



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

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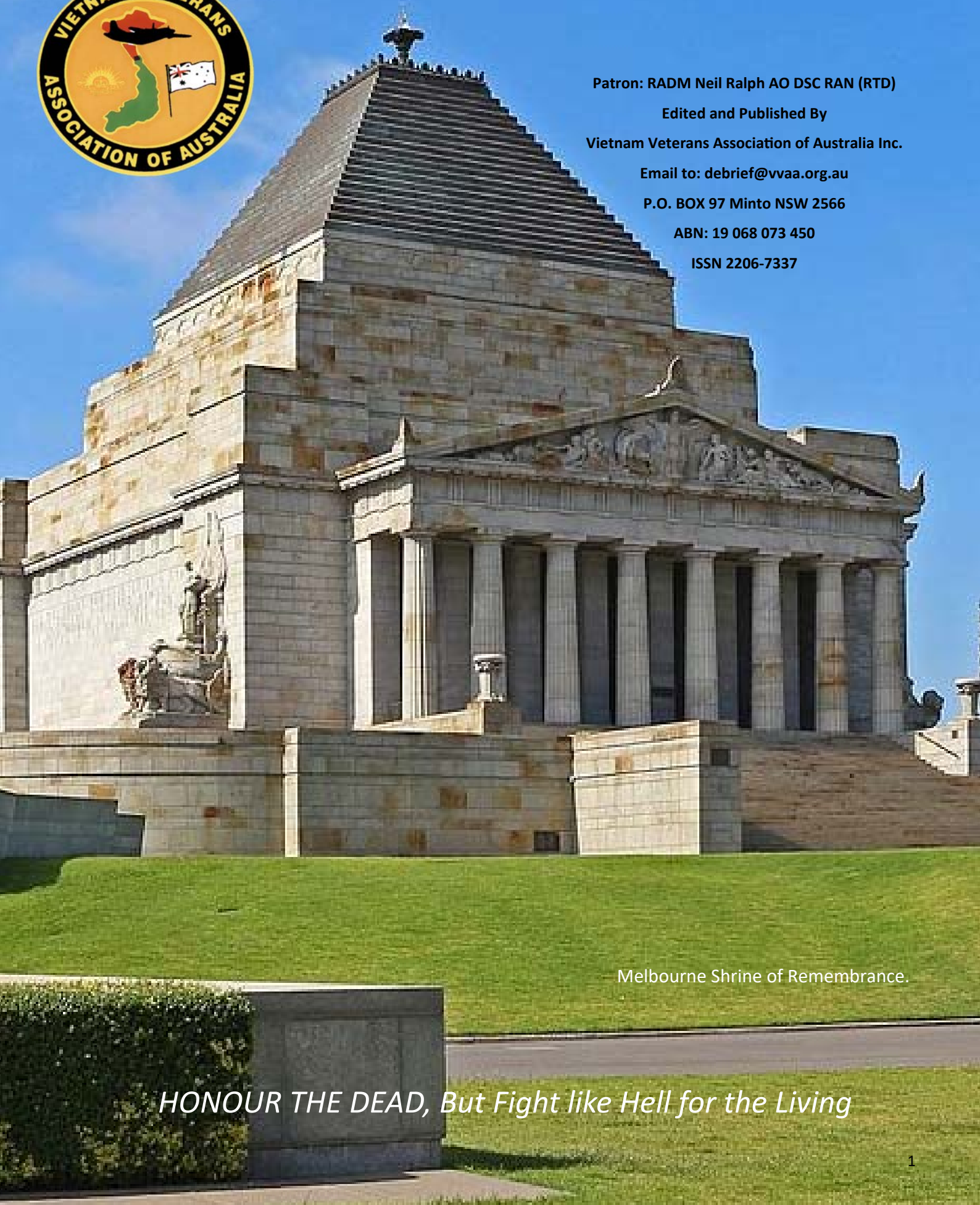
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Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.

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

## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT

How things change in a month, the Corona Virus is having a major effect on how we work and how we, as an association, must adapt to meet this threat to the health of our members.

