



DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

Edited and Published By

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

Email to: debriefeditor@gmail.com

P.O. BOX 7139 Watson ACT 2602

ABN: 19 068 073 450

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The GROVE , CANUNGRA—See Page 4 for Cover Story

NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

The landmark event since the last edition of Debrief was the bringing down on 6 October of the delayed Federal Budget 2020-21. The following morning the Secretary of DVA, Liz Cosson, gave to the members of the ESO Round Table a briefing (by Zoom) on the major budget measures that would affect veterans and DVA. The Minister, the Hon Darren Chester, also attended the meeting and spoke to many of the topics.

Similar briefings were also given by, and sometimes in, DVA offices throughout the country. From my perspective the measures important to our members included;



Open Arms.

An additional \$5.0 million has been provided to expand the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service. We are pleased with this as earlier this year your association expressed to the Minister its concern that additional resources were needed to provide support for the increase in veterans and families, especially in regional and remote areas.

Fees Paid by DVA to Mental health, social workers and community nursing providers.

For some time ESOs have raised with DVA the need for the fee structure to be increased. \$94.3 million has been provided for these fees to match market conditions and simplify fee structures, and also to fund psychiatric training places.

\$2.4 million has been provided to expand eligibility of the Coordinated Veterans' Care Program to certain White card holders. Further details are not known at this time.

Mileage Allowance.

While not a budget measure an additional \$1.7 million has been provided to increase mileage allowance for veterans who travel by treatment by private vehicle, but it is understood that this excludes veterans under the VEA. Details have been sought from DVA.

TPI Veterans.

\$25.9 million has been provided to increase certain TPI Pension and other Disability Pension payments for those who pay private rent, and to simplify payment arrangements. I will be seeking further details about this measure.

The Budget did not address any other matters regarding TPI/SRDP payments. This was disappointing. The Minister has released an independent review of these payments compiled by Mr David Tune AO PSM but I have yet to have an opportunity to examine this report, which I intend to discuss with the National President of the TPI Federation.

DVA Additional Resourcing. A total of \$64.1 million has been provided for;

Data sharing and analytics for DVA and Defence, \$4.3 million. It is understood that some of this funding may go towards better qualitative analysis of claims by veterans but further information will be sought.

\$23.2 million to support DVA claims processing and \$36.6 million to assist the department to maintain services standards.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Continued from page 2

The Productivity Commission Report.

As promised, the Government has also at this time provided its first and interim response to the recommendations of the Productivity Commission Report. 25 of the 69 recommendations have been addressed of which proposed limitations on the Gold Card, and restrictions on the Gold Card to new groups, have been rejected, (Recommendations 16.4 and 16.5).

Recommendation 11.2, that a proposed annual premium be charged to Defence, has been responded to with an alternate solution offered with a new measure.

At this time I cannot advise the details of each of the recommendations that have been addressed but I intend to seek those details from DVA at a meeting with the Secretary later this month.

In terms of recommendations yet to be addressed it is understood that responses will be contained in the 2021-22 Budget together with responses to the Veterans' Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study (the Cornall Report).

The 2021-22 Budget.

It is expected that the 2021-22 budget will be brought down at its usual time in May 2021, along with a further response from the Government to the recommendations of the Productivity Commission. This is only some seven months away. If members have any suggestions for budget submissions to the government I encourage you to discuss them with your sub-branch or branch committees with a view to bringing them to your National Council.

Best regards to all,

Max Ball

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

The Long Shadow: Australia's Vietnam Veterans since the War Peter Yule

The Memorial Shop is pleased to extend a 10% discount to members of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia, for the purchase of *The Long Shadow: Australia's Vietnam Veterans Since the War* by Peter Yule.

Pre-order this book to receive a FREE copy of internationally acclaimed documentary *Long Tan: the true story* on DVD (valued at \$9.99).

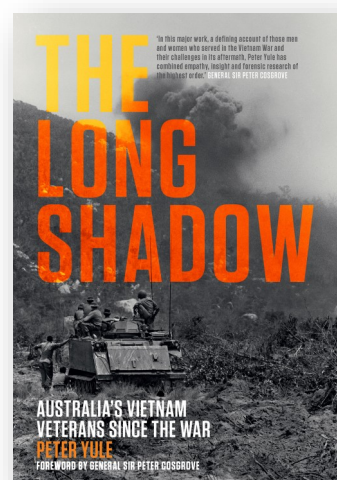
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Members to contact the Memorial Shop team to take advantage of this special offer.

E: esales@awm.gov.au Ph: (02) 6243 4555, select option 2

W: <https://www.awm.gov.au/shop/>

The book will be launched on Wednesday 28th September 2020.



Picture courtesy: Australian War Memorial

COVER STORY

The most beautiful 'living' memorial you've never seen

Declare "The Grove" a National War Memorial

The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (the AATTV) is THE most decorated Australian War unit in military history. It contains four Victoria Cross recipients - indeed, ALL the VC recipients from the Vietnam War came from this unit. 1006 Officers, Warrant Officers, Sergeants and Corporals served in the unit. Each member has a tree planted for them at "The Grove" at Canungra.

Most of the members who served in this unit have decided that they want their ashes to be buried under their tree at Canungra. It is 'their home'. 480 members are already resting there. Most Vietnam veterans who went through the Jungle Training Centre, Canungra would have been instructed by staff who had served at least one tour of duty as a member of AATTV or who would subsequently go on to serve with The Team.

Unfortunately, members of the public aren't able to freely visit "The Grove" and pay their respects. The AATTV would like the Australian Federal Government to declare this site a national war memorial and thus enable the public to honour these men who not only gave so much to the war effort, but also were vilified so vehemently upon their return.

*Rick Ryan Maj (Rtd), President
AATTV Association WA Branch
Mobile: 0418 912130*

Declare "The Grove" a National War Memorial.

AATTV started a petition to Australian Federal Government, Your support to declare the AATTV Memorial Grove, Canungra as a Living National War Memorial is required.

Petition can be accessed by copying this into your browser.

https://www.change.org/Canungra_war_memorial

You can see more here about the AATTV's latest battle here

A Current Affair Story

<https://9now.nine.com.au/a-current-affair/the-grove-canungra-most-beautiful-living-vietnam-war-memorial-most-aussies-will-never-see/b32fa011-85e4-46eb-bd10-59c1687f1d64?fbclid=IwAR2qvlQjlveoE5IzOCLCQwlqmnquEtlk3X50wg1lI5SsTJZApfIVCCJkiE>



MINISTER MATTERS

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE - 18 October 2020

ARMS WIDE OPEN TO MORE VETERANS TWO YEARS ON

TOMORROW, 19 October, marks two years since Australia's leading provider of high-quality mental health support services for veterans and their families was renamed Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the *Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service* was first established by our Vietnam veterans in 1982 who recognised a need for specialist support.

"Over the years this service has evolved and improved to provide vital services to more people in the serving and ex-serving communities, and it was two years ago that our Vietnam veterans graciously allowed us to rename this vital and life-saving service to be more inclusive of who can access it," Mr Chester said.

"Open Arms is one of our Vietnam veterans' most important legacies and now benefits all veterans and their families, which is something I know they are incredibly proud of.

"The service has grown to support some 30,000 clients in 2019-20, a 50 per cent increase from two years ago and illustrates that more veterans and their families are speaking up and seeking the support they need.

"Open Arms is available 24/7, 365 days a year on 1800 011 046 and I encourage veterans and their families who may be struggling to call at any time if they need support, day or night."

Open Arms is led by Psychologist and Army veteran, Dr Stephanie Hodson, who said she was immensely proud of how Open Arms has grown and been accepted by Australia's veteran community.

"The stigma around mental health is real, and it is very encouraging that more and more of our military veterans and their families are reaching out to Open Arms for support," Dr Hodson said.

"2020 has been difficult for all Australians, including veterans and their families, and Open Arms stands ready to support our current and ex-service community through this challenging time.

"It is really encouraging that people are reaching out for support when they need it, we are just a phone call away."

The Government provided an additional \$5 million in funding in the 2020 Budget to further expand services in rural and regional Australia, as part of an over \$100 million investment in mental health and employment support for the veteran community.

Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or visit www.OpenArms.gov.au.

Editor's note: To request an interview with Minister Chester or Dr Hodson, on the support available to veterans and their families via Open Arms, please contact the numbers listed below.

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MINISTER MATTERS

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MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN ARMS

Open Arms offers:

- 24/7 counselling support through a dedicated support line – 1800 011 046
- Face-to-face and video counselling for individuals, couples and families
- Care coordination for clients with multiple and/or complex needs
- Peer support and veteran community engagement by those with lived experience of Defence service and mental health recovery, as either a veteran or family member
- Online and face-to-face group treatment programs to develop skills and enhance support for individuals and couples
- Suicide prevention and intervention workshops and online training
- Mental health training programs
- Crisis accommodation support – especially where there are concerns of domestic violence or homelessness
- Referrals to other services or specialist treatment programs, as needed
- Information, education and self-help resources are on the Open Arms website.

