



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

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Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

Email to: [debrief@vvaa.org.au](mailto:debrief@vvaa.org.au)

P.O. BOX 97 Minto NSW 2566

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RAR MEMORIAL SYDNEY

*HONOUR THE DEAD, But Fight like Hell for the Living*



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT.**

From records available the V.V.A.A has reached the 40th anniversary of it's formation and this is an opportunity to celebrate.

Our records from the early days are a bit thin on the ground but records show Holt McMinn as the first President in 1979.



We need to fine tune our history and to that end I am asking members to review their old files and see if we can find any early copies of incorporation certificates, prior to 1991, and minutes of early National Congress meetings would be helpful.

Research is currently being conducted into our history and the effect the V.V.A.A. has had on services to the veteran community, a few examples are: research into the effects of chemical exposure (Agent Orange), Veteran's counselling services that led to the current "Open Arms Program" and Men's Health Peer Education programs to mention a few.

In addition there are numerous high profile memorials around Australia that commemorate the service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans that our branches and sub branches have made a major contribution to, these need to be recorded in a central registry.

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As many would be aware by now the government has released the Productivity Commission report into Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans - A Better Way to Support Veterans and while much of this focusses on the younger and current generation of veterans there are some points that may have a significant effect on our members if adopted by government.

That is the key factor now, what recommendations will the government adopt, how soon and with what effect, I encourage all our members to at least read the condensed version and if concerned raise the matters at your sub branch and branch meetings.

Continued

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National President report Continued.

I have again been involved in meetings at DVA including the Operational Working Party and had a discussion related to future recognition of the service of our members, the next few years will complete the commemorations of significant events from our era and of course this will be the 50th anniversary of the final withdrawal of Australian troops from combat roles in Vietnam.

The Secretary of DVA now hold fortnightly teleconferences with National Presidents of ESO's in addition to the formal Ex-Service Organisation Round Table meetings and this allows a constant flow of questions to be put to the department on matters we see as needing attention or answers, feel free to feed questions to me through the normal branch / sub branch channels.

The Secretary of the Department (DVA) has indicated she will resign in 12 months if the system is not improved, she has asked for input and detailed complaints, I would ask that any V.V.A.A. complaints lodged be sent to me as well so I can follow-up and ensure we get the best results possible, lets give her every chance to make the system better.

Ken Foster OAM JP  
National President



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1800 011 046

# Mental Health Summit communiqué

**26 June 2019**

The Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, the Hon Darren Chester MP, convened a national summit of experts in veteran mental health and suicide prevention to reshape the 10 year Veteran Mental Health Strategy; and to focus on a National Action Plan to improve veterans' mental health, wellbeing and to significantly reduce suicide. This is the first step in a series of consultations to ensure veterans and their families shape the government's response to this important issue.

The Prime Minister has made mental health one of his highest priorities and will be driving new efforts to improve mental health for all Australians right across government.

Minister Chester has been charged with ensuring that the mental health needs and services for veterans and their families receive maximum effort in the new term of government.

Participants at the Summit acknowledged that there is good work being done to support the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. Yet, a more collaborative approach is needed to move from an illness model to a wellness model.

The Australian Government as a whole, and Defence and DVA specifically, will need to work closely with veterans and their families, researchers, ex-service organisations (ESOs), business and service providers to lead national policy efforts to implement practical, local, community-led and evidence-based solutions.

The Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be renewed and the Summit participants agreed to work together to engage veterans and their families in the development of a National Action Plan, for endorsement by government, by the end of this year. This work starts now and will be designed and built through local engagement with veterans and families. Similarly the existing national network of experts, service providers, businesses and ESOs can support and enable veterans to transition well and live well.

We have identified four critical priority areas:

1. **Health Care** – top quality, evidence-based, accessible and tailored to reflect the unique nature of military service and its impacts on veterans and their families. The government may need to address some market failures impacting accessibility, but also, veterans and families need to be empowered to drive their own care needs.
2. **Transition** – supporting veterans and their families from military life to civilian life.
3. **Partnerships** – across government, business, service providers, communities, researchers and ESOs. For service delivery partnerships, it is essential that each partner contribute to wellbeing and recovery-focused, models.
4. **Engagement, Communication and Education** – engage better and more often in informing and educating veterans, their families and the wider community on the mental health success stories, identifying the positive support, help and services available. It is important that veterans are informed of progress being made on recommendations from previous inquiries, studies and reviews in parallel to this work.

