



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

Edited and Published By

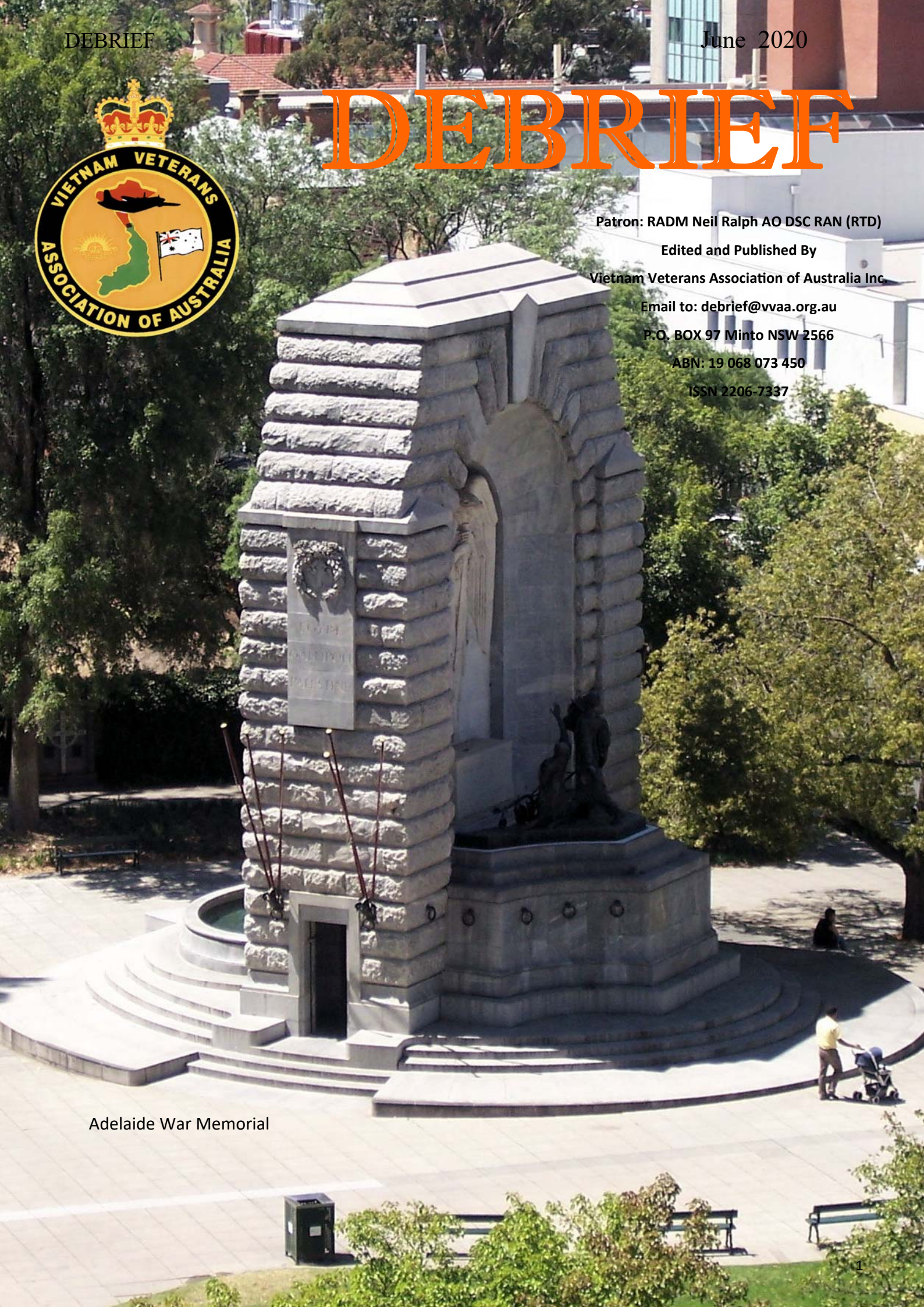
Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

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

P.O. BOX 97 Minto NSW 2566

ABN: 19 068 073 450

ISSN 2206-7337



Adelaide War Memorial

## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT

The May 2020 National Council and National Congress were conducted as video conferences using a system titled Zoom.

All National Executive and State Branch Presidents or, in one case, their representative were part of the meeting and apart from a few delays in getting everyone established it was a success.



As a consequence of these meetings the V.V.A.A. Administrative handbook was updated and revised copies are available on request.

We said a sad farewell to Graham Anderson as our National Secretary who is reducing his workload after a number of years faithful service, thank you again Graham.

His role has been taken over by Terry Roe from Tasmania who will fill the role as Acting National Secretary until certain constitutional conditions can be met, by the time you read this all administrative functions will have been transferred from Graham to Terry and we welcome him to the role.

All other positions on the National Executive were filled by the 2019 incumbents as all were again nominated unopposed.

There was some discussion regarding the Open Arms counselling service that resulted in correspondence with that service and a media release was distributed requesting media to support Open Arms as part of their contribution to reducing veterans suicide rates.