Open Arms is also the host of an anonymous 24/7 support line – Safe Zone Support – which was created to help vulnerable cohorts of veterans and their families who might not otherwise seek mental health support due to concerns about protecting their identity – including those in the Special Forces. Safe Zone Support’s specialist counsellors can offer help to veterans and their families without needing to know who they are. Calls to 1800 142 072 are answered 24/7, and are not recorded. For more Information visit: <https://www.openarms.gov.au/safe-zone-support>

Open Arms is available to all current and ex-serving members and their families, is available 24/7 by calling 1800 011 046. The service is free and confidential and there is always a team member, who understands the military experience, available to answer your call.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

DVA GOLD CARD FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS OVER 70 YEARS OLD

Members and readers are reminded that veterans aged 70 years or more who have qualifying service are eligible to receive a DVA Gold card for medical treatment.

To lodge a claim go to the DVA web site and search firstly for Gold card and then “How to get your Gold Card”. This will bring up the form “Application for a Gold card for Veterans of Australia’s Defence Force” DVA form D3057.

When completing the form you can ignore Question 16. We believe that this question is irrelevant and inappropriate and we have requested the department to remove it.

MINISTER MATTERS

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE—Thursday, 8 October 2020

INTERIM RESPONSE TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT AND FINDINGS FROM THE TPI REVIEW

THE ex-service community can be assured of the Government's commitment to putting veterans and their families first with an interim response to the Productivity Commission report, *A Better Way to Support Veterans*, tabled in Parliament today.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester said the interim response addressed 25 of the report's 69 recommendations, with a particular focus on mental health, wellbeing, employment support and transition.

"The Government has carefully considered the Productivity Commission's findings and has listened to the veteran community to ensure our interim response is considered and will deliver support where it is needed most," Mr Chester said.

"In these uncertain times the Government has prioritised initiatives that bolster access to mental health support, improve the transition to civilian life and increase access to employment.

"The Government recognises the important role the Veteran Gold Card has in supporting veterans and their families to access treatment, and this is why we are rejecting the recommended changes to the Gold Card outlined in the Productivity Commission report, providing clarity and certainty to veterans and their families."

Seventeen of the 25 recommendations addressed in the interim response have already been implemented, are underway, or will be delivered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) or Defence using existing resources. The remaining eight include the two Gold Card recommendations that have been rejected, and six recommendations addressed through in the 2020–21 Budget.

"The response includes the establishment of a Joint Transition Authority that will provide a better transition for Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel as they move back to civilian life, a major step forward. This addresses recommendation 7.1 of the Productivity Commission's report," Mr Chester said.

Other measures announced in the Budget include:

- Recommendation 16.3 – providing \$94.3 million to increase fees paid to mental health, social work and community nursing providers to improve mental health outcomes and ensure high quality care for our older veterans and their families, and to better support transition to civilian life.
- Recommendation 17.2 — providing \$5.0 million to expand Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (Open Arms), especially in regional and remote areas.
- Recommendation 16.1 — providing \$2.4 million to expand eligibility for Coordinated Veterans' Care, which provides GP-led team-based care, to White Card holders with an accepted mental health condition.

The Government will not proceed with the recommendation to levy a premium on Defence (Recommendation 11.2), but has agreed to fund the first stage of developing a data sharing and analytics solution between the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs (DVA). The solution will be underpinned by ADF member and veteran wellbeing frameworks to help with injury prevention and management and understanding of the long-term costs of military injuries.

The Government also released the Independent Review of the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) Payment by Mr David Tune AO PSM, agreeing to all the supplementary recommendations in the report.

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MINISTER MATTERS

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“Mr Tune’s review is the third assessment into issues raised by the TPI Federation around the TPI Payment, with the previous two being the *KPMG Review of TPI Benefits* and the Productivity Commission’s report,” Mr Chester said.

“The Government has accepted the recommendations in the report by Mr Tune, as well as announcing in the Budget that Recommendation 15.1 from the Productivity Commission’s report will be implemented, which provides \$25.9 million in additional support to disabled veterans.

“All three reviews have consistently found that there is insufficient evidence to support a broad increase in the TPI payment.

“While I can appreciate this is not the outcome the TPI Federation had hoped for, the Government has exhaustively investigated their claims and responded positively to all the recommendations put forward by Mr Tune.”

The [KPMG Review](#), [Tune Report](#), and [Productivity Commission](#) reports are all available on the DVA website.

“The Productivity Commission’s report is wide ranging and complex, and we are committed to consulting with the ex-service community to consider and address the remaining recommendations as part of our final response to be provided as part of the 2021–22 Budget,” Mr Chester said.

“The Government believes major reform of the veteran support system, particularly to legislation and entitlements, should be carefully considered and implemented incrementally to limit disruption and ensure it best meets the future needs of our veterans and their families.”

The Government will also respond to the recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into transition from the Australian Defence Force and the Veterans’ Advocacy and Support Services Scoping Study in the 2021–22 Budget. The full detail of the Government’s 2020–21 Budget package in response to the report can be found on the [DVA website](#).

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT.

Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Washington DC

In 2013, the Australian Government made a financial contribution to the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Fund (VVMF) for the construction of a Vietnam Veterans Education Centre (VVEC) in Washington DC.

The VVMF has since advised the Department of Veterans’ Affairs that they were no longer able to continue with the construction of the VVEC and instead were considering an online/digital platform.

The Australian Government’s contribution was refunded as the proposal no longer met the original agreement which was specifically for the construction of an education centre.

The Australian Government remains supportive of the efforts of the VVMF to educating people about the Vietnam War, including the Australian experience and the impact this has had in shaping both of our nations, and advised that future plans proposed by the VVMF will be considered positively by the Australian Government.

To date, the VVMF has not submitted a business case for their digital education platform to the Australian Government.

Summary from ESORT Meeting August 2020

MINISTER MATTERS

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE - Wednesday, 30 September 2020

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM NATIONAL COMMISSIONER WELCOMED

The next step has been taken in the Federal Government's efforts to combat suicide in veterans and serving members of the Australian Defence Force with the appointment of the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester welcomed the announcement made by the Attorney-General Christian Porter today appointing Dr Bernadette Boss CSC to this important role.

"The health and wellbeing of our veterans and ADF personnel is at the heart of the National Commissioner legislation and is part of the Government's commitment to putting veterans and their families first," Mr Chester said.

"The appointment of an interim commissioner is a significant step forward as we work to ensure our personnel and veterans have the help they need, when and where they need it when it comes to their mental health.

"I congratulate Dr Boss on her appointment as the interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention who will start working to identify and understand the factors and systemic issues that may contribute to suicide risk and provide recommendations to improve prevention efforts.

"Dr Boss started her career as a nurse, completing a Bachelor of Science in London and later studying law. She had a distinguished military career and has held inquests and hearings into complex deaths, including suicides.

"As a current Magistrate and Coroner in the Australian Capital Territory, Dr Boss has the skills and expertise to examine these tragic instances of ADF and veteran suicides to understand practical actions to reduce suicide risk."

This announcement builds on the Government's ongoing commitment to support the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families, including funding free mental health care for any mental health condition, improvements to transition and employment support, and assistance to those veterans particularly at risk.

"The Government is providing psychiatric assistance dogs for veterans with PTSD as a supplement to clinical mental health treatment – a program that veterans and their family members are telling me is changing their lives and saving lives," Mr Chester said.

"We continue to roll out a national program of more than 45 Open Arms Peer Workers who connect with veterans and family members who may be struggling with their mental health, bringing a lived experience of mental health issues and, importantly, of recovery.

"We have also invested in the Coordinated Client Support program to identify veterans at risk before they transition out of service and provide them with a single point of contact as well as delivering increased employment support for ADF members looking for career development and job placement support as they set up for civilian life.

MINISTER MATTERS

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“In June, the Government extended the Provisional Access to Medical Treatment program, which delivers medical treatment to veterans for the top 20 most commonly accepted conditions while their claim is being considered, and the Wellbeing and Support Program, which provides intensive face-to-face case management services for highly vulnerable veterans who are transitioning or who have complex needs.”

While legislation is currently before the Parliament to establish the role permanently, the National Commissioner will begin important work to strengthen our efforts toward suicide prevention, including conducting an independent review of past Defence and veteran suicides.

Following the passage of legislation, the National Commissioner will have enduring power, scope and resources to inquire into deaths by suicide, and will support future wellbeing and suicide prevention efforts, by identifying the need for any system-wide reforms, or new approaches to support ADF members and veterans.

“The National Commissioner will make recommendations to the Government about actions and strategies to prevent future suicides, and will report publicly on their findings to Parliament each year,” Mr Chester said.

“The Government will be required to report on the progress of these recommendations, and the National Commissioner will have an ongoing role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations it makes.”

Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit www.OpenArms.gov.au.