The National Executive meeting in March that was scheduled for Canberra is now being conducted electronically.

This then leads to the National Council and Congress scheduled for Canberra in May again being done electronically and allows the Executive from its March “meeting” to report on its activities and make recommendations to the National Council.

State branches are advising they are closing offices and restricting their activities, this will lead us to develop new and innovative ways to conduct business and more importantly provide services and support to our members.

One option under consideration is working towards a video conferencing system that is available but not used, to date, by the V.V.A.A. we need to keep the channels of communication open and effective.

While all DVA meetings are suspended the members of the Ex-Service Organisation Round Table are having weekly telephone conferences with DVA to keep us up to date with processes being implemented to keep the services to veterans flowing.

Regarding cancellation of ANZAC Day services, I am confident enough in our members ability to adapt and pay their respects on this day in a meaningful way, we have the ability to remember their sacrifices without meeting as we have done in the past.

I would encourage all members to protect themselves, however, remember a phone call or equivalent contact depending on your technical skills with other veterans can be a positive way forward until things return to what we refer to as normal.

Stay strong and look after each other.

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](mailto:maxball@iinet.net.au).



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## AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL—CANBERRA

With the rapidly evolving developments across the nation and the world and the risks posed to the community by COVID-19, I can confirm that the Australian War Memorial has today made the difficult decision to close the Memorial to the public as of Tuesday 24 March 2020 until further notice. The health and safety of our visitors, veteran community, staff and volunteers is our paramount priority.

In line with the latest national health advice, and consideration of our operation as a cultural institution that encourages visitation, a decision was made by the Council and corporate management of the Australian War Memorial, that all public spaces and programs within the grounds of the Memorial, including galleries, the Reading Room and the Last Post Ceremony, should be closed indefinitely. We will continue to engage our supporters and audiences and share the stories of our military history with you via our website [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au) and social media channels.

Anzac Day commemorations will take place at the Australian War Memorial on 25 April 2020 as a private commemorative service to be held in the Commemorative Area and Hall of Memory at 5.30 am. This service will not be open to the public nor you our partners, and we encourage you to tune into the ABC's live broadcast of the event. This decision was made in conjunction with the RSL (ACT Branch) following government advice on gatherings of large groups. The traditional Dawn Service, National Ceremony and veterans' march will not take place.

Anzac Day is a symbolic day for Australians and New Zealanders, with the Australian War Memorial being the centre of national commemoration. We are committed to providing an opportunity for Australians to commemorate Anzac Day. The revised ceremony will be broadcast live across Australia by the ABC and streamed online, providing an opportunity for all of us to pause safely in our homes, unite in remembrance and celebrate the Australian spirit.

In these changed circumstances, please take care and I hope we can welcome you to the Memorial again soon.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Bennie

Acting Director

Australian War Memorial



## THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT PAYMENT

Veterans or dependants who receive the following benefits (as at 12 March 2020), and who are currently residing in Australia, will receive the one-off payment of \$750 (the Economic Support Payment) as part of the stimulus package:

**Please encourage all of your members to ensure their bank account details are up to date via MyService or by phoning the Veteran Access Network (VAN).**

- Income Support
  - Service Pension
  - Income Support Supplement
  - Age Pension and Wife Pension paid by DVA
  - DVA Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders
- Compensation
  - Disability Pension
  - War Widow(er)'s Pension
  - Wholly Dependent Partner payment
  - Special Rate Disability Pension
  - Permanent Impairment compensation under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*
  - Permanent Impairment compensation under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988*
  - Veteran Payment
  - Gold Card holders

There will be one payment per eligible recipient. The payment will be tax free and will not count as income for Social Security, Farm Household Allowance and Veteran payments.

Eligible recipients do not need to do anything to receive the payment as long as their bank account details are up to date. This can be updated via MyService or by contacting the VAN. The payment will be automatically paid into their bank account and will come from the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Services Australia.

Payments will be made from 31 March 2020. With the majority of payments to be made by 17 April 2020.

