



DEBRIEF

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AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE VETERANS' COVENANT

*We, the people of Australia, respect and give thanks
to all who have served in our defence force and their families.*

*We acknowledge the unique nature of military service and the sacrifice
demanded of all who commit to defend our nation.*

*We undertake to preserve the memory and deeds of all who have served
and promise to welcome, embrace, and support
all military veterans as respected and valued members of our community.*

For what they have done, this we will do.

HONOUR THE DEAD, But Fight like Hell for the Living

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

The National Executive and Council meetings in October covered a lot of ground and resolved a number of questions.

Minutes of the National Council meeting will be available in the near future, The executive meeting the day before simply reviewed the agenda of the Council and allowed the executive to review matters and ensure information is available on the day to answer potential questions.

The future of the V.V.A.A. was a particular item for me as I needed clarification of what the membership wanted in the future. This is now crystal clear and I thank the executive and National Council members for their consideration of the earlier discussion paper and their clear direction.

You will note in this edition of Debrief a page recognising the award of National Life Memberships, I thank the association for this recognition and congratulate the other three on their awards. Life membership is a worthy recognition of service at all three levels of our association and should be used to recognise and reward service.

The Government's Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019 has finally passed through both houses of parliament and a great degree of scrutiny, if it gives even one veteran an increased sense of worth and belief that his service was worthwhile it has value, displaying the covenant and wearing the lapel pin is optional as is using the Veterans' card to obtain benefits.

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.

Kel will make some comments in a future edition of Debrief; at this time any queries should be asked of National Vice-President Max Ball, via email on maxball@iinet.net.au.



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1800 011 046

NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATIONS 2019



Mike Benyk



Richard Williams



Ken Foster



Bob Elworthy

GREATER RECOGNITION FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

22 October 2019

Members of the community will be able to better recognise the unique nature of military service and further acknowledge the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families through legislation that passed Parliament today.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the Government's *Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019* establishes the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, which provides a formal way for all Australians to show their appreciation to our current and former Australian Defence Force personnel, and to the families who have supported them.

"The covenant, veteran card and lapel pin will allow the community — employers, businesses, community groups, veteran or sporting organisations — the opportunity to recognise the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served our nation," Mr Chester said.

"The legislation also includes a statement requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to adopt a beneficial approach when interpreting legislation and apply a fair, just and consistent approach to veterans' claims.

"Arrangements are also being finalised for businesses across Australia to recognise the unique nature of military service by providing benefits through the veteran card, and I encourage any business which would like to learn more about how it can participate to contact DVA.

"The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first and this legislation is part of our ongoing efforts to transform the culture of DVA."

The covenant is part of a wider recognition package, and enables the oath and lapel pin to be provided to veterans and eligible reservists. The package also includes the veteran card — a redesign of the existing DVA health cards, which is open to new applicants and will be provided to existing card holders over the coming months.

Those who have already applied for the lapel pin and oath would begin receiving their covenant packs soon and Mr Chester urged those who have not already applied for the covenant to do so online using MyService.

Upon Royal Assent in coming weeks, the Bill will become a separate Act to provide symbolic recognition for all veterans. It does not change current entitlements.

More information on the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, including how individuals can apply and how businesses and community organisations can register support, can be found on the [DVA website](#).

COUNCIL OF THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL APPOINTMENT

Tuesday 1 October 2019

FORMER Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony (Tony) Abbott has today been appointed as a member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial, bringing with him dedication, passion and knowledge in a period that will see the Memorial upgraded to tell the stories of more recent conflicts.

Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel Darren Chester said Mr Abbott's extensive experience will ensure the stories from recent military conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Solomon Islands and East Timor will be proudly told.

"The Australian Government recently announced an investment of almost \$500 million to be able to display more of the Australian War Memorial's collection and I have no doubt Mr Abbott will be an asset to the Council during this period," Mr Chester.

"As Prime Minister, Mr Abbott led the case to build the Sir John Monash Centre in Villers-Bretonneux to tell the stories and honour the thousands of fallen Australians who served in the First World War.