For further information on the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, visit www.nationalcommissionerdvsp.gov.au.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466

Office of the Hon. Darren Chester, Canberra ACT

THE VIETNAMESE MUSEUM- AUSTRALIA



For more information and to see a visual concept of the project go to:

www.vietnamesemuseum.com.au

Australian-First Memorial Unveiled

“Cor Infinitus” - Infinite Courage



AUSTRALIA’S first Cor Infinitus memorial was recently unveiled at Townsville’s Anzac Park. The memorial was created as part of a new national initiative created by Kevin Humphreys to pay respect to veterans lost to suicide after serving their country.

Peter Hindle, Queensland State President of the VVAA laid a poppy to remember Australia’s Vietnam veterans. Any queries about Cor Infinitus can be emailed to: assistance@corinfinitus.org.

The memorial was created as part of a new national initiative created by Kevin Humphreys to pay respect to veterans lost to suicide after serving their country. Mr Humphreys said he hoped the addition of the memorial at Anzac Park would help provide comfort to the families of veterans who had lost loved ones to mental health battles.

“This memorial doesn’t represent individual people, eras, campaigns or circumstances. It is anonymous and owned by all families of those lost to mental health battles,” he said. “We have worked with the families of veterans who have taken their own lives as well as other specialist advisors to create the first Cor Infinitus memorial.”

The memorial’s plaque is inscribed with the message: “Dedicated to all those who served our nation and were overwhelmed by the battle within. Lest We Forget.”

Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill said Townsville City Council was proud to support Cor Infinitus. “As a garrison city, it is incredibly important that we support our veterans and their loved ones. Being home to the first Cor Infinitus memorial is very special for Townsville, and I am sure that it will help bring peace and healing for many families, partners and friends of veterans who have lost their lives to mental health battles,” Cr Hill said.

“I would invite those loved ones to not only come and visit the memorial, but to reach out to each other for support. There is no shame in losing a loved one to suicide, and there is no shame in asking for help from your loved ones and your community.”

“For me, this is personal. I’ve buried too many of my mates who have died from suicide. Too many mums and dads have buried too many sons and daughters who have died from suicide,” he said.

“We need to break the stigma, we need people to know that it’s ok not to be ok, it’s ok to speak out and get support, and I think this memorial goes a long way to helping achieve that.”

The Cor Infinitus memorial is located at Anzac Park, part of the outer circle of plinths surrounding the cenotaph. *Date published: 10 September 2020, Townsville City Council.*

<https://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/multiple/display/116184-cor-infinitus-memorial>

A 1RAR SOLDIERS MODERN PERSPECTIVE

After hearing of another young man take his life yesterday, for some unknown reason, and having a very meaningful conversation with a long time mate, I have to tell you all this. I want you all to listen. Please just listen.

For those of you who leave the military, particularly after many years' service, who struggle to find your place, to feel complete, and for those of you who are worried about leaving, because it's 'who you are', I give you this thought.

The military is, by its very nature, designed to replace you in a heartbeat. You will leave today, and tomorrow, it will be like you were never there. You will be replaced. They will get the job done without you. That's the nature of the job. While you no doubt make a difference, and your service is vitally important to this nation, you will soon be forgotten and no longer needed. You can and will be replaced.

But do you know who cannot replace you? Your family. Your wife. Your sons and daughters. Your brothers and sisters. Your mother and father. Your FAMILY. To them, you cannot be replaced. There is no substitute for you as a father, a mother, a brother or sister. A daughter or son.

If you are struggling after leaving the military, or struggling with the decision to leave, think about what really matters. Your family, and how much you mean to them. And how much they mean to you.

And for those who think or feel they lose their identity when they leave the military, I can tell you now you're wrong. You will always be a soldier, a sailor or an airman/woman. No one can take that away from you. But that's not who you really are. Who you are is an essential part of a family; that is loved, and cherished, and cannot be replaced, by anyone, EVER. That is far more important than your military service.

So if you're struggling and need help, please reach out. Please talk to someone. Talk to your family and tell them how you feel. Please ask for help. I don't want to see another family lose someone they cannot replace.

Please feel free to share far and wide.

Spike

Graham J. Christie JP

VETERAN FRIENDLY RETREATS



Some VVAA State branches have retreats
on their websites.

Under the current COVID restrictions,
check before you travel



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DFRDB Update September 2020



Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc.

No. A0108026R

We represent the interests of Defence Force Retirees regarding their Superannuation

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

Email: admin@adfra.org

DFRDB UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2020

Introduction

Another short Update.

CDDA Application

Herb has still heard nothing regarding his claim.

Legal Action

We have received a [Departmental Reply](#) to our [Request for Amendment of the DFRDB Act](#), in which we requested:

1. The amendment of the DFRDB Act;
2. The recalculation of the retirement pay reduction for recipients yet to reach Schedule 3 life expectancy;
3. The refund of all retirement pay and invalidity pay reductions which exceed the amount commuted; and
4. The restoration of the relativity of DFRDB benefits to the rates of those benefits at the time of retirement.

However, before we can appeal the decision in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal we have had to submit a [Request for Re-consideration of Decision](#).

Stay safe.

Jim Hislop OAM

President



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VVAA HISTORY TASK CONTINUES

VVAA Historian's "Most Wanted" List

With the special research areas of the Australian War Memorial and the National Library open once again, after corona virus restrictions, Kel Robertson has been making good progress with the VVAA history. Robertson has also completed a sequence of telephone interviews with significant individuals in the early organisation.

"The interviews are important," he said, "because they often reveal what was going on behind the scenes. They also fill in the gaps in the paper records. Talking to some of the people involved in events leading up to the Evatt Royal Commission has been extremely useful."

"But doing paper research and interviewing is a kind of juggling act. I can't get the best out of interviews without knowing about the key events in the period of relevance to interviewees ... and knowing about those events usually means that I need to have worked through the paper records. The two activities go hand-in-hand."

Robertson admits, though, that close examination of 'Debrief' is one way of getting enough understanding of significant happenings to interview someone from a period he hasn't yet explored.

He says he is looking forward to interviewing David Harris (early Vic) and Frank Donovan (early WA) in the next few months, as well as some of the lawyers who assisted the Association in its early years.

"I have a 'Most Wanted' list", he said. "If 'Debrief' readers can help me with the locations of people currently at the top of that list, I'd be very grateful. They include Bernie Szapiel (Vic), Sandi Klose (SA), Dirk Van Neuren (Vic), Jim Wares (NSW) and Terry Spriggs (WA). Other people, from other States will follow."

Readers who have any information on the whereabouts of any of these individuals should contact their State Presidents.

Robertson is still keen to see a number of documents listed in the last article about his work (in August 'Debrief'). These documents include accounts of the May 1980 National Conference (sometimes referred to as "the national seminar"), minutes of the March 1981 meeting of State representatives in Sydney, and minutes of the May 1981 National Conference in Canberra. If you have copies of any of these records, please let your State President know.

Editor

From: willgrant200406 <willgrant200406@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, 22 August 2020 7:19 PM

Subject: Detachment 55 Engineer Workshop and Park Squadron RAE

A very close friend of mine **Cpl. Darby Ivan Munro 1734403** Vietnam veteran 68-69 recently passed. I have started writing his story and would like to get in contact with other veterans he served with. Unit: Detachment 55 engineer workshop and park squadron. 68-69

Kind regards

Will Grant

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AT A GLANCE

A friend once told me he didn't understand the military system. Dumb civilian, I said to myself, but openly I said, "The system is really quite simple.

You see, all people in the Army are soldiers, all privates are soldiers, but not all soldiers are privates. Some are officers who are commissioned, but some are officers who are not commissioned. Obviously if every private was called private it would be confusing, so some privates are called things like trooper, driver, gunner, craftsman, sapper or signaller. Not all of the drivers actually drive because some of them cook, but we don't call them cooks, for that matter, not all drivers are called drivers – some of them are privates or gunners. Gunners as I'm sure you know are the blokes that fire guns, unless of course they are drivers or signallers in which case we call them gunners rather than drivers or signallers just to make it clearer. All gunners belong to the artillery, except that in the infantry we have gunners who are called privates because they fire a different sort of gun, for the same reason we call our drivers and signallers private as well.

A Lance Corporal is called Corporal, unless he is a Lance Bombardier then we call him Bombardier to distinguish him from a full Bombardier, who is just like a Corporal. All other ranks are called by their rank for the sake of simplicity except that Staff Sergeants are called Staff, but they are not on the staff, some Warrant Officers, who are not officers, are called Sergeant Major although they are not Sergeants or Majors. Some Warrant Officers are called Mister which is the same thing that we call some officers but they are not Warrant Officers. A Lieutenant is also called Mister because they are subalterns, but we always write their rank as Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and second comes before first.

When we talk about groups of soldiers there obviously has to be clear distinction. We call them Officers and Soldiers although we know that officers are soldiers too, sometimes we talk about officers and other ranks which is the same as calling them soldiers. I guess it is easiest when we talk about rank and file which is all the troops on parade except the officers and some of the NCOs— and a few of the privates – and the term is used whether everyone is on parade or not.

A large unit is called a battalion, unless it is a regiment but sometimes a regiment is much bigger than a battalion and then it has nothing to do with the other sort of regiment. Sub units are called companies unless they are squadrons or troops or batteries for that matter. That is not radio batteries and don't confuse this type of troop with the type who are soldiers but not officers.