The Summit identified some priority areas for the action plan, and we will identify more as we engage further with veterans and their families:

- **Ask veterans and their families** what initiatives and services would help in maintaining their wellbeing or improve recovery
- **Promote the benefits of belonging to a community** during and after military service
- **Enable the use of technology** to engage younger veterans in online communities
- **Empower veterans and families** to be responsible for their own wellbeing and health care needs
- **Promote stories of recovery** in the popular press, and across social media platforms, including veterans and their families participating in activities that promote wellness

Continued

## Mental Health Summit Communique, Continued

- **Improve the claims process** by ensuring it is fast, seamless, supportive, positive and responsive to veterans' needs
- **Improve access to mental health care** by working across government to strengthen the capacity of the mental health workforce and enabling more equitable access to mental health professionals, peer and lived-experience workers
- **Improve the quality of care** through training (especially on the unique nature of military service), quality assurance and networks of excellence
- **Implement improved models of care** that provide holistic, wrap-around support, including community and volunteer services
- **Apply evidence-based suicide prevention programs** based on the learning from successful trials, the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan and new approaches that support veteran wellbeing
- **Provide opportunities for ESOs** to strengthen collaboration and commitment to shared outcomes for veterans and their families
- **Apply our shared knowledge and research outcomes** – use our national network of experts, researchers and providers to ensure the best available evidence informs our approach to improving mental health and wellbeing.

Summit participants agreed that to be truly effective, DVA's future approach should be characterised by collaboration, communication and a focus on communities and families.

In the coming weeks and months, in the preparation of the National Action Plan and renewed Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, there will be extensive national and local engagement to ensure that the strategy and all practical actions are *co-designed by veterans and their families, for veterans and their families*.

Minister Chester has announced the appointment of Repatriation Commissioner, Don Spinks, effective 1 July 2019. The Commissioner, as part of a planned intense national dialogue, will also engage with the veteran and defence communities to get their input into the National Action Plan.

Minister Chester also committed to establishing a bi-partisan Parliamentary Advisory Group of MPs and Senators with ADF service to progress veterans' issues, including support for veterans' mental health. All present at the Summit want to send a message of assistance and support to veterans and their families. There is help available and anyone who is struggling with their mental health can have confidence to approach services for help. People who may have had less than ideal experiences with DVA in the past are encouraged to 'give us another go' as there have been many improvements to DVA and the services we offer. There is still much to do and we want to work with veterans and their families, listening to them as, together, we formulate the Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and National Action Plan.



### Open Arms, Veterans and Families Counselling.

24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support  
and free and confidential counselling.

Phone **1800 011 046**.

# Productivity Commission report into Compensation and Rehabilitation of Veterans released

The Coalition Government recently tabled in Parliament the final Productivity Commission report into Compensation and Rehabilitation for Veterans - A Better Way to Support Veterans.

The report was commissioned by the Government in March 2018 to undertake a thorough review of veteran support services.

The Treasurer Josh Frydenberg thanked the Commission for delivering an important review into how the Government supports veterans and their families.

"There has been wide consultation and considerable effort put into this report and I would like to recognise and thank all those who have provided submissions, ideas and information to the Productivity Commission for consideration," the Treasurer said.

"This is a significant report looking at an important and complex system – it will require careful consideration by the Government as well as the veteran community and other stakeholders."

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the Government was committed to putting veterans and their families first and would carefully consider the report.

"The Government has moved quickly to release this report and will be listening to the views of the veteran community, which we will consider in the context of developing our response," Minister Chester said.

"I acknowledge the Productivity Commission's final report has listened to feedback from the veteran community and changed a number of recommendations made in the draft report. In particular, the recommendation that the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) should be abolished has been removed, with an emphasis on the need for a standalone agency.

"There are also new chapters focusing on mental health and veteran advocacy."

The Government will finalise its response to the report in conjunction with the recent Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into transition from the Australian Defence Force and the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Scoping Study, which have also considered in detail the best ways of supporting veterans and their families.

The Productivity Commission report is available at [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au)



## OUTGOING REPATRIATION COMMISSIONER

Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC  
THANKED FOR DEDICATED SERVICE

AFTER almost a decade of enhancing the services and support provided to veterans and their families, and the broader ex-service community, Major General Mark Kelly AO DSC will pass the Repatriation Commissioner mantle to Mr Don Spinks AM.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said veterans and their families had benefited greatly from Major General Kelly's leadership, passion and commitment to the ex-service community.

"Major General Kelly has performed with distinction as the Repatriation Commissioner and I commend him on his achievements, most notably the improvements made to Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling, formerly known as the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service," Mr Chester said.

"During his years of service, we have seen Open Arms become a nationally accredited mental health service as well as expanding eligibility to include children, partners, former partners and certain United Nations and Australian Federal Police personnel — improvements which have made a difference in the lives of many."

Most recently Major General Kelly guided the counselling service through its rebranding to be called Open Arms, signalling its increased eligibility and positioning it as the frontline mental health service for the ex-service community.

He is passionate about commemorating Australia's military history and ensuring veterans from all conflicts are never forgotten. During his time as Repatriation Commissioner he has been the master of ceremonies for countless commemorative events, such as Anzac Day services held internationally, including the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations in Gallipoli, 2015.