There has been discussion on the option of regular video conferencing at National and State levels and apart from other benefits would allow members of the National Executive to brief state meetings in real time.

Ken Foster OAM JP  
National President

*DISCLAIMER—The material in DEBRIEF is in the nature of general comment only and neither purports nor is intended to be advice on any particular matter. NO persons should act on the basis of any matter contain in DEBRIEF without considering and, if necessary, taking appropriate professional advice upon their own particular circumstances. The V.V.A.A. the authors and editors, expressly disclaim all and any liability in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether whole or partial, upon the whole or part of the contents of DEBRIEF.*

## 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).



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

**A SERVICE FOUNDED  
BY VIETNAM VETERANS**

**1800 011 046**

## VETERANS TAKE HOME THEIR ASSISTANCE DOGS

AN important step forward in supporting veterans and their families has been reached with the first two dogs, Zuma and Leon, provided to veterans under the Federal Government's Psychiatric Assistance Dogs program.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the Government has listened to veterans, ex-service organisations and the wider ex-service community about the role psychiatric assistance dogs can play in improving the lives of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"This program will change lives and it will save lives, and I have no doubt Zuma and Leon will make a difference to their new owners and help them to manage their mental health and wellbeing," Mr Chester said.

"The dogs will now begin their next phase of training together with their owner and within their own environment, and importantly, as part of the veterans PTSD management plan.

"This is just one of the ways we are putting veterans and their families first, and I look forward to seeing more eligible veterans signing up to experience the difference an assistance dog can make to their mental health and to their overall quality of life."

The first two dogs handed over are from one of the approved providers based in Queensland, Smart Pups, which is supplying eligible veterans nationwide with trained psychiatric assistance dogs through the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) program.

"The program is available to eligible veterans who have a diagnosis of PTSD and forms part of their PTSD management plan, along with financial assistance from DVA for the upkeep of the dog," Mr Chester said.

"Since the program was announced in September 2019, there has been more than 130 requests from veterans interested in adding an assistance dog to their treatment plan.

"The psychiatric assistance dogs are specially trained to perform tasks that contribute to the clinical recovery goals of their handler (veteran), including detecting signs of distress in their handler and performing specific tasks to help alleviate those symptoms.

Australian Army veteran Andrew Glebow was one of the first to receive his dog and said that when he met Leon, he knew he was the right dog for him.

"I got a good vibe from him straight away, so I know that we're going to have a good relationship together. I'm really excited about him being a part of my life now," Mr Glebow said.

"So from this point, having Leon as a part of my life is going to give me first and foremost companionship. It's going to ease my anxiety and my depression a lot having him around. And he already has!

"The DVA and Smart Pups process up until now has been really easy to understand, straightforward, and with a person such as myself suffering from PTSD I've had no problems at all, it's been great."

Mr Chester said that as part of DVA's program, participating veterans are encouraged to be involved in an evaluation process designed to understand the individual program benefits experienced by veterans living with complex mental health conditions.

"I encourage veterans who are participating in the program to provide their feedback so that we can continue to improve what we are doing and meet the changing needs of the veteran community," Mr Chester said.

Veterans currently accessing treatment for PTSD are encouraged to speak to their mental health professional in regards to gaining access to a psychiatric assistance dog, or for more information about DVA's Psychiatric Assistance Dog program visit the [DVA website](https://www.dva.gov.au/psychiatric-assistance-dogs).

**VISION AND PHOTOS HERE** [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZDUCvMu\\_04CqfsshPyuLfmAk1-fvsxcg?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZDUCvMu_04CqfsshPyuLfmAk1-fvsxcg?usp=sharing)

## Western Australian State Report.

VVAA Congress May 2020.

I guess as we all reflect on 2019, it could be considered an uneventful year, compared to the first months, to date, in 2020.

Here's hoping that we and all VVAA members have endured, managed and survived this current health crisis.

Vietnam Veterans Day, 2019, was again successful, with good attendance by veterans, their families and the public, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Binh Ba. The annual Western Australian KIA, grave site commemoration was held on the Saturday 17th August, preceding the VV Day Memorial service on Sunday the 18th. Poppy tributes were distributed to regional locations, to be placed on the respective grave sites, as well as those within Karrakatta and Perth War Cemeteries.

The second series of "Camaraderie" videos, Generations, covering service from WW 2 through to current ADF commitments, were recorded in September, with editing being completed for a November launch. I am hoping that those of you who have taken time to view the videos, will agree a worthwhile project and good follow up to the Vietnam Remembered series. The videos are available on line, Google, "Camaraderie" videos, Generations and Vietnam Remembered. Could there be another series in the future, "watch this space".

Again, I must thank Kate Naughtin, for her efforts in setting up the project, managing the recording sessions and expertise in editing the final product. I only had to find the money and the people.

The VVAA WA Annual General Meeting was held on the 27th October, with a slightly better attendance than in recent years. As per normal, the incumbent executive and committee, were recycled for a further 12 months. I thank those members for their continued support.