Mostly the Army is divided into Corps as well as units, not the sort of Corps which is a couple of divisions but the sort which tells you straight away what trade each man performs, whether he is a tradesmen or not. The Infantry Corps has all the infantrymen for example and the Artillery Corps has all the gunners. Both these Corps also have signallers and drivers except those who are in the Signals or Transport Corps. In fact the Signals Corps is not a service at all because it is an Arm. Arms do all the fighting, although Signals don't have to fight too much, rather like the Engineers who are also an Arm but they don't fight too much either.

So you see, it's really quite simple.

Ted McEvoy A56015 RAAF

VALE

3905024 ROBIN HOLROYD PARKER

23 MAY 1933 – 28 September 2020

Robin served with the Australian Army Pay Corps during his time in Vietnam.

HQ Australian Army Force, Vietnam 1 June 1965 to 27 February 1966 then Ships Army Staff (HMAS Sydney) in November 1968.

Robin was a valued member of VVAA ACT receiving a Life Membership in 2008.

A funeral was held in Canberra on 13 October in conjunction with a memorial service for Robin's wife Wendy (nee Morrison) who passed away on 18 March 2020 when a funeral was not possible.

R64790 ADRIAN MALCOLM SMITH

It is with great sadness we join with Noble Park Sub-branch of the VVAA, in announcing the passing of R64790 Adrian, Malcolm SMITH on 21st August 2020

Adrian served in Vietnam on the

HMAS Sydney 22 April 1966—18 May 1966

HMAS Sydney 25 May 1966—11 June 1966

‘MAY HE REST IN PEACE’

Due to the COVID 19 lockdown a memorial service will be held in his honour when the Noble Park RSL re-opens.



1734403 Cpl DARBY IVAN MUNRO

25 June 1946—13 November 2019

Darby was born in Mackay Queensland and passed away in Bowen Queensland

As a National Serviceman he served in Vietnam from 23 December 1968—17 December 1969 with the Royal Australian Engineers AFV Detachment, 55 Engineer Workshop and Park Squadron

RIP

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A MOST INTERESTING 3 YEAR - PART 1 of 3

I served in the Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, 2 Squadron, E Troop 1966 to 1969. Before-hand and having initially completing an apprenticeship as a compositor in the printing industry my marble was drawn out in the very first National Service ballot (those born between 1st Jan. & 30 June 1945). My employer didn't want me to join the Army so I was enrolled into a diploma course at the Victorian school of Printing. Then being given the "flick" by my then girlfriend I decided to join the Army. I knew my time was up so I rang the Army asking if I could join now and complete my two years. Their answer, you can join-up in nine months, it seems I had to wait until the next intake. Then thinking, what's another three months? I joined the Regular Army for three years.

I joined the Army on the 15th March 1966 with recruit training in Kapooka, NSW, then onto Ingleburn, just South of Sydney for basic infantry training. In the final weeks of Infantry training, a senior cadre group from the SAS Regiment attended our training looking for recruits and having no idea what they did, I relied on the advice of Garry Lobb. They interviewed yours truly and for some reason, I along with Garry Lobb MM, Don Jensen and Darryl Cochrane were selected to attend a cadre course in Perth WA. The four of us passed this initial course with Don and Darryl being posted to 3 Squadron as reinforcements with Garry and I posted to an embryonic 2 Squadron.

The first course after passing the cadre course was learning to parachute – a plane ride to Richmond NSW for two weeks (two weeks instead of three because of an approaching weather front), which completed this exciting course, then back to Perth for more interesting courses. One was a Regimental Signals course where we learnt how to operate the various signal sets with learning the Morse Code the most demanding, but we were not as proficient as the Regi. Sigs. Then there was a Medical course (all theory) in Healesville Victoria - housed at an old holiday resort with the SAS contingent of about 30 troops, all being housed in a large tent on a golf course green. After this six weeks of theory it was back to Perth – all of the above courses were completed in 1967. Then in mid-67, I along with another trooper, John Easlea, had the opportunity to put into practice some of the theory we had learnt in Healesville. Off to the Royal Perth Hospital and into the casualty department for 6 weeks – commencing our days at 4pm and being supervised by the many doctors and nurses, we were allowed to give needles and stitch-up certain patients, mainly drunks. But there were rules, aboriginal men and women and white males were fair game for needles and stitching, while white women, it was from the knees down. In casualty it was mainly drunks and mostly from Thursdays to Sunday when they arrived inebriated looking for all or any forms of treatment/assistance. On a few occasions a road accident victim was in need of urgent surgery and to give us some experience in trauma treatment we assisted the surgeon in the operation, on one occasion the operation begun at midnight and finished at 6am and the poor bugger lived, with massive injuries for the rest of his life.

Having this medical experience and just before embarking onto Vietnam each Squadron member required 6 different needles – and in our small medical center the whole Squadron was lined-up ready to get 3 in each arm. As one of those giving the needles, at one particular stage I forgot to change the damn needle, so 6 or so troopers all got the same injection from the same needle, but it was my mate Garry Lobb in my line waiting, when he asked me, "can you change the bloody needle for me". But then again I don't think anyone died.

Continued page 18

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A MOST INTERESTING 3 YEAR —PART 1 of 3

Continued from page 17

With Vietnam just around the corner, there were shallow diving courses, roping, kayaking and parachuting on and into the Swan River or Rottnest Island. There was a Vietnamese language course, lots of shooting and bush time. One exercise which caused a bit of concern was one called “Crack & Thump” – the idea behind this exercise was to let us young troopers listen to bullets passing close by so as to understand the calibre and type of weapons (rifle, pistol or machine gun) be it 7.62, 5.56, 9mm or .45inch, being used. There were two groups of cadre staff with the weapons, one to the left and one to the right, with the intent of firing the different weapons across our front. A problem was Frank Cashmore a corporal and a bit of a dill who took it upon himself to fire at the feet of our group, one trooper was hit in the knee but thank god it was only a pistol round and not from a rifle.

Things do change - Frank Cashmore in Vietnam was by now a Sergeant in E Troop who was the patrol commander of the famous “Tractor Job” patrol – which in SAS folklore was quite famous. His patrol was credited with 15 or was it 21 confirmed kills. North of Nui Dat were quite a few French rubber plantations surrounded by jungle, with rather wide tracks/trails separating various sections of the plantations with one being called the Firestone trail. The VC used this wide trail to ferry various military items from one place to another with the use of an old tractor and trailer, owned and probably purloined from one of the local French rubber growers. According to Intelligence and SAS patrol reports the use of the tractor and trailer on the Firestone trail were a fairly common occurrence.

The Aussie engineers constructed four “beehive charges” or mines similar to the IEDs now used in Afghanistan. Two corporals, Danny Wright and Dave Scheele could be seen practicing digging holes in the road outside my tent in preparation of the real thing. The patrol was air-lifted into the area which allowed the two corporals, Danny and Dave time to dig the necessary holes and set up the charges. Later that evening the tractor and trailer with dimmed lights trundled down the trail and were subsequently blown to pieces. The force of the explosion blew the tractor’s engine in half, there were bodies and half bodies everywhere, weapons were strewn all over the place. Being in the dead of night the patrol stayed in situ listening to the screaming and moaning of the dying. Normal enemy practice is to collect their dead and wounded from any battlefield but on this occasion they didn’t, probably fearing being ambushed. The next morning at first light a small Bell helicopter arrived with pilot and our Squadron photographer, Dick Meisenhelter. While viewing and photographing the carnage they spotted a 57mm RCL rocket launcher and decided, against all the rules, to retrieve it, which they did, but did they get into the shit.

The above patrol was an overnight job while most other patrols were five days or more and most patrols were generally reconnaissance with the allowance for an ambush on the last two days if a suitable well-worn track was found. Patrols carried a weapon called a “Claymore Mine” usually five with each patrol. Probably mis-named, it was rectangular 10 x 7 inches and about 1.5 inches deep, made of plastic with inside a skin of plastic explosive in the back, then with 700 ball-bearing impregnated into the front of the explosive charge facing the enemy. This mine had two sets of retractable legs which you pushed into the ground and you aimed it either for the upper torso or the legs.

When three Claymores went off in unison the noise, smoke and litter were immense. There were two apertures on the top of each Claymore for the detonators – with an ambush usually consisting of

Continued page 34

AVCAT



Essay Prize 2020

AVCAT presents the inaugural
AVCAT Essay Prize 2020
on the theme:

'Impact of the Vietnam War on Family'

Entries open on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August 2020
and close midnight 16 October 2020.

First Prize: \$500
Second Prize \$200
Third Prize \$100

The AVCAT Essay Prize is open to all entrants over the age of 18 at 18 August 2020. Essays should be up to 2500 addressing the theme 'Impact of the Vietnam War on Families'.

avcat.org.au

Contest guidelines and entry form online at avcat.org.au.