"I have no doubt the ongoing effects of Major General Kelly's leadership and enhancement of Open Arms as well as his passion to commemorate all Australians who have served will be felt for generations to come," Mr Chester said.

"I sincerely thank Major General Kelly for all he has done for the ex-service community and wish him well for the future."

The Repatriation Commission grants pensions and benefits, and provides treatment and other services under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) to veterans and members of the Australian Defence Force, their partners, widows/ers, and children. The Commission also provides advice to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs on related issues.

Major General Kelly welcomed Mr Spinks to the role and said he was very proud of the work completed to-date in enhancing the services and support available to current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel and their families.

"I have been privileged in my position to meet with many veterans, their families, and have witnessed first-hand the profound impact that Open Arms can have as well as the other services provided by DVA. I wish Don Spinks all the very best and I have no doubt he will further enhance the support to our current and former ADF personnel and their families."

Major General Kelly served in a number of senior command appointments during his Army career, including Commanding Officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment; Commander 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade; Commander 1<sup>st</sup> Division; Land Commander Australia; and Commander Joint Task Force 633 (CJTF 633).

His operational experience includes service with the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia (1979–80), Chief of Staff of INTERFET in East Timor (1990–2000), with US CENTCOM in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and Iraq (2003–04) and as CJTF 633, commanding all ADF elements in the Middle East Area of Operations, Iraq and Afghanistan (2009–10).

## OUR MILITARY HISTORY

### *Lest we Forget*

#### **18 August 1966 Battle of Long Tan, South Vietnam**

Amid a tropical downpour, 108 men of D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, supported by artillery and a timely resupply by the RAAF, fought off an attack by an enemy force of more than 2,000 in a rubber plantation near the abandoned village of Long Tan. The arrival of Armoured Personnel Carriers carrying reinforcements brought the action to an end. Seventeen Australians were killed, one died of wounds, and 24 were wounded. More than 245 enemy bodies were later counted, but many more had been taken away.



18 August 1971 The Australian Government announced that the 1st Australian Task Force would be withdrawn before Christmas 1971, and the logistic support force shortly thereafter.

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape,  
So I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising.  
I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors.  
I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and  
perspired for an hour.  
But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was  
over.





## **MAKING IT EASIER FOR VETERANS TO ACCESS SUPPORT**

IMPROVEMENTS to how veterans and their families access services and support will continue with funding committed for the ongoing transformation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) secured until 2021.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said improvements made to-date meant that veterans and their families, in many cases, are now able to get almost immediate decisions on claims through DVA's online platform, MyService.

"The Government's ongoing investment in the Department's transformation over consecutive years illustrates our commitment to ensure veterans and their families have a world-class support system," Mr Chester said.

"Before the Government started its investment, many claims were still paper-based and there was a lot of manual handling involved. We are focussed on improving processing and approval times of claims to further improve the experience of veterans and their families through the digitisation of client files and streamlining of internal processes.

"To ensure veterans and their families can navigate the Department's phone system and gain assistance as quickly as possible, DVA is continuing to simplify and enhance its phone system and the current DVA website is being updated to make it easier for veterans, their families, providers and the wider community to find the information they are looking for.

"The Government is putting veterans and their families first and making sure they have access to the information and assistance they need, no matter where they live in Australia. This includes those living in rural and regional areas where DVA may not have offices set up to support veterans who need face-to-face support.

"It is my priority to ensure veterans and their families get the support they need throughout their lives."

DVA is undergoing the most significant reform in its history, to ensure veterans and their families have faster and easier access to the services they need, when they need them. DVA is more closely connected with veterans and their families. DVA is embracing new technology, moving from complex and outdated systems to providing more streamlined and modern access to services.

Stand Up and Salute These People!The Unit Citation for Gallantry – The Battle of Coral-BalmoralGeorge Hulse

There are always a group of people who are never acknowledged when the dust settles over the success of a significant campaign. The campaign to recognise all the units that were involved in the Battle of Coral-Balmoral with the Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG) is no exception. The following are the reflections of George Hulse covering his involvement with the Coral Balmoral Veterans Group in that campaign.

