixing the irrational rules regulating appeals from decisions of the Repatriation Medical Authority to the Specialist Medical Review Council; rules that make the system dysfunctional. (see previous article)

The second is the Repatriation Commission's refusal to take seriously the need to formalise arrangement for child care for young mums visiting the Counselling Service. We must, after all, do everything possible to prevent a repeat of that shocking statistic that the children of Vietnam veterans have had a 300% higher suicide rate than their peers in the general community. ■

Vietnam vets wives urge Afghanistan vets to seek help

Radio Interview

The ABC's Sally Sara reported this story on Wednesday, April 17, 2013

TONY EASTLEY: The wives of Vietnam veterans who saw their husbands come back from the war bearing the mental scars of the conflict are urging the families of soldiers returning from Afghanistan to seek help.

The wives say that many women married to Vietnam veterans waited more than 30 years to seek assistance. They don't want that same pattern repeated again.

Research shows the spouses of Vietnam vets have rates of some mental disorders more than 30 times the national average.

With more here's social affairs reporter Sally Sara.

SALLY SARA: The wives of some Vietnam veterans call it walking on egg shells. It's something they've done for decades: trying to keep their families going, while their spouse is affected by post traumatic stress, depression or anxiety.

Pat Cleggett from the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia hopes that the partners of Afghanistan veterans won't have to suffer in isolation.

PAT CLEGGETT: We might be a generation apart in age, but we've walked the walk. We've lived the life. We can offer them some avenues of where to go for help if they don't already know.

Well we're certainly finding that the wives have a very much higher rate of depression. More than half of the women have... would qualify for a depressive disorder. Now that's pretty nasty.

SALLY SARA: Mrs Cleggett says while it took a long time for the psychological injuries of Vietnam veterans to be acknowledged, it took even longer for people to understand that the spouses and children were deeply affected too - not just affected by the experiences of the veteran, but in their own right. She says many wives kept quiet for decades about the challenges of supporting husbands who had been changed by war.

PAT CLEGGETT: The walking on eggshells has been a horrendous thing for a lot of girls. It took me even a while to learn what... when I was pushing his buttons without realising it.

But we have to keep our own self esteem at the same time. We can't be walked over. We've got to be supportive without being sort of trampled on.

New data has been released from a national study on the mental health of partners of Australian Vietnam veterans.

Dr Brian O'Toole from the Brain and Mind Research Institute at the University of Sydney is one of the lead authors. He says 12 per cent of Vietnam veterans' partners are suffering from severe, recurrent depression.

BRIAN O'TOOLE: And that's 33 times higher than in the general Australian population - not 3.3 or 33 per cent, but 33 times higher.

SALLY SARA: Some initial results from the study were released in 2011 but Dr O'Toole says further data is now showing the depth and breadth of the problem for veterans' partners.

BRIAN O'TOOLE: Well we're certainly finding that the wives have a very much higher rate of depression. More than half of the women have... would qualify for a depressive disorder. Now that's pretty nasty.

SALLY SARA: The research is also tracking the mental health of the veterans. Dr O'Toole says 40 years after the conflict, many former soldiers are still suffering.

BRIAN O'TOOLE: If a doctor's got a veteran in their consulting room, check to see if the wife's in the waiting room. Make sure that she's not being overlooked.

SALLY SARA: Pat Cleggett from the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia says the families of more recent veterans must reach out if they are struggling.

PAT CLEGGETT: Don't wait 30 years like a lot of the wives of Vietnam veterans did. Get out there and seek help.

TONY EASTLEY: Pat Cleggett from the Partners of Veterans Association of Australia. Families of veterans seeking help can phone the toll free assistance line: 1300 553 835. The number's on the AM website.

National President Comments:

Veterans' war caused psychological damage puts families at risk. It's as simple as that.

Not taking this risk seriously can have dire consequences.

For Vietnam veterans those consequences have been the high rate of depression amongst veterans' wives and the shockingly high rate of suicide amongst their children.

There couldn't be better reasons to get help quickly.

And if you're the spouse of a veteran whose obviously got a problem but won't acknowledge it, go and see the Veterans and Veterans' Counselling Service yourself — before any damage is done to the family. The veteran will eventually thank you for it.

If you're a young mum with young children and no relatives to mind them, just take them along on your first visit. Even counselling with your children present is better than no counselling at all. After that ask what child care arrangements the Counselling Centre might be able to help you with.

And it wouldn't be a bad idea to get in touch with the Partners of Veterans Association. They have a wealth of experience in living with veterans with psychological damage. And their advice and support might just be the thing to set things right.

<http://www.pva.org.au/>

Dr Peter Hendy MP Replies

Peter Hendy is now the member for Eden Monaro in the Federal Parliament. His personal views on veterans matters have therefore become important to us.

As we reported in the November 2013 edition of this magazine, Peter Hendy was the Chief Executive Office of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2005 when it commissioned a paper proposing government expenditure cuts. Included in those proposed cuts were downgrading of the indexation of veterans' pensions and the abolition of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Dr Hendy's response to our article follows:

Dear Secretary,
I would like to comment on your recent article entitled *One to Watch*. This article was about a 2005 paper commissioned by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), when I was the Chief Executive of that organisation.

For the record it was a discussion paper prepared by an independent consultant, Mr Des Moore, a former Treasury Deputy Secretary, who wrote a piece broadly about possible budget cuts. It was designed by Mr Moore to be a provocative thought-piece about ways of getting the overall Budget in order.

The key point is it was not ACCI policy and was never adopted as such. Indeed that was communicated by ACCI to your journal at the time. Nor have these policy positions ever been my personal views.



Fast forward eight years and this paper resurfaced during the 2013 federal election campaign in Eden-Monaro when I ran as the Liberal candidate against the ALP incumbent, Mike Kelly. It was circulated by my political opponent at a media event, with the claim that it represented my personal views on taxation, budgets and other policy areas such as Veterans Affairs. A similar false claim has now appeared in your journal. There is also an email doing the rounds in the veterans community which has a concocted email purportedly from me which quotes me advocating reducing service pensions and abolishing the DVA— both claims being absolutely false and defamatory. Can I suggest the political games continue. Clearly there is an orchestrated campaign afoot. But to create anxiety in the veterans' community in this way is a low act.