Letters to the Editor

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Minister for Defence Personnel

MEDIA RELEASE

LETTER TO THE EDITOR — RECOGNISING CONTRIBUTION OF OUR VIETNAM VETERANS

Dear Editor

Each year on 18 August, Vietnam Veterans' Day and the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, Australians pause to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who served during the Vietnam War.

The first Australian troops from the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam arrived in 1962 and over the course of the war around 60,000 Australians served there, with our involvement ending with the Royal Australian Air Force flying humanitarian missions and evacuating embassy staff in April, 1975. Tragically, 521 Australians died and more than 3,000 were wounded.

On 18 August 1966 Australian soldiers fought in one of their fiercest battles during the entire Vietnam War, the Battle of Long Tan, a brutal action that saw 18 Australians killed and 25 wounded.

As we commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who served and died in Vietnam, it is important to acknowledge that many Vietnam veterans were deeply affected by their service.

Vietnam veterans were instrumental in establishing the Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service, now known as Open Arms. This service has been providing mental health and support services for Australian veterans and their families every year since 1982 and is their enduring legacy.

All Vietnam veterans can be proud that Open Arms supported more than 30,000 veterans and their family members last year and that it has made a life-changing difference to countless veterans and their families and I know it will continue to do so into the future.

Vietnam veterans also set up the Long Tan Bursary, a program that provides education support to the children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans, helping them gain the skills and qualifications needed to pursue their chosen career. Applications for the 2021 Bursary open today and eligible descendants of our Vietnam veterans can apply online at avcat.org.au/scholarships/.

As a nation, I encourage all Australians to acknowledge and honour the Vietnam veterans who gave so much in the service of our country, as well as recognise the rich contribution Vietnam veterans continue to make to our community.

Lest we forget.

VETERAN FRIENDLY RETREATS



Some VVAA State branches have retreats on their websites.

Under the current COVID restrictions, check before you travel



AROUND THE COUNTRY — Vietnam Veterans Day 2020

VICTORIA

Just a round up of the Vietnam Veterans Day 2020 Streaming of Commemorations by the Shrine of Remembrance.

This year would have had to be the most trying time for the planning of a Commemorative Service especially with all the changing restrictions due to COVID 19. Preparations started in November last year with no inkling of what was to come. By March 2020 it was obvious we would be unable to plan for a service as in previous years. Plans were made, plans were changed and in the end, in cooperation with the Shrine of Remembrance a live streaming event was the best we could hope for and the resulting event was great.

If anyone missed viewing the live stream on the day, I have included the websites below so you can do so simply by clicking on either:

<http://vvaavic.org.au/> or <https://www.shrine.org.au/>

On the day the results were startling to say the least with Social Media leading the way. Just my Facebook Shares alone to two 3 RAR and the Coral Balmoral Group accounts alone resulted in a total of 24.7K views. There was also a dramatic increase by other ESO's, RSL Sub-Branches and interest groups compared to previous years and this was great to see.

In the end all the hard work, frustration and dedication put in by Maurie Benson paid off, so I am sure you will all join with me in Congratulating Maurie on a job well done.

Looking through the Facebook pages it was obvious some of our Sub-Branches are now starting to get more involved in communicating with each other via Social Media and this can only be a good thing.

For your enjoyment I have attached some photographs below on activities from our around Melbourne Sub-Branches. I am sure there are many more pictures to share and stories to tell, especially our Rural Sub-Branches who were not subject to the same rigorous restrictions and who were able to commemorate the event a little more freely. As this pandemic is a 1 in a 100 year event I thank you for sharing photos and stories of how your Sub-Branch celebrated on the day. We are now share it amongst, not only our VVAA Victoria family but Nationally also.

George Skell, Victorian State Secretary



Photo courtesy VVAA Victoria Branch: Bob Elworthy, Victoria President, enjoying a quiet ale on Vietnam Veterans Day.

AROUND THE COUNTRY — Vietnam Veterans Day 2020



Member Michael Chudiak laying flowers at the local memorial in Greensborough on VV Day



Wreath Laying at the Croydon Cenotaph by Outer Easter Melbourne, Victoria



GDVVAA Member Alan Fleming conducted a Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Service at Camperdown RSL on VV Day. Thanks Alan for continuing to help us remember the fallen.



A much quieter commemorative service for Vietnam Veterans in Geelong this year at our Memorial in North Geelong. President Rieny Nieuwenhof laid two wreaths on behalf of G&DVVAA and the Geelong RSL.

AROUND THE COUNTRY — Vietnam Veterans Day 2020

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Richard Williams (WA State President)

The commemoration of the 54th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan was marked by wet and windy weather in Perth, which resulted in a reduced crowd and a cancelled “March-on”. Our King’s Park pavilion had two additional marquees erected to accommodate participants but the COVID- 19 and the rain affected attendance this year. Despite this we decided to soldier -on.

Peter Heeney (2 RAR), the Master of Ceremonies, introduced the dignitaries including the Hon. Peter Tinley (Minister for Veterans’ Issues); Hon. Liza Harvey (Leader of the Opposition); Hon. Tjorn Sibma (Shadow Minister for Vets’ Issues) Air COMM/ C.O. ADF (WA) Fiona Dowse (RAAF); BRIG Moore (13 Brigade); David Gainer (U.S. Consul); Peter Aspinall and John McCourt (RSL); Peter King (DVA) and all of the organisations and family members supporting Vietnam Veterans.

Di Ryder (President of the ATSIVSA) did the Welcome to Country, while also paying tribute to the Indigenous members of our military services. Chaplain Allan Pipes led the spiritual aspects of the service very well.

A touching moment was when Ms Toni Reiss, the widow of Trooper Anthony Jones (3 CAV, Binh Ba, June 1969) soulfully read the brilliant poem “Soldier” by George Skypeck, a decorated American Vietnam veteran.



“I was that which others did not want to be.

I went where others feared to go, and did what others failed to do.

I asked nothing from those who gave nothing, and reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal loneliness ...should I fail.

I have seen the face of terror; felt the stinging cold of fear; and enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment’s love.

I have cried, pained, and hoped ... but most of all, I have lived times others would say were best forgotten.

At least someday I will be able to say that I was proud of what I was ... a soldier.”

Vivian Blycha (Chairperson, Veterans’ Advisory Council of WA) gave an excellent address that was reflective, personal and humorous.



The 23rd Psalm and a Prayer were then offered by Mrs Kay Hair, widow of Corporal Clarence Hair (HQ 1ATF), and Thanh Van Nguyen (President of the Republic of Vietnam Veterans’ Association of WA). The official wreath laying was then followed by many of the attendees laying personal Remembrance poppies.

A growing feature of our service was the generous feeding of the masses by the Vietnamese families who support us each year. So, while the weather was unkind, we did our duty.

Lest We Forget.

(Dr Neil MacNeill, Editor of CONTACT!)

TO THE EDITOR

REMBRANCE DAY POPPIES—QUEENSCLIFFE CEMETERY 2020

G'Day Robynne,

While on the subject of Heroes who have passed. the following was sent to State & Federal Parliamentarians – I hope you do not mind some light reading. We are seeking Relatives & Friends to provide- **a Photo & Service Details of any known Gravesites of Those Who Served** – and also use this information to copy all of their Friends & Associates – both Local & afar - who may also contribute their details on this immediate **Project** – i.e. **Remembrance Day – the 11th November-** to Honour All Those Who Served - and **in this LOCAL case— are laid to rest at the 150 year old Queenscliff Cemetery—**established in the Garrison Towns of Queenscliff & Point Lonsdale.

We have to contact as many stakeholders as possible—**Members of clubs & associations**, the local Media, Neighbours - to ask their Relatives, Friends and Historians – to help provide the Names, Units & the Dates Born & Died – of **ALL our Heroes of ALL Wars, our First Responders & the many auspicious contributors to our Borough** from the Crimea War, the Boer War, WW1. WW2, Korea, Vietnam and more recent Wars - from 1850's - onward - to assist the Geelong Cemeteries Trust in locating each & every Gravesite - in this beautiful Garden space.

The following is a part-copy of my correspondence to all Regional & LOCAL people to create their own personal Remembrance Day commemoration - after both the application and the context of ANZAC Day & Vietnam Veterans Day had sadly been cancelled – **at the resting place of their forebears – for acclaim - with a Poppy in perpetuity at each of their Gravesites**

Graham

GRAHAM J. CHRISTIE

Justice of the Peace 9747

0418 521 579

ryandale31@bigpond.com



*Boer War Lt. Col.
Charles E. Umpelby
RAA - KIA 1900*



Deakin Cenotaph in Point Lonsdale 1925



*WW1 W. Donovan Joynt VC
- opened Cenotaph 1925*

Continued page 25

REMEMBRANCE DAY POPPIES QUEENSCLIFFE CEMETERY 2020

Continued from page 24

Mr. Mayor, Councillors & Staff, may I offer my congratulations for the oversight of the Borough - on attending to the on-going Restoration of the Avenue of Honour – to retain the majesty of these Sentinels for The Fallen – an activity that Mayor Cr. William Thwaites envisaged and established initially way back in 1918 for the Towns – spurred on by the loss of his Son in the Great War months prior. His energy was also responsible for the creation of our RSL on the 3rd April 1919 – initially located at the YMCA – until the Hall on the present site was built – he established these permanent edifices by Public Subscription.