While 2019 had been progressing smoothly, that changed in early October, when the Friends of ANZAC Cottage [FOAC], launched a campaign, in an attempt to have the VVAA WA, relinquish the Cottage lease, in their favour.

From the 7th October 2019, when the FOAC, circulated a letter to the City of Vincent [Cottage title holders] and the VVAA WA President, the FOAC, refused to enter into any direct communication or negotiations with the VVAA WA on this matter.

The relinquishing the lease proposal was made at a meeting on the 21st November, convened by the City of Vincent. The FOAC President, Mr. Peter Ramsay [former VVAA WA President], who made the proposal was advised that a decision could not be made, without consultation with the VVAA WA executive and members, that decision could not be confirmed until 20th January 2020. On that date the City of Vincent and FOAC were advised that the lease would be retained by the VVAA WA, giving the FOAC until 31st January to advise their intentions.

No FOAC decision was given on that date, with a "final offer" being made to the City of Vincent, not the VVAA WA, with the threat, that if the lease was not given to the FOAC, by the 7th February, that they, FOAC, would begin a media campaign. The FOAC, vacated the Cottage on the 7th, carrying out their threat of a media campaign, targeting the VVAA WA.

While this misleading, one sided campaign, did have an impact on the VVAA WA, it was

WA Report continued.

While this misleading, one sided campaign, did have an impact on the VVAA WA, it was considered “short term pain, for long term gain”, with the VVAA WA gaining considerable public support, during the recent months.

Currently in conjunction with the City of Vincent, the VVAA WA are in confidential discussions with a third party, regarding the long term future and title holding, for ANZAC Cottage. Due to the COVID crisis, negotiations are on hold at present but will resume, once the current crisis normalises.

The VVAA WA's focus in this, is the long term future of ANZAC Cottage, to ensure that the Cottage and its title, reverts to an organisation, best positioned to retain the Heritage listed property, in years to come.

As with the situation Australia wide, the VVAA WA, ANZAC Day plans were shelved for 2020. We did ensure that the ANZAC Cottage flag went up at 4.30am, signifying the hour that troops went ashore at Gallipoli in 2015. In lieu of the Sun Set service, the Last Post, Rouse and Anthem was played at the Cottage, as we lowered the flag.

Again, I guess we are all hoping that current restrictions will be eased, to allow Vietnam Veterans Day services to be held.

Richard Williams. OAM.

VVAA WA.



## MAIL BOX

My name is Will Laird and I am currently the Operations Officer for B Coy 5 RAR.

The reason for this email is because the Battalion is currently in the process of writing an updated unit history booklet for distribution amongst the unit and to new members joining the unit.

I have been tasked to write a small blurb about the units first tour of Vietnam in 1966-67.

I am just wondering if you knew anyone who was formerly a member of 5 RAR during this tour and whether or not they would be willing to share any personal experiences or photos that they may have of their trip to Vietnam.

I am trying to incorporate personal accounts and real life images of what the war was like for the soldiers of the 5th battalion.

Thankyou for your time.

Kind Regards,

William Laird

LT

Bravo Company OPSO

5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

Robertson Barracks

Mobile: 0403 142 744

Email; [william.laird@defence.gov.au](mailto:william.laird@defence.gov.au)>



The 5th Battalion was formed at Holsworthy Barracks, New South Wales on 1 March 1965. According to historian Robert O'Neill, since both 5 RAR and 6 RAR were the first battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment 'to be composed of a mixture of regulars and national servicemen, their formation and development was a particularly vital experiment for this was to be the model for the infantry battalions of the Army from then onwards'.

## MAIL BOX

Good morning Ken

Thank you for the space in November *Debrief* regarding the book Out of Sight etc.

Could you now give some consideration into placing the enclosed Petition to the House, regarding AO exposure, in the next Edition of Debrief.

The Victorian Branch Executive have all signed a pen/paper version, so it has their support.

The petition is contained at URL <https://www.gopetition.com/petitions/agent-orange-exposure.html>

Should you need any further information regarding this, please contact the under-signed.

I have also produced a precis on the issue titled 'A Dangerous and Deadly Paradox' which may explain this issue even more.

I hope you can again assist us with this all-important issue.

Sincerely

Dr John Carroll – President, HMAS Sydney Assoc. (Inc. Vic.) Also,

Member, Outer Eastern Metro VVAA, (who have supported this in their email notifications to all members.)



**SAFE ZONE  
SUPPORT**

FREE ANONYMOUS  
COUNSELLING LINE  
CALL 1800 142 072

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.

## **OUR MILITARY HISTORY**

### **VIETNAM**

1966

14 June 1966 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, arrives in South Vietnam. The deployment of the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, to Vietnam formed part of Australia's build up of forces in Phouc Tuy province in the mid-1960s. D Company from this battalion fought the battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966.

1967

2 June 1967 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, arrives in Vietnam. By 1967 Australia's commitment to the war in Vietnam was increasing as the Australian Task Force expanded its control over areas of Phuc Tuy Province.