## **HEALTH AND STIMULUS PACKAGES SUPPORT VETERAN COMMUNITY**

THE Government is doing everything it can to protect our nation from the health and economic impacts of this global health issue, including veterans and their families.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said veterans and their families will benefit from the Government's commitment of \$2.4 billion to bolster the nation's health system in response to COVID-19 as this situation evolves.

"The health package allows older and at-risk veterans to access some health consultations and assessments remotely, via video or phone where video is not available," Mr Chester said.

"In the event veterans are in home isolation or from a vulnerable patient group, they will also be able to have their Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescriptions filled online or remotely and have their medication delivered directly to their home.

"This ensures vulnerable veterans can access the health care they need while limiting the risk of exposure.

"Veterans in residential or home care will be supported by the Government's commitment of over \$100 million to upskill and increase the numbers of aged care staff and nurses."

In addition, more than 225,000 veterans and their dependants will benefit from the \$17.6 billion stimulus package announced by the Government yesterday.

"Many of our veterans receive benefits through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister and Treasurer will support our veteran community through this challenging time," Mr Chester said.

"Those veterans or dependants who receive income support or compensation benefits through DVA as listed below and who are currently residing in Australia, will receive the one-off payment of \$750.

"The payment will be automatically paid into bank accounts and will come from DVA or Services Australia, however, recipients are encouraged to confirm their bank details are current and up-to-date by calling DVA on 1800 555 254.

"The Government is committed to putting veterans and their families first, particularly with regards to the health and economic impacts of this global health issue."

## VETERAN PENSIONS SET TO INCREASE

Veteran pension payments will increase in March in line with the biannual indexation process.

Pension recipients including veterans, their partners, war widows and widowers across Australia will see the increase from 20 March 2020.

Due to the calculation of pension rates on a daily basis, the first pension indexed on payday 26 March 2020 will comprise a component of both the old and new rates.

The new pension rates will be fully effective from pension payday 9 April 2020.

The table below highlights the new fortnightly rates.

	Old rate (fortnightly)	New rate (fortnightly)	Increase (fortnightly)
<b>SERVICE PENSION</b>			
Single person	\$933.40	\$944.30	\$10.90
Couples (each)	\$703.50	\$711.80	\$8.30
Single person – transitional	\$780.10	\$789.30	\$9.20
Couples (each) – transitional	\$629.40	\$636.80	\$7.40
<b>WAR WIDOWS</b>			
War widow(er)'s pension	\$949.10	\$960.40	\$11.30
Income support supplement	\$280.80	\$284.20	\$3.40
<b>DISABILITY PENSION</b>			
T&PI (Special rate)	\$1,434.70	\$1,451.80	\$17.10
Intermediate rate	\$974.20	\$985.80	\$11.60
EDA	\$792.80	\$802.30	\$9.50
100 per cent	\$510.10	\$516.20	\$6.10
10 per cent	\$57.94	\$58.55	\$0.61
<b>VETERAN PAYMENT</b>			
Single Person	\$1,009.80	\$1,021.80	\$12.00
Couples (each)	\$786.70	\$796.30	\$9.60

These are the maximum rates of payment and include any Energy Supplement payable.

Pensions are indexed twice a year in March and September. For a full list of pension rates, please visit [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) or call 133 254 or 1800 555 254 from regional Australia.

## OUR MILITARY HISTORY

### VIETNAM

8 April 1918 Repatriation Department established. Once soldiers were demobilised all tasks aimed at their rehabilitation and return to civilian life became the responsibility of the Repatriation Department.

29 April 1965 Prime Minister Menzies announces the commitment of an infantry battalion to Vietnam Australia's involvement in Vietnam was a gradual process. By April 1965 there were 100 members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam in Vietnam. The commitment of a battalion represented a major step in Australia's involvement and precipitated further increases in the number of Australians serving in Vietnam until reductions began in 1970.

7 April 1967 Major P.J. Badcoe, VC Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, originally from Adelaide, SA, was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for a series of actions in South Vietnam between February and April 1967.

9 April 1968 HMAS Sydney arrived at Vung Tau The 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, disembarked and the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, embarked. Sydney made 24 voyages to Vietnam during the war.