As a member of the Battle of Coral-Balmoral Veterans Group I recall my first contact with Garry ‘Pepe’ Prendergast in 2013 when he sent out an email looking for interest in his campaign. I put my hand up. In the end there were four of us recruited into Pepe’s group. They were: Pepe as the leader, Neil Weekes AM MC, Jack Parr and George Hulse. We would meet at various times and places – sometimes in pubs – and laid out the format, content of our submission and the plan of action to get the submission read at the top end of military management in Canberra. A visit to Vietnam to speak to the NVA leaders at the Battle by Pepe and Leonie Jones in 2006 presented a whole new palette of information about what happened at the Battle. Leonie covered the Battle in an hour-long documentary and this opened up more avenues of information leading on from Lex McAuley’s book “They Will Come Looking For You”. The submission came along very well with input from so many of the guys that were there. In addition, the article written by Colonel Ian “Scrubba” Ahearn on the first battle of Coral on 13 May 1968 helped us. The Unit Commanders Reports, Radio Logs and Intelligence Summaries of the battle were of assistance but, at times, raised more questions than they answered. Eventually we got it there and submitted the 260 pages to the Directorate of Defence Honours and Awards (DH&A) in March 2016. We then readied ourselves for the knock-backs. They came by way of the DH&A referring the whole thing to the Chief of Army. The CA held the submission for about six months and then knocked us back – we expected this despite the fact that Neil Weekes had visited the CA and wrote him a letter suggesting that the CA support the submission. I also wrote a letter to the CA asking for his support. He couldn’t support it and sent it back to the DH&A. We were down 2-0 at this time but not phased by what we expected anyway. Then the unbelievable happened. On 4 July 2016 Pepe passed away suddenly and this put Neil in as our leader. On 7 March 2017, Neil died leaving Jack and I as the team. Jack and I continued unabated with the campaign.

Jack and I decided that our next step was to approach the Defence Honours and Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) and have the decisions reviewed. As luck would have it, I was in Canberra at that time on other business and took some time off to visit the DHAAT. I spoke to Mr Jay Kopplemann a very experienced and helpful public servant working in the DHAAT and he advised against going straight to the DHAAT. He suggested that we would be better served by convincing the Minister for Defence Personnel – Mr Dan Tehan at that time – that our campaign merited his support and having him direct the DHAAT to conduct a public inquiry into the Battle of FSPB Coral-Balmoral. But he warned us that convincing Dan would be an enormous undertaking because we were asking him to overturn the decisions of the CA and DH&A. I reported it all to Jack and we decided to go for broke with a campaign to convince Dan Tehan to accept our initiative. We produced a second submission and sent it to Dan Tehan and backed that up with a public campaign. We decided that Jack would write to every politician in Canberra and anybody that would listen including the veterans and I would mount a Change.org campaign to raise signatures aimed at Dan Tehan.

Continued

FSPB Coral-Balmoral Veterans Group continued.

My part of our campaign with Change.org commenced on 8 February 2017 with the first story going up about the Mortar Platoon of 13 May 1968. I needed a short clip of four minutes duration promoting the purpose behind the campaign and Leonie Jones dropped everything else she was doing to get me my short clip. She went about that high-tech stuff about fixing it to the campaign page. I followed up every week with another episode of what happened at the Battle with the Artillery, the Tanks, the Engineers, 1RAR, 3RAR, the RAAF a description of the NVA soldier and finished with a page on PTSD. By a stroke of good luck, my next-door neighbour – Ms Erika Rutledge – worked with CPL Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG at Channel 7. Erika offered to speak to BR-S about putting the campaign on the Community Announcement clip during peak time TV broadcast on Channel 7. I was delighted with the offer, she asked BR-S, he accepted and now all we had to do was to get a 30-second grab of our four minute video. Back to Leonie Jones who again dropped everything and together with Erika they managed to get a 30-second grab done quickly enough for BR-S to go to air and promote our cause. I thanked BR-S for that and he said he was delighted to help because he was passionate about the battle of FSPB Coral Balmoral (having visited the battle-site and spoken to the NVA Commanders about it). The outcome of the BR-S promotion was an immediate rise in responses to the Change.org campaign. The signatures were mounting into several thousands and all these were automatically being sent straight to Dan Tehan's office, complete with all the remarks made by the respondents. The remarks included those from veterans, families, friends and supporters in the general community. More than 7,500 of them in just a couple of weeks transmitted straight to Dan's office. That's the way Change.org operates.

Jack's initiative with the pollies was going well and Dan Tehan received quite a few messages from his parliamentary colleagues putting the wood on him to support the Coral-Balmoral submission. My own pollie was Teri Butler who wrote Dan a very pressing letter supporting our cause.

So, now it was time to sit down with Dan, deliver the outcome of the Change.org signatures and talk about what we wanted from him. I wrote a letter to him requesting an appointment for both Jack and I in his Canberra office. He responded and Jack and I visited Dan on 29 March 2017. We handed Dan a six-page brochure on the (word-smithed) versions of what appeared on Change.org and an 11-minute straight-forward rendition of yet another video clip that Leonie Jones prepared (and yes, she had to drop everything to get me this clip as well). The 11-minute clip was written by Jack and I but put together by Leonie Jones and narrated by a professional speaker Mr Marcus Oborn – ALL AT NO COST TO US!. The video clips would have cost us around \$20,000 but they cost us nothing. It was all down to Leonie and her pro-bono generosity. Jack and I spoke for about ten minutes each to Dan and we handed him the brochure and video clip. All we asked for was a fair go from him. We waited.