All I ask as the new Member for Eden-Monaro is that the Coalition is judged at the end of this term by what it has delivered for Veterans.

Dr Peter Hendy MP is now the Member for Eden Monaro in the Federal Parliament. His personal views on veterans' matters have therefore become an important matter to us.

Labor had six years to sort out the pension issue for Veterans and squibbed it. In fact when in Opposition the Coalition put an increase in Veterans entitlements up in a Bill and Labor voted it down!

As we said during the campaign, a Coalition government will ensure that DFRB and DFRDB military superannuation pensions are indexed in the same way as aged and service pensions. Our commitment will apply to DFRB and DFRDB superannuants aged 55 and over. Under the Coalition, 57,000 military superannuants and their families will be better off.

I just wanted to set the record straight.

Dr Peter Hendy MP, Member for Eden-Monaro

We responded to Dr Hendy's letter as follows:

Dear Dr Hendy,

Thank you for your letter concerning the article titled, *One to Watch* in November 2013 edition of our journal.

It is comforting to know that you disagree with Des Moore's proposal that the indexation on Veterans Affairs pensions should be made less generous and that the Department of Veterans Affairs should be abolished.

Your letter suggests that we should have known of your disagreement.

We refer to a statement by you about the cuts proposed in Des Moore's paper reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 2 May 2005 in an article titled, *Old, sick to pay for ACCI tax cuts*. The article reads as follow:

Chamber chief executive Peter Hendy said

if people wanted tax reform, they also had to find ways of funding it.

"It is just not possible to legitimately talk about taxation reform in this country without also looking at major expenditure cuts," he told reporters.

"If you want to talk the talk on tax cuts you have to walk the walk on expenditure cuts.

"The reason it needs to be done because we need major tax reform in this country."

No hint there of disagreement.

In The Adelaide Advertiser, 18 May 2005 in an article titled *War veterans up in arms over pay reform plan*, you are reported as saying:

"The report includes challenging proposals across the board, including a 20 per cent cut to business welfare."

It seems to us you were saying that if business welfare was cut by 20 per cent, that we all should be willing to cop cuts.

These statements suggest that far from disagreeing with the cuts proposed in Des Moore's paper you were an apologist for them. We therefore feel justified in our concern.

However we are pleased our concern is unwarranted as you make clear in your letter that you do not support Des Moore's proposed cut for veterans.

As for the election, we played no part in it.

If there are any orchestrated political games afoot, we are playing no part in them.

Yours sincerely,
Tim McCombe
National President

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

2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA

The 2014 Annual General Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans, Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc; will be held at Merrylands RSL Club 10.30am Saturday, 24 May 2014.

AGENDA

- Opening of Meeting by the Chairman
- Apologies
- Confirm the Minutes of the AGM 2013
- Business Arising from the Minutes of the AGM 2013
- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Secretary's Report
- Membership Report
- Appointment of Association Auditors
- Appointment of Association Legal Representatives
- Life Membership proposals (Bob Freshfield and Ken Thistlethwaite)
- Other Business by leave of the Chairman
- Close of Meeting

Any items for General Business must be in the hands of the Secretary by close of business

on Monday 4 May 2014.

Next AGM to be held on a date to be confirmed during May 2015.

Frank Cole
Hon. Secretary
NSW Branch

APOLOGIES

LAST POST NOTICES

Notification of a veterans passing are reported to us from a variety of sources. They come from family, relatives and friends, as well as, from our State Branches and Sub-Branches and RSL Branches. DVA also issue a list several times a year sourced from their own records.

Whilst we make every endeavour to ensure the accuracy of all names published within our "Last Post" article, we apologise unreservedly when ever an error occurs.

Unfortunately, in our November / December 2013 issue our last Post article included three (3) errors, for which we are deeply regretful, and the persons affected have received our apologies.

We have found that the source of our errors all arose from the same outside source misreported to a sub-branch. We sincerely apologise to the families, relatives and friends of the following veterans:

43816 Pte W Pretty 2 Comp Ordnance Depot

212935 Cpl R Walker 6 RAR, and,

55339 2Lt T McGovern 1 ARU & 7 RAR



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Yass RSL Centenary Exhibition Memorabilia Wanted

The 25 April 2015 will mark the 100th anniversary of the landing at Anzac. Thousands of young Australian Men and Women enlisted into the service of our fine Nation to fight in the war to end all wars, The Great War. The flower of Yass' youth were of no exception and were equally as quick to join the calling to arms and enlisted to do their part.

The members of the Yass RSL sub-Branch are looking to put together an exhibition in April 2015 to mark the occasion, to remember the contributions and sacrifices that the people & families of the Yass Area made. From within every family, there are stories about the young men & women out there from the Yass Valley just waiting to be told. Some are tragic, some are bold & brave, and others are quite humorous. These stories can be told through letters, photographs, and memorabilia, etc.

Hence, we wish to seek the assistance of the people of Yass, the surrounding Yass Area, and those with a past connection to Yass, to put together the exhibition and mark this special occasion. We are seeking any members of the general public who are prepared to assist and contribute through the loaning of photographs, letters, and other pieces of memorabilia, etc., for the period of the exhibition.

No matter how small the contribution, every piece will help to create a larger story of those of the Yass Valley who played their part towards victory, both at home and on the battlefield.

If you are able to assist or contribute in anyway, please contact the Yass RSL Sub-Branch's primary point of contact for the project, Mrs. Jan Wilson, on 6226 6222. The alternative point of contact is the Honorary Secretary, James Ward on 6226 6046.

James Ward
Honorary Secretary
Yass RSL sub-Branch

Do you remember Marrickville Induction Centre (Marrickville Army Depot)

The ADDISON ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE is located in what was once, from 1913 until 1972, the "Marrickville Army Depot", and known to many Vietnam Veterans as the "Marrickville Induction Centre".

