



DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

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Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

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SUMMER

2011

Vale Lieutenant General Sir Donald B Dunstan, AC, KBE, CBE

Lieutenant General Sir Donald Dunstan , AC, KBE, CBE passed away on October 15, 2011, in Adelaide.

Sir Donald was born in Murray Bridge, South Australia. He was a career officer in the Australian Army, serving in the Pacific theatre during World War II, in Korea, and Vietnam.

His father died of the injuries he had sustained during World War I when Donald was 13.

Later he entered the Royal Military College Duntroon. He pursued a highly distinguished 42-year career in the army.

After serving in Darwin and New Guinea during World War II, he was a staff officer in the Japan Occupation. In 1949, he then moved to Keswick Barracks in Adelaide.

In 1954-55 he served as military assistant to the commander-in-chief of the British Commonwealth Forces in Korea.

In Vietnam in 1968, he took over command of the 1st Australian Task Force at a critical moment during the Tet Offensive.

In 1971 and 1972 he was commander of Australian Forces in Vietnam, and concluded his career as chief of the army general staff.

It was a career recognised with many campaign medals and glittering awards, starting with an MBE in 1954. He was made a CBE in 1969, knighted in 1979 and made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1991.

SIR Donald served as governor from April 23, 1982 to February 5, 1991,

VVAA South Australia is saddened by the death of Sir Donald Dunstan as he had been their patron and was a special guest at the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on 15th October 2006.

Over the years Sir Donald would always make time to talk to veterans, he really was a man's man. Many of those who attended National Council meetings in Adelaide would have met him.

Sir Donald will be sadly missed by all who knew him.



Photo Courtesy of RARA SA

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NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT



With Xmas and New year fast approaching on behalf of the National Executive I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Xmas and a most prosperous and Happy New Year.

This year there have been some questions raised in relation to who can become members of the Association. This is

easily determined from the constitution displayed on our www.vvaa.org.au website.

Membership of the association has remained fairly static this year. Some States have had a slight decline while others have had slight increase. Perhaps in all areas we need to become more active and out there. There is also the need to let members know that the VVAA is very actively involved with Government in addressing matters of concern to the veteran community. At this time the Executive is awaiting an appointment to discuss matters that concern not only Vietnam veterans but also the ex and serving members of today. Aspects of the new Military Rehabilitation & Compensation Act (MRCA) that may well have bearing on claims of those of our vintage with sons and daughters serving today.

The main concerns we have with the MRCA are in two areas.

First is that for a disability with exactly the same impairment rating the amount of pension paid will depend on where the disability was caused. If it happened on Warlike Service, Afghanistan, one rate of pension is paid while if the same disability was caused by service in Australia a lower rate is paid. As with the Veterans Entitlement Act (VEA) there are the two burdens of proof, that is a reasonable hypothesis for Warlike and the balance of probability for Defence service within Australia, under MRCA the two rates of pension apply. That is on sliding scale up to 80 impairment points. Secondly when a person is assessed as unable to work and is granted weekly incapacity payments, like TPI, there is a differential in that if the person is on Commonwealth Superannuation his pension, incapacity payment, is offset against his super while if he was on State or private super it would not be. Surely this is discriminating against a person who continued to work for the Commonwealth.

The BEST Grant system is causing concern. There has been a dramatic cut to this funding that provided ESOs with the means to assist veterans with claims and welfare work. Ability to carry on this core business of the VVAA with out seeking assistance from other sources

is severely affected. Some States have appealed to their membership to be able to keep on with the work in most fields of their operations.

Another area of ongoing concern is erosion of the disability pension. In 2005 the VVAA raised the matter that disability pension had been eroded by \$67.69. Since then this sum, subject to the half yearly pension increases, has only been addressed by the one off increase of \$50 moved by Liberal Bruce Billson and put in payment during Alan Griffin's term as Minister for Vet Affairs in 2007 after Labour assumed Government. As is evident we have not yet caught up. This association continues to pursue the matter.

The financial constraints on Government at this time mean that there is little movement but we continue to raise these concerns.

At this time we have many members on the sick-list and we think of them daily. Some of it is because we are all getting to an age where this will be happening more frequently but it does not make it any easier. I wish all of them a full and speedy recovery.

Overall the association is doing well. Of course the work we were doing under the VEA for veterans of our vintage has practically now finished with very few new or update claims coming through. Now we are seeing more and more of the younger veterans. I hear stories of pension officers with years of experience under the VEA saying that they don't do claims under the MRCA. The problem there is that to have a claim accepted under the MRCA is exactly the same as the VEA the only difference is the payment end. Surely we need to get the younger veterans working with us to learn from our experience.

I take this opportunity to thank the Executive for their support this year. In particular I should also thank Kath for her continued effort through her health problems. All is now well and we continue the journey.

To all, keep active and enjoy life and the association.

Ron Coxon.

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NATIONAL SECRETARIES REPORT



During the National Council meeting in Adelaide on 22 October 2011 there was some discussion related to administration, in my report to the National Council I outline a number of points and I feel it is important that my attitude to

administration is clear.

I must confess that unlike many (and I understand their point of view) I believe that good administration is the key to any successful venture, this belief probably comes from my military background of 21 years service where I worked within guidelines and procedures that were almost set in concrete and to contravene these was often met with the severest of actions from my superiors.

Let us consider the alternative, if the Army did not have rules of engagement, set procedures that operate and are practiced regularly, set procedures for pay, leave etc.

If the Navy did not have rules of the sea, guidelines for everyday operation and set practiced procedures would they be effective?

If the Air Force did not comply with pre flight checks, inspection of aircraft and rules to be followed in take-off and landing procedures, would they be a more efficient and safe service?

In relation to the V.V.A.A. we have two documents that should keep us from missing important issues, they are the National Constitution supported by State Branch and Sub Branch Constitutions where necessary and the National Administrative Handbook, neither of these publications are perfect however they are living documents and subject to change and improvement.

To my mind whenever we ignore, or try and manipulate these guidelines to our administration we firstly leave ourselves open to error and omission and probably more importantly we have an effect on others within the association that makes them less effective.

To know that all administration within the association is operating to an agreed standard makes us more efficient and indicates a professional approach that reflect our military background.

Ken Foster
VVAA National Secretary

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Well we have finally achieved our goal of reaching membership of ninety for the year. Northern Territory membership is now ninety two. Another three of our members have reached 10 year continuous membership this now make thirteen members who have ten years continued service as members

We also have 23 members who have five years or more continuous membership.

As always Vietnam Veterans Day in the far north was a great success with the Vietnam Veterans contingent being cheered by the many local and interstate people who attended the ceremony. The main speech was given by Air Commodore Ken Watson, RAAF, Commander Northern Command. Around 33 books were placed in memory of those who lost their lives in Vietnam and also those who continue to suffer from their service. Books about the Vietnam conflict are donated to Territory schools to ensure our younger generation learns about the conflict and the effects it had on the Australian population as well as the men who served in it.

This year a wreath was placed for the soldiers who have not returned from Afghanistan at the cenotaph by Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Pearse, Commanding Officer 1 Combat Engineer Regiment.

This year as we have done for the past two years in the month of July members of the NT association manned an information stall at the Royal Darwin Show within the Defence Recruiting Area to handout information on the Vietnam Veterans Association, DVA and VVCS. This was a great success again with many inquires received not only from older veterans but many younger veterans and members their families.

As always Coral House is running well and continues to have maximum occupancy. Funding is still being used to improve the living conditions of the residents and to assist them to find more permanent accommodation and full time employment.

The long awaited Standing Operating Procedures have been implemented.