On 24 April 2017, Dan Tehan telephoned me from Villers-Bretonneux in France. He told me that he had reviewed the information sent to him and was convinced that he would direct a DHAAT inquiry. Dan Tehan directed the DHAAT to mount a public inquiry and to report back to him with their findings. That was the giant-killer. The score was now 2-1.

The DHAAT inquiry into the Battle of FSPB Coral-Balmoral was the largest inquiry ever held by the Tribunal. It was so large that they had to hold their public hearings in Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. They received almost 180 written submissions and conducted their hearing by listening to veterans speak in person as well as via telephone conversation. The Dept of Defence and the DH&A were represented at the hearings and they spoke against the submission being supported. The Tribunal listened with interest and demonstrated a totally unbiased view for anybody and everybody who came forward to help in their inquiry. The Tribunal personalities were: Mr Mark Sullivan AO (Chair), Mr David Ashley AM (ex-RSM Army), Mr Graham Mowbray (Lawyer) and Air Vice-Marshal John Quaipe AM (Retd).

Continued



## FSPB Coral-Balmoral Veterans Group, Continued.

The DHAAT submitted their report to Dan Tehan in support of everything that Jack and I wanted in our submission. The score was now tied at 2-2. Now it was up to Dan to put it past his parliamentary colleagues. He did that and the Unit Citation for Gallantry was announced for the units involved. The score soared to 2-3. A parade was held in ANZAC Parade Canberra on 13 May 2018 – exactly 50 years after the Battle occurred in Vietnam and was attended by hundreds of veterans. Unit Colours, Guidons and Banners were paraded to receive the Streamer that is attached at the head of the pike that holds these flags. The score was now 2-4. The Streamer has the words “Coral-Balmoral” written on it. The veterans get to wear the UCG with the Commonwealth Star in its centre on the right breast and the diggers who are currently serving in the descendent units of those at Coral-Balmoral wear the Citation without the Star on their right breast of their ceremonial uniform. They only wear the UCG while serving in the unit but do not wear it when they depart on posting or discharge. All the veterans were treated to a lunch (score 2-5) and then the very moving Last Post Ceremony in the Australian War Museum that afternoon. (score 2-6). The campaign was well and truly won by the Coral-Balmoral Veterans Group!.

So, I ask you to stand and salute the following people in order of importance (in my opinion) for the award of the UCG for FSPB Coral-Balmoral:

- Mr Dan Tehan – who directed the DHAAT to conduct the inquiry;
- The DHAAT who demonstrated complete open-mindedness and gave us a fair go;
- Jack Parr, Pepe Prendergast. Neil Weekes and George Hulse, particularly Jack for his dedication and enormous work ethic which led to his award of the OAM;
- All the veterans who submitted their written and spoken statements to the DHAAT;
- Leonie Jones for her numerous video clips, unwavering support for the campaign and her commitment going back over numerous years on the Coral-Balmoral story;
- All the parliamentary entities who supported us;
- CPL Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG for his support when we needed it.
- Change.org for having such a valuable platform to muster public support and engaging the entity it is directed to;
- Mr Jay Kopplemann of the DHAAT for his very timely and helpful advice;
- Ms Erika Rutledge who went out of her way to coordinate with Leonie Jones and BR-S during the Change.org campaign.

There may be others to recognise. But that’s my version of events. It was a team of people and a whole lot of supporters who got us the UCG for FSPB Coral-Balmoral. May God bless them as well as the veterans who fought that iconic battle.

George Hulse

Co-author and team member of the Battle of FSPB Coral-Balmoral Veterans Group

30 June 2019

## ODE TO A MATE- BY JIM MURRELL

While wandering down life's -windin' path  
Through many-a turning gate  
Met a kindred soul -along the way  
In a bloke – I called a mate.

Someone -who'd take good care of you  
Someone – who'd stand and wait  
And lend a hand -unto your cause  
For he – was indeed – a mate.

My-mind-goes back to '68  
To Vietnam-and of hate  
Reflecting back-on times gone by  
For time-is but-a date.

When on that fateful -luckless day  
We swore-and cursed our state  
For the demons of death were lurking  
Too close-for me and my mate.

Those eyes of white-of unnumbered foes  
A picture-my mind still paints  
The yells and the screams-the blood, sweat and  
tears  
Whose lives-of my mates will you take?

With all that killing-and all that dying  
We both had a date with fate  
And all that sorrow-and all that suffering  
Was hell-for me-and my mate.

Then a hail of lead split open his head  
His warm flesh and blood-for god's sake  
With life-flowing from him-he slurred but once  
"My time-has come-old mate."

That- beat-from the medivac chopper  
That-stench-from the dead-lying straight  
Those souls on the ground-hear not but a sound  
And there in a body bag-lay my mate.

With a final farewell and short silent prayer  
To grieve with no tear-that must wait  
To melt back again-to the bush I call home  
But to do it-this time-with no mate.

Because you fell-for your country's cause  
You will always-be a saint  
Your blood was the price of freedom  
But fate was your hunter-old mate.

