



DEBRIEF

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H.M.A.S. Brisbane, H.M.A.S. Hobart, H.M.A.S. Perth

HONOUR THE DEAD, But Fight like Hell for the Living

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

October is the second most important administrative month in the V.V.A.A. calendar, as it is the National Council meeting and that is where decisions are made and policy set or amended.

It has always been my guiding principle to ensure any opinions I give or submissions I present are in line with adopted policy and where those policies have not been defined to consult and seek agreement from the National Executive and State Branch Presidents.

Whilst there are some matters that can be decided this year, I believe that when the governments response to the Productivity Commission report into "A Better way to Serve Veterans" is available we may need to look seriously into our policies to ensure they have a currency and relevance.

Many of the Productivity Commission recommendations have no effect on the pre 2014 veterans and their entitlements however those that do affect us can have a profound effect.

During September, following consultation with the National Executive and State Branch President, I forwarded four letters of concern to the Federal Treasurer, (who commissioned the Productivity Commission enquiry), the Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel, The Shadow Minister and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Copies of these letters have been distributed to states and are available on request. I am sure there will be further discussion at the National Council meeting on these letters.

Regards



Ken Foster OAM JP
National President



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KEEPING THE RECORDS

IF IN DOUBT DO NOT THROW IT OUT!

Mr Kel Robertson, a Canberra based post-graduate student at the University of New South Wales, and an experienced writer, has begun research into the origins and activities of the Association.

The first phase of his project will include an examination of the many Association documents held by the Australian War Memorial and the Australian National Library and, once some university procedures have been completed, interviews with members. Later, there will be a focus on State Branches and Sub-Branches.

Meanwhile, Branches and Sub-Branches are reminded of the importance of storing and maintaining their official records, including and especially newsletters, as the basis of future research by Kel and, in the longer term, other historians.

Combat Veteran

1. **NEVER QUESTION THE LOOK IN HIS EYES:**
You really don't want to know what he's thinking.
2. **NEVER SHAKE HIM TO WAKE HIM:**
It could be a while before you regain consciousness.
3. **NEVER SNEAK UP ON HIM FROM BEHIND:**
See above comment.
4. **NEVER ASK HIM IF HE HAS KILLED ANYONE:**
He may say your next.
5. **NEVER PROVOKE HIM:**
PTSD means he has a short fuse and a long memory.
6. **NEVER DISRESPECT HIS FLAG OR COUNTRY:**
He has lost friends defending both.
7. **NEVER RUN DOWN HIS BROTHERS IN ARMS:**
They are closer than family.
8. **NEVER CALL HIS WAR A SIMPLE CONFLICT:**
conflicts are for pussies, men fight wars.
9. **NEVER EXPECT HIM TO FIT INTO YOUR SOCIAL AGENDA:**
There are never enough chairs and never enough walls.
10. **NEVER FORGET, TO HIM THREE IS A CROWD:**
large crowds coming at him are just incoming rounds.
11. **NEVER BRING UP HIS PAST, IT'S HIS PERSONAL NIGHTMARE:**
He already knows he's messed up, let it be.



**A SERVICE FOUNDED
BY VIETNAM VETERANS**

1800 011 046

Australia supports the recovery of Vietnamese war remains

11 September 2019

As part of the ongoing cooperation between Australia and Vietnam, the Department of Defence has presented the Vietnamese Deputy Minister for Defence, Senior Lieutenant General Le Chiem with a digital database of Missing in Action data. Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said Australia understands the importance of honouring those who have died in war.



“The recovery of war remains has been an important area of defence cooperation between Australia and Vietnam,” Mr Chester said.

“The Vietnam War was the longest 20th century conflict in which Australians participated, involving some 60,000 personnel of which 3000 were wounded and 521 were killed.

“However, the scale of Vietnamese losses on both sides of the war was enormous. Around four million Vietnamese civilians were killed or wounded, about 224,000 South Vietnamese military personnel were killed, more than one million on the North Vietnamese side were killed and more than 300,000 were declared Missing in Action.

“This digital database compiled by the Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society at the University of New South Wales, will provide the Vietnamese with the tools and information required to continue to search for their Missing in Action.”

As part of the ongoing cooperation, Defence will fund the delivery of a face-to-face training package on the database, to be conducted by the University of New South Wales.

Senior Lieutenant General Chiem’s visit to Canberra, and Australian support of this important initiative, are further examples of the growing strength of the Australia–Vietnam relationship following Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s visit to Hanoi in August.