The last of the Rural Associations outdoor Veteran's get-togethers was held on Saturday 17th September. Once again this year's monthly BBQ's were a great success. We hosted many Veterans who were visiting the Top End, all of them will remember the hospitality we gave them and will hopefully return on their next visit.

Monthly meetings are still being held at Reg Hillier House which has undergone some large renovations thanks to the fund raising by members and grants that the Rural Sub Branch received.

Fund raising has been excellent this year, with members backing up each week selling raffle tickets at the various locations around Top End and working the many fund raising BBQ's at various sites around Darwin and the Rural area. Also worth a mention is the good work our members have been doing in support of the Noonamah Rodeo's.

VVAANT still remains determined to carry out our core business of helping our members and other veterans. Pension and Welfare work is still on the increase in our area and we are now seeing a greater increase in the areas of serving and ex-service men and women who are veterans from other conflicts

D.T.MEREDITH

President

QUEENSLAND

Hi from a sunny dry Qld. What a year we have had weather wise, what with floods and cyclones we have really taken a battering but we have survived and bounced back bigger and better than ever.

Qld's membership continues to grow ever so slowly. Yet again we have the situation where our State Secretary resigned but we are battling on. It is disappointing to hear that the CQVVAA branch appears to be ready to close the doors next year. We will do everything in our power to ensure it continues in some form. We have been in touch with the Sub branch and working toward a satisfactory outcome for all concerned. It appears as if the main problem here is no one stepping up to take on executive positions. It is also extremely disappointing to hear that the CQ Veterans Support Centre is also closing their doors obviously due to lack of funds.

We have had a very successful Vietnam Veterans Day here in Brisbane even though our numbers were down due to the 6 RAR Presentation parade at Enoggera. I had the pleasure of attending a couple of other Vietnam Veterans Day Services in Gympie and Bribie Island and I would like to congratulate all centres on their services and I would also like to point out it was very pleasing to see the involvement of youth.

We are currently working on the plan for next year obviously with the fact that next year is the fiftieth anniversary of our commitment to the Vietnam War. We are in communication with the AATTV, VVFA, RSL and the Qld Vietnamese community and looking at the possibility of having a combined dinner the night before we conduct our March, AATTV Leading, and service which may be on a different day than the 18th August. A date that has been suggested is approx. 2nd

October 2012. This date would coincide with the dedication and rededication of our national memorial.

To say that we were disappointed with the results of the last round of BEST funding would be an understatement. As far as we are concerned we believe that the future is looking pretty bleak and that the way ahead is to integrate or perish. The funding was reduced this year and it is going to be reduced even more next year.

Qld was very pleased with the letters that the National Executive wrote to government but we are disappointed in the responses whereby the government only stated what we already knew and failed to give us any hope of change. We were pleased to see that the

National Executive is continuing to follow up on these important issues and appear to be organising a face to face meeting with the PM advisers (obviously would have been much better with the PM herself) in relation to the fairer indexation of DFRB/DFRDB plus we are hopeful that we may be able to address the other problems raised in our letters.

We would like to congratulate Victoria for taking the initiative in preparing a paper on our future direction. We do not agree entirely with everything in it, but it has given us a start point at least. Qld has distributed this to all sub branches and have asked for feedback and we most probably will be having a meeting in the new- year. I would like to point out that we will not be closing the doors in 2015 which seems to be the rumour floating around, our youngest member is 12.

In closing I would like to point out that at the moment we have quite a few very pressing problems involving the veteran's community as a whole and I do not believe that we can afford to drop the ball at any time and we have to be very proactive and continue to fight for veteran's benefits and rights.

John Smith

State President

The National Executive wish all the best for the festive season ahead and may the new year be great for all. Keep up the good work and enjoy life.



TASMANIA

It is now the end of October and hard to believe that another year has slipped past barely noticed. Thankfully the Tasmanian weather is starting to warm and we remain optimistic that perhaps this year we will actually enjoy a summer as opposed to the two springs of 2010-11.

This past year has seen a small decline in membership numbers with several from among our ranks passing on, while others are seeking the warmer northern climes to escape the Tasmanian winters. Spiralling electricity costs and other State Government charges that are out of control are undoubtedly the major cause. A sad indictment of our times when the State which produces more clean energy from renewable sources than any other keeps raising its prices simply to stay in line with somewhere else. It is biting hard on those who can least afford it, and that includes a good proportion of our veteran community. As one of my elderly neighbours said recently *can we hurry this global warming thing along a bit because I can't afford the electricity to stay warm*. I tried to reassure him that Canberra has their finger on the pulse right now and the rapidly expanding carbon pollution cloud that is going to envelope us all shortly will keep everyone warm because of a new tax. I'm not sure that old Brian is convinced for some inexplicable reason.

Our Bush Retreat facilities at Interlacken remain a popular group destination for many veterans from both interstate and locally. The volume of guest traffic staying at the retreat has been steadily increasing making the Spring maintenance and renovations all the more critical. Everything is complete for those looking for something or somewhere different to go to over the summer holidays.

Illness is something that while we try our hardest to avoid does invariably strike and often in the most unexpected quarters. The time honoured philosophy of... *if I abuse my body long and hard enough it will never recognise the symptoms of sickness, therefore I will never be ill....* unfortunately at our age just doesn't quite cut it anymore. For those who have not availed themselves of the 'Heart Health' program you should do so, and for those who have - don't squander the effort by relapsing. I am hoping that our sub-branches will take hold of the walking groups concept not just for fitness but also from the perspective of camaraderie. Besides, why should the women have all the fun.

On the national scene the Tasmania Branch wishes Bob Elworthy a safe and successful surgical outcome and a speedy recovery, and also to Clive Mitchell-Taylor as he too recovers from surgery and prepares for the next stage of his treatment. Our thoughts and best wishes

are with you both and your families throughout these testing times.

In February of this year the Tasmania Branch was asked to administer the HMAS LEEUWIN Memorial Scholarships. The scholarships are an annual award of \$3000 each to a Naval Cadet from T.S. PERTH in Western Australia and T.S. TINGIRA in Victoria. I am pleased to announce that the inaugural scholarships for 2011 have been awarded to Cadet Petty Officer Thomas Runting of T.S. TINGIRA and Cadet Midshipman Kieran Benedetti of T.S. PERTH. Congratulations to both recipients.

Vietnam Veterans Day Commemorations in Hobart marking the Role of the RAN in Vietnam were well attended and appreciated by all. The march to the Hobart Cenotaph although held in cool and blustery conditions, was proudly led by the most highly decorated Vietnam Veteran in Tasmania, Andy Perry.

The Tasmania Branch also wishes to acknowledge the



most generous and kind contributions of RADM Ken Doolan towards ensuring the success of our event. Following the last minute withdrawal of VADM David Leach who was readmitted to hospital with a recurring golden staph infection, Ken immediately agreed to step up to the plate delivering two highly moving and informative speeches in the style he is well known and admired for. Ken our sincere thanks and appreciation.





To all our veteran friends and their families I wish each and everyone a very happy and safe Christmas. If you are travelling drive safely to come home and may 2012 be a successful, healthy and peaceful year for all.

Warwick Luttrell
State President

DVA Closure times

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will close at 4.45 pm on Friday 23 December 2011 and will reopen on Monday 2 January 2012 at 8.30am.

Key services will still be available during the shutdown including:

- **Crisis counselling** - call 1800 011 046.
- **Transport** - if transport is not booked before the shutdown, it should be paid up-front and a reimbursement sought when DVA reopens.
- **Hospital admissions** - doctors can admit DVA patients into hospital and, if required, request admissions approval when DVA reopens.

Please note that these times are applicable nationally.