Since 1976, ARCC has supported community organisations, environmental groups, arts organisations, local artists, as well as cultural and multicultural associations through the provision of services, programs and space within the Centre's beautiful grounds. Importantly, ARCC is also a place of diversity where people of all cultures, ethnicities, ages and abilities can meet, learn, contribute and have fun.

Currently they are interested in finding out more about the establishments past and have asked our help to see if our readers can provide an insight into some of your own experiences when passing through.

If you can answer theses questions then maybe you would be kind enough to give them a call.

Did you report to the Marrickville Army Depot?

Did you work there?

Is this where you said goodbye to family and friends upon induction into the army?

If so, then they would be grateful for your stories, memories or photos. Please let them know.

Contact the 'Talking History Project'
Addison Road Community Centre
142 Addison Rd, Marrickville 2204.

Phone: 02 9569 7633

Email: addisonhistory@iinet.net.au

Check out their website: <http://addisonrdcentre.org.au>

I well recall the 23rd intake of the 10th call-up on 8 July 1970, does anyone else...ED.



The New South Wales government is kindly paying for the (badly needed) painting of our NSW Branch offices at Granville.

This is much appreciated as all the money we can scrape together goes towards our system of processing of compensation claims and appeals going smoothly and quickly and representing veterans' interests.

And the workload is increasing with our office processing over 1,000 claims and over 300 appeals last year. And it should be noted that round half of our clients are contemporary veterans.

The State Minister for Veterans Affairs and

the local member were shown round our two office complexes before presenting us with \$15,000 for their painting.

It is much appreciated.

In the photo above from right to left:
 Bill Roberts OAM, VVFA National Secretary,
 Hon. Victor Dominello MP, NSW Minister for
 Veterans Affairs, Minister for Citizenship and
 Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs;
 Tim McCombe OAM, VVFA National
 President; Mr Tony Issa OAM MP, Member for
 Granville, Mr Tao Bai, Hon Secretary &
 Treasurer of Granville RSL Sub-Branch. ■

War Artist's Paintings on Tour

Ben Quilty's paintings
are touring
in an exhibition called :
After Afghanistan

It is well worth visiting.

Gallery	City	State	Start	Finish
Griffith University Art Gallery	Brisbane	QLD	12 April 2014	7 June 2014
Flinders University City Gallery	Adelaide	SA	27 September 2014	30 November 2014
Australian War Me- morial Special Ex- hibitions Gallery	Canberra	ACT	12 December 2014	27 May 2015

Here's How You Can Help the Rehabilitation of Troubled Veterans

Dear Friends, supporters and sponsors,

I am writing on behalf of the Veterans Sporting Association to seek your support for our "Warriors Walk to the Whitsundays".

I have been granted approval to fundraise on behalf of the Veterans Sporting Association for the Warriors Walk to the Whitsundays.

The Veterans Sporting Association (VSA) formerly the double diamond integrated combat club INC is a charity of veterans supporting veterans to maintain healthy habits and gain training and employment opportunities post service.

In this first ever Warriors Walk to The Whitsundays, participants will walk from Townsville to Airlie Beach in the Whitsundays (275km) over the period 20th – 23rd March 2014, to raise money for the VSA which will be put helping soldiers in Townsville.

Participants will consist of veterans, ex-serving members, family and friends of returned servicemen and women who wish to show their support and raise money.

Because this event is quite long and physically demanding, we are seeking local businesses to help out in donations for our participants. We are seeking food, drink, and monetary donations to help make our event fun, rewarding and safe, as well as to raise money for the VSA.

With the Townsville area having such a high number of currently serving and ex-Defence members, nearly everyone knows of a veteran who has struggled when they have returned home from deployment, or completed their military service. This fundraiser will raise monies which will assist veterans to integrate back into the community, encourage them to socialise in healthy environments, gain qualifications to assist them with employment opportunities and eventually open a facility for them to access for ongoing support.

Please seriously consider this request and let your neighbours, your customers, and your community know that you are supporting this worthwhile cause.

If you would like more information about the VSA and it's goals for the future, please feel free to call

Kind Regards,

Ian Bone

Event Organiser/Participant / 0400999544 / ianbone@bigpond.com

Direct donations can be made to:

Westpac

Double Diamond Integrated Combat Club INC

BSB 032379

Account 292031

Please email details so that you can be given a certificate and a receipt.



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

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia



2014

1ST JANUARY to 31ST DECEMBER

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

SURNAME		FIRST NAME		SECOND NAME	
ADDRESS					
SUBURB / TOWN				STATE	POST CODE
TEL.(HOME)		TEL.(WORK)		TEL.(MOB)	
SERVICE NUMBER		SERVICE UNIT		Overseas area of Operational service	
NEXT OF KIN FULL NAME		CONTACT No.		RELATIONSHIP	
SUBSCRIPTION		Qty		PAYMENT OPTIONS Payment may be made by Credit Card, (phone or post), Cheque, Money Order, or by cash if paying in person. Make all Cheques & Money Orders payable to: VVPPAA (NSW Branch) Inc. Post to: PO Box 170 Granville 2142 Remember to endorse the reverse of any Money Order before posting to this office. It protects you if separated from form. Please note that more items of memorabilia may be available at your local Sub-Branch office. Contact Head Office on 02 9682 1788 for further advice. Email: secretary@vfvagranville.org	
FEDERATION PLAQUE			\$30.00		
			\$34.00 + P/H \$4.00		
BELT BUCKLE (Various)			\$28.50 + P/H \$2.30		
FEDERATION CAP & LOGO			\$17.50 + P/H \$4.30		
FEDERATION BADGE			\$8.30		
FEDERATION PATCH			Check		
FEDERATION STICKER			Check		
ASSORTED STICKERS			\$6.00		
DONATION					
TOTAL PAYMENT					

PAYMENT METHOD (Tick one box only)* All prices are AUD\$

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2 Volume Boxed Book Pack

CANISTER! ON! FIRE!