MORE SUPPORT TO FORMER PARTNERS OF VETERANS

ALL recipients of the Partner Service Pension through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will now maintain access for at least 12 months after separating from their veteran partner, regardless of their marital status, under legislative changes passed through Parliament today.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the Government continues to put veterans and their families first and is providing \$6.2 million to support changes to the Partner Service Pension, which previously only allowed access to current partners, and married **partners** after they had separated from a veteran.

"The Government has listened to the views of the ex-service community, in particular those raised through the Female Veterans and Veterans' Families policy forum, to remove the inequity between married and de-facto partners for the Partner Service Pension," Mr Chester said.

"Where the veteran has a mental health condition recognised by DVA and there was an unsafe or abusive domestic environment to the partner or their family prior to separation, former partners will remain eligible to receive the Partner Service Pension until they enter into a new relationship.

"This measure is part of the Government's *Fourth National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* and will assist partners who leave an abusive relationship by providing them with financial support.

"Families play a critical role supporting current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and it is vital we look after them too, which includes ensuring all former partners of veterans continue to have access to the assistance they need."

Former partners include de-facto partners of a veteran, someone who was in a registered relationship with a veteran and someone married to, or divorced from, a veteran.

For more information about the Partner Service Pension, visit the [DVA website](#).



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Assistance dogs to support veterans with PTSD

27 September 2019

Military veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) will be able to access specially trained assistance dogs under a new program announced today by Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester.

Mr Chester said two suppliers of assistance dogs had been contracted to work with the veteran community following overwhelming feedback from ex-service organisations.

“This program will change lives and it will save lives,” Mr Chester said. “Matching a veteran experiencing PTSD with a specially trained assistance dog will help reduce isolation and give the veteran a chance to improve their mental wellbeing and overall lifestyle.

“We have listened to veterans, ex-service organisations and the wider ex-service community about the role psychiatric assistance dogs can play in the lives of veterans with PTSD.

“These dogs are highly trained to detect signs of distress in their handler and perform specific tasks to help ease those symptoms. For example, waking their handler experiencing a night terror or nuzzling their handler to distract them from emotionally disabling symptoms.

“Today we have announced two companies, Smart Pups Assistance Dogs and Centre for Service and Therapy Dogs Australia, as the first suppliers chosen to provide assistance dogs to our veterans.”

The announcement is in addition to a research project currently underway with La Trobe University to expand the evidence base for further use of assistance dogs for veterans.

“The early results from that trial have been very positive and will help to inform the work we are doing now to support more veterans with PTSD,” Mr Chester said.

“There has been emerging evidence around the world that supports the use of assistance dogs in addition to ongoing treatment for the management of PTSD.”

Centre for Service and Therapy Dogs Australia (CSTDA) Principal Psychologist Dr Pree Benton said CSTDA were thrilled to be partnering with DVA in delivering such innovative care to veterans.

Continued

Assistance dogs, continued

“Assistance dogs are able to pick up on the veteran's stress in a way that we as humans are not, and respond to this by assisting them in the moment with trained strategies to downregulate the veteran's distress,” Dr Benton said.

“The dogs can also be trained to wake veterans up from nightmares, scan the environment for the veteran to reduce hypervigilance, and provide a barrier between the veteran and members of the public to induce feelings of safety.

“Assistance dogs are trained to have a symbiotic relationship with the veterans, whereby not only does the veteran benefit from having their assistance dog perform its trained tasks, but the assistance dog also benefits from having a daily job to do in supporting their veteran partner. This also serves to boost self-worth and provide a sense of purpose to the veterans.

“We believe this relationship is what makes the veteran-assistance dog partnership so effective.”

Unlike pet or companion dogs, assistance dogs are specially trained to perform tasks that help their handler to achieve their clinical recovery goals. They are trained to meet the veteran's needs and veterans will be trained as their dog's handler.

“Assistance dogs will support those veterans in need now, while we continue to work with La Trobe University to further develop evidence that backs up what we know – that assistance dogs can support the treatment of PTSD,” Mr Chester said.

“The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first and is providing more than \$230 million a year towards veteran mental health.”

A limited tender was undertaken to gain access to assistance dogs for veterans in need as early as possible, and there will soon be an open tender to expand the panel of providers.