VVCS Tasmania HEALTH & WELL BEING PROGRAMS 2012

Partners Self Care
Heart Health
Stepping Out
Veterans Stress Management
Residential Life Style Programs
Building Better Relationships
Woodwork
Yoga for Stress Management
Communication and Conflict Resolution

Contact VVCS on 1800 011 046 for more details about programs Dates still to be determined for some groups

See the website for details of group content and dates

[www.dva.gov.au/
health_and_wellbeing/
health_programs/vvcs](http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/vvcs)

Traffic Control at East Yolla Tasmania

Little wonder that the Tasmanian Government is struggling for cash these days as it shifts emphasis from revenue raising onto actual road safety measures while at the same time creating a new employment opportunity for the local self appointed Marshal who incidentally is a retired former SAS trooper and Viet Vet.



VICTORIA

The Branch has been largely pre-occupied in recent times coming to terms with the latest BEST funding offer, and how we might be able to work within the financial constraints visited upon the Regional Veterans Centre Project by the department. Victoria submitted a paper outlining the ramifications of the reduction in BEST funding to the National Executive.

Fundamentally, the Victorian Regional Veterans Centre Project as we now know it is dead. Already work has commenced on the amalgamation of two veteran centres, more amalgamations and closures will surely follow. Renewal of employment contracts for salaried administrative staff has been put on hold; and it is clear that there will have to be a significant reduction in the number of paid employees and significant changes to their terms of employment given that funding has been cut by up to 70% in some areas and the prospect of relief funding is remote. Given that the Victorian model was held up as the preferred way of doing business, this outcome is extremely disappointing.

Against this backdrop, and the resultant impact on the stress and morale levels of the volunteer workers in the veteran centres, we have managed to continue to keep the branch on a relatively even keel. However, the Government BEST offer has left many of our volunteer force disillusioned and pondering their on-going commitment-this can only be to the detriment of all veterans and their families.

The first draft of our Branch Closure Plan "*Under our own Control*" has been released to the membership for comment and feedback. It has been an interesting exercise to arrive at this milestone, and the draft paper contains a number of principles that the membership requires adherence to during the formulation and implementation of the plan. The plan does not indicate a time frame for implementation or completion, but points to a contraction of the branch, when and if key indicators called "*triggers*" are activated. More work is needed to flesh out the plan, however we are satisfied that we have established an agreed and readily understood framework of principles from which to work.

Our annual badge week was again successful with in excess of \$75000 being raised across the state. The introduction of a standardised range of badges, based on the Long Tan Cross, has helped to grow the Branch image, and educate purchasers who are now becoming familiar with the Long Tan badge range, in much the same way as we are all familiar with the RSL ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day products. We have also permitted sub-branches to introduce other products for sale as an acknowledgement of the diverse buyer market that we need to appeal to. One such example is a rubberised bracelet, in camouflage colouring and

bearing the words "*Vietnam Veterans Welfare*" which has proven to be particularly popular with the younger generation.

The first instalment of our increased capitations (\$1 per head) has been paid to the museum. This has proven to be a quite painless way of further supporting the museum, with the added advantage that the museum can budget on the payments. The museum will shortly take delivery of the long awaited Huey helicopter, has recently obtained a Wessex helicopter from Nowra and has placed a bid for an M2A2 howitzer. The second hangar is complete, apart from some floor concreting and the Canberra bomber has been largely disassembled for refurbishment.

Vietnam Veterans Day 2011 was again a successful event, with the new Victorian Premier and new Victorian Minister for Veterans Affairs attending. It was pleasing to hear the Premier pledge the on-going support of his Government to Victorian Veterans, and in particular his desire to support and be involved in our 2012 commemorations.

Preliminary planning for 2012 has commenced with identification of key activities and dates. The 2012 activities will focus on the 50th anniversary of the first deployment of Australian servicemen to Vietnam, commencing with a VetRide's "*Tour of Duty*" bike ride from Echuca to Melton in March. A thanksgiving service in St Pauls Cathedral Melbourne is planned to coincide with the date of the deployment in 1966. A civic reception, black tie dinner, Vietnam Veterans race meeting, concert, radio broadcasts from the museum and a specifically themed Museum Day in November are planned. The Melbourne ANZAC Day Organising committee has been requested to permit the Vietnam Veteran contingent to lead the ANZAC Day parade in recognition of the 50th anniversary.

Planning for a large VV Day activity including bussing in veterans from across the state and a gunfire breakfast in the grounds of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance is underway. We have also asked the Shrine Trustees to permit the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club to parade on the Shrine forecourt at the start of the march.

Planning for the VVAA National AGM in Geelong is well advanced, and it too will be highlighted to the media as an integral part of our 2012 activities. Initial responses from the Geelong City Council have been favourable

A disturbing trend relating to "sleepers" members has been identified and action put in place to address the matter. Basically the problem is that "sleepers" pay their subs and for all sorts of reasons then take no further part in sub-branch activities. As a result, they tend to slip off the radar, and we have experienced a number

situations where “sleepers” have fallen seriously ill or hit hard times without the sub-branch having visibility of the problem. It seems such a simple welfare related matter that should not occur, so we have embarked on a program to have every member of every sub-branch contacted either personally or by phone in the lead up to Christmas, and to instigate simple welfare follow up plans across the state.

Our membership is holding up strongly, despite an alarming increase in deaths this year, and we are looking towards next year as an opportunity to gain new members through our planned PR efforts to support the 50th anniversary commemorations.

I would like to finish off by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy 2012.

Bob Elworthy
State President



Jim Coghlan, Acting State President Vic receiving a cheque for \$5000 from Richard Williams State President WA.

Caretaker Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat

The caretakers position at Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat at Dareton NSW will become vacant in March 2012. Anyone interested can contact the Retreat at rdveteransretreat@bigpond.com.

Ideally it is a husband and wife position for a minimum 12 months.

Tasks include keeping gardens and lawns neat and tidy, taking bookings, keeping bookwork up to date, keeping toilets and club room clean and tidy. For this you stay in your caravan free of charge.

It is an ideal opportunity for nomadic persons to save, on fuel and park fees, ready for your next trip.

Barry Langan
Caretaker.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

As 2011 draws to a close, It has been an indifferent year for the W.A. State Branch. While we have gained some new members, the overall membership numbers have declined. Maintaining a State Executive, is an ongoing problem, with the usual few doing their best to keep the wheels on and turning.

The Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Day Service was held at the Kings Park Vietnam Memorial on Sunday the 14th of August. While the weather looked threatening, the rain stayed away. The 2011 Service was dedicated to the RAN, recognising their support efforts, during Australia's commitment to South Vietnam. The recently appointed, W.A. Governor, Mr Malcolm McCusker. QC, AO and Mrs McCusker attended. Capt. Brett Dowsing, RAN, a Vietnam Veteran and current serving navy officer, delivered the Memorial Day Address.

On Vietnam Veterans Day, the now customary visit to 39 grave sites, of the 52 Western Australian soldiers killed in South Vietnam, the grave sites are located within the Perth War Cemetery and adjoining Karra-katta Cemetery. The remaining grave sites are at various country locations throughout W.A.

A Memorial Service was held at the City of Stirling, at 2.00pm on the 18th, conducted by the Naval Association. The Memorial at the City of Stirling, was the first Vietnam Memorial erected in W.A. and was used for our Long Tan Day Services, in the 1980's, prior to the State Vietnam Memorial being erected in Kings Park.

The Western Australian State Branch has made a \$5000.00 donation to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum. The donation was made using funds from the Phillip Pascoe Bequest. Phillip Pascoe, was a former 1RAR veteran. *See pic left*

The V.V.A.A. W.A. along with the Friends of the Cottage, have held 4 Open Days at Anzac Cottage during 2011, being in February, the anniversary of the building of the Cottage in 1916, Anzac Day, Vietnam Veterans Day and to coincide with Remembrance Day.