11 April 1970 HMAS Vendetta returns to Sydney HMAS Vendetta was the only one of three Australian Daring class destroyers to serve on the gunline in Vietnamese waters. The ship served one tour.



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Safe Zone Support is a free and anonymous counselling line, for veterans and their families – call 1800 142 072 (available 24/7).

This service provides access to specialised counsellors, with an understanding of military culture and experience.

The service offers care without the need for individuals to identify themselves or be concerned that their call will be recorded.

This line has been created for vulnerable cohorts of veterans and their families which might not otherwise seek mental health care.



An extract from the book "Vietnam—Our Stories"  
Copies available from [www.wilkinsonpublishing.com.au](http://www.wilkinsonpublishing.com.au)

## PERSEVERE

Laurence Nicholson, Budgewoi, NSW

For its size, it was the most highly decorated unit of the Australian Army, including four Victoria Crosses, the only such awards in Vietnam, yet it took almost half a century for the unit's badge to be officially recognised. Small wonder, then, that the motto of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) is 'Persevere'.

It was in 1962 that Australia first sent thirty officers and warrant officers troops to help the Americans train South Vietnam's Army.

They were to stay until the end of the war a decade later.

Most were career officers and senior NCOs, experienced and mature, with an average age of thirty-five. They were mainly drawn from the infantry, SAS or Commandos, although there were a number

of signallers, engineers and others from specialist corps. Hand-picked, they were considered experts in both counter-revolutionary and jungle warfare, many having served in the Malayan Emergency during the confrontation with Indonesia.

As Commander of the AATTV, Colonel Ted Serong arrived in Saigon in July 1962, followed the next month by fifteen officers and an equal number of senior NCOs (warrant officers and sergeants).

Initially all professional soldiers, they were spread in small groups across all of South Vietnam. At first, the AATTV was confined by its objectives to training, but as its members more frequently became involved in combat, these aims changed. Their experience and professionalism meant that they not only went into combat with the South Vietnamese, but they also commanded subunits and units up to battalion strength.

Three of the team's Victoria Cross winners were Warrant Officers and two received the award posthumously. Warrant Officer Kevin 'Dasher' Wheatley died aged twenty-eight during action in

November 1965. He was assigned to a platoon with a fellow warrant officer, Ron Swanton. As the platoon advanced through rice paddies in the vicinity of Binh Hoa, they came under heavy fire from a larger Viet Cong force. Swanton was killed in the battle that followed.

Continues

Persevere continued

Wheatley sought support as the clash intensified. When his platoon began to scatter, Wheatley carried the wounded Swanton to a safer area, but as the Viet Cong closed around his position, Wheatley insisted on staying with Swanton even though medics urged him to leave. He was killed defending his comrade.

Major Peter Badcoe was killed in April 1967, aged thirty-three. Between 23 February to 7 April 1967, Badcoe repeatedly performed extraordinary feats. While under fire he attacked across open ground, rescuing an American adviser and capturing a machinegun. He led attacks and provided leadership and an example to wavering troops.

Eventually he was killed by a burst of enemy fire as he rose to throw a grenade. The renowned club where Australians took breaks from war in Vung Tau bore his name.

Warrant Officer Ray Simpson was forty-three when he received his award in 1969. In May 1969, in Kon Tum Province, he rescued a wounded fellow warrant officer and carried out an unsuccessful attack on a strong enemy position. Two days later he fought alone against heavy odds to cover the evacuation of a number of casualties.

Warrant Officer Class Keith Payne was the last Australian to be awarded the Imperial Victoria Cross, by Queen Elizabeth. He served in Korea, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea before going to Vietnam.

In May 1970 he was commanding the 212<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 1- Mobile Strike Force Battalion when it was attacked by a strong North Vietnamese force. When his company was isolated and surrounded on three sides, his Vietnamese troops began to fall back.

Wounded in the hands and arms and under heavy fire, 35-yearold Payne covered the withdrawal before organising his troops into a defensive perimeter. Then for three hours while under regular fire he scouted the scene of the day's battle for isolated and wounded soldiers.