The cancellation of all 2020 National Commemorations has been very sad – although ANZAC Day received great Community support from their homes & driveways together with the Bells of the Borough Churches – which was grand – but now as these cancellations continue – such as Vietnam Veterans Day on the 18th August being reduced to a very few people – gratefully with the Mayor laying a Wreath on behalf of the Community – which still handsomely retained a vestige of the observance.

Our ANZAC Day is usually 3 Services – Dawn at the Ocean View Lookout, later the Point Lonsdale March to & Service at the Deakin Cenotaph – on a corner land of their house “Ballara” - gifted by Pattie Deakin following Alfred’s death in 1919 (opened by Lt.Col. Donovan Joynt VC in 1925) and then a March to & Service in Fort Queenscliff. The VV Day is a Street March to the RSL Hall and finally Remembrance Day is usually a Street March to a Service in the Fort.

Remembrance Day must now be our focus – as it is anticipated that it also will be cancelled - therefore - in tandem with the work on The Avenue – I wish to physically identify Those Who Served our Borough and the Nation – at their actual resting place in the Queenscliffe Cemetery – to replace the physical loss of all their individual Name Plates – which over the decades by theft, damage or souvenir – that initially were placed and dedicated to each Veteran on their very own Monterey Cypress Sentinel – I believe this time provides us an opportunity to locate the closest Memorial we can now acknowledge them - for perpetuity **by placing a Poppy** - in their own Name on their own Grave - in this wonderful Cemetery. We are cognizant that many were buried in the lovely Cemeteries of France and Belgium and even in South Africa – the Commanding Officer of Fort Queenscliff – Lt. Col. Charles E. Umphelby was killed in Action in 1900 – serving the Colonial Artillery – as Federation was still to be achieved - his Grave is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The idea came from discussions with Lambis Englezos of Fromelles History fame and a Deakin Family researcher. The stipulated Military Section in the Cemetery was set in the 1800’s – along Williams Road (the Southern Boundary fence) – but this selection remained relatively small in number and was primarily for **Fort Garrison Artillery** personnel – with the many Heroes of our Towns who came after this period - being placed in individual plots all throughout the Garden Cemetery.

The alternative quick reference for the many names who served – is the RSL Honour Boards – but they really can only be physically traced around the last 20 odd years – where older RSL Members may remember their Passing – and if they were even actually buried in this Cemetery. The grandeur of **the Monterey Cypress** identifies **Loss** - and the **Honour Board** denotes **Service** – but the intent to **Honour Our Fallen** with their personalised entry - has been cancelled out - by time from the 1950’s onward.

This can be corrected to a large degree – by re-dedicating their Gravesite with an on-going placed Poppy. The Poppy is the same as used by the **Australian War Memorial** on their Honour Wall with the same intention to be replaced over time due to wear & tear – hopefully in perpetuity.

REMEMBRANCE DAY POPPIES QUEENSCLIFFE CEMETERY 2020

Continued from page 25

The Geelong Cemetery Trust wants to assist but needs Names – as it can only find the plots via a database of individual named sites – as there is **no reference point** that designates them into Military or Service categories – for instance Frederick Mason MM (served in both the Boer War & in WW1) of 4 Stokes Street, Queenscliff – was buried in 1939 at Queenscliff – however only a Rising Sun motif on the slab indicates he had any Military service – the location is a long way from the Military plots mentioned.

However his Grandson – Cr. Jim Mason AM of COGG would appreciate the Poppy to both his Grandfather and his Father - as they both served and Jim had also assisted in the restoration of the outlying historic Mannerim Memorial.

I am requesting all the Local Newspapers to ask the Community to assist with their relatives Names, Units, War location - as they did when we identified some of the names in the 1933 photograph of the elaborate Smoke Night held in the RSL – with many well-known Family forebears smiling back at us. I am seeking their replies by Email to assist in formally Honouring their Forebears on Remembrance Day – when they can visit their Gravesite – adorned by **The Poppy**.

We have a little time to ensure capture in the interest of the Poppy display – if we can get their details – which could lead to a Site Map of Location and eventually a printed Booklet of their History for Remembrance – each year on the 11th November.

Please note the following information that was sent to Board Members of the Geelong Cemeteries Trust – namely Rieny Nieuwenhof (a Vietnam Veteran) & Lynn Wallace - Cr. Susan Salter once served on this Trust when it was Queenscliff specific.

The youngest Daughter of Point Lonsdale Residents - PM Alfred & Pattie Deakin – their Daughter Dame Vera Deakin White OBE (founder of Australian Red Cross) & her husband Sir Thomas White DFC – who was the Australian Ambassador to London - are laid to rest in the same site as per the following photograph.



A hero of WW1 was Senior Nurse Violet Blanche Duddy MID who served in the horror of Lemnos and in France is noted correctly – as her re-dedication five years ago has designated as a single Gravesite for the Family Site – now has her name as a personal Plaque. The re-dedication was undertaken by the War Nurses Association – her funeral had a large attendance.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY POPPIES—QUEENSCLIFFE CEMETERY 2020

Continued from page 26

*Violet Blanche Diddy MID-
in the 1960's in Queenscliff*



*As a WW1 Snr. Nurse
pre Lemnos & France*

One of the Greats of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots who brought the big ships in and out of the Heads - Captain Colin Springall also served in WW2 – our RSL President - he was married to Joan who pre-deceased him - he then married Betty. Colin died and later Betty also a few years ago.

Frederick Charles MASON MM (Boer War & WW1 Soldier) lived with his wife Clara at 4 Stokes Street in Queenscliff – they were interred together – he in 1939 – I am not aware of her passing date.



Captain Colin Springall

Their Son was named after his father – also Frederick Charles (Jnr) – he served in WW2 in Darwin & New Guinea – an Artillery Sergeant Instructor at Fort Queenscliff – he was Mayor of the Borough in 1972 - he was buried at Queenscliff in September 1984. His Son is currently a Councillor at the COGG – Cr. Jim Mason AM of Marcus Hill.



We had around 85 Cypress Trees dedicated to WW1 Soldiers & Nurses – from 1918 until the final passing in 1933 – for Those who died in action and were buried in the lovely Cemeteries of France & Belgium and then Those who died of wounds on their Return Home – of whom we assume that quite a number were aid to rest in the Queenscliff Cemetery – followed by as many trees again – for the Heroes of WW2, Korea, Vietnam – which added more Sentinels in their Name - we owe each one of them – the Honour of Remembrance – particularly now the Avenue is devoid of the Name Plates of their initial Memorial – but the sentinels presence will always remain glorious.

Graham
GRAHAM J. CHRISTIE
Justice of the Peace 9747
0418 521 579 ryandale31@bigpond.com

VALOUR PARK



Ex Service and Allied Organisations

5 August 2020

Dear Colleague,

Afghanistan Victoria Cross Recipients' Memorial on the Remembrance Driveway

The Remembrance Driveway linking Sydney with Canberra honours those who served the Australian Defence Force in World War Two and subsequent conflicts and peace keeping operations. Along the Driveway there are specific rest areas dedicated to Australian Victoria Cross recipients from World War Two onwards.

We have plans for a new Rest Area for Keith Payne VC, AM, and this is on hold for now as the site chosen is being redeveloped. We are however, developing a memorial for the four Afghanistan Victoria Cross recipients.

As a part of the 65th Anniversary of the Remembrance Driveway in 2019, the Governor of New South Wales launched a design competition to commemorate the Australian Defence personnel who were cited for the highest of valour and were invested with the Victoria Cross for their actions in the Afghanistan conflict. The selected design is now being finalised to submit for Development Approval.

This exciting memorial will be located in Valour Park, Watson ACT. The site is on the northern approach to Canberra and is a revitalised original grove on the Driveway. We estimate the cost of the memorial to be \$500,000 and the plan is to complete construction for a commemoration in mid-2021.

As an unfunded charity, the Remembrance Driveway Council has embarked on a fund-raising program to develop the Afghanistan VC Memorial. On behalf of the Council, I seek your support in the form of a donation to our fund-raising appeal. I would further ask that you place the enclosed flyer in any magazine, newsletter, webpage or mail out from your organisation, to give individuals the opportunity to contribute to this significant memorial.

I look forward to your support and would be happy to provide further information.

Yours Sincerely,

Air Commodore Ian Scott AM
President, Remembrance Driveway Council

Email: rdc@rms.nsw.gov.au (or direct email to ian@scottadr.com)

RDC banking information:

- Electronic Funds Transfer to Remembrance Driveway Council
BSB: 032143 Account: 477785
- Credit Card donations through website: www.remembrancedriveway.org.au
- Cheques may be mailed to Mr. David Farquhar, Hon Treasurer,
3 Beulah Place, Engadine NSW 2233

REMEMBRANCE DRIVEWAY

Help create a memorial for our
Afghanistan Victoria Cross recipients
on the Remembrance Driveway

The Remembrance Driveway Council maintains and develops the Remembrance Driveway that stretches from Sydney to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

We want to honour the valour of the four VC recipients from the Afghanistan conflict in a fitting memorial and we need your help to do it.