The annual Back to the Bush reunion at Bruce Rock, was held from the 31st of October until the 6th of November, at this time i have had no official report on the 2011 event. Due to a lack of willing volunteers, the V.V.A.A. W.A. was not represented at this year's reunion.

It is now time to start looking to 2012, the AGM and a calendar of events for the year.

On behalf of the Western Australian State Branch, i take this opportunity to wish all V.V.A.A. members a Merry and Safe Xmas and New Year festive season.

Richard Williams.
State President.

IT WAS GROUND HOG DAY.

By Bob St John

On Wednesday, the 2nd of November 2011, I donned my New Flight Suit, which was a considerably larger size than the one I used on the Caribou Transport for my last flight with number 38 Squadron. I took the long intercom lead and positioned myself outboard of the starboard engine for the engine start of A4-234 for its trip from Oakey in Queensland to Illawarra regional airport, south of Wollongong NSW, the home of the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS). I was a Loadmaster again.

When The Caribous were retired from airforce service in 2009 they were put out to graze in a paddock in the Army Base at Oakey. Two years later HARS was more than successful in its bid to secure a Caribou to keep in flying condition, we ended up with two Caribous.

I had been working at HARS for about three years, mainly building P-38 Lightning rudders and carrying out corrosion control on a P2V-7 Neptune. HARS is well able to look after the Caribous and is a flying museum. The heavy metal we fly starts with our flagship, the Lockheed Super Constellation, closely followed by 2 ex-RAAF C-47 Dakotas, 3 P2V-7 Neptune's, a DC-4 and a PBY Catalina, together with a host of smaller aircraft, mainly piston driven types. If you are ever down our way please drop by and do the tour of our facilities, you won't be disappointed.



I was fortunate enough to operate the flight as the Loadmaster on 234. It sort of was "ground hog day" for me as it has been 43 years since I left 38 Squadron.
Bob St John

Once we had the green light from the government that the aircraft were ours we set about planning their removal from Oakey to Albion Park. This was pure gold for me as I was a Loadmaster with 38 Squadron and was in Vietnam with **RAAF Transport flight Vietnam**.

There are two other Vietnam Veterans in HARS, Mike who was an Army Signaller and Trevor who was an Airframe Fitter in 38 and **35 Squadron** in Vietnam.

The Oakey crew arrived at the aircraft on the Monday morning and by 8.00am on the Thursday, most of the servicing was complete and the retraction test on both aircraft had been carried out. By Saturday morning engine runs had been completed on A4-210 and she was ready for her trip to her new home. We had to wait until Wednesday for A4-234 to get going because of the lack of suitable crew. Pity, it would have been great for them both to fly back together.

Going back in time, in late 1963 I was working as a "flying spanner" on P2V5 Neptune's at Richmond. Being inherently lazy, I much preferred to pick up my tool box and board a Neptune with my crew and go looking for submarines off the coast. The RAAF put out a notice asking for volunteers from airframe and engine trades to train as Caribou Loadmasters. I had grown very used to this flying racket, no more dirty hands or greasy overalls for me, flying was the way to go.

I was successful with my application and joined number 38 Squadron in January 1964. I had absolutely no idea what a caribou looked like or what it did, all I knew is that I would keep myself in the air, at least for the next three years.

In April 1964, while I was training on the C-47 Dakota, the first three Caribous arrived at Richmond NSW. My first impression of the aircraft was that it looked very ungainly but I came to love being with it and I can say that saved my bacon on a number of occasions in Vietnam.

Shortly after that I was on my way to Toronto, Canada to pick up a flight of three aircraft for the return to Australia. Little did know what was coming up a couple of months later.

Six weeks after leaving Toronto the three aircraft finally arrived in Butterworth, Malaysia expecting to "hang a right" and head for Australia, but we were told that we were heading for a place called Vung Tau in a place called Vietnam. I had no idea where that was or how long we were going to stay there, so we "hung a left" and headed into the unknown.

They say that first impressions are always the best. My first impression of Vung Tau was that it was great from the air but on the ground it was a hot, dusty, dirty, smelly place with a lot a yanks. The three aircraft from the third ferry flight were there together with a nucleus of 38 Squadron troops who were now in a unit called **RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV)**. We were now aware that there was a shooting war going on and under no circumstances were we to go flying "in country" so the next morning we three Loadmasters from !

the fourth ferry flight turned up at the air base dressed in our flying suits, were issued with our parachutes and a 45 calibre pistol. Both of mine went under the seats as I didn't want to shoot myself in the foot.

Off we went to see what this war was all about. The Loaders at Saigon airport were surprised when not one but four loadmasters emerged for the Caribou at the start of our "round the Delta" trip. We were quickly herded out of Vung Tau the next morning

Back in Australia I set about leaning the technical side of the aircraft in earnest, readying myself for the exciting prospect of going to war and doing a bit of shooting. Having now seen the war in person I was fully aware of what I was getting myself into but I wanted to fly and now I would have to pay my penance.

Bad things began to happen with the aircraft in Vietnam. In October 1964, A4-185 fell down a drain cut across a dirt runway and filled with water. The aircraft was written off as unrecoverable as the strip it crashed on was not secure at night and it would take too long to repair enough to fly out. So, RTFV was down to five aircraft. This was good for the crews as there were only six which included the Commanding Officer and the Loadmaster Leader, so everyone flew

Early in 1965 A4-173 ran off the runway at the southernmost airfield of Haiyen, tearing the right hand main gear off. RTFV was now down to four aircraft. 38 Squadron decided to send one of its aircraft up to replace the lost aircraft. A4-210 was chosen and as I was close to going to Vietnam, I won the Jersey. So in March 1965 I set off to Vung Tau via Perth, Cocos Island, Butterworth and on to Vung Tau. I was to take over the position as the sergeant Loadmaster leader. During my time in Vietnam I had some good times, some hairy times and frightening times. The closest that I came to becoming a statistic of the war was when a 50 calibre round entered the aircraft through the floor, went up through the esky I was sitting on, tore a neat hole in my flying suit and ended up in the HF set. I still have the bullet in my draw at home as a reminder of what war is all about..

Most aircraft that flew in the Special Forces areas that we inhabited were commonly called "mortar bait". That is what happened to the aircraft that I delivered to Vung Tau, from the factory. A4-193 was mortared shortly after landing and the crew were very lucky to escape with their lives. I can see them now trying to explain to the CO "sorry Sir but we lost your aeroplane!"

In February 1966 I had had enough of the war and it was time for me to head home. I flew 1150 missions for 645 hours in my time in country, that's enough!

But what about the aircraft? In 1967 I was in Millingimbi for a few months on an army survey. As a "city Kanaka" and one who is terrified of snakes I had been there too long so I went to Darwin to bum a lift home. A4-210 was on the tarmac having crashed and been repaired but it refused to fly straight and level so it was sent home in disgrace for refusing to "straighten up and fly right." This aircraft now resides in splendour in the HARS hanger and will be the first to fly on the civil register as VH-ABA. A4-234, another Vietnam veteran will follow soon after as VH-ABB. Both aircraft have to undergo a major servicing before resuming their flying careers.

It won't be long before you will see both aircraft once again gracing the sky at air shows around Australia. If you see them on the ground come up and say hello. HARS hopes that both aircraft will be flying for many years to come.

But what about the "ground hog day" bit? 34 years after leaving 38 Squadron to join 37 Squadron as a C-130 Flight Engineer, I stood by that Starboard engine as it coughed into life. With the second engine started, I leapt aboard the ramp like a 20 year old! (I do lie a lot) or as agile as my 70 year old knees would let me, and set off to the A4-234's new home at Albion Park. Never, in my wildest dreams, did I think that I would ever become a Loadmaster on a Caribou again...It was "Ground Hog Day".