He found about forty wounded men, brought some in and organised the rescue of the others, leading the party back to base through enemy dominated territory.

continues

Persevere continued

In all, members of the AATTV received four Victoria Crosses, two Distinguished Service Orders, three Officers of the Order of the British Empire, six Members of the Order of the British Empire, six Military Crosses, 20 Distinguished Conduct Medals, 15 Military Medals, four British Empire Medals, four Queen's Commendations for Brave Conduct and 49 Mentions in Despatches. In addition, 245 US and 369 South Vietnamese awards were bestowed on unit members and the unit itself also received two unit citations. Because of the nature of the AATTV's work in Vietnam, all members, regardless of their corps, were awarded the Infantry Combat Badge.

Over the course of its service, a total of 1,009 men served with the unit, 998 Australians and eleven New Zealanders. Many men served multiple tours. During the ten years that the unit was in Vietnam, it lost thirty-three killed and 122 wounded. The members are commemorated by a memorial at Kokoda Barracks at Canungra, Queensland. In 2002, the AATTV's badge and an Australian flag were included on a memorial unveiled in North Carolina dedicated to US special forces that served during the war. The story of this badge is extraordinary. As a special forces unit, it at first had no identifying insignia.

Then in 1966 its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Milner, decided that such a badge was needed. The design job fell to Warrant Officer Laurie Nicholson who studied the symbols of South Vietnam and the U.S., as well as the people of the south and their environment. A green background was chosen to reflect the jungle of Vietnam, with the red and yellow colours of the South Vietnamese flag.

He settled on a green background with the red and yellow of the South Vietnamese flag, a shield like that of the American advisers, a crossbow as the traditional weapon of the tribal jungle people of Vietnam and a boomerang. Each weapon symbolised readiness.

Continues



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### Persevere continued

The first use of the badge was on the unit's 1966 Christmas cards, then around the end of that year it was adopted as a shoulder patch. Because the unit was disbanded at the end of the war, however, the badge was never officially approved or entered in the Australian Army Customs and Traditions Book.

Events took a fresh turn in July 1971 when the Army Headquarters Dress Committee finally and formally accepted and authorised the badge to be worn fixed to a green beret. But members of the unit were only permitted to wear the beret and hat badge while in Vietnam, and both items were not to be provided by public funds but had to be bought from 'their own resources'. This decision was later ruled through and deleted from the meeting minutes by the Dress Committee Secretary.

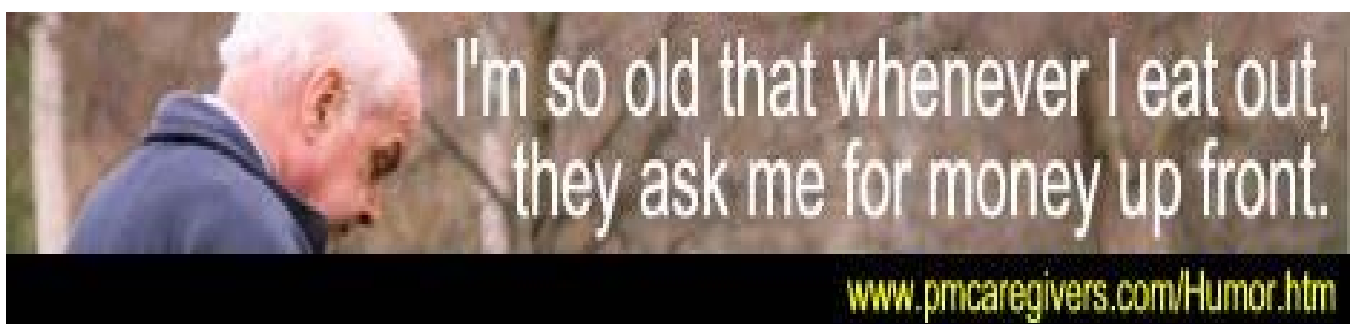
Warrant Officer Nicholson was determined that the badge should gain official status, not least to commemorate those unit members killed or wounded and it should be worn on Anzac Day and on other suitable occasions.