"I congratulate Mr Abbott on his appointment and am confident he will ensure we continue to record the stories of those who have served, in their words, and be able to share those stories to the more than one million visitors to the memorial each year."

Mr Abbott has a long history and interest in supporting veterans and their families and has been appointed to the Council as a part-time member for a period of three years. Since 1998, Mr Abbott has convened the annual Pollie Pedal charity bike ride, which has raised more than \$5 million for medical research, indigenous health scholarships and Soldier On.

The Council of the Australian War Memorial is responsible for the conduct and control of the affairs of the Memorial and the policy of the Memorial with respect to any matters determined by the Council. More information about the Australian War Memorial and its Council can be found at www.awm.gov.au/about.





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Questions and Answers for *Partner Service Pensions – eligibility alignment***2019-20 Budget Measure****Background**

This measure, which is subject to the passage of legislation, removes the inequity between married and unmarried partners of veterans by extending the Partner Service Pension (PSP) for 12 months post-separation to all former partners.

Additionally, this measure will allow former partners to remain on PSP after the 12-month period where special domestic circumstances, which include domestic violence, apply. Under this measure, former partners who separate due to special domestic circumstances will be able to remain on PSP after the 12-month post-separation period until they enter into a new relationship.

What is Partner Service Pension?

A service pension provides regular income for people with limited means and is subject to the income and assets test. Partner Service Pension (PSP) is the payment made to eligible partners, former partners and widows/widowers of veterans with qualifying service.

What changes have been made in this measure?

This measure streamlines eligibility for Partner Service Pensions (PSP) by removing the inequities which currently exist between married and non-married former partners.

When will the changes take effect?

Pending the passage of legislation, these changes commence on 20 September 2019, or if Royal Assent is after this date, the measure is taken to have commenced from 20 September 2019.

Who will it benefit?

This will benefit former partners of veterans, regardless of marital status.

What will be the impact of this change, and what are the new eligibility requirements?

Former de facto partners of a veteran, persons who were formally in a registered relationship with a veteran, and persons divorced from a veteran can continue to receive PSP for 12 months after separating from the veteran (or until they enter into a new relationship), and beyond this period either indefinitely (or until they enter into a new relationship) where the Commission is satisfied that special domestic circumstances exist. Where the veteran partner or former partner dies, the recipient is eligible to receive PSP until they commence a new relationship. These provisions are already available to married partners who separate from the veteran partner.

What are Special Domestic Circumstances?

Special Domestic Circumstances is the term used to describe the set of circumstances under which a former partner of a veteran may continue to receive PSP after the initial 12-month post-separation period.

There are three criteria which must be met in order for Special Domestic Circumstances to be applicable:

Continued

Partners Service Pension, Continued.

the former partner must not reside in the same residence as the veteran;
the veteran must have a mental health condition recognised by DVA (this may include non-liability health care); and
immediately prior to the separation, the domestic environment shared by the veteran and the partner (or a child) was, because of the veteran's behaviour, unsafe or abusive for the partner or any child of the partner.

An unsafe or abusive domestic environment is not prescriptively defined and a permissive approach is taken when assessing these claims because there are potentially a range of circumstances that may be relevant, including circumstances where the separated partner:

was fearful for their safety or that of their children;
was subjected to physical abuse or violence;
was subjected to psychological or emotional abuse or social isolation; or
felt they were threatened or oppressed.

In all cases, the Department seeks to take a compassionate and confidential approach to determining whether special domestic circumstances exist recognising that the affected partner may be distressed or uncomfortable about describing their circumstances.

How will former partners continue to receive Partner Service Pension after their separation?

Former partners can inform DVA of their circumstances post-separation in order to remain on PSP where eligible. Where special domestic circumstances occur, which includes domestic violence, former partners may remain on PSP after the 12-month post-separation period.

What about separations that occur prior to 20 September 2019?

These changes only apply to separations that occur on or after 20 September 2019.

For the provisions which relate to continuing PSP eligibility after a veteran's death, these apply only where the death occurs on or after 20 September 2019.

For separations and deaths prior to this date, only legally married partners can continue to receive PSP after separation from the veteran.