In paddy fields-no poppies blow  
There are no crosses-row on row  
Your only wish-if you should die  
Was to bring you home-and let you lie.

No band-at the Quay-playing Matilda  
In clubs-we weren't known as saints  
At home-our folks walked around us  
But now-were together-with mates.

Why did we fall-for that call to war?  
That war was to set things straight  
But-once again-it's all happened in vain  
And frail-grieving mothers-still wait.

On ANZAC-and- Remembrance Day  
My girls-they ask me straight  
"You shed a tear-then have a beer  
In memory of your mate?"

If there's to be-an after life  
Then I don't know how-I'll rate  
For the only words-I'd care to hear  
"Your welcome-up here-mate".

Jim Murrell  
4RAR (ANZAC) Battalion  
Vietnam 1968

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jwmurrell@bigpond.com



## OPEN ARMS RETAINS MENTAL HEALTH ACCREDITATION

Veteran-specific lifeline *Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling* has successfully retained its Mental Health Accreditation under the National Standards for Mental Health Services (NSMHS).

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, Darren Chester, has welcomed the decision, made this week, saying the service provides an invaluable counselling support service to veterans and their families.

“Accreditation follows a rigorous assessment process conducted by an independent, external assessing agency, Quality Innovation Performance Limited (QIP),” Mr Chester said.

“QIP’s accreditation report stated that Open Arms had met all requirements of the NSMHS and commended Open Arms on its many strengths and positive feedback from clients and stakeholders.”

Mr Chester said comments made from veterans and their families about Open Arms included:

- ☐ *The help they gave me early on probably saved my life – now they’re keeping me stable*
- ☐ *I feel it’s safe because it’s a public service organisation. They understand military context – it makes the world of difference*
- ☐ *They were and are a lifesaver*
- ☐ *The staff are skilled and genuinely concerned about me and my family*
- ☐ *Helped me understand what my partner was going through with PTSD and why they acted the way they did*
- ☐ *I felt very validated and supported*
- ☐ *They have an understanding that we’re constantly in fight mode...they get it and they understand that, it’s respectful*
- ☐ *I find the service very easy to get to.*

“The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first — their mental health and wellbeing is a top priority,” Mr Chester said.

“Mental health is everyone’s business – families, friends, employers, community organisations and the Ex-service Organisations all have an important role to play in supporting veterans and their families.

“I encourage any veterans—or their family member—who are struggling with their mental health to reach out for support.

‘Australia’s Vietnam War’ Website.  
University of New South Wales Canberra  
[Vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au](http://Vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au)





## HELPING STUDENTS TO A BETTER FUTURE



The Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) is a national independent charity. AVCAT helps the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-service men and women to a better future by providing tertiary education scholarships. Through the generous support of the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, ex-service organisations and private donors, AVCAT offers up to 90 new scholarships each year for students enrolled at an Australian University, a TAFE College and a Registered Training Organisation. Scholarships are awarded to students based on financial need, academic merit and deserving circumstances.

To be eligible to apply, students must meet the following criteria:

- A child, step-child, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Enrolled, or planning to enrol in 2020, in a full-time course at an Australian University, a TAFE College or a Registered Training Organisation
- Receiving, or eligible to receive, Centrelink Youth Allowance or an equivalent means-tested educational payment
- Other criteria according to the specific scholarship on offer.

"This scholarship has not only greatly assisted me financially, but helped me in my learning by enriching my opportunities. I recognise wholeheartedly that this scholarship has given me the opportunity to be one step ahead in my course and I fully intend to continue making the most of this opportunity. I am so thankful for those who have made of all of this possible for me" – Scholarship Recipient

**Applications for 2020 scholarships open on August 18 2019  
and close on October 31 2019**

For information about how to apply contact the AVCAT team!

T: (02) 9213 7999 W: [www.avcat.org.au](http://www.avcat.org.au)

## ADVOCACY CORNER.

**Extract from the ATDP Wellbeing Support Officers Handbook.**

**A complete copy is available on the ATDP Website**

### **Indemnity Insurance**

The Veterans' Indemnity and Training Association Inc. (VITA) provides access to professional indemnity insurance at an affordable cost for members of ex-service organisations (ESOs) and incorporated groups who provide advice and advocacy services to members of the ex-service community about government pensions, benefits and community support services.

VITA also maintains an insurance policy providing basic protection for VITA members' advocates for accidents that occur at a client meeting, while travelling to and from a client meeting, and for travel to training.

As WSOs provide neither advice nor advocacy services to veterans, you are **NOT** covered by VITA insurance arrangements, even if your ESO is a member of VITA.

It is therefore vital that you **DO NOT** put yourself in a situation where you could be accused of providing advice or advocacy services. If these are required by a veteran or family member, arrange for them to talk to a competent and authorised Compensation or Wellbeing Advocate.