Australian Tank Operations in Vietnam

Canister! On! Fire! tells the remarkable, but little known story of Australian tanks in the Vietnam War. Based on twelve years of research, including personal letters and diaries, extensive searches of official records and numerous interviews, this book brings to life a previously unheralded aspect of the conflict. It is the story of a select group of soldiers, both regular and conscript, serving their country against all odds.

The 53-tonne Centurion tanks were not only involved in intense fighting in conjunction with infantry and artillery to capture enemy defences and defeat attacks, but also fought their own battles against enemy mines, ambushes, and an unforgiving terrain and climate.

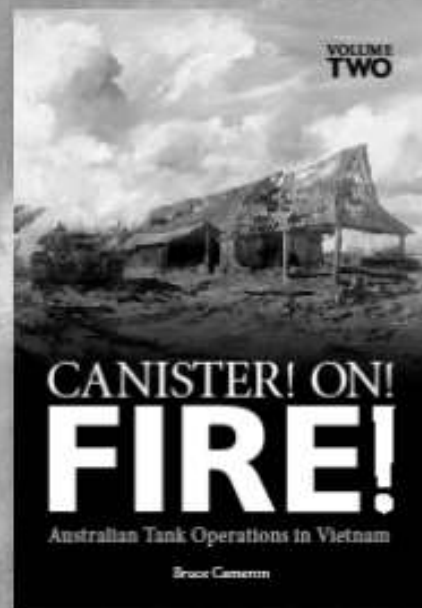
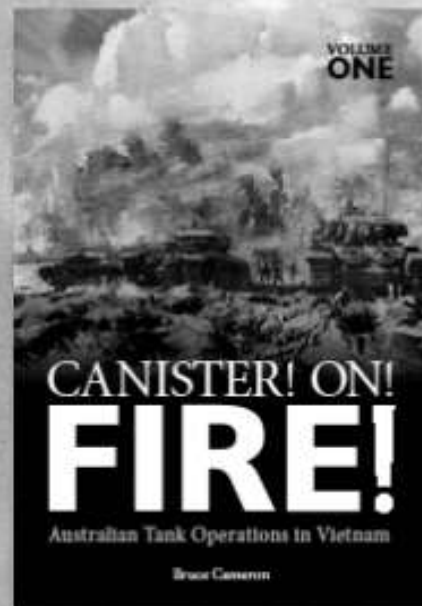
This book takes the reader inside the tanks to share the experiences of their crews in action in the jungle. We see the gunner, trying to survive the heat inside the turret, while identifying designated targets; the operator trying to maintain communications, while keeping the guns loaded; the driver, trying to see his way forward, while keeping his head down; and the commander, trying to locate enemy positions, while directing his driver and giving fire orders to his gunner. The account also reveals how the mechanics overcame extraordinary challenges to maintain the twenty-year-old tanks, while the field engineers risked their lives protecting them against mines.

In 1968, the deployment of a squadron from 1st Armoured Regiment was controversial; their Centurions were considered totally unsuited to jungle warfare. Not only did the men and machines prove their worth, but they became an indispensable part of Australian combat operations. So much so, their subsequent withdrawal was equally as controversial as their deployment.

This exciting and enthralling narrative deserves to be read, not only as a military history, but also as a contemporary account of the resolute attitude of Australian soldiers often asked to do the impossible.

About the Author

Bruce Cameron served in the Australian Regular Army for 19 years. After commanding the last troop of tanks in action in Vietnam, his career saw him attend the UK's Long Armour Infantry Course and Royal Military College of Science, as well as the Australian Command and Staff College. His last appointment involved responsibility for developing the Army's future ground mobility requirements. He left the Army in 1987 to take up a position with the Office of Defence Production. Now retired, Bruce lives in Canberra with his wife Jasmine.



Specs

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Membership No. _____

Signature _____

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VETERANS MORTALITY REPORT

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

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

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

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

Please print clearly

Veterans' 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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**The Welfare Officer,
PO Box 170,
Granville, NSW 2142**

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

PTSD? A Way Forward

www.warriorsreturn.com.au



The Warrior's Return is a group of retired Infantrymen with PTSD, Anxiety, Depression and who have been medically discharged from the Australian Army.

We have discovered we were not broken, that there is a way forward to lead satisfying and rewarding lives and we want to share how with you.

One of the most important things we have learnt is that a job won't fix PTSD on its own. You need to re-establish a sense of self, a sense of purpose and discover a new worthwhile 'mission'. This is 'psychosocial rehabilitation'.

We have forged a partnership to benefit current and future Veterans.

We have been unhappy with the rehabilitation and care provided by traditional models and agencies and are revolutionising how the next generation of war fighters are going to be able to transition back into civilian life.

The Warrior's Return is a non-profit organisation that invests back into the health, wellbeing and psychosocial rehabilitation of veterans and their families.

We are an agile organisation that responds to grassroots needs. We are a responsive and empathic group that is not encumbered by the 'ball and chain' of bureaucracy, traditional organisational structures and no firsthand experience of Mental Health.

The founders of the organisation are:



Kyle Tyrrell

kyle.tyrrell@warriorsreturn.com.au

Todd Berry

todd.berry@warriorsreturn.com.au

Garth Camac

garth.camac@warriorsreturn.com.au

Liana Von Sanden

lianavonsanden@warriorsreturn.com.au (unpictured)



**Office of Australia War Graves wants to
contact the relatives
of those listed below seeking good photos
for the 'Wall of Faces'
planned for Education Centre being built
adjacent to the US Vietnam Veterans
Memorial (known as 'The Wall') in
Washington DC.**