After 10,000 hours on the Boeing 747, I had forgotten how bouncy these little aeroplanes can get. We were met at HARS by a large welcoming committee and I had the RTFV/35 Squadron Association flag out of the top hatch.

If you are the area of Albion Park, south of Wollongong, drop in and say hello, I will give you a cook's tour of the aircraft.

Bob St John EX and current Caribou Loadmaster.



The Vietnamese Platypus by Warwick Luttrell

As many other Australians have done a few years ago Bob Greer took time out to holiday in and discover Vietnam as a country. It was while in Hanoi visiting the Hoa Lo Prison Museum that Bob's interest in the French Indo China war began to develop. A further four more visits after his 2001 introduction saw him resigning his job and embarking on a nine month study trip retracing the post WWII paths and fields of conflict between the French and Vietnamese. These are located in the northern half of Vietnam.

Like many of us who have travelled extensively throughout Vietnam, Bob has been affected by the grinding poverty that many of the indigenous Vietnamese still endure and has decided to do something about it. This has led to the foundation of Platypus Inc. Its charter is to raise funds enabling kids to get a schooling that would otherwise be unaffordable for them. Platypus seeks not only to raise funds, but to win friends, and the following story from Bob's personal experience demonstrates how little it takes to substantially alter the life direction of some.

Bob has come up with a novel way of raising funds which will suit the more adventurous of us and is called *The French War Challenge*. Its open to all. A limited number of motorcycle riders will have the opportunity to enjoy 16 very special days of motorcycling around North Vietnam following the trail of the French Vietnam War of 1944-1956. For further details contact Bob directly on 0421633145, he will be delighted to talk to anyone who has a question.

The Story of Mr Dong

Upon reaching my hotel in Hue during my third visit to Vietnam, I was approached by a dignified man of perhaps 50 years who offered his services as a cyclo (three-wheel cycle) guide for the day. He had excellent English, and knew his city intimately, so after a fine day we dined together.

I learned that like almost all operators around Vietnam, he rented his machine. His average earnings were about \$5, of which \$2 went to the owner of the vehicle by way of a rental that could buy 3 cyclos a year.

He knew that, of course, but he did not have the \$200 capital required to buy his own machine. He was working on it, and told me proudly that he had \$70 saved up. It would have been more, but bad floods the year before had cost him his house. However, he said, his family had been lucky as they all survived – a typical Vietnamese attitude to disaster.

When I came across him the next day, having had a few hours to mull over what he had told me, I told him I would wire him \$130 (my funds were running low as I was self-funding my research) so that he could buy his cyclo. In return he would someday help a stranger. We shook hands and parted company.

A year later, during a follow-up trip to Hue, I found him on his cyclo. It was now sprayed a splendid

metallic purple, and sported a new soft seat and chrome mudguards. Mr Dong was a very happy man. His small business was doing fine, but more importantly, he had of course saved \$2 per day for the previous year, which plucked his family out of the poverty trap they had been caught up in.

During my last visit to Vietnam the following year, I found him astride a small motorcycle. He and his brother-in-law had pooled resources. His successful cyclo business had enabled them to raise money for the motorcycle, and they now alternate between vehicles. Brother-in-law's 2 children are assured of education also, and of course his family is now also out of the poverty trap. The \$130 was worth \$750 a year to him in rental savings alone but had brought 2 families financial independence and freedom.

Friends had suggested that Mr Dong might gamble or drink away the money, but he just did not look the type. I had an idea by then of just how deeply the commitment to family runs amongst the Vietnamese, and was confident the money would be put to good use. That was how I learnt you can change 7 lives or more in a major way for \$130.

The old adage about teaching someone how to fish rather than buying him a meal was uppermost in my mind when I first dined with Mr Dong and I am delighted at the successful outcome. The Viet Platypus seeks to help, not with lessons in fishing, but to supply the "fishing rods" that are in desperately short supply. The most effective rod one can offer is education.

When you hand an Annamese a spark plug, he may build a car around it. Or he may pass it on to his wife, who will build a motor scooter for family use in her spare time. Platypus wants to be in the business of spark plug supply.

Bob Greer

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

By Betty Blonde

Last year I replaced all the windows in my house with that expensive double-pane energy efficient kind, and today I got a call from the contractor who installed them. He was complaining that while the work had been completed more than one year ago I still hadn't paid for them.

Helloooooo,.....just because I'm blonde doesn't mean that I'm stupid, so I told him what his fast talking sales guy had said to me last year, that in ONE YEAR these windows would pay for themselves! Hellooo, it's been a year! I told him. There was only silence on the line then he hung up and has never called back. Bet he felt like a goose.

I wish I had good news for you, the Vietnam Veterans as a whole are getting older, slower and some are finding what they do, day to day is getting harder. Up here in the Tropics it is no different to anywhere else. You'd think with all the sunshine we would be fighting fit.

Next year 2012 will probably see the end of the CQVVAA. We can't get a replacement for our very long standing Secretary Phil Aplin (Ex 1RAR) and his also very long standing wife and Treasurer, Pauline Aplin.

Phil & Pauline have been doing the job for 16 years and it is time to retire. Thank you, to both of you for keeping the members informed, for looking after the catering at BBQ / Meetings and organising 16 Christmas Parties, it was a big job well done.

Some of us are still finding the benefit of exercise. Remember "Heart Safe", it started me at the Gym in 1997 thereabouts and I'm still at the GoodLife Gym. Remember "Just Walk It" with the Heart Foundation, I was a Walk Organiser in 1997 and I'm still walking. What I'm getting at is the more you exercise, you can be assured of more heart beats. I was taught by my father a WW2 Veteran, to never give up, keep putting one foot in front of the other.

All Veterans can go to the Gym for one year all expenses paid by DVA, after that why give up? For the little it costs the benefits are huge.

Both John Elson (ex 8 RAR) Vice President CQVVAA and I have been members of U3A Rockhampton & District Inc for the last 5 years. This year John became President and has had a hard but rewarding year. The membership stands at 366 and John's leadership skills have come to the front. I am a tutor at a computer group and look after the Publicity and part of that was to develop a web site.

We are on the web at

<http://www.u3arockhampton.org.au> and generally the U3A movement is a great way to share experience, life skills and meet new people.

The CQVVAA has met on and off every two months, but with members away and unwell we have had small numbers in attendance.

Although the group here in Rockhampton will close, I will continue to source information and guide Veterans toward help. To do this I'll have to become a member of a Brisbane group.

Talking about help and this is serious; recently the CQVSC Inc (Central Queensland Veteran Center – Pensions & Advocacy) held a special meeting to fold up. CQVVAA were supporters of this organisation. BEST funding doesn't cover all the costs and after being **rejected by the RSL Qld** for much needed funding support, next year Veteran Support will be very limited to non-existent in this area.

Merry Christmas and a Happy SAFE New Year

Nick Quigley OAM

VVAA NSW

Vale Mr Chris Church.

Chris saw service in Vietnam on HMAS Melbourne & HMAS Perth 1966-68.

He served as Secretary of the St Marys Outpost between 2005-2007; after arriving here around 2003, he was also a member of the VVF Granville and kept that membership 'live' although his main focus was at the 'Train'.

He was also the Public Officer during his time as Secretary.

He represented the 'Train' at the State Meetings during his tenure as Secretary, and he was a great spokesperson on that committee, never afraid to say his piece.

Chris became quite ill with cancer a couple of years ago which I understand was a recurrence of a previous cancer, and although he was being treated with Chemo he continued to act as Assistant Treasurer continuously right up until the day he passed away.