1968

7 June 1968 Australian Prime Minister visits Vietnam. Prime Minister Gorton begins two-day visit to Vietnam against a background of both a growing Australian military commitment to the war and steadily increasing, though not yet overwhelming, domestic opposition.

1969

6 June 1969 Battle of Binh Ba, South Vietnam. Binh Ba, located 6 kilometres north of the Australian base at Nui Dat was the site of a battle between an Australian Ready Reaction Force and a combined force of Viet Cong guerrillas and North Vietnamese Army troops who had occupied the village. The enemy were driven off after more than a day's fighting.

1971

30 June 1971 Final anti-war rally 110,000 people in Australian cities demonstrated against the war in Vietnam.

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

## SETTING THE STANDARD

Col Pugh, Eltham, Victoria

**J**ohn (Gorry) Goritchan and I joined the Army in 1967.

I reckon he must have been behind me in the line at Watsonia Barracks, Melbourne, but any way we were in Vietnam within a few weeks of each other for a year from March 1970. I'd known him back home.

We took some leave in late 1970 so we hitched a ride to Phou Loi to have some fun with the Yanks. On arrival we slipped on Sergeant stripes, because we were both baggy arses (privates) and needed to be looked after.

Well, the Yanks' Sergeants' Mess was a sight to behold, a bar that was floor to ceiling with cases of beer. We were told we were five to six beers behind. As all good Aussies do, we caught up and drank till dawn.

They took shifts to keep us entertained. I did notice that some of the 'snakes' (American sergeants) did not want to go home since here they had a personal maid and an air conditioned unit.

We visited a barracks where privates lived. They were hazy about our accents, giving us strange looks as though we were from another planet.

Another weird thing was their crap house: a shed with a long timber seats with holes in them to do your thing. I had to go and next to me was one of the biggest African Americans I have ever seen. We had a great conversation over everyone's strains and noise. Anyway, they took also us for brekkie to the Sergeants' Mess.

On the menu was 'Creamed Beef'. A couple of days had passed and we needed good Aussie tucker, so we hotfooted back to Nui Dat, returning with cans of baked beans and spaghetti, plus a few slabs of 'green' VB and 'white' Carlton Draught. They couldn't believe how good we were, so they gave us more slabs of Black Label beer than we could carry, fire extinguishers and bows and arrows.

We played footy with them and Gorry got the hang of throwing their tiny ball. I got on to a few torps and the US Baggies seemed good blokes, but nearly all them didn't have a clue about Australia.

Anyway, it was time to go 'home' to the Dat, so we hitched a ride on a US Chinook Helicopter and with our rifles and bows and arrows.

The Yanks on board were down the other end of the aircraft and left us alone. The door gunner had a pot shot at something on our way back. We also demoted ourselves, so we arrived as we left.

After getting back to our lines we fired our arrows straight up and ran for cover as they disappeared. No one reported sick with an arrow stuck in them, so where they landed is anyone's guess. I still have the bow and some arrows and a fire extinguisher somewhere.

The Black Label was crap and we left it there.

## BOOK REVIEW

I have just published my book 'as leaves are prey to wind'

I am a Vietnam veteran served 1970/71 3 RAR.

I began writing as therapy when I was diagnosed 20 years ago with PTSD. After many years of rewriting I have released this novel for publication in the hope that it will give the reader graphic insight to what soldiers experience. Also to encourage other service personnel, veterans of past and present conflicts to consider using story-telling as means of emotional and psychological self-exploration and therapy.

My novel is an historical fiction. It involves fictional characters but always attempts to maintain a realistic examination of how soldiers and air crews served and coped with the demanding roles and events they experienced. Not simply a war novel but a discovery of the human spirit. Its vulnerability and its resilience.

Perhaps I could send a copy to your organisation and you may wish to share information about my book, through your website or newsletter.

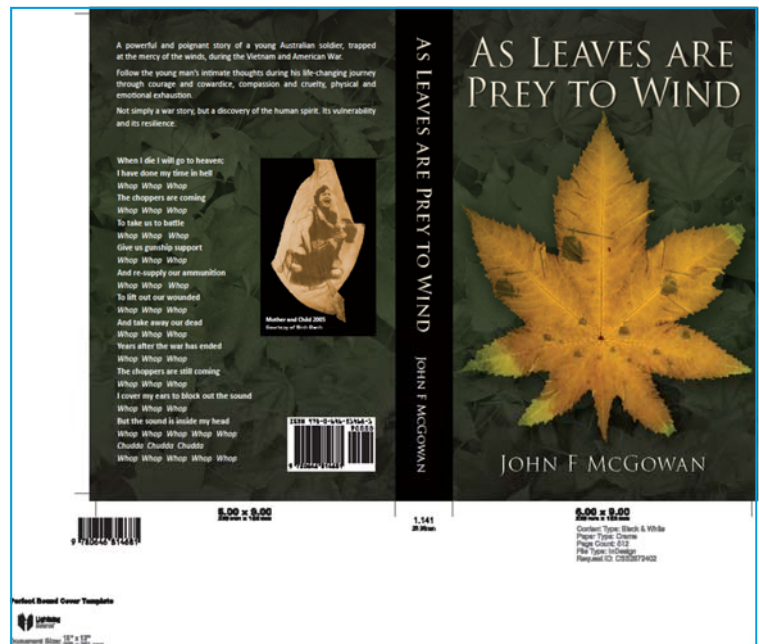
I have a website you can view [www.johnfmcgowan.com](http://www.johnfmcgowan.com)

and FB page johnfmcgowan

Kind regards

John McGowan

0417872366



a review from Brian Thorpe, South Australia.