**If you can help please contact the
Office of Australian War Graves on
(02) 6225 4487 or email vvec@dva.gov.au.**

Serial	SURNAME	CHRISTIAN NAMES	DATE OF DEATH	SERVICE NO/	RANK	UNIT	CAUSE OF DEATH
1	ALLEN	Norman George	10 November 1967	2784699	PTE	7 RAR	KIA
2	AYLETT	Donald Raymond	6 August 1967	38110	T/CPL	7 RAR	KIA
3	BAIN	John	12 July 1970	16667	SGT	AACC	MVA
4	BIRSE	Robert Graham	10 December 1967	215349	LT	4 FD REGT	DOW
5	BOND	John Albert	25 April 1969	21977	WO2	AATTV (RAAC)	KIA
6	BUCHAN	Robert	11 December 1969	55613	PTE	6 RAR	KIA
7	CHECKLEY	Thomas William	5 August 1966	311534	GNR	RAA	Accident
8	COXON	Ronald Edward	13 January 1966	38012	L/CPL	1 RAR	KIA
9	DAVISON	Walter Johnston	27 January 1968	311546	PTE	8 FD AMB	KIA
10	DUFFY	Kenneth Allan	8 March 1970	1735143	PTE	6 RAR	KIA
11	EVANS	Paul	8 October 1968	1732701	PTE	1 RAR	KIA
12	FALLON	Barry Edmond	10 November 1967	216906	PTE	7 RAR	KIA
13	FEWQUANDIE	Francis John	4 December 1967	1411181	PTE	2 RAR	KIA
14	FITZGERALD	Jack	17 April 1970	27974	WO2	AATTV (RAINF)	KIA
15	FREEMAN	John William	15 October 1967	2226078	T/CPL	Det1 Div Int Unit	Accident
16	GOULD	Eric George	21 December 1969	55890	PTE	8 RAR	KIA
17	GREENE	John Gerald	8 December 1969	2791447	SPR	1 FDSQN	KIA
18	GRILLS	Edward Anthony	12 February 1966	215418	PTE	1 RAR	Drowned
19	HARTNEY	Gilbert John	27 January 1971	34854	WO2	RAEME	Illness
20	HEWITT	Ronald David	21 June 1972	A118817	LAC	RAAF	Illness
21	HILLIER	Reginald Hedley	29 November 1965	42774	CPL	1 RAR	KIA
22	HOBAN, BEM	William Joseph	28 February 1970	15400	SGT	8 RAR	KIA
23	HOOD	Ronald Dean	16 June 1966	4410911	PTE	1 ARU	KIA
24	HUGHES	Robert Edward	22 April 1970	44897	Private	7 RAR	DOW
25	JACKSON	Peter Joseph	15 June 1969	2789790	PTE	5 RAR	KIA
26	JAMES	Barry	5 June 1969	1201885	PTE	6 RAR	KIA
27	KERR	James Kelly	13 May 1969	218508	TPR	1 ARMD REGT	KIA
28	KINGSTON	Ian William	3 September 1969	1734754	PTE	6 RAR	KIA
29	KNIGHT	Peter Raymond	15 December 1970	A318937	LAC	RAAF	Accident
30	LEE	Errol John	11 May 1969	235328	LT	5 RAR	KIA
31	LOGAN	Barry Arthur	28 March 1967	38324	SIG	552 SIG TP	KIA

Continued next page



32	MATHEWS	Geoffrey Francis	9 February 1968	5714739	PTE	3 RAR	DOW
33	MAZA	Reginald Nelson	12 February 1970	15142	L/CPL	3 RAR	Illness
34	MCINERNEY	Neil Anthony	7 October 1968	217514	PTE	1 RAR	DOW
35	MITCHELL	David	23 July 1968	1201249	PTE	1 ARU	Accident
36	MORGAN	John Leslie	1 June 1970	3795756	PTE	2 AOD	MVA
37	MORRISON	Dayle William	26 January 1968	1732186	PTE	2 RAR	KIA
38	MURRAY	Peter Eris	9 July 1968	2788524	PTE	RA INF	KIA
39	NEAL	Dennis William	29 May 1970	1735386	PTE	2 RAR	KIA
40	PESONEN	Timo Eska A	28 February 1970	7154	PTE	8 RAR	KIA
41	RHODES	Maxwell Lachlan	19 September 1971	2796378	PTE	4 RAR	KIA
42	RICHARDSON	Neil Thomas	27 August 1970	218697	L/CPL	7 RAR	KIA
43	ROSS	Grant Stuart	9 February 1971	17101	CAPT	HQ AFV	Accident
44	RUDDY	James	30 May 1967	214360	T/SGT	Det 55 AESS	Illness
45	SCHUIT	Martinus Jacobus M	22 October 1970	4720852	SPR	17 Const SQN	Injuries
46	STAHL	Donald Matthew	29 October 1968	21934 (NX164568)	CPL	RAE	Unknown
47	STEVENS	John George	23 January 1970	313122	PTE	5 RAR	Accident
48	TALBOT	ALAN	1 February 1971	3797623	PTE	7 RAR	KIA
49	THOMAS	William Malcolm	26 May 1968	4718911	PTE	3 RAR	KIA
50	TULLY	Desmond John	29 May 1970	2792375	PTE	2 RAR	KIA
51	WHITTON	John Hunter	13 May 1968	311532	CPL	1 RAR	KIA
52	WILSON	Kevin Ronald	16 February 1968	3411951	PTE	2 RAR	KIA
53	WOOLLEY	Ivan Alfred	11 December 1969	A118435	LAC	RAAF	Injuries
54	WORLE	Jeffrey Thomas	28 May 1968	3790789	PTE	3 RAR	KIA

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

Garry Loveridge in WA. Writes;
To President & Secretary
Compliments of the season.

Re Meentheena Veterans Retreat

I have just enclosed a little info on a veterans retreat being established at Meentheena, an old abandoned cattle station 75Kms east of Marble Bar, along the Nullagine River. The retreat has a dirt airstrip for light aircraft and the Flying Doctor craft. There is a full medical emergency kit and first aid room.

There is limited accommodation at present as it is our intention to establish several camping sites along the river for your own bit of privacy. So you are welcome to pull up with your camping gear or caravan anytime soon. We hope to have a Main Camp site completed as a get together for 'Happy Hour'.

It's a safe place along the river to relax on the banks, swim without Crocs, or just fish away the day. You might even like to try your hand at prospecting (Miners license required), as there is gold in the area. There is a Campsite host who lives in-situ, and is willing to show visitors around for a small fee, to cover the cost of fuel.