What other support is available former partners who advise that domestic violence was a factor involved in their separation?

DVA currently provides a 'one off', non-taxable crisis payment, equal to one week's service pension, for victims of domestic violence who are veterans or partners of veterans. To receive a DVA crisis payment a person must be receiving service pension, PSP or income support supplement, have recently made a claim for one of these payments, or be eligible to receive one of these payments and be in severe financial hardship.

The Open Arms – veterans & Families Counselling Service (formerly VVCS) is a nationally accredited mental health service that provides 24-hour free counselling and support. Any current and former Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel with one day full-time service can receive support through Open Arms, as can their partners and children.

Continued

Partner Service Pension, continued

DVA is working with the Whole of Government Fourth Action Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. The Action Plan coordinates actions across jurisdictions and focuses strongly on prevention measures. This framework guides our policy making.

How will Partner Service Pension recipients and members of the veteran community learn about these changes?

DVA will liaise closely with ESO's and veteran community through a tailored communications strategy. DVA will also communicate these changes to Partner Service Pension eligibility through media articles, social media and other messaging platforms.

Where can more information be found?

DVA's website has information on Partner Service Pension in Factsheet IS45 – Partner Service Pension. Information on this 2019-20 Budget Measure will be updated closer to the commencement date. Alternatively, DVA can be contacted via telephone on 1800 555 254, or via email at GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au



OUR MILITARY HISTORY

Lest we Forget

10 November 1964 Australian government introduces selective conscription of 20-year-old males by ballot under the National Service Act. The National Service Scheme saw 15,381 young men serve in Vietnam.

13 November 1965 Warrant Officer Class 2 Kevin "Dasher" Wheatley, Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, is awarded the first Victoria Cross of the Vietnam War posthumously in the Tra Bong Valley, Quang Ngai province

V.V.A.A. BRIBIE ISLAND QLD



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

V.V.A.A. VICTORIA RECOGNITION.

The VVAA Victorian Branch has a proud history of conducting commemorative events for the benefit of our Vietnam Veteran Family. The efforts put in by your State Executive have been consistent over many years and the contribution by Sub Branches ensures we stand head and shoulders over other VVAA State Branches. That is not to put down the efforts of our interstate brothers but acknowledges achievements here in Victoria.

The 2019 Vietnam Veterans Day Service at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance was another success attended by a wide range of VIP Guests including a large contingent from the US Consulate, Melbourne. Among those US Guests was the US Assistant Secretary of the Army, Washington who we believe is a 4 Star man of some note. The attached letter of thanks from Mr Jette is certainly a feather in VVAA Vic's cap and a testament to how we do our business here in Victoria.

VV Day 2020 arrangements are already under way and we look forward to a strong attendance by our members at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance on Tuesday 18th August next year.