Veterans currently seeking treatment for PTSD are encouraged to speak to their mental health professional in regards to gaining access to an assistance dog, or for more information visit www.dva.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/rehabilitation/assistance-dogs



OUR MILITARY HISTORY

Lest we Forget

1967

16 October 1967 RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV '67) joins the US Army's 135th Aviation Company at Vung Tau, supporting American troops in South Vietnam.

18 October 1967 HMAS Perth hit HMAS Perth struck by return fire near Cape Lai, Vietnam, while on the United States 7th Fleet 'gunline'. This was the only occasion on which an Australian warship suffered casualties from enemy fire during the Vietnam War.

1969

13 October 1969 HMAS Brisbane returns to Sydney This was the end of the Brisbane's first deployment to Vietnam. A turret from HMAS Brisbane is on display outside the Memorial.

1971

6 October 1971 HMAS Sydney at Vung Tau The carrier embarked the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, as Australia's participation in the Vietnam war wound down.

1992

3 October 1992 The Vietnam Veterans' National Memorial, Anzac Parade, Canberra, was opened by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Paul Keating, MP, and honours those Australians who served and died in the war in Vietnam

'Australia's Vietnam War' Website.
University of New South Wales Canberra
Vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au

Tpr Barry Hodges presenting the journal "A Centurions Long Journey" to the students at Montpellier PS, Geelong (the journal covering the tanks arrival from the UK to Puckapunyal, Vic in 1952 and its unique armour military history).

Subsequently it's return to Australia in 1970 with battle damage and where to this very day it holds ground as gate guard at the 1st Armoured Regiment, Chauvel Lines, Edinburgh S.A.

This journal was compiled by corporal Graham Munsell - crew commander and driver Trooper Barry Hodges from their reflections and memories of that time and includes over 100 rare photos from their collections.

This is a very important piece of British, Australian and Victorian military history and needs to be publicised to make people aware of the amazing history of this particular tank.

Cheers
Barry Hodges



Rotary Club of Launceston pays homage to Vietnam Veterans

The Rotary Club of Launceston hosted members of the Launceston Sub-Branch of the Vietnam Veterans to dinner at the Hotel Grand Chancellor on Wednesday 14th August. The dinner was a prelude to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day on August 18

The dinner honoured the service of the Australian Veterans in the Vietnam conflict. The veterans shared tables with Rotarians.

The keynote speech was delivered by former Launceston Sub-Branch Secretary Kerry Wise who spoke about the history of the Sub-Branch and how they had helped their colleagues and the community

Dinner organiser, Rotarian Graeme Williams, was delighted to see Rotary being able to recognise the service of the Vietnam Veterans in such a tangible way. President of the Rotary Club of Launceston, Colleen McGann, said that one of the major goals of Rotary in Tasmania for this year, was to honour the service to Australia of our war veterans.

Reference: Launceston Examiner Tuesday August 13 Page 4

A TRIBUTE TO VIETNAM VETERANS (Tune – Waltzing Matilda)

**Vietnam Veterans, we gather at your service,
Honouring you, for you answered the call,
Some returned home quite safely, but some were cruelly damaged,
Some paid the ultimate price of them all.
Vietnam Veterans, bold and courageous,
Entered a war unlike any before,
And your lives changed forever because of what you suffered through,
You wouldn't see things the same any more.**

**Thousands were conscripted, no-one offered them a choice,
Birth dates determined who went and who stayed,
Though you served your country well, no welcome home awaited you,
No adulation, no ticker-tape parade.
Vietnam Veterans, you deserved better
Treatment from those who had sent you away
To a war, not our making, you did what you were ordered to,
We all acknowledge your role here today.**

Music: Banjo Paterson

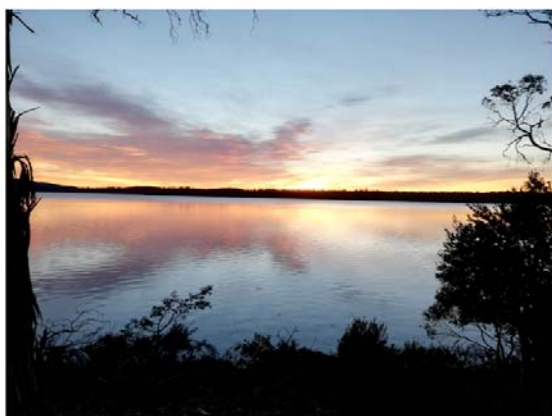
Lyrics: Val Clarke

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2019

LAUNCESTON TASMANIA



Vietnam Veterans Tasmania Bush Retreat at Lake Sorrell



Peace and Beauty at Dawn, Lake Sorrell



Looking towards the wood heater, new flooring in front of the heater and new position for the TV