The camp is powered by solar energy with conversion to 240v. Water is supplied via a bore, and we have established 3 caravan shaded areas adjacent to the main camp, with plenty of sight-seeing to do from there. All food and fuel must be brought with you and all litter removed as you leave.

It's a great place for those who enjoy relaxing, watching the wild life, or taking in aboriginal paintings and carvings.

I hope this letter has been of interest, and invite visitors to our website at

<http://www.veteransretreatswa-meentheena.org>

Contact us on facebook or email us as we would be glad to hear from you.

Have a safe year, enjoy life while you can.

It's only a short one. Regards, Garry.

From: Ron Aitken

[mailto:aitken_atis@optusnet.com.au]

Sent: Thursday, 23 January 2014 1:48 PM

To: secretary@vvfagranville.org

Subject: Vietnam Insecticide Use.

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the articles re the use of insecticides in Vietnam in the Nov/Dec 2013 Journal. The information did not surprise me and proper exposure of this issue is long overdue. However, in discussing pesticide use in the AUS Army bases in Vietnam, the articles do not cover the effects of pesticides on the personnel of No. 2 Sqn, RAAF while based at Phan Rang (USAF Base South of Cam Ranh Bay).

I served approximately 12 Months with 2 Sqn during 1970/71 during which time the base was sprayed with insecticide on a weekly schedule. The spraying was done by a Phan Rang based 'Ranchhand' Squadron which was otherwise engaged in spraying the defoliant 'Agent Orange'. Done shortly after dawn, the C-123 pilots (fellow aircrew and known to us) always delighted in flying very low over the roofs of our double story plywood hoochies to advertise their presence. The concentration of insecticide which entered the quarters generally required breathing through a towel for some time afterwards in an endeavour to reduce the adverse effects until it dispersed. Although I have no idea what insecticide was used, the declared intention was to reduce the risk of malaria. The Base perimeter exterior was also sprayed occasionally with Agent Orange to aid security by ensuring that no foliage cover was available to potential enemy infiltrators.

I, and many of my Squadron colleagues, were subsequently afflicted with prostate cancer, one (to my knowledge, but probably more) fatally, and my eldest son, conceived after my return to Australia, is disabled. My treatment was accepted by DVA as war-caused.

I applaud and thank you for highlighting the issue of insecticide use in Vietnam.

Sincerely,

Ron Aitken (ex- GD Sqn Ldr, RAAF)

(VVFA Member #1362, 2014)

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:

\$1400	D Paul Celler
\$1000	Kevin Faust, Graham Jamieson, Warren Axford, Air Dispatch Association of Australia (Inc)
\$500	Peter Jones, Garry Hackett, Arthur Kneller, "TG", Korean Vietnam Veterans Association, John McNeil, Bruce Robertson
\$420	Neil Croker
\$370	Dieter Hisch
\$300	Henry Walker, Hazel Harris
\$270	Howard Clark, Geoffrey Peattie, Thomas Grills
\$220	Peter Unwin
\$200	Kevin Smith, Gordon O'Brien, Albert Brown, Raymond Wood, Kerry Davis, Alexander Robinson, David Gibbs

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

(as at 30 January 2014)

2 Relocatable cabins for sale

Chain Valley Bay (north)/ Macquarie Lakeside Caravan Park
172 Findlay Avenue Chain Valley Bay North, Lake Macquarie, NSW.



Site 18:

2 Bedroom

Lounge/ Diner

Large Kitchen

Internal Bathroom/ Toilet

AC.

Will sell as a package
together for solid offer. Or
separate to genuine buyers.

Some furniture
included. Buyer/s take
as offered, may require
some work.

Site: 75

Sleeps 4 comfortably

Lounge / Diner open plan

Kitchen

WC etc.



Only genuine buyers need apply.

Park has just come under the ownership of Ingenia Communities and unit site fees etc., may be negotiable directly through their agents. Contact Bill Roberts OAM at our Granville office for further details on 02 9682 1788.

Veterans form Political Alliance to contest 15 March South Australian Legislative Council (State Upper House) election

The emergence of a veterans' political alliance is an interesting development.

Perhaps it is timely, as the number of troops that have returned from recent wars is about the same number that fought in Vietnam. And with our participation in the war in Afghanistan coming to an end, the public consciousness of the needs of our veterans is in danger of fading. Yet, as we know, it is vital that their needs are generously catered for.

But the Vietnam Veterans Federation does not endorse any political group. What we do is point out and comment on any group's policies that effect the welfare of veterans and their families.

Indeed, which party or alliance veterans vote for will probably depend on many factors, not just veterans' issues.

So we report on the policies of this new veterans' political alliance contesting the March South Australian State Legislative Council (State Upper House) election so they can be thrown into the mix.

The YOUR VOICE MATTERS alliance believes:

"The members of our Defence and veteran community have offered to put their lives on the line for our country. We will ensure

that the service of our veterans is recognised, and work to make sure that state government services provide the support that our veterans and their families need."

Locally,

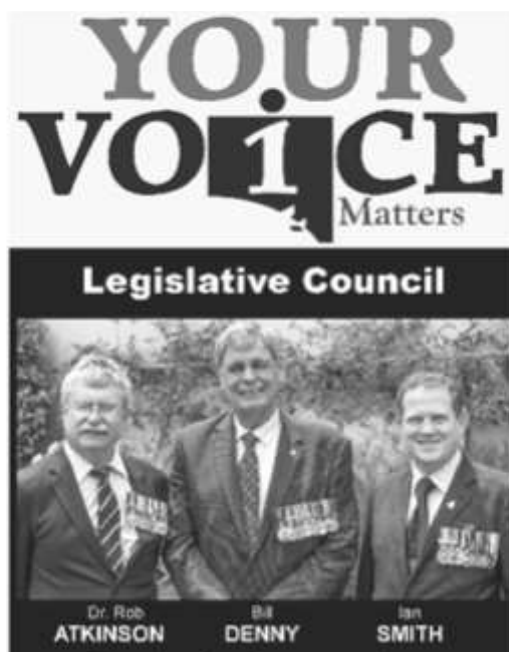
- they want the Torrens Parade Ground to be available for Defence and veteran community activities.
- They want mental health services to properly

meet the needs of veterans and their families.