You should check with your ESO in relation to insurance coverage for your volunteer activities, such as vehicle accidents while travelling to a home or hospital visit or personal injury sustained while undertaking volunteer tasks.

## **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ATDP has a responsibility to provide its graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide high quality advocacy services to serving and former members of the ADF and their dependents.

Advocates work in a complex and ever changing social, government, statutory and policy environment. Consequently, what we learned as we journeyed through the Course in Military Advocacy can quickly become out-of-date. If this happens, we can't give those who seek our help the assistance they deserve or ATDP's stakeholders expect.

The CPD program is designed to do a number of things:

- To help reinforce the knowledge we gained in our formal training;
- To help keep us abreast of changes in our working environment;
- To help us grow our professional knowledge;
- To be flexible in meeting our needs as advocates;
- To help ensure that we are covered for professional indemnity insurance under VITA; and
- To be an important part of ATDP's quality assurance and quality control programs.

Another very important part of the CPD program called Self-directed Learning or SDL. This is what we do every time we read a Factsheet, check the latest version of the Act, look for something on the internet or ask a colleague for help. Its something every competent advocate does all the time – on every case.

CPD and SDL work together to make us better advocates – better able to help those who rely on us.

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AUSTRALIAN VETERANS'  
CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

AVCAT scholarships are for the children and grandchildren of Australian Veterans to study at university or TAFE

***Every donation helps our young people achieve their dreams and build a better future***

It's easier than ever to donate, visit our website to click the DONATE button now  
**www.avcat.org.au**



02 9213 7999 [avcat@dva.gov.au](mailto:avcat@dva.gov.au)  
PO Box K978 Haymarket NSW 1240



A service started by Vietnam Veterans

1800 011 046

## MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH.

### PHOENIX REPORT RELEASED

The long awaited, mysterious Phoenix Report was released by DVA on their website. This should be read in conjunction with the Collie Report, both attached.

#### Phoenix Report

<https://www.dva.gov.au/.../mental-health-impacts-compensation...>

#### Collie Report

[https://www.dva.gov.au/.../hea.../independent\\_study\\_mhiccap.pdf...](https://www.dva.gov.au/.../hea.../independent_study_mhiccap.pdf...)

## YOUR ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN DEBRIEF

States and sub branches are encouraged to contribute reports on their activities, particularly an opportunity to let others know what is happening in your area.



## COMPARE YOUR SERVICE EMPLOYMENT HISTORY WITH THE CURRENT JOB SPECIFICATION.



### AIR FORCE SECURITY



Air Force Security (AFSEC) belong to the Force Protection and Discipline family within Air Force and may be involved in direct combat roles. AFSEC are employed within a Security Forces (SECFOR) Squadron.

Following graduation from your initial military training, all AFSEC will undergo AFSEC Initial Employment Training (IET) comprising the following key areas:

- Security Fundamentals
- Introduction to Security Governance
- Military Working Dog Handler Tier 1 (MWDH 1)

Following the successful completion of the AFSEC IET, trainees will achieve IET graduation and be deemed to have the required knowledge and skills to act independently in the workplace. Successful members will then be posted to a unit where they will undertake further competency based training in the workplace spanning the first 18 months.

Members will gain further development by On the Job Experience and additional specialist skills through Post Initial Employment Training (PIET). PIET training includes areas such as:

- Security Governance
- Investigation and Investigation Management
- MWD and Explosive Detector Dog Handling (EDDH)
- Security Risk Management and Planning
- Emergency Management

AFSEC is responsible for providing the following main activities:

- Protective security - protection of personnel, physical assets and classified information
- Employment of MWDs - security patrols, intruder detection and apprehension
- Employment of EDDs - explosives detection

Emergency response for incidents and accidents including aircraft and motor veh...

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### Air Force Security, continued

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- Protective security - protection of personnel, physical assets and classified information
- Employment of MWDs - security patrols, intruder detection and apprehension
- Employment of EDDs - explosives detection
- Emergency response for incidents and accidents including aircraft and motor vehicle accidents
- Traffic and crowd control
- Detainee and prisoner of war handling
- Protective security surveys and reviews
- Security risk management and threat assessment
- Operational security planning
- Security governance, compliance and investigation

AFSEC utilise MWDs to patrol flight lines and other operational assets and may also conduct patrols with RAAF Ground Defence (Airfield Defence Guards) beyond the airfield perimeter. Some AFSEC employ EDDs in support of airbase and air operations security. AFSEC are generally the first to attend an incident or emergency situation including aircraft incidents and crime scenes. AFSEC are the after hours physical security and initial response contact for an airbase.

AFSEC undertake security functions in support of air operations. They are required to identify potential threats to the airbase or air operations and provide security advice to airbase executives.

AFSEC are required to work indoors and outdoors, during the day or on shifts as required, and periodically in extreme weather conditions, often working long and irregular hours.