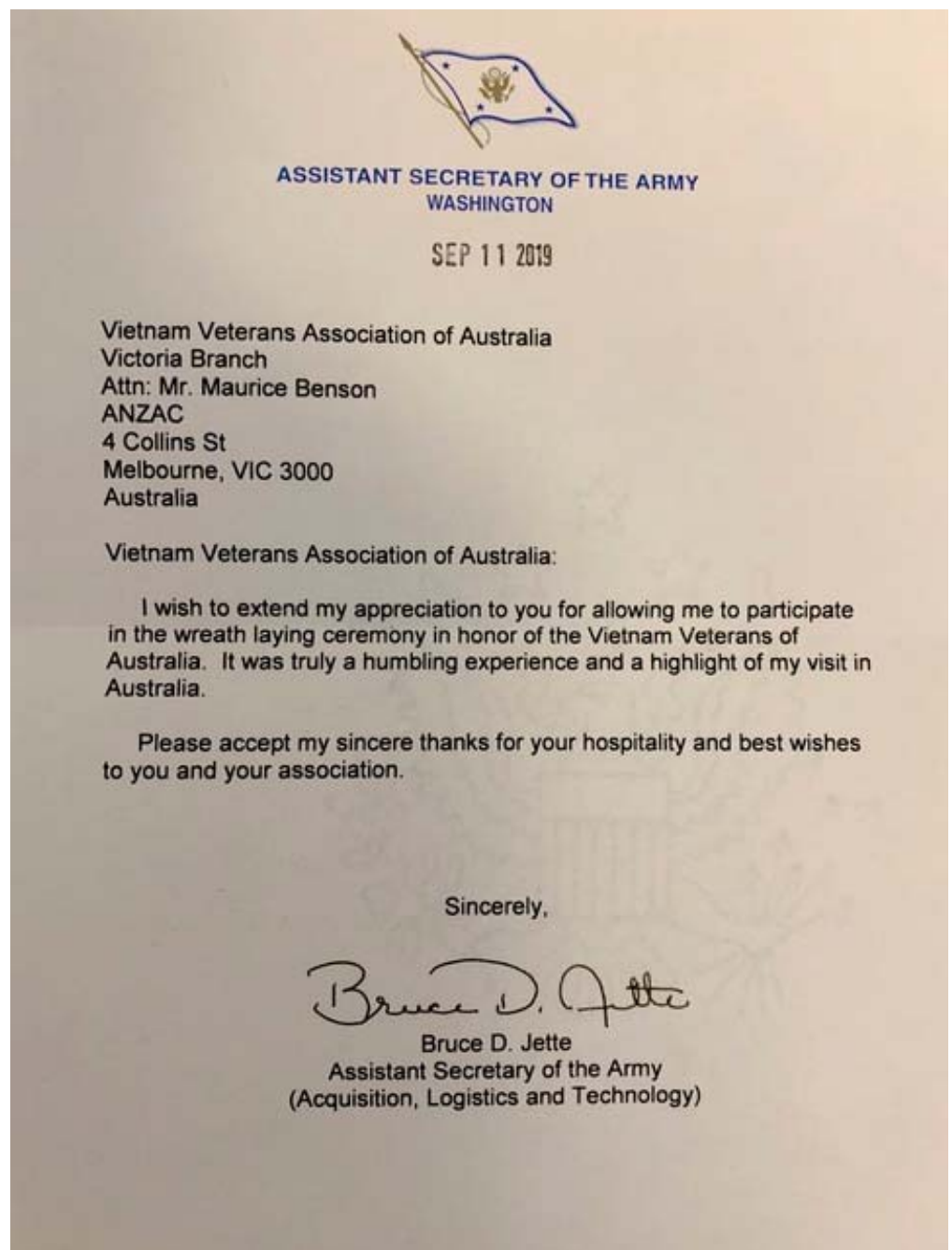
Maurie Benson

Commemorations Manager

VVAA Vic Branch

office@vvaavic.org.au

0417 588 886



MAIL BOX

Dear Ken,

I just wanted to share this with you. I am an educator and part time musician who has had the privilege of performing at the ANZAC Dawn service at Eastern Beach in Geelong for the last three years. The service organised by the Geelong Vietnam Veteran's Sub branch has grown to about 9 to 10000 people. This year I performed a tribute the veterans of the Kokoda Campaign. As I performed I couldn't help but notice the hundreds of Vietnam Veterans who were present. I decided I needed to put something together for them for the 2020 Dawn Service.

It is my tribute the the veterans of Long Tan. I performed this at the Vietnam Veteran's Commemorative Service in Geelong this year.

As an educator I get the opportunity to share story in this way so that younger generations will learn, commemorate and respect.

This song/prayer/eulogy is sung through the eyes of a surviving digger. The images of the mud mist, monsoonal rains and the shifting light of Long Tan's Rubber Plantation all came from interview transcripts.

It is my prayer that those young men can finally find peace and clarity in the fact that they did their duty.

I suggest you use headphones and share as you see fit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kq6WlaHcbJk>

I would love your feedback.

Vin Healy

19 Penleigh Cres

Ocean Grove, Vic, 3226

0418515970

TRAVELLING TO THE USA

Mr. Foster,

I received your name and email address from Phil Dressing. I am a US Army Vietnam Veteran living in Colorado, USA, and I have been researching Australia's role in the Vietnam War. I was stationed in the northern area of Vietnam called I Corps from 1967-1969.