So, sixteen years after the badge was designed, an email was sent to Army headquarters seeking its full recognition. An investigation by the Australian Army History unit followed.

In September 2012 the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General, D.L. Morrison, sent his approval.

In response, he was told that this would reinvigorate the esprit de corps of the surviving members of the unit and the personal pride each would feel with the inclusion of the badge in the official Army Customs and Traditions Book and Units' histories.

Persevere indeed.



## **Have you applied for your Covenant pack and pin?**

More than 83,000 veterans and reservists have now applied for the Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant, including the Oath, Lapel Pin and Veteran Card.

Veterans and reservists who have not already registered for the Covenant can do so through MyService ([dva.gov.au/myservice](https://dva.gov.au/myservice)).

Meanwhile, the business benefits component of the Veteran Card is continuing to expand with registration of 212 additional businesses completed since its November launch. These new offers are available through the Australian Partners of Defence (APOD) online platform, where Veteran Card holders can electronically gain access to more than 10,000 unique offers and deals.

A further 246 businesses are at various stages of the offer-creation process, with interest in the program remaining strong thanks to support from the Defence community.

To gain access to offers and discounts, existing DVA Health Card or Veteran Card holders can simply register for free with APOD ([apod.com.au](https://apod.com.au)), which is entirely free for veterans and businesses.

Veterans and eligible reservists who don't currently hold a DVA Health Card or Veteran Card can apply through MyService, where you can also pre-register with APOD.

Card-holders can then gain access to offers from businesses by searching APOD website, which includes geographical, veteran-owned and concession filters. It is important to read the 'How to Redeem' information on each offer as some businesses only require you to show your card, others require an online purchase, while others require an exclusive offer code.

Businesses range from small local and veteran-owned family businesses through to large chains that operate nationally. They include retailers, travel and tourism operators, accommodation and car hire, entertainment, hospitality, restaurants, as well as service and trade industries from gyms to automotive mechanics.

There are now more than 52,000 Veteran Card holders registered with APOD.

If businesses or community organisations in your area have not heard of the Veteran Card, encourage them to find out more and show their support for the Covenant.

If you would like to suggest a business to APOD, please email your recommendation to [partners@apod.com.au](mailto:partners@apod.com.au). For more information about how to apply for and support the Covenant, including eligibility and other frequently asked questions, visit [recognition.dva.gov.au](https://recognition.dva.gov.au).



**V.V.A.A. WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

9<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Media Release by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Western Australian Branch Inc.

Reference ANZAC Cottage.

The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Western Australian Branch Inc [VVAA WA], are disappointed that the recent situation with the Friends of ANZAC Cottage [the Friends] could not be resolved amicably, to enable both parties to continue, in their respective roles at ANZAC Cottage [the Cottage].

On the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Friends circulated a letter, to the Mayor, CEO, all City of Vincent councillors and the VVAA WA President, stating that their situation at the Cottage was “untenable and unsustainable” and that they would vacate the cottage on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. This action, by the Friends, breached clause 9 of the MOU, drafted and signed by the Friends and the VVAA WA.

As President of the VVAA WA, I responded to the Secretary of the Friends, asking that the Friends expand on the “untenable and unsustainable” statement, The Friends did not respond to the VVAA WA e-mail. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> October, the Friends have been reluctant to have any direct communication with the VVAA WA or enter into any meaningful negotiations to resolve this matter.

The City of Vincent [COV] convened a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, attended by COV community engagement officers, the Friends and the VVAA WA a number of issues were raised and discussed. At this meeting the President of the Friends, Mr. P. Ramsay. BEM [Mil NZ], President of the Friends, tabled a proposal, that the VVAA WA relinquish the Cottage lease, in favour of the Friends. As the VVAA WA representative at this meeting, I advised that a decision could not be made without VVAA WA executive discussion and consultation with VVAA WA members. A VVAA WA response could not be given before the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020, allowing time for member's response and a VVAA WA executive meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> January. At this time the Friends agreed to delay their exit from the Cottage until mid-December 2019.