"An excellent read detailing the futility of the Vietnam War, the emotional numbness to survive a 12 month tour, the special bond us band of brothers have for each other and the long journey back to normality that for some is still a Bridge too far"

Denise Dawson 's review – A wife of a Vietnam Veteran

This is an extremely well written book and keeps the reader's attention. Congratulations to John, super book and a must read for families of Vietnam Vets."



**Open Arms, Veterans and Families Counselling.**

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

Phone **1800 011 046.**

## BOOKS OF OUR ERA AND HISTORY.

The 5 RAR Association in cooperation with the Australian National University Press have recently published a new book titled ***“Vietnam Vanguard – The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion’s Approach to Counter Insurgency 1966”***. The book recounts 5 RAR’s insertion into Vietnam as the initial major unit of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force, the securing of Nui Dat and major offensive operations conducted throughout 1966. The attached flyers, in short and longer version give additional background.

The book comprises 456 pages including 17 chapters written by 33 contributing authors, 7 appendices, 44 photographs, 13 maps and 3 diagrams in full colour. The co-editors, Professor Robert O’Neill AO and Brigadier Ron Boxall (Retd) are 5RAR veterans. *Vietnam Vanguard* was launched at the 5 RAR 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion on the Gold Coast on 2 March by Major-General Stuart Smith AO, DSC who is the son of a 5 RAR member killed-in-action on the battalion’s second tour of Vietnam.

The book can be read **free** on line or purchased in hard copy for \$55 plus postage. The link at the bottom of the flyer or <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/vietnam-vanguard> will take you direct to the book.

We are hopeful that you can publicize *Vietnam Vanguard* in the next issue of “Debrief”, to your branches and on your social media platforms. This book will be of interest to many members about the formative days of the Australia’s war in Phuoc Tuy Province.

The 5 RAR Association hopes that you enjoy this very readable book.

Kind regards,

**Roger Wainwright**

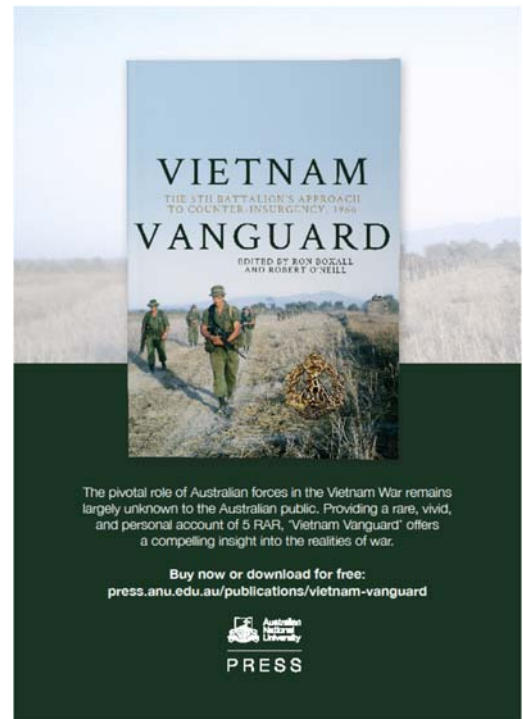
Vice-President

5RAR Association Inc

Mob: +61 (0) 409 588 935

Email: [roger.w@netspeed.com.au](mailto:roger.w@netspeed.com.au)

Web: [www.5rar.asn.au](http://www.5rar.asn.au)





The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant now provides free access to the Australian Partners of Defence (APOD) program for all Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) card holders.

APOD has grown from very humble beginnings, established in 2012 'by veteran families for veteran families' and since then we have worked hard to develop a secure platform which connects the defence community with businesses that acknowledge and respect their service. Businesses choose to list offers with APOD because it provides an opportunity to advertise unique discounts within a private community where all members are verified by DVA, and there is no cost to publish an offer.

APOD also offers a 'veteran-owned business' category, to support veteran family enterprise.

Access to the APOD online platform is entirely free for all DVA card holders, providing a range of discounts and special offers which are updated weekly. Discounts range from clothing and appliances to holidays, beauty, services and fuel. In addition to special offers, the APOD platform includes a concession list which is regularly updated to ensure our members are aware of their entitlements across electricity, registration, amusement tickets and transport, to name just a few.