Chris was a very private person and never really let on how sick he was, he was not a person to worry others with his ailments.

Chris' passing was very sudden, even though we all knew he was not well, he was working at the 'Train' Monday & Tuesday 21/22 Nov and died early on Wednesday morning 23rd Nov.

Vale Mr Paolo Angelo DOD 26/9/11

Served with 2nd Battalion Vietnam 70-71

Pam Forsdike OAM

VVAA NSW Secretary

ACT

With November looming and the realisation that yet another year is coming to a close, the ACT Branch can look back on 2011 as a year of very mixed fortunes and promise of major changes in 2012.

High on the ACT agenda now is the establishment of a Veterans' Centre in geographically central Canberra. While this project has been uppermost in the minds of several ESOs for many years, it floundered for want of availability and affordability of suitable premises as well as opposition from certain parties. Pressure in the form of drastically reduced BEST funding and less than subtle hints from Government for a pooling of resources has apparently convinced those previously opposed to a joint venture to rethink that opposition. The ACT KOC has now undertaken to project manage the first stages of establishing the long overdue joint Veterans' Centre.

Pensions' activity is in decline with no reported referrals from the normal sources for some considerable time. While this situation provides a respite from this sometimes demanding element of our core business, we note the workload in other ESOs increasing. We are yet to ascertain the reasons for this situation.

ACT members will be asked to nominate for the committee positions that will become vacant at the AGM.

This will be scheduled for a date as soon as the audited books are available. Also on the agenda will be constitutional amendments deemed necessary by changing circumstances and pressures from influences outside the ACT Branch.

Vietnam Veterans' Day was, despite the damp and freezing conditions, a resounding success. The Service was well attended with the congregation estimated at some 350. The organising committee acceded to a Vice-Regal request to move the start time forward to 10:30hrs to enable Her Excellency and Mr Bryce to attend the Service at the National Memorial and get to Ennoger for the 6RAR Trooping the Colour, now starting in the afternoon. Erstwhile Repatriation Commissioner Bill Rolfe delivered the key note address after the Prime Minister had spoken on behalf of the Australian people. Official guests included ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher, US Ambassador Jeffery Bleich, newly appointed NZ High Commissioner Martyn Dunne, leader of the opposition Tony Abbott, DVA Secretary Ian Campbell, erstwhile GG Michael Jeffery as well as elected members of both levels of Government in the National Capital. Following the Service a good number of attendees enjoyed the traditional camaraderie afternoon. With our usual venue the Canberra Services Club now demolished after the catastrophic April fire, this event was kindly hosted by the Harmonie Club.

We understand the iconic Canberra Services Club destroyed by fire in April will be part of a multi storied structure designed to accommodate the licensed club premises, and to provide space for ESO tenants as well as a variety of professional tenants. These, such as medical, dental or perhaps legal, hopefully, will in some way service the ESO community. There is also talk of the building accommodating ACT sporting groups with a close association to the adjacent Manuka oval. Any hopes of the "Old Girl" being resurrected using modern materials have now been dashed by the club president, Matthew Harvey. Mr Harvey stated that to rebuild in the style and form of the fire destroyed building was to condemn the Club to a slow economic demise. Thus, that beautiful old white building will remain just an extremely fond memory for several generations who held the Services Club near and dear to their hearts.

In the last report we mentioned the ACT Government had begun the process of forming a Chief Minister's Veterans' Advisory Council. ACT President Pete Ryan accepted an invitation to sit on this very important local panel. To date the panel has begun considering the process of how to appropriately commemorate the centenary of ANZAC as well as raising with the Government a series of issues of concern to the local Veterans' community.

Many of these are also issues in other jurisdictions and include the provision of accommodation suitable for younger mental health patients. Another is the refurbishment of Veterans' Park, a designated open space area in the city that contains, among others, the ASASR memorial.

An important addition to Veterans' Park is scheduled for installation in February 2012. This will be the installation of a Veteran themed sculpture by the same artist who created the ACT Memorial. The design for the Veterans' Park sculpture was approved some time ago by a committee of interested parties. VVAA ACT was represented by Pete Ryan. At the recent Chief Minister's Veterans' Advisory Council meeting, members opined that the sculpture, by virtue of its design, should be reclassified as a Memorial and be properly dedicated as such. This suggestion was strongly supported by the other Council members. The Government consideration was for installation as a piece of "public art".

In a now all too familiar occurrence vandals damaged the ACT Memorial recently. Once again the culprits attacked the glass globe depicting the areas in which local men and women have served. The ACT Government reported to the Chief Minister's Veterans' Advisory Council of consultations with the sculptor or ways of making the Memorial less vulnerable to these senseless attacks.

With the festive season now less than two months away, we in the ACT wish our fellow members all the best for them and theirs and look forward necessary changes and to the VVAA being an effective force for the members in 2012.

Pete Ryan
State President

Pete Ryan
State President

When the door to happiness closes, another opens,
But often times we look so long at the
closed door that we don't see the one,
which has been opened for us.

A Cruel Ruthless Bitch Named War

Was it so long ago when we seemed immortal and soldiered together
 Sent to train at Canungra in all sorts of miserable weather
 Ambushing, attacking and defending by day and by night
 Being toughened up by experts and learning how to fight
 Running, jumping, shooting, yelling and always trying to be best
 Preparing for Vietnam which would be our ultimate test

Then came the time, from our shores we did leave
 Were we really that young, so innocent, so naïve?
 Soon we were in an arena of death for the very first time
 Fleeting shadows, bunker systems, paddy fields and lots of mines
 Tired, thirsty, hungry, filthy, stumbling and tangled in wait- a-while vines
 An urgent jargon of “fire mission”, “bush ranger”, “dustoff” and other call signs

Always the curses and the wry jokes when there was bad news
 The constant yarns of when we went home and what we would do
 The taunts, the jibes at those other units was all part of the rare fun
 Seeking news of footy finals and which horse in the Melbourne Cup had won
 The hovering chopper, the wounded and dead lifted and a final goodbye
 Then back to the task at hand and no time to cry

Arriving back in Oz close to midnight and hustled away
 Told not to wear uniform on leave forever and a day
 Returning to a familiar city but finding a strange new race
 Two legged sheep in cloth walking the streets at busy pace
 Yesterday’s cheers now converted to glares and “why did you go?”
 Noisy chanting protests and VC flags being waved to and fro

Now in today’s dawn, the silence is broken and the bugle does call
 Its mournful moving sound is heard by all
 Beyond the sea of mourning faces I see them once more
 Ghostly images of youth never to return to their beloved shore
 Weary, panting, going forward into certain danger to have another go
 Few outside the brotherhood would understand what made them so

As the parade ends, I hate to admit it but after so many years, I’m old
 Certainly much wiser and definitely not bold
 Thankful to have been so fortunate for such a long life
 Unlike dear comrades who perished so young in times of terrible strife
 I know that tonight in restless sleep I’ll hear the night birds shriek and cry
 A curse on that cruel ruthless bitch called war; dear God; why oh why
 George Mansford©June 2011

The Nomad.

Some medal ribbons from Long Tan,
 a four-wheel drive and a caravan;
 his roaming travels never cease
 though all he seeks is quiet and peace.
 His hair is long and mainly grey,
 he takes prescriptions every day.
 If you try to have a chat with him,
 he sits there with a face that's grim.
 He listens quiet to what you say,
 but you know his mind is far away.
 He wasn't always sad like that,
 he used to smile and laugh and chat;
 used to grin and be upbeat -
 till he got booed in Flinders Street,
 when. Marching with his cobbles there -
 he saw his own folk didn't care!