I currently volunteer at the Wings Over the Rockies Air Museum in Denver, Colorado 2 days a week restoring military airplanes and I meet many other American Vietnam Vets.

The reason I am reaching out to you is to offer an invitation to any Australia Vietnam vets who might be visiting in America and happen to need a guide and fellow veteran to share all that this country has to offer. I know most of the great places to visit, and places to stay away from. If any of them are in the Denver, Colorado area I would offer to host them in my home and show them around.


My wife and I spent 5 weeks in Australia and it was the best vacation we ever had. Great places to visit and really enjoyed the people who were kind and open.

Please feel free to give out my email address, nolan1947@hotmail.com to anyone interested in my offer.

Best regards,

Nolan Hargrave

Centennial, Colorado



THE UNPAC STUDY

Easily irritated? Does anger get in the way of your life?

Help us understand how
day-to-day life affects anger
for veterans, and improve
treatments for problem anger

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A PHOENIX AUSTRALIA INITIATIVE

More details next page.

Anger Study Seeks Veterans to Complete a Series of Surveys

Research Centre: Phoenix Australia, University of Melbourne

Location: This is a virtual study, all participation will take place online

Lead Investigators: Dr. Tracey Varker and Dr. Mark Hinton

Ethics Committee: The ethics committee is the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs Human Research Ethics Committee (DDVA HREC)

Background

Problems with anger are common in veterans, and are strongly linked to other issues like posttraumatic stress disorder.

This study will attempt to discover the underlying factors that trigger anger in everyday living and aims to contribute in developing a more targeted approach to anger treatment.

This study seeks ex-serving, and veteran men and women who have served in the military for at least 12 months. Participants are required to answer 2-minute micro-surveys, 4 times per day for 10 days. Participants will also need to complete a short survey at the start and end of the 10 day period.

Your Rights

If you decide to participate in the study and later feel that you no longer wish to be part of it, you may withdraw at any time.

Your records relating to this study and any other information received will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law.

Why Participate?

You may better understand what is triggering your anger

You will be helping to advance veteran research.

You will be compensated for participating in this study.

Who Can Participate?

Men and women aged 18+ who have served the military for at least 12 months.

Able to complete 2-minute micro-surveys, 4 times per day for 10 days.

Able to download a study app to their smartphone

Click here to participate: <https://is.gd/UNPACstudy>

Interested in signing up for other veteran research studies? Email us at phoenix-info@unimelb.edu.au



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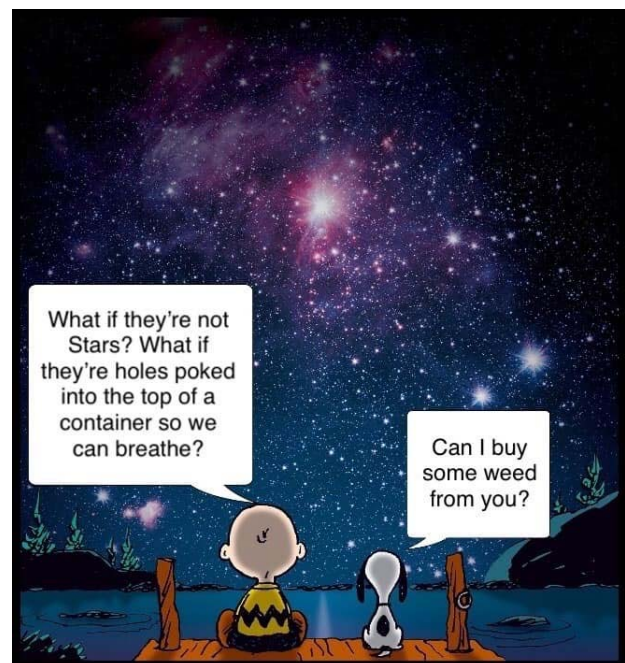
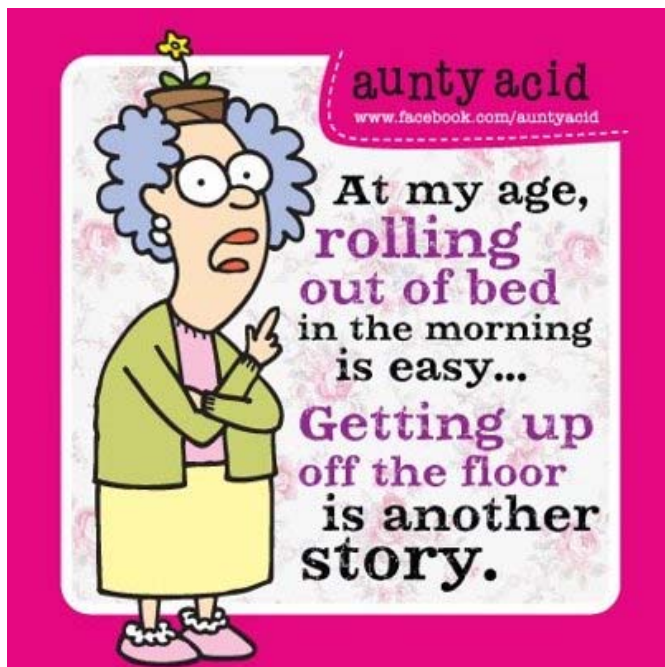