From 2006 until 2018 the Friends had free use of the Cottage. in 2018, an MOU was signed, with the Friends agreeing to contribute 50% of the outgoing costs, incurred by the VVAA WA, at the Cottage

It is worth noting that Mr. P. Ramsay, President of the Friends, is a former State President of the VVAA WA, Life Member and was instrumental in the gifting of the Cottage to the Town of Vincent [now COV] in 2006.

Following the VVAA WA executive meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Friends and the COV were advised of the VVAA WA retain the Cottage lease, a majority vote by members. The Friends were requested to advise the VVAA WA of their intentions by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. On the 31<sup>st</sup> January, the Secretary of the Friends, Mrs. A. Chapple advised the VVAA WA that the Friends could not make any decisions at this time.

As late as the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, the VVAA WA met with the COV, to discuss a way forward, in an attempt to resolve the stalemate with the Friends, regarding the Cottage.

Apart from the lease proposal on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019, no other “final offer” was put to the VVAA WA in respect of the Cottage lease.

The VVAA WA only became aware of the Friends “dead line” and intention to vacate the Cottage, at noon on the 7<sup>th</sup> February, when advised of this, in a phone call from the COV.

The VVAA WA are still willing to enter into dialogue with the Friends, in regards to their activities at the Cottage. In the interim period, the VVAA WA will assume responsibilities for conducting open days and other commemorations at the Cottage. The VVAA WA, conducted an Open Day at the Cottage today, 9<sup>th</sup> February, to coincide with the 104<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cottage.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Williams. OAM.

Contact. [president@vvaawa.org.au](mailto:president@vvaawa.org.au) .

Phone. 0424 368670.



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## OUR HISTORY

Recent research has identified a loss of records from our associations past.

If there are copies of V.V.A.A. National Congress minutes prior to 1996 please forward to;

[president@vvaa.org.au](mailto:president@vvaa.org.au)

or

[secretary@vvaa.org.au](mailto:secretary@vvaa.org.au)

## 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.

## Called Up

Geoff Leitch 2013



What day's your birthday? I said I wasn't sure,  
The bloke behind the desk said "no worries son", "I'll put you in the draw".

"Well I'll be buggered" I said, as me number came up,  
Meself and a few thousand others, were ordered to sign up.

Off to "Pucka" for indoctrination and training, Canungra for a little bit more,  
By the time the troops had finished with us we were certainly not looking for more.  
Not being the brightest spark in the pack, they asked me "what I wanted to be",  
I thought for a bit and pondered the choices, and like dill, I chose Infantry.



After just a few months training, they couldn't wait to send us off to war,  
To a place we hadn't even heard of, a place where no-one could give a damn,  
A place we came to loathe, the place called VIETNAM.

Nui Dat was our destination,  
The place covered in jungle vegetation,  
The yanks had set up the camp, a safe place no doubt'  
When we stepped of the plane we shit ourselves when the Sergeants began to shout.

No time to settle in, Patrols to be carried out,  
We went off into the jungle, packing plenty of clout.  
The enemy we couldn't hear or see, it was like searching in the dark,  
But at the crack of a rifle shot, our weapons began to bark.  
There were many acts of bravery, mates looking after mates,  
Not one bloody award, handed out on a silver plate.



*Called Up Continued.*

Oppressive heat and pissing rain, for this my friends we didn't train,  
Twelve months of this we had to endure,  
By Christ we couldn't wait for the end of the tour.  
A few of the mates were knocked around a bit, but we looked after them as best we saw fit.  
Survival here was pretty tough', due to conditions being bloody rough,  
But when word came through that we were going home,  
Our smile was bigger than that on a garden gnome.



Not knowing what to expect when we touched down,  
Not one of us was wearing a frown.  
Excitement soon turned to disappointment as we stepped off the plane,  
No one there to meet us, nowhere to hide the pain.  
Told to dress in civvies and find our own way home,  
Before the rednecks in the street start spitting and throwing bloody stones.

A great way to be welcomed back, in hindsight  
Why in the bloody hell had they made us go and fight?  
No explanation from those in charge,  
Just go back to your job, son, back to the garage.