He'd done what he was told to do,
 no carry-on or ballyhoo;
 he hadn't asked to be sent there;
 he simply went to do his share;
 but some times he can still see scenes
 of bombs, and flares, and jungle greens -
 he lost five hundred mates up there,
 his hair now grey that once was fair;
 his brow more creased, his face more lined,
 he tries to think of happy times,
 but happy times have passed him by,
 and now he quietly sits and cries.
 His wife has tried to comfort him;
 she gets his pills and other things,
 then while he's lying there asleep -
 she sneaks outside to have a weep.

Instead of honour he deserved
 from this great country that he served,
 all he got then were snarls and curses;
 the thing that made it really worse is
 the Government that sent him there
 should be so thoughtless, so unfair,
 to dump him in his hour of need -
 as change in politics decreed!
 So when you see that caravan,
 with medal ribbons from Vietnam,
 then show that man some deep respect,
 not ignorance or cruel neglect,
 for he deserves your admiration,
 and grateful thanks from this – his Nation!

Copyright – Paul Bownas, 2005

The last Vietnam victim

By Terry Brown—Herald Sun



Mick Berrigan had served in Vietnam for seven months when he suffered a catastrophic head wound. *Source: Herald Sun*

MICK Berrigan went to war in 1967 - a bright spark who loved a drink and the girls. The shell of a man who came back injured never recovered from his private hell.

PRIVATE Mick Berrigan died from combat injuries last Sunday and was buried on Thursday.

There weren't any politicians there, or news cameras, because death didn't come swiftly.

It ate at him for 44 years, tore at his body and soul and drove his parents, Rosemary and Gerald, to an early grave.

The artillery shell shrapnel that hit him, so-called friendly fire, took the best part of his life in Vietnam, and then took its time with the rest.

When soldiers die on the battlefield, they are said to have made the ultimate sacrifice.

To live on in pain, anger and confusion as a brain injury progressively destroys you and everybody you love, is worse than that.

Comrades count Mick as an Australian combat casualty of the Vietnam War, as much as any of the official 500 fallen.

They think, dead at 66, he may be the last.

"We commemorate the dead but we forget about the wounded," unofficial 7th Battalion historian Mike O'Brien says bitterly.

And Mick's younger brother Chris, who has spent most of his life watching his brother's cruel decline, says there are worse things than a battlefield death.

"If you're killed outright, there's traumatic suffering and terrible sadness. But the terrible sadness goes away eventually, doesn't it?" Chris says.

"I think this was worse than what they usually call the ultimate sacrifice."

In 1967, while the rest of the world embraced flower power and the Beatles sang that love was all you need, Mick Berrigan, the fourth of eight kids, went to war.

He was smart, with a year of Melbourne University law under his belt, and headstrong.

He liked a beer a little too much, liked to chase girls at South Side Six in Moorabbin, and took a gap year from uni to build a bankroll for the rest of his course.

When the call-up came for national service, Mick was up for the pay and the adventure.

He landed in Vietnam in April 1967 and took a hit in November ahead of an attack on a Viet Cong camp 1km east of Nui Toc Tien.

Australian guns were called in to soften up the camp and five of the six shells hit.

The other exploded against a tree 50m from Pte Berrigan and shrapnel from it tore through his skull and his brain.

"We couldn't keep him quiet," a Digger mate of Mick's wrote in a diary.

"We couldn't keep him quiet," a Digger mate of Mick's wrote in a diary.

"We gave him dose after dose of morphine. We believed we had no alternative. We were close to the enemy and had to keep him quiet."

But the story didn't stop there. Mick died and was resuscitated. His mother was flown to Vietnam to say her goodbyes to her comatose son, but he was strong and fit and lived.

"Operating on his skull, they had to remove fragments that were blown into his brain. Then they patched him up," Chris says.

"I remember him in bed at Heidelberg (Repatriation Hospital) and he looked remarkably fit and very, very tanned, brown as a berry.

"He was already paralysed, flat in bed and he couldn't turn to one side. His speech was slurred already, but he knew people."

With calipers and a four-pronged walking stick, somehow the hospital got Mick on his feet and home.

"There was a time when he was at home and we were living in East Malvern when he used to walk up to the front gate, walk 100m down the street," Chris says.

But it was a false dawn.

"There was a great hopefulness that he would improve. That changed into 'nothing's happening', and that changed into a feeling of hopelessness, awful for any family," Chris says.

Mick suffered seizures and each one took a part of him away. His short-term memory was shot and his useless limbs, once so strong, grew twisted.

"It's like he's been a 22-year-old soldier all his life. In that sense he was stuck in time," Chris says, but adds: "Whatever brain damage there was, he did have some episodes of clarity and deep insights. We wondered how much he knew."

In an earlier war, Mick would have died. A later one, and he would have caught medical advances and better treatment.

As it was, his life became a round of psychiatric hospitals, frustrated outbursts and harsh drugs to bomb him out.

The family's fight for the best for Mick was unending.

And also, so bittersweet, there were times when he touched his carers and family, connecting in small ways that meant everything to them.

"He was quite an assertive, macho guy, intensely independent," Chris says.

"It was very difficult for him to have that taken. Often he would lash out at people, try to hit people. He would get angry and this would lead to him being heavily tranquillised.

"It was just a gradual decline. It's hard to express. My mum was particularly devastated by it. It was a real heartbreak to go out and see him.

"He went through unpleasant repat hospitals for many years, and nursing homes and things like that."

Family priest Fr Peter Matheson spoke of the toll on Mick's parents at Thursday's service.

"They died before their time because of that weight," he said.

Mick's last 11 years were spent surrounded by kindness, helped by Yooralla at a home in Highett, but the brain injury was relentless and paralysis spread to his throat muscles.

"There was not much in his life. The only pleasures were a beer and a smoke and his food," Chris says. "In the end you'd give him food and instead of swallowing it, he was breathing it in."

On Sunday, his battle ended. The war was over for Mick and his family.

"The ultimate sacrifice? This is even more, isn't it, really? What a waste," Chris says.

"He died in his sleep. That's something, isn't it?"

And a comrade, John Johnston, one of the 30-odd Vietnam veterans in a guard of honour for the flag-draped coffin, spoke for all of them.

"There just couldn't be a greater sacrifice," he said. "There couldn't be."

brownt@heraldsun.com.au

BULLETIN BOARD

Reunion

B Coy 2 RAR/NZ ANZAC Battalion
South Vietnam 1967-1968. Reunion 2012.
23rd—26th April 2012
Nanango Qld
Contact:
Peter Gurney
0419 649 774
Email siren33@bigpond.com

Finding assistance:

Phone numbers:

Dept of Veteran Affairs	133 254
Metropolitan area	1800 555 254
Callers from regional Australia	
Veterans & Veterans Families	1800 011 046
Counselling Service	131 114
Lifeline	1300 651 251
Suicide Helpline	1800 007 332
Carers counselling Line	

Web sites

VVCS	www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs
Beyond Blue	www.beyondblue.org.au

Are you having a reunion?

Are you wanting help to find someone?

Contact the Debrief Committee for publishing the info in the Winter 2012 Debrief.

THE LONG TAN MEMORIAL SITE

As ever increasing numbers of Australians choose to visit Vietnam each year more often than not the Long Tan Memorial and battlefield are an integral part of their travel itinerary.

For those of us who have been fortunate enough to visit the site, it is indeed a moving experience, and one that all should share when circumstances and opportunity permit.

When planning a visit to the Long Tan site it is also important to remember a few basic courtesies. Unlike many memorial sites throughout the world, Long Tan is not readily accessible to the public. The site serves also as a memorial to the Vietnamese who perished in the fighting, and is situated in a working rubber plantation. Permits are required to be obtained from local authorities and can be quite easily arranged.