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YOUR ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN DEBRIEF

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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BOOK REVIEW.

We will be publishing the second edition of John Carroll's book, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind, The Royal Australian Navy in Vietnam 1965-1972* in January 2020.

The book will retail at \$35.00.

The ISBN is **9780648446682**

It has 260 pages and is illustrated throughout with black and white photographs.

Following is a bit about the book

The second edition has been thoroughly checked updated where required and validated. The substantial amount of corroborating evidence ensures it is true and accurate.

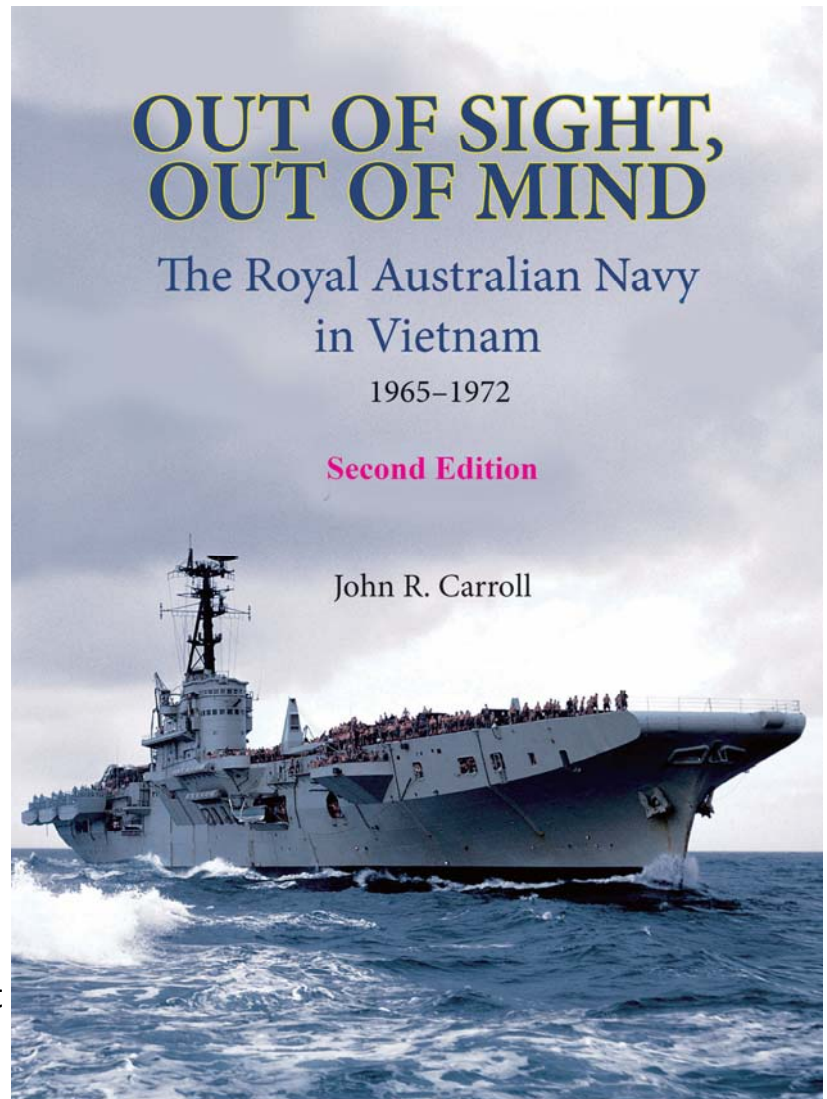
The first edition was utilised to great effect by advocates and legal representatives of veterans at the Veterans Review Board, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and at the Federal Court.