Security work is at times physically and mentally demanding, therefore all AFSEC personnel are required to maintain a high level of physical fitness. AFSEC may expect to frequently lift and handle dogs weighing up to 45 kilograms



## REUNIONS

### 102 field workshop RAEME Reunion

**When: 4<sup>th</sup>. 5<sup>th</sup>. and 6<sup>th</sup>. October 2019**

**Where: Koondrook Victoria.**

Friday Saturday & Sunday (including 5 meals wine beer, soft drinks tea and coffee)

**COST:** Friday to Sunday midmorning (including 5 meals, wine, beer, soft drinks tea and coffee)

**Single 100.00**

**Double 150.00**

**One day only**

**Single 60.00**

**Double 85.00**



**Please contact Noel Lake on 03 5456 9246**

**HEADQUARTER COY,  
1ST AUSTRALIAN LOGISTIC SUPPORT GROUP**  
and it is held in BALLARAT,

from the meet and greet on the 8TH NOVEMBER  
2019 till the 11TH NOVEMBER 2019

for ACCOMMODATION AND REUNION DETAILS  
contact TONY BROWN on 0428852736 or  
email on [tony11raye13@bigpond.com](mailto:tony11raye13@bigpond.com).

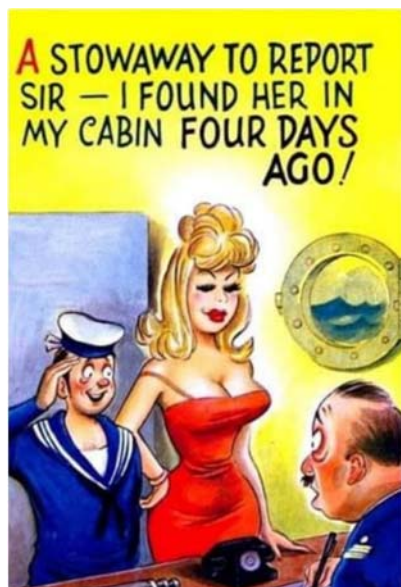
### 30 Terminal Sqn Reunion Townsville 2019

16-18 August 19

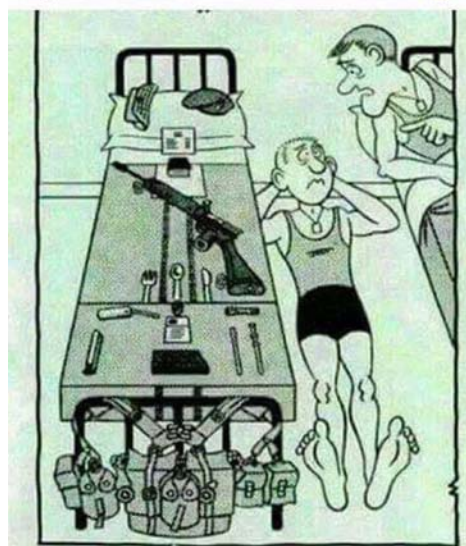
An event to get all past and present termites  
together in a fun and relaxed atmosphere to  
share the trials and tribulations of being a ter-  
mite (and possibly some tall tales)

Craig Ingram  
Unit 5 28 lowth St Rosslea Qld 4812  
0407173321  
[craingram@westnet.com.au](mailto:craingram@westnet.com.au)

**If you would prefer to have this publication emailed directly to you please forward your email address to the National Secretary at [secretary@vvaa.org.au](mailto:secretary@vvaa.org.au).**



Only another old soldier will understand this 😊



Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service



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Veterans & Families  
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WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE SAME:



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helpline

A service founded by Vietnam Veterans

## VETERAN FRIENDLY RETREATS

Future listing of these facilities should be available on the various VVAA State branch web sites and these can be accessed through the web site [www.vvaa.org.au](http://www.vvaa.org.au)



## HAVE YOUR SAY— LETTERS TO DEBRIEF ARE WELCOME



The subject matter should be generally of interest to Vietnam Veterans and their families. Brief, to the point letters have a better chance of publication. Photographs should be of good colour, quality and subject matter, in jpg or similar format. Text should be submitted in Word format with minimum formatting. Vietnam Veteran writers must identify themselves by name, state, Vietnam Unit and Tour dates. Email: [debrief@vvaa.org.au](mailto:debrief@vvaa.org.au)



## NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM

25 VETERANS DRIVE, NEWHAVEN, PHILLIP ISLAND VIC 3925

[WWW.VIETNAMVETSMUSEUM.ORG.AU](http://WWW.VIETNAMVETSMUSEUM.ORG.AU)

Membership enquiries welcomed



## THE WAR WIDOWS GUILD OF AUSTRALIA

"We all belong to each other. We all need each other. It is in serving each other and in sacrificing for our common good that we are finding our true life."



A strong part of the Guilds History is the origins of its Logo.

The kookaburra was adopted as the Guilds Logo from its early inception and remains today.

The Kookaburra is also present on all War Widows' Guild Badges.