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



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

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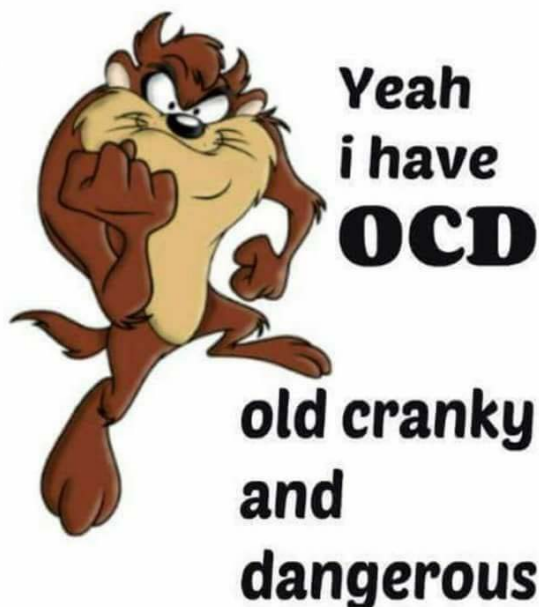


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YOUR ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN DEBRIEF

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.

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GOVERNMENT SEEKS INPUT INTO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY AND NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Tuesday 24 September 2019

VETERANS, their families, and the broader ex-service community are being asked to help shape the Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and National Action Plan as public consultation opens today.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester is encouraging those in the community to have their say and provide their ideas on how the Government can improve veterans' mental health and wellbeing.

"This Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first, and a crucial part of this is listening to their views, their experiences and considering their solutions to promote positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes," Mr Chester said.

"People will be able to have their say and contribute to this important topic through an online survey or by providing a written submission, with a view of ensuring collectively that we are all doing what we can to support our veterans and their families."

The Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and National Action Plan was determined as a priority as part of the of the Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit that Minister Chester convened in June this year.

"The Prime Minister has made mental health one of his highest priorities and I am committed to driving new efforts to improve mental health for veterans and their families," Mr Chester.

"One of the initiatives I have been working on is providing assistance dogs to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. This is the first time the Federal Government has provided financial backing to a trial of this nature and something that I am proud to support.

"This is just one step this Government is taking to put veterans and their families first, and more than \$230 million a year is being invested in supporting the mental health of veterans, out of a broader budget of more than \$11 billion."

To help everyone provide informed feedback for the online survey, an environmental scan of mental health reform in Australia has also been published, which highlights developments in mental health policy across Australia over the past six years.

For those in need of immediate mental health support and counselling, Open Arms — Veterans and Family Counselling can be contacted 24/7 on 1800 011 046.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs online wellbeing portal, [AT-Ease.dva.gov.au](https://at-ease.dva.gov.au), also provides veterans and their families with information, resources and links to services for support with mental health and wellbeing.

To view the environmental scan, complete the online survey or provide a written submission, please visit: www.dva.gov.au/nap2019

REUNIONS

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.

THE VIETNAMESE MUSEUM-AUSTRALIA



For more information and to see a visual concept of the project go to;
www.vietnamesemuseum.com.au

His new wife was standing there by the bench watching him.

After a long period of silence she finally said: "Honey, I've just been thinking; now that we are married, maybe you don't need to spend so much of your time out here in your garage and could consider selling some of your machinery and stuff ... like your gun collection, fishing gear, boat, and lose all those stupid model airplanes. And sell that vintage hot rod sports car, and dump that home brewing kit..... and **the golf clubs**"

Tom got a horrified look on his face and silently stared at her. She said, "Darling, what's wrong?"

He replied, "Nothing ... but for a minute there, you were starting to sound like my ex-wife."

"Ex-wife!?" she screamed, "YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU WERE MARRIED BEFORE!"

Tom replied, "I wasn't...



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.

ADVOCACY CORNER.

All V.V.A.A. Authorised advocates are reminded that they need to renew their authorisation on an annual basis, that is each January as part of the condition of authorisation is that the advocate is a member of the V.V.A.A. Membership must be confirmed as current each year.

For a copy of the application form go to the V.V.A.A. Administration Handbook.

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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



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

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM

25 VETERANS DRIVE, NEWHAVEN, PHILLIP ISLAND VIC 3925

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.