The author highlights and analyses the vital part played by HMAS *Sydney* and other units of the RAN in the support of land bases forces in Vietnam.

The perceived absence of enemy threat was the prime factor influencing the Federal Government's decision to exclude from benefits and entitlements those who served in *Sydney*, *Jeparit* and *Boonaroo* and the warships that escorted them into the war zone.

A flawed decision made on the basis of fallacious information and the cause of much bitterness.

While *Sydney* and her escort were at anchor, not only were they vulnerable to an enemy well versed in unconventional guerrilla warfare, but all who served in these ships were also exposed to highly toxic herbicides used to defoliate the nearby landscape.



Continued

Book review, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, continued

The residue of this procedure flowed into the surrounding rivers and streams. Due to the processes used in those times for the production of potable water, the dioxins contained in the distillate were enriched, thereby making them much more potent and deadly. The vexed issue of exposure to Agent Orange has also been expanded. This is due to an ongoing reluctance of government to fully recognise that exposure to toxic defoliants via contaminated potable water is still having a detrimental effect on both the sailors who served at sea, and those who were transported by sea, to and from Vietnam. Obfuscation and indifference by the minister(s) concerned does nothing for the health and wellbeing of those who served. This ongoing problem has been included in the Chapter titled *Herbicide Exposure*.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind identifies and dispels various myths which have developed around the importance of sea transport and logistical support, and argues for a new appreciation of the service of the 13,000 members of the RAN who participated in this vitally important task.

Many of the illustrations were taken by serving military personnel which gives them an immediacy and poignancy lacking in official photographs. The *second edition* includes a large new chapter *In Their Own Words* containing pieces from the sailors and soldiers who served at sea, or were transported by sea, to and from Vietnam. It also includes many former members of the RAN not credited with operational service. Foremost was Lt Cdr Peter Maxwell Cumming who served in an advisory/observer role during the latter part of 1962 and the first weeks of 1963, before the first 30 members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam. The 200+ Fleet Air Arm personnel who served in HMAS *Sydney* as HMAS *Sydney* Flight were not recognised as having served in Vietnam or recorded on the Nominal Roll as Vietnam Veterans. This situation has been rectified.

The author: John Carroll was apprenticed to the Department of Navy in 1959 at the age of 15 'to learn and exercise the art and occupation of Shipwright.'

In 1962 he volunteered for service in the RANR, transferring to full-time service in the RAN in 1966. He then served as a naval shipwright in HMAS *Sydney* 1967, posted by helicopter to HMAS *Yarra* 1967–68, returning to Sydney 1972–73. Both ships were deployed on operational service in

Vietnamese waters during these periods. He was admitted as an Associate of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects in 1971, and then as an Associate Member in 1989. He is a graduate of Hawthorn Institute of Education (Melbourne University), and Monash University.

He was admitted to the Australian Psychological Society as a Member in September 1993, and was also admitted as a Member of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology. This book is based on his third doctoral dissertation.

The book will be available from all good bookshops or direct from us

Rosenberg Publishing, www.rosenbergypub.com.au or sales@rosenbergypub.com.au

Thank you for your help

Regards

Scilla Rosenberg

REUNIONS

WHAT'S HAPPENING

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



THE VIETNAMESE MUSEUM- AUSTRALIA



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

ADVOCACY CORNER.



Advocacy Training and
Development Program

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(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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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

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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.