- They are concerned about veterans in jail whose transgressions may have emerged from undiagnosed PTSD.

To see all of their policies and a discussion of their philosophy see their web-site:

www.yourvoicematters.com.au ■



The Candidates



Bill Denny is a veteran of the Vietnam war.

Bill has been Chair of the *RSL ANZAC Day Committee* for 16 years, was founder of the *ANZAC Eve Youth Vigil Ceremony* and instigator of the *Vietnam War Memorial*. Bill serves as Chair of the *State ANZAC Day Commemoration Council* and is patron of many veterans' organisations

He was a State finalist in the 2014 Australian of the Year awards.



Ian Smith saw active service in the former Yugoslavia and peacekeeping in Cyprus.

Ian served on the Veterans' Advisory Council from 2009 -2012, has been a member of the RSL Board since 2012, and is currently a member of the Veterans' Health Advisory Council. He is Deputy Chair of the RSL ANZAC Day Committee, served on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander War Memorial Committee, and has been a Legatee with theLegacy Club of Adelaide since 2004.



Rob Atkinson was a medical officer during the Vietnam war and has since served in the Persian Gulf war, Rwanda, Bougainville and East Timor.

He also deployed to Aceh and Samoa following the 2005 and 2009 tsunamis.

Rob was made a Fellow of the Australian Medical Association in 2008, and in the same year he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2008 for services to medicine.

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@vvfagranville.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.

Stories of our scholarship children and grandchildren

(How proud we are of them all)

The Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc., affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia, funds two *Phil Thompson Scholarships* for the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans and the veterans of more recent conflicts who are doing it tough financially. The scholarships are \$3,000 a year.

The Scholarship is available nationally and membership of the Association is not a requirement.

Phil Thompson was a highly respected leader of the Vietnam Veteran movement campaigning in the early 1980s for a Royal Commission into exposure to Agent Orange and for veterans' counselling centre. He sadly was to succumb to war related illness.

We fund these Scholarships mainly from the proceeds of the **Association's Annual Raffle**. So please help by buying tickets.

The Scholarships are administered on the Association's behalf by the *Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT)*, who also administer other Scholarships funded by the Australian Government (Long Tan Bursaries) and sponsors such as Legacy, RSL, TPI and a number of other organisations.

AVCAT usually calls for applications for these Scholarships in August of each year, with a closing date of 31 October of the same year. The scholarships that are on offer, and the eligibility requirements of the various scholarships, will be advertised by AVCAT in this magazine prior to that date.

However, for those wishing to make general inquiries about this Association's and the other AVCAT administered Scholarships may do so at any time by writing to AVCAT at: P.O. Box K978, Haymarket, NSW 1240, or contact them on: Telephone (02) 9213-7999, Fax (02) 9213-7307, or Email: avcat@dva.gov.au

Virtually all the recipients of the Association's Scholarships since its inception have done very well. Recently AVCAT caught up with a few ex-recipients to see what they are up to now:-

Stephanie BARKER

Stephanie was awarded the *Phil Thompson Scholarship* in 2008 for three years. She graduated with a Bachelor of



Physiotherapy degree from La Trobe University in 2010 and worked as a rural community health physiotherapist at Alexandra District Hospital.

In 2012 Stephanie took a position as the sole Acute/Rehab/Surgical physiotherapist near her home in Healesville Hospital, 52 kms north-east from Melbourne's CBD in Shire of Yarra Ranges. She also finds time, about 8 hours a week, working in community health.

Down the track Stephanie hopes to do further study in her field in management courses and moving into physiotherapy management/team leader roles.

Stephanie is the child of a Vietnam Veteran who served with 21 Engineer Support Squadron 1968-69.

Caitlin McGREGOR

Caitlin was awarded the *Phil Thompson Scholarship* in 2009 for three years. She graduated with a bachelor of Communication degree from the University of Newcastle in 2011. She then went on to do an Honours degree in 2012. She received the faculty medal and the university medal for first place in the Communication Honours program.

Caitlin is currently in her first year of a four year PhD in Communications at the University of Newcastle and hopes to remain in academia and take a lectureship at the University when she finally completes her studies.

Caitlin passed on her gratitude for the assistance given by the Association through the Scholarship which helped her with the undergraduate degree.

Caitlin is the grandchild of a Vietnam Veteran who served with 2 APC Squadron in 1972.

Nathan SHUTE

Nathan was awarded the *Phil Thompson Scholarship* in 2010 for three years. He graduated with a Bachelor of Design in 2011 and will complete his Master of Architecture in 2012, thanks to the support of the University of South Australia, allowing him to attend as a visiting student (from the Queensland University of Technology).

Nathan is currently working with "Design Inc" in association with Silver Thomas Hanley Health Architecture in Adelaide on one of the largest projects currently in Australia – The Royal Adelaide Hospital –

due to be completed and occupied in 2016.

Nathan said the Scholarship was a fantastic opportunity for him and allowed him to focus on his studies. Nathan strongly endorsed the scholarship because without this assistance he doesn't believe he would have been where he is today.

Nathan is the grandchild of a Vietnam Veteran who served with RAE 32 Small Ship Squadron in 1967.

The progress report/results of our current recipients of the *Phil Thompson Scholarships*, Brayden Witcombe-Keep and Emma Wratten, who were awarded the Scholarships in 2012, follows:

Brayden WITCOMBE-KEEP, Bachelor of Arts (Psychology & Sports Degree), Swinburne University.

Semester 1 (2012):

For "Sociological Foundations" and "Psychology 100", he attained **Distinctions**

For "Introduction to Sports Psychology" and "Statistics and Research Methods A" he attained **High Distinctions**.