In order to access the free APOD membership, you need to register online, or, upgrade your existing membership by simply linking your DVA Veteran card number. There is no need to request an APOD card, your physical DVA card and/or digital APOD membership will be accepted at participating stores.

For step by step instructions on how to upgrade your membership, please visit <https://support.apod.com.au/>, or call 1300 00 2763. For DVA Veteran card support, please call 1800 VETERAN (838 372).

We sincerely appreciate your support and promise to continue developing a world-class platform that provides veterans with secure and simple access to exclusive offers which reflect the deserved recognition of your service.

### **Frequently asked questions:**

**'Is there an APOD discount book?'**

Because new offers are uploaded to the APOD platform every week, we cannot print a physical book. This ensures all offers are current and concession information is up to date. However, if you would prefer a physical copy, you can print out a list of APOD offers, this will also display the date and your member number. To further increase member usability, we are also developing a mobile Application.

**'Do I get an APOD Card?'**

All DVA card holders can now use their DVA veterans' card (gold/white/orange) to redeem all APOD offers, there's no need for an additional APOD card to be shown. Or, you can use your digital APOD card instead, this is available when logged into the APOD website. DVA card holders are not issued with a physical APOD card, but you can request one if you would rather not show your DVA card.

**'Why do I have to sign up to APOD to get discounts?'**

APOD provides a secure platform where you can search for veteran supportive businesses and

## APOD Continued

concessions in your area and interstate. Because we encourage businesses to lodge exclusive discounts for veterans, their offers are advertised within a closed community (APOD website), where all members have been verified by DVA. This protects the business and our members, it also provides clear terms and conditions, meaning you will always receive the advertised discount, no matter who you're served by on the day or which store you visit.

'How much does it cost?'

All current and ex-service personnel who hold a valid DVA veterans card/health card (gold/white/orange) receive a full APOD membership free of charge. As of March 2020, all DVA card holders can also link a spouse to their account, providing the spouse with free membership as well.

It is also entirely free for businesses to create and advertise an offer on the APOD platform.

What kind of discounts are available?

All offers on the APOD platform are created by the business to suit their capability. We are proud to provide offers from small businesses, right up to large multinationals and veteran-owned businesses. Currently, APOD provides offers on discounted: fuel, gift cards, hotel accommodation and local services (mowing, moving, painting). There are also discounts on jewellery and clothing, car hire, furniture, mattresses, pet supplies, activities, cosmetics, caravan parks, and even discounts at restaurants. We are currently supported by Barbecues Galore, Harvey Norman, Woolworths, Caltex, Myer, Forty Winks, Jax Tyres, Amart Furniture, Prouds Jewellers, Gloria Jeans and loads more!

How do I get businesses in my area to create a veteran discount?

We encourage veterans and defence families to get behind their local businesses! You can speak to local business owners and refer them to the APOD website where they can easily create an offer, or, you can send us a business recommendation via the online suggestion form on our website and our team will contact the business for you. There are no costs to businesses to list with APOD.

Where can I get help? I want to talk to someone who understands my circumstance.

APOD is 100% Australian owned and operated, our office is located in Adelaide South Australia, and the majority of our staff are current or ex-service personnel or defence spouses. Please feel free to call us on 1300 00 2763, or you can email the team at [customerservice@APOD.com.au](mailto:customerservice@APOD.com.au) and we will get back to you.

## THE NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM GAINS MUSEUM ACCREDITATION

**The National Vietnam Veterans Museum has gained Accreditation by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria. A professional panel of museum experts has made a final assessment and compiled a positive report on the museum's operations. The National Vietnam Veterans Museum has met set criteria from the *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries* and joins the 79 Victorian museums, galleries and collecting organisations Accredited in Victoria.**

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum has unique beginnings, having initially been conceived by John and Krishna Methvan as a travelling 'mobile museum' trailer which toured Australia in an effort to reach out to soldiers and to promote a broader understanding of the Vietnam War. The museum moved to its permanent home in Newhaven on Phillip Island in 2007 and remaining true to its vision, has continued to support service men and women and their families by interpreting the enduring impact of the war on society.

The museum's collection ranges from helicopters and tanks to oral histories and the ballot marbles used in selecting birth dates for National Service. Staff and volunteers remain dedicated to creating informative and engaging visitor experiences based on the extensive collection now under their care.

The Accreditation panel were impressed with the range of activities the museum carries out as part of the broader community and its continued commitment to service men and women and their families, in particular the creation of a commemorative garden space for remembrance and contemplation.

The Victorian-based Museum Accreditation Program (MAP) is now in its 27th year and is run by Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria, the professional association for the museum and gallery sector. There are currently 79 Accredited cultural organisations and a further 5 working towards this goal. To become Accredited the museum spent 4-5 years developing procedures and policies, and practice to meet recognised museum standards.

Simone Ewenson Co-Manager, Museum Accreditation Program, Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria, says, "*We are pleased to recognize the many years of hard work undertaken by the museum founders and supporters to reach this level of museum practice and their commitment to ongoing improvement. MAP looks forward to sharing future successes with them*".