We have a beautiful and timeless design from top landscape architects Moir, selected in competition, and now need the funds to make it a reality.

Your kind donation can turn this vision into reality.

Please visit the fundraising site at www.remembrancedriveway.org to make a donation or use our EFT details below.

The Remembrance Driveway Council is a registered charity: ABN 94 634 944 246



The VC recipients are:

- Trooper Mark G Donaldson VC - 2 September, 2008
- Benjamin Roberts-Smith VC MG - 11 June, 2010
- Corporal Daniel Alan Keighran VC - 24 August, 2010
- Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird, VC MG posthumously 13 February, 2014



Electronic Funds Transfer to: Remembrance Driveway Council BSB: 032143 Account: 477785

THE MORAL INJURY OUTCOME SCALE

SURVEY

Understanding Moral Injury in Ex-Serving Defence Members

*While in the military, did you see
or do things that conflict with
your beliefs and values?*

What is moral injury?

Moral injury refers to witnessing or experiencing acts that conflict with your deeply held moral beliefs, values, and expectations



Study aims

This study aims to develop an outcome measure of moral injury in which military care providers can use to better identify and support Defence members impacted by these experiences



Who is conducting the study?



What is involved?

- Complete an anonymous online survey
- Answer questions about the impact of moral injury on your identity, relationships, beliefs, and behaviour
- Access the survey <https://is.gd/MIOStudy> or via www.phoenixaustralia.org



Participation is
completely
voluntary



Ethical approval

This study has been granted ethical approval by the DDVA HREC – protocol number 273-20

Contact



1800 290 618

phoenix-mip@unimelb.edu.au

REUNIONS



HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE SOUTH VIETNAM 1966 - 1972

HQ1ATF ASSOCIATION REUNION

In Memory of our D&E losses at Long Khanh (12 June 1971)

CANBERRA 18-22 NOVEMBER 2021

RESCHEDULED DATES

Capital Country Holiday Park

47 Bidges Road, SUTTON NSW 2620 Ph:(02) 6230 3433

Email: bookings@capitalcountryholidaypark.com.au

Web: www.capitalcountryholidaypark.com.au

Due to the ongoing Corona Virus situation our 2020 Reunion of Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force / D & E Platoon (Nui Dat, South Vietnam 1966-1972) has now been rescheduled to 18-22 November 2021 and will still be held at the Capital Country Holiday Park which is located just off the Federal Highway, some eight km north east of Canberra.

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war from 1965 – 1972 has had a lasting impact on all the servicemen and women who served there. HQ1ATF and its sub-unit Defence and Employment (D&E) Platoon, the longest continually serving Infantry Platoon in South Vietnam, served from 1966 – 1972 and encountered much enemy action during those years.

Each two years HQ1ATF Association holds a reunion and the rescheduled 2021 event will remember 50 years since we closed the gates of Nui Dat. It is anticipated that some 70 Veterans and 60 wives/partners (a total of 130 people) will participate in the four day event. The reunion is an important part of the Association's efforts in the healing process which is achieved through the continual networking of members and also importantly their partners and carers. With objectives to improve health and well-being and to reduce social isolation, the reunion plays a significant role.

The Commemorative Dinner will be held on Saturday 20 November 2021 at the Old Parliament House (Museum of Australian Democracy). The dinner will be preceded by a Memorial Service at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Anzac Ave, Canberra.

For details contact: John Verhelst: 0437212121 or jeverhelst@gmail.com www.hq1atf.org

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: debriefeditor@gmail.com

REUNIONS

1ALSG EX-VIETNAM - 8-13 NOVEMBER 2021 HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

1st Australian Logistic Support Group—*Ex-Vietnam*

The reunion will be from November 8, till November 13, 2021 and will be held at:

**Lake Hume Discovery Park,
33 Boathaven Road, Ebdon VIC 3691** via Albury/Wodonga
For details of the Reunion and Accommodation Bookings

Contact Tony Brown on:

Mobile: 0428 852 736

Email: tr4950@optusnet.com.au

21 Engineer Support Troop Reunion

The Troop Reunion is to be held from 30 August to 3 September 2021 at Forster—Tuncurry on the NSW coast.

All accommodation, venues and activities will remain prior to the change of date due to COVID19. Any changes will be posted on the website and sent out by email. Please make sure that we have your current email address. For further information contact Ian (below), Phil Hicks 0414 761932 phil.hicks@gmail.com or Stan Monkley 0411 506787 stan21est@gmail.com.

Contact Ian McLean (0412 431297)

jaim@hotmail.com.au

Website: www.21est.org

2 RAR B Coy, 67-68 Reunion



B Company Reunion



Plans are underway for the Reunion to be held in Gympie Queensland, mid-August 2021. Exact dates haven't been decided but would incorporate Vietnam Veterans' Day, the 18th August.

Please ensure your email address is up to date and if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact Leonie Millard (Schwarz) 0408015815, leonieschwarz@bigpond.com or Ros Kirkpatrick (daughter) 0429 942528 ros.acugympie@gmail.com

104 Sig Sqn National Reunion 2021

20-22 July 2021, Twin Towns Service Club, Gold Coast.



55th Anniversary Reunion for all ex members and families of 104 Sig Sqn, SVN and later. Other RASigs most welcome. Meet and Greet, Dinner, Memorial Service and Farewell Lunch.

Contact: Denis Hare—0419334535

reunion@au104.org <http://2021.au104.org>

Facebook Page: 104 Sig Sqn National Reunion 2021

OPEN ARMS IPSWICH

The Hon Darren Chester MP

Minister for Veterans' Affairs - Minister for Defence Personnel

Senator Paul Scarr - Senator for Queensland

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE - OPEN ARMS IPSWICH MOVE—Sunday, 13 September 2020

VETERANS and their families in Ipswich, Queensland, now have greater access to mental health support services with the opening of a new permanent Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling office tomorrow.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester said the previous Open Arms office in Ipswich was a satellite office and that the new permanent location further demonstrated the Government's commitment to improving the mental health and wellbeing of Australian veterans and their families.

"The new office, centrally located at 10 Brisbane Street, is in close vicinity to RAAF Base Amberley, the largest Air Force base in Australia, and the place of employment for thousands of current Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and their families," Mr Chester said.

"The new location offers veterans and their families a modern, well equipped, easily accessible and family friendly site with additional counselling rooms and large open office spaces to ensure they are well-looked after."

In what has been a challenging year, Open Arms has seen a 35 per cent increase in counselling sessions provided to the ex-service community in the last 12 months, and this increase is expected to continue throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Senator for Queensland Paul Scarr, who is based in the Ipswich region, said the increase in those accessing counselling services illustrated that the message about seeking mental health support was being heard, particularly in the ex-service community.

"Reaching out for support is incredibly important during uncertain times and veterans and their families in the areas surrounding RAAF Amberley here in Queensland will now have a better resource to provide that support," Senator Scarr said.

"If you are a veteran or family member who may be struggling or in need of additional support, I encourage you to call Open Arms 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or visit OpenArms.gov.au to find more about services available."

Open Arms was founded by our Vietnam veterans and is their enduring legacy of ensuring all veterans and their families can access free and confidential mental health support.

The Ipswich Open Arms office is one of five in southern Queensland. For further information on Open Arms locations, visit OpenArms.gov.au.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Minister Chester, Rachel Tharratt: 02 6277 7820




Senator Scarr, Matt McEachan: 07 3186 9350

DVA Media: 02 6289 6466





24Hr 1800 011 046

A service founded by Vietnam veterans,
now for all veterans and families

 @OpenArmsVeteransAndFamiliesCounselling
 @OpenArmsSupport
 @OpenArms

MORE HELPLINES

Department of Defence - Mental Health All-hours
Support Line
 1800 628 036

Lifeline Australia
 13 11 14

1800RESPECT - National Sexual Assault, Domestic
and Family Violence Counselling Service
 1800 737 732

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A MOST INTERESTING 3 YEAR—PART 1 of 3

Continued from page 18

three mines in the killing group and one for each end as protection. Having such weapons and having surprise on your side allowed a four/five-man patrol to take on a much larger body of enemy. After initiating such an ambush usually two members of the patrol would search the bodies for weapons and relevant information then leave the area hopefully with a quick dash to a hole in the jungle to be extracted.

I suggest there was one piece of military equipment, made in the USA, that made the task of defeating the enemy much easier. To my mind the leveler in any contact or ambush, was the mis-named, “Claymore Mine”. A “mine” was something that was buried as the name implies and is an enemy to both friend and foe when primed and activated. An example is the M16 Jumping Jack mine, which I believe caused more casualties than the VC. But whatever the nomenclature, the Claymore mine was an effective and deadly weapon.