In recent years there have been incidents by both expats living in Vietnam and some Australian based tour organisers that have placed access to the site in jeopardy. To simplify matters while ensuring that access to the site remains possible for all, the following protocol details from the Australian Consul General (HCMC) have been reproduced and should be strictly adhered to.



Warwick Luttrell

VISITING THE LONG TAN CROSS -

Protocol Details from The Australian Consulate General's Office Ho Chi Minh City VIETNAM.

Due to sensitivities regarding the memorial and because it is located on relatively isolated, non-public land, those wishing to visit the site must notify the Dat Do District People's Committee in writing by fax at least 3 days prior to the intended visit.

Notification can be made either individually or through a recognized travel agent.

Local authorities recommend visitors use a travel agent as notification should be in the Vietnamese language and include names and passport numbers of visitors, as well as their intended day and time of visits to the LCT. For individuals wishing to notify directly, please download a standard bilingual notification form.

The fax number for Dat Do District People's Committee Is:

+84 64 3688 245.....From outside Vietnam

064 3688 245.....From inside Vietnam

The telephone number Is:

+84 64 3688 285.....From outside Vietnam

064 3688 285.....From inside Vietnam

In recognition of sensitivities associated with the LTC, visitors should conduct themselves with appropriate decorum and observe the following protocols In order not to jeopardise continued access to this important site:

- A. No medals or military uniforms to be worn.
- B. No flags to be raised or displayed
- C. No music to be played
- D. Any speeches made at the site to be low key and short

OFFICIAL SERVICES AT THE LONG TAN SITE

In recognition of the importance of the LTC to veterans and others who wish to recognize Australians who served in Vietnam, local authorities permit the Australian Consulate General to organise two annual official commemoration services at the LTC on behalf of the Australian Government

1. Anzac Day Dawn Service on 25th April, commencing at 5:15am
2. Vietnam Veterans' Day Service on 18th August, commencing at 3:30pm

Travel Agents in Baria-Vung Tau (for reference)

a. OSC Vietnam Tours

9 Le Lol Street, Ward 1 Vung Tau City

Tel: +64 64 3852008 OR 3810515 OR 3254008

Fax: +84 64 3852318

Email: osc-tours@hcm.vnn.vn

b. Vung Tau Tourist Corporation

29 Tran Hung Dao Street, Ward 1 Vung Tau City

Tel: +84 64 3857527 or 3511043

Fax: +84 64 3852284

Email: vungtautour@hcm.vnn.vn

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**P.O. BOX 97 MINTO NSW 2566****National President:**Ron Coxon OAM,
(03) 6266 6467 VPO Box 89 HUONVILLE TAS 7109
(03) 6266 6478 F 0412 264 346 M
Email: vvaanatpres@netspace.net.au**National Vice President:**David McCann J.P
(02) 4390 861337 White Swan Ave, Bluehaven NSW 2262
0413 968 985 M
Email: Dmac45@bigpond.com**National Vice President:**John Smith, OAM, JP
07) 5498 520248 Alexander Crescent, Morayfield Qld 4506
0407 460 358 M
Email: vvaanvp2@gmail.com**National Secretary**

Ken Foster, OAM, JP

PO Box 97 MINTO NSW 2566
0413 046 077 M
Email: VVAA.sec@bigpond.com**National Treasurer:**Rob Cox OAM,
(08) 9455 5290 VPO Box 528 WILLETTON WA 6955
Mob 0418 928 621
Email: nat.treas@inet.net.au**NORTHERN TERRITORY****PO Box 1861 HUMPTY DOO NT 0836**

www.vvaant.org.au

President Danny Meredith (08) 8927 7725 V 0412 523 737
E-Mail: ntpres@vvaant.org.au

Secretary Peter Mansell

(08) 8988 5630 V A/H
Email: ntsec@vvaant.org.au**NT RURAL SUB BRANCH**

PO Box 1861, HUMPTY DOO NT 0836

E-mail: ntrural@vvaant.org.au

Web Site: <http://ntrural.vvaant.org.au>

President Colin Hill 0439 202 777 M

Email: ntruralpres@vvaant.org.au

Secretary Peter Mansell

(08) 8988 5630 V A/H
Email: ntruralsec@vvaant.org.au**NEW SOUTH WALES****NSW Branch Inc.****PO Box 81 VINCENTIA NSW 2540**

www.vvaansw.org

President Clive Mitchell-Taylor OAM JP (02) 6236 8183V 0412 012 167 M
Email: president@vvaansw.orgSecretary Pam Forsdike OAM (02) 4441 5011 V/F 0400 135 710 M
E-mail: secretary@vvaansw.org**BATHURST**

PO Box 153 PORTLAND NSW 2847

President Kevin McDiarmid (02) 6337 3812 V

Email: kevinmcdiarmid@yahoo.com.au

Secretary Tony Walker (02) 6355 5504 V 0427 541 852 M

Email: doc1968@southernphone.com.au

HUNTER/CENTRAL COAST

PO BOX 342, BUDGEWOI NSW 2262

Email: hunter_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President Trevor Lawrence (02) 4399 1165 V 0404 153 189 M

Email: trevorlawrence@optusnet.com.au

Secretary Graham Cook (02) 4390 5159 V (02) 4399 1165

0428 258 104 M

Email: trevorlawrence@optusnet.com.au

JERVIS BAY & DISTRICT

PO Box 38 HUSKISSON NSW 2540

E-mail: jervisbay_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: Graham Anderson OAM JP (02) 4443 2911

Email: ga340@bigpond.com

Secretary: Peter Vincent (02) 4443 2463 V 0405 932 440 M

Email: vvaajervisbay@internode.on.net

MACARTHUR

Dredge's Cottage, 303 Queen St, CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

PO Box 928 CAMPBELLTOWN NSW 2560

Email: macarthur_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: John McDonald (02) 4634 1338 V 0412 444 991 M

E-mail: immacdonald@primus.com.au

Secretary: John Lees (02) 9601 2580 V 0401 528 386 M

Email: john.lees5@three.com.au

Senior Pension/Welfare officer: Ken Foster

NORTHERN DISTRICTS

PO Box 939 BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

President: Geoff Green (02) 9982 9663 V

E-mail: gggreen1@bigpond.net.au

Secretary: Bob St John (02) 9949 3746 V

Email: northerndistsec@gmail.com

RYDE CITY & DISTRICTS

PO Box 226 ERMINGTON NSW 1700

(02) 9613 8810 V 0423 654 832 M For appointment

Email: laschulz1@optusnet.com.au For appintment

www.rydevvaa.org

President: Len Schulz OAM, JP

Secretary: Wendy Schulz

ST MARYS OUTPOST

PO Box 3049 SOUTH ST MARYS NSW 2760

Cnr Mamre Rd. & Hall St., ST MARYS

(02) 9833 4700 V (02) 9833 4711 V (02) 9833 4022 F

E-mail: vietvet@tpg.com.au

Web Page: www.vvaastmarys.org.au

President Greg Cant

0425 208 622 M

Email: greg.cant@optusnet.com.au

Secretary Sam Vecchio

(02) 9670 4646 V 0418 247 325 M

Email: vietvet@tpg.com.au or

Email sam.vecchio@bigpond.com

VIETNAM VETERANS SOUTH WEST NSW & WAGGA INC.

PO BOX 6323 WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Email: sw&wagga_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: Keith Poole

(02) 6926 1214 V 0418 692 566 M

Email: keithspool48@bigpond.com

Secretary: Des Davie

(02) 6922 3855 V 0427223855 M

Email: drdavie@bigpond.net.au

Murruguldrie Veterans RetreatWeb site: <http