### **Further information:**

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum is located at

<https://www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org/>

The Museum Accreditation Program

[https://amagavic.org.au/museum\\_accreditation\\_program](https://amagavic.org.au/museum_accreditation_program)



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](http://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**

## 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.

#### The life and times of feeding soldiers by a Vietnam Veteran

This book is about feeding soldiers. It is written by those who served with the Australian Army in the Vietnam conflict. Three meals a day, piece of cake. Not when you live in a foreign land. Someone has to provide. Some interesting facts to ponder:

- quality control at the Class I (rations) Yard at the Long Binh logistic depot was the responsibility of the US Army's 4th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services),
- on 11 May 66 (quite early days) 1 COY RAASC at Vung Tau received 50 tons of fruit cake from Oz (based on the average weight of a fruit cake [1.5 lb] and the AFV ration strength at the time [3,800], that works out to 17½ fruit cakes per man!)
- DoD set up three full sized dairies in VN to provide milk and ice cream, however, to augment the ice cream provided by the milk plants, 40 additional small size ice cream plants were brought into country to provide ice cream as far forward as possible.
- on 29 May 66 1 COY RAASC received an unexpected and un-requested "forced issue" of 67,000 eggs which had to be immediately issued out and used as quickly as possible as most unit messes did not have adequate refrigeration (extra eggs at breakfast and lots of custard tarts at dinner time? - the Oz Army's daily egg ration allowance at the time was 1% eggs per man per day),
- the US Army did not have enough covered storage space for its ration stocks until late in 1970
- in 1966 bread received from Long Binh was unfit for consumption and 1 ALSG was forced to turn to bartering with local bakeries to get decent bread (I have no idea what they used for barter).

Join us on the journey and found out more. You will not be disappointed. "Jacks Platoon" can do anything-they were and are Equal To The Task!



PEAS BEANS AND BULLETS

## PEAS BEANS AND BULLETS



**AUSSIE DIGGERS SUPPORTING THE COMBAT FORCE IN VIETNAM**



**21  
518**

**25  
518**

**52  
518**

Recognising the service of Australian Supply Platoon Soldiers in the Vietnam war  
by Russ Morison on behalf of those who served their country

by Russ Morison on behalf of those who served their country

I have been selling the book to fellow Veterans for \$30. It is not much but as a mini fund raiser, I can sell for my net cost \$25/book to your organisations. I have pre-positioned copies in the major centres of Brisbane, Sydney (VVF and VVA) Melbourne and here in Canberra. Postage otherwise is \$11/book.

Many Thanks to those organisations that have accepted books already on consignment.

Russ Morison  
Canberra ACT  
0408947935  
0262927567

ARE YOU DRUNK?

- ☐ YES  
☐ NO

X

**WE'LL ALWAYS  
BE BEST FRIENDS  
BECAUSE YOU  
KNOW TOO MUCH**

## 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)

## BOOK REVIEW

***Out of Sight, Out of Mind***  
*The RAN's role, Vietnam, 1965 – 1972*

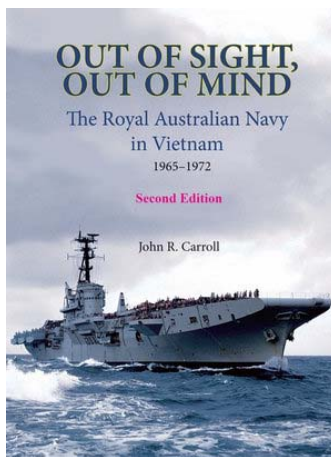
Second Edition

**John R Carroll**

NSW, Rosenberg Publishing 2020

Paperback 258pp RRP \$34.95

Reviewer: Roger Buxton, May 2020



Recognition of the RAN contribution to the Australian involvement in Vietnam between 1965 and 1972 is usually limited to naval gunfire support provided by destroyers with only a passing reference to logistic support by HMAS *Sydney*.

The author served twice in HMAS *Sydney*: in 1967 and again in 1972. Both editions of this book are based on his doctoral dissertation, and have several aims: to demonstrate the vital importance of the RAN's logistic contribution to 1 Australian Task Force (1ATF) in Vietnam, to illustrate the risks involved, to note the injustice of not recognizing for many years the service of those who served and also how they were exposed to extreme risk from Agent Orange.

John Carroll writes with a determination to document the living and working conditions in *Sydney*, to correct errors that have appeared in previous histories and to show the risks the ships experienced while anchored in Vung Tau harbour unloading or backloading soldiers and stores. He has corresponded with surviving commanding officers of the escorting destroyers and frigates and in the chapter "In Their Own Words" he records the words of

some of those – both captains and junior sailors - who sailed in *Sydney* and her escorts. The comprehensive bibliography, which includes the logs and reports of proceedings from *Sydney*'s escorts, and the almost 900 endnotes are an indication of the research that led to this book.

HMAS *Sydney* was a World War II light fleet carrier converted to a fast troop transport to support the Australian Army in Vietnam. As *Sydney* had not been built for service in the tropics, conditions below decks were extremely uncomfortable and almost intolerable in the machinery spaces.