Suffering a great deal were we all, but we stuck together, standing tall.  
A few years later, the nation gave us recognition, and a welcome home parade.  
A show of appreciation and eventually, some aid.  
We stand here today, proud that we did serve,  
And we do appreciate the recognition we so justly deserve.



## REUNIONS

### 21 Engineer Support Troop 2020 Reunion

The reunion will be held at Forster/Tuncurry NSW from 31 Aug-4 Sept. All who served with 21 EST in Vietnam and those from other units who worked with the Troop are welcome along with partners and any family members. The main purpose of the reunion is to reconnect mates. About 200 are expected to attend. Further information at: [www.21est.org](http://www.21est.org) or contact: Ian McLean 0412431297 [jaim@homemail.com.au](mailto:jaim@homemail.com.au), or Phil Hincks 0414761032 [phil.hincks@gmail.com](mailto:phil.hincks@gmail.com), or Stan Monkley 0411506787 [stan21est@gmail.com](mailto:stan21est@gmail.com).

Please feel free to call me anytime to discuss.

Kind regards

Ian McLean (LtCol Retd)

President of the Organising Committee

### 2 RAR B Coy, 67-68 Reunion.

In August 2020 between the dates of 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Gympie will become the hub for the 2RAR B Coy, 67-68 Vietnam Veteran's Reunion.

There will be approximately 60 Veterans and their partners from throughout Australia gathering together to enjoy fellowship, friendship and memories. It is expected that this number will increase, which can be confirmed closer to the event. Every Veteran attending is either a member of a reciprocal RSL or member of Vietnam Veteran's Association from their home towns and there are some Gympie Members also attending. We are also currently speaking to Members from V Coy (NZ) who have expressed an interest in attending.

Veterans will be attending the Gympie Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Service in Memorial Park on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August, with a 'Meet and Greet' to be held at Gympie RSL afterwards. The week will conclude on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> with a farewell dinner. During the week they will be enjoying what Gympie has to offer including a visit to the Gympie Mining Museum, a trip on the Mary Valley Rattler and attending Standown Park on Vietnam Veteran's Day, where they will be involved with the Memorial Service being conducted. They have also invited to attend 150ACU Gympie Army Cadets.

An approximate cost per person for activities planned is \$240. This includes entry, activity, meals and some transportation throughout the reunion.

If you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact Leonie Millard (Schwarz) 0408015815, [leonieschwarz@bigpond.com](mailto:leonieschwarz@bigpond.com) or Ros Kirkpatrick (daughter) 0429 942528 [ros.acugympie@gmail.com](mailto:ros.acugympie@gmail.com)



**SAFE ZONE  
SUPPORT****FREE ANONYMOUS  
COUNSELLING LINE  
CALL 1800 142 072**

Hosted by

**OPEN**  
Veterans & Families  
Counselling  
**ARMS**

Safe Zone Support is a free and anonymous counselling line, for veterans and their families – call 1800 142 072 (available 24/7).

This service provides access to specialised counsellors, with an understanding of military culture and experience.

The service offers care without the need for individuals to identify themselves or be concerned that their call will be recorded.

This line has been created for vulnerable cohorts of veterans and their families which might not otherwise seek mental health care.

## 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)



## THE VIETNAMESE MUSEUM- AUSTRALIA



For more information and to see a visual concept of the project go to;  
[www.vietnamesemuseum.com.au](http://www.vietnamesemuseum.com.au)

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

## ADVOCACY CORNER.



Advocacy Training and  
Development Program

The current Corona virus restrictions on personal contacts present a challenge that we never probably anticipated, many advocates have lost their workplace and in some instances their work records?

Training and assessment opportunities are restricted however I am aware of steps being taken by ATDP management to address these problems, I would suggest you look at the latest updates on the ATDP website.

Now is not the time to give up, it is the time to reassess how we do business or as a minimum how we hand over current cases to an alternative service provider.

If any advocates are having problems I invite them to contact me direct by email in the first instance at [president@vvaa.org.au](mailto:president@vvaa.org.au) and we can look at alternatives and solutions.



Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service



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WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE SAME:



A service founded by Vietnam Veterans

### 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



CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

## 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.