Semester 2 (2012):

For "Sociological Perspectives", "Sociology of Young People", "Psychology 101" and "Design and Measurement 2" he attained **Distinctions**.

Semester 2 (2013):

For "Sociology of the Environment", "Sociology of Health" and "Sports Statistics", he attained **Distinctions**.

For "Cognition and Human Performance", he achieved a **Credit**.

Brayden has passed on his gratitude and thanks to the Association for its very much appreciated assistance and looks forward to completing his final two semesters.

Emma WRATTEN, in 2012 commenced at third year of Bachelor of Education at Queensland University of Technology.

Semester 1 (2012):

For "Social Education Curriculum Studies 1", she attained a **Distinction**.

For "Australia and the South Pacific", "Medical Physiology 1", "Science Education Curriculum Studies 1" and "Ecology", she attained **High Distinctions**.

Semester 2 (2012):

For "Social Education Curriculum Studies 2" and

"Biology Curriculum Studies 2", she attained **High Distinctions**.

For "Teaching and Learning Studies 3 (Practising Education)", she attained a **Distinction**.

For "Secondary Field Studies 2", she was **Satisfactory**.

In her first Semester 2012, Emma received the **Dean's Scholars Program Award Certificate** for her outstanding achievements and performance in her degree course.

Semester 1 & 2 (2013):

Specific details of Emma's achievements during 2013 are not to hand. However Emma advises that she graduated from her bachelor of Education with a GPA of 6.6, first class honours and received a university medal for sustained academic excellence.

She was fortunate enough to be offered a permanent teaching position at Dalby State High School whilst completing her internship at that school.

Emma has intimated that the assistance provided by the Association through AVCAT had eased the financial burdens in undertaking her studies, improved her quality of life and helped her to successfully complete her studies which has led to her being offered a permanent teaching position.

Emma wants the Association to know that she is extremely grateful for the financial support provided through the scholarship.

There were no new scholarships awarded by the Association in 2013 as the 2012 recipients Brayden Witcombe-Keep and Emma Wratten had continued with their studies for that year. Brayden has indicated that he will be continuing with his studies during 2014. Consequently only one new Scholarship will be awarded for 2104.

It is pleasing to see what our past scholarship recipients have achieved since completing their studies. The achievements of both our past and present recipients only highlights their determination to succeed under hardship.

The Association continues to be extremely proud of the achievement of those that it has supported with scholarships over the years and will continue to provide this support whilst it is able to do so.

William (Bill) Roberts OAM, JP

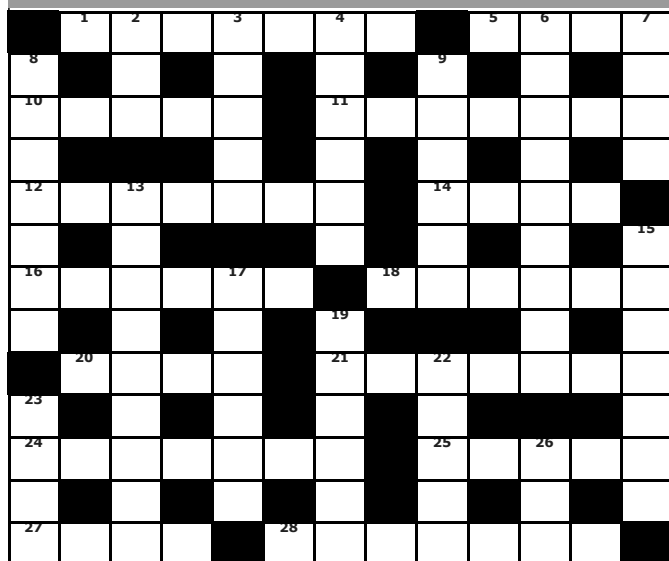
Senior Vice President – VVPPAA

BRANCH LISTINGS

BRANCH LISTINGS

Reunions, Commemorations & Notices

CROSSWORD CORNER



Across

1. Above normal
5. Twirl
10. Scope
11. Hummed
12. Not Oriental
14. Egg on
16. Nutty, chewy sweet
18. Woolly beast
20. Foot cover
21. Harden
24. "Keep Out" sign
25. A "Simpson"
27. Most excellent
28. Talk to crowd

Down

2. Ashes holder
3. Part
4. Undo screw
6. Written section
7. Bare
8. Sketching
9. Ceremony
13. Pacific area
15. Wash room
17. Spies
19. Remained
22. Theatre escort
23. Snooty person
26. A title

Solution Next Issue.

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

THE UNKNOWN COMIC

A bus full of really ugly people, from the 'Really-ugly-Peoples Day Tour, had a head on collision with a truck. Sadly everyone died, so St Peter said he would grant all of them one wish as they passed through the Pearly Gates. The first person, a woman said, "I want to be gorgeous." St Peter nodded his head and God made it happen. The second person said he wanted to be handsome and God made it happen.

This went on and on throughout the whole group. St Peter noticed the last man in line was laughing hysterically. By the time the last ten people got nearer to the gates, the last man was laughing and rolling on the ground. When the last man's turn finally came, he laughed and said, "I wish they were all ugly again. I was the truckie!"

Q: What do Alexander the Great and Kermit the Frog have in common?

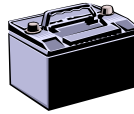
A: They have the same middle name.

A man from Perisher left the snow covered streets for a vacation on the Gold Coast. His wife was on a business trip and was planning to meet him there the next day. When he reached his hotel, he decided to send his wife a quick e-mail. Unable to find the scrap of paper on which he had written her e-mail address, he did his best to type it in from memory.

Unfortunately, he missed one letter and his note was directed instead to an elderly woman, whose husband had passed away only the day before. When the grieving widow checked her e-mails, she took one look at the monitor, let out a piercing scream, and fell to the floor dead. At the sound, her family rushed into the room and saw this note on the screen: "Dearest Wife, Just got checked in. Everything prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Your Loving Husband. PS. Sure is paradise up here!"

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



Last Post





Last Post





Last Post



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

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

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.

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