*Sydney* made 25 voyages between Australia and Vietnam: the first in June 1965 to transport 338 men of 1RAR to Vietnam and the last in November 1972, and on each voyage she was escorted by between one and three destroyers or frigates because of the possibility of a deniable submarine attack, and on several voyages she also embarked a flight of Westland ASW helicopters. In Vung Tau harbour the threat of attack by underwater swimmers required constant vigilance (Operation Awkward), and at night the ships always went to sea rather than remaining at anchor. Despite this, for many years the crews were denied benefits because the ships were denied 'special duty' status.

The carcinogenic herbicide, Agent Orange, posed a particular hazard as it was washed downstream into the harbour where the ships were anchored and was carried over with the distillate from the ships' evaporators into the potable water used by the ships' companies.

The appendixes include details of *Sydney* and her escorts, the anchorage positions and details of each of the 25 voyages.

The logistic support of 1ATF would have been almost impossible without the support of the RAN and anyone interested in this period should read this meticulously detailed and persuasive book.

The RUSI – Vic Library thanks the publisher for making this work available for review.

**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 ATDP program support team will be contacting advocates in relation to Continuing Professional Development requirements as we enter the third year of our CPD program. Contact will be by phone and email with three levels of message according to CPD activity. Basically there are those who have, or will, complete their three year CPD requirement by 30 June next year, there are those who may need a bit of encouragement and assistance to reach that three year target and the third group is those who have not yet attempted any CPD activity which, unfortunately, includes a small number who, for whatever reason, believe that they have nothing to learn and so have indicated they have no intention of undertaking professional development.

Unfortunately, a belief has developed over the years that continuing professional development is a requirement for insurance purposes. While authorisation by an ESO is one of the requirements that must be demonstrated by an advocate for VITA insurance compliance another factor is that an advocate must be able to demonstrate competence and a CPD status of 'Current' is something that can support an advocate's proof of competence and is an important side benefit of CPD but by no means why ATDP has a CPD requirement.

ATDP's CPD requirement is intended to ensure that veterans and their families can be confident that an ATDP accredited advocate is someone that they can rely on for the highest standards of support in wellbeing and compensation advocacy. The last thing a veteran requiring assistance needs is an advocate in name only, who is not motivated to keep up to date in their field. Our serving members, veterans and their families deserve the best. So, if you really want to provide a quality service to our defence family, please keep your CPD up to date.

Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service



IS CHANGING TO

**OPEN  
ARMS**  
Veterans & Families  
Counselling

WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE SAME:



Professional  
service



24/7  
support



1800 011 046  
helpline

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)

## ATDP UPDATE - SPECIAL EDITION #3 – 15 May 20

Hello again,

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

The postponement of scheduled programs is extended to 30<sup>th</sup> June. The only program affected is the RPL scheduled for Maroochydore on 2-3 June.

A further review will be undertaken on 31<sup>st</sup> May and advised in the June Update.



Monday (11<sup>th</sup> May) saw an update of the national COVID-19 control strategy following the National Cabinet meeting and while the relaxation of restrictions is welcome at the personal level, there was little relief from the State and Territory application of the controls which are preventing a resumption of face to face Recognition of Prior Learning or Consolidation and Assessment programs. Most States and Territories are embracing staged easing of restrictions with four week 'steps' to enable proper evaluation of the effects of the changed conditions.

Apart from the overriding one of the wellbeing of presenters, assessors and candidates the principle considerations in respect of conducting programs are those of participant availability and logistic support. Maintenance of National consistency across the program is supported by the general principle of not allowing RPL candidate assessment by an assessor from the same State and this is influenced by presenter/assessor qualifications and availability. The availability of participants is another variable which impacts our programs and while we try to plan programs at least a couple of months ahead, personal circumstances change and late withdrawals can sometimes lead to the cancellation of programs at the last minute although, thankfully, there have been few instances where this has been necessary.

At the moment, as you would appreciate, it is the logistics that present the major problem. Firstly, there is travel. Both inter-state and intra-state travel restrictions, which vary widely in the various States and Territories, are presently a significant planning consideration. And if travel were unrestricted another series of factors come into play including accommodation availability, provision of meals and self-isolation rules. Then there are assembly rules and venue requirements to take into account. Generally, limiting programs to ten participants (including presenter/assessors) is achievable, but venue considerations, such as the 4m<sup>2</sup> area per person social distancing requirement and availability of catering, then begin to impact – if, indeed, the proposed venue is actually open for business.

So, please be assured that the Training Team are looking at every possible way we can resume normal, or at least close to normal, program scheduling and in the June Update we will try to include a summary of restrictions, current and planned, by State and Territory.

In the meantime, please, stay safe and keep your distance,

Rog



*Roger W. Greene* OAM JP  
Chair  
Capability Framework Management Group  
Phone: 0411 431 189

PS Please do not forget to do the Dept of Health COVID awareness training – less than an hour

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-infection-control-training>

## 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.