Having been in Vietnam a couple of months my troop and patrol commander, Gordon Simpson decided I should be the first to experience R & R (Rest & Recreation). With an array of Asian capitals to choose from, I selected Hong Kong, an amazing city of millions. If I had been married I could have chosen Australia, but I wasn't, nor did I have a girlfriend. Being a greedy tourist I spent my money on the trappings of a rich young (23 years of age) hedonist. There was an Akai M9 reel to reel tape recorder, plus two rather large speakers, then came a Rolex Submariner watch, a Pentax camera, then followed an array of tailor-made clothing. Then after this short soiree it was back to finding and fighting the Viet-Cong – it never entered my mind that I might not live to enjoy this beautiful bounty.

SAS patrols travelled through the jungle on compass bearings, meaning we always knew where we were. In most cases we knew exactly where we were being inserted, having flown over the exact position the day before and we knew exactly where we were going to be picked-up from, plus a back-up position. The forward scout had attached to his rifle a small counter with the theory being, one yard equals three steps so we basically knew how far we had travelled, plus he also had a wrist compass for taking bearings. As SAS patrols never walked on tracks and our movements were slow and deliberate – the basic idea was to travel from A to B without making any sounds and all patrol communications were basically via hand signals.

Depending on the type of job our forward scout Denis could be carrying a silenced weapon – the choice of weapons was fairly good. Swedish K, Silent Sterling, all 9mm and the heavier hitting American .45 Grease gun. The look on the face of a VC forward scout, when he was hit with a burst of silent bullets and attempting to know which direction they were coming from.

My main role in 14 Patrol (a four man patrol) was as the signaler, providing communications back to base (twice each day) and depending upon the distance from base it was either via voice or Morse Code. My secondary role in the patrol was as the medic – nearly all SAS troopers in 2 Squadron were cross trained. Our forward scout Denis Cullen, he was also a trained medic, next came the Patrol Commander, Gordon Simpson a Duntroon graduate who in July 1968 lost both of his legs after stepping on a mine. Terry Nolan a Portsea graduate replaced Gordon as our patrol commander

Continued page 35

THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

A MOST INTERESTING 3 YEAR —PART 1 of 3

Continued from page 34

for the rest of our tour – whereas Terry continued his year-long tour with 1 Squadron. Our 14 patrol consisted of Denis Cullen, forward scout, then our Patrol Commander, Gordon Simpson/Terry Nolan, then myself as the sig/medic and Tom Kerkez as “arse-end-charlie”. If something happened to one of the patrol members there was always another to complete the appropriate task.

Having four young troopers in our tent the head-man was certainly corporal Garry Lobb (sadly Garry has now passed-on) what he said went, most times, but being realistic you couldn’t accuse him of being a tyrant, far from it. But then again, he had plenty of fighting spirit – one example. Gaz was a member of “Ginger” Scutt’s patrol and they had been out for about six days and we were expecting them back on the morrow, the three of us in the tent, Denis, Adrian and myself, decided to nail an empty jam tin into the floor-board beside Gaz’s bed. Gaz arrived back, stored his weapon and backpack, undressed and headed straight for the showers, as you would having spent a number of days out in a tropical jungle without any chance of washing.

After the shower, back to the tent with just a towel around his waist and wearing thongs – then in viewing our tin, he yelled “get that f...ing tin out of my space”.

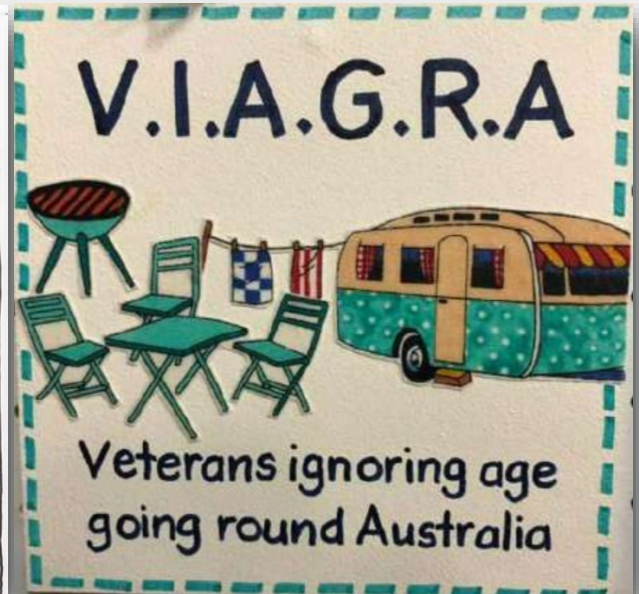
When no one jumped to his order, he kicked the damn tin, you should have heard the language and the amazing sight of this big lad hopping around on one foot screaming and attempting to hold onto his big toe.

In 2 Squadron we had a young aboriginal lad Harry Harris, Harry was ex-Artillery and had Corp transferred into Infantry and was accepted into the Regiment – for some reason in late 68 he joined the patrol of “Ginger” Scutts. This particular patrol was for reconnaissance, spying and counting the enemy as they travelled down a particular track. When the individual patrol members were settled into their various positions, two troopers (including Harry) up at the track watching/listening, the other three back about 30 feet with their radio set-up for sending immediate reports. While the back three were in their LUP (lying-up place) they heard voices behind them which caused the Patrol Commander to move the LUP sideways away from the voices. At around the same time the two up at the track started to count scores of enemy passing along the track (in broad day-light), one of these two listeners was Harry, who decided to return to the LUP and report the movements on the track. We troopers always went out on patrol wore camouflage jackets and pants as well as painted faces, necks and the backs of our hands. Harry being aboriginal didn’t need the face paint, and as he travelled back to the LUP he was unaware it had been moved sideways. He went past the old LUP and must have realized the error and commenced to return in a big loop – by performing this loop he entered the new LUP from the wrong direction causing the Patrol Commander to see an unpainted face and his immediate reaction was to shoot. Harry was killed on the spot, a most unfortunate accident.

Continued next edition of Debrief

Tony Bowden OAM JP—July 2020
Service No. 3411809
24 Morden Court, Nunawading 3131

AN ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR!



The NILE Virus (Type C)

I thought you would want to know about this virus.

Even the most advanced computer programs from Norton, McAfee and others cannot take care of this one.

It appears to target those who were born prior to 1948.

The lockdown seems to be increasing the chances of being affected!

Virus Symptoms

Causes you to send the same email twice. (Done that)

Causes you to send a blank email. (That too)

Causes you to send an email to the wrong person. (Yup)

Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you. (Ah-ha)

Causes you to forget to attach the attachment. (Done that).

Causes you to hit SEND before you've finished. (Oh no, not that again)

Causes you to hit DELETE instead of SEND. (Hate that).

Causes you to hit SEND when you should DELETE. (Heck, now what?)

The Virus is called the **C-NILE** virus

A lot of us have already been inflicted with this deadly disease and unfortunately as we age it gets worse.

And if you can't admit to doing any of the above, you've obviously caught the other strain – the **D-NILE** virus!



**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.



THE INSPIRATION FOR THE NAME



OPEN
Veterans & Families
Counselling
ARMS

A service founded by
Vietnam Veterans now for ALL
Veterans and their Families
1800 011 046



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

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SUPPORTING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

At Open Arms your wellbeing is our business.

We offer free:

confidential counselling for individuals, couples and families
group programs
transition workshops
peer networks
suicide prevention training
education, self-help resources, and more...

**To get support or find out more
call or visit:**

1800 011 046 | OpenArms.gov.au

OPEN ARMS

Veterans & Families Counselling

A service founded by Vietnam veterans,
now for all veterans and families

OUR HISTORY

Recent research has identified a loss of records from our associations past. If anyone has copies of VVAA. National Congress minutes prior to 1996 please forward to:

president@vvaa.org.au or secretary@vvaa.org.au

TELL OTHERS ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES

States and sub branches are encouraged to contribute reports on their local activities for publication in Debrief.

Don't miss this opportunity promote your group; it may give others ideas of what they can do for, and with, their members and their families.

The preferred method is to attach to an email the article in Word format and photographs in JPG format for better quality, to debriefeditor@gmail.com

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.

Don't forget to advise him if the address changes.

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM

25 Veterans Drive, Newhaven, Phillip Island VIC 3925

www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org.au

Membership enquiries welcomed



THE WAR WIDOWS GUILD OF AUSTRALIA

“We all belong to each other.

We all need each other.

It is in serving each other

and in sacrificing for our common good

that we are finding our true life.”



A strong part of the Guilds History is the origins of its Logo. The kookaburra was adopted as the Guilds Logo from its inception and remains today.

The **kookaburra** was the mascot of the 7th Division of the 2nd AIF, commanded by Mrs Jessie Vasey's husband, Major-General Vasey.

More information on www.warwidows.org.au

DEBRIEF NEXT EDITION IS NOVEMBER—DECEMBER 2020

When submitting an article with photographs for publication in DEBRIEF, the photographs need to be emailed as an attachment in JPG or similar format. Also identify each photo i.e., Photo 1 – SA President laying a wreath; Photo 2 – Cenotaph gates etc.

Debrief Editor
debriefeditor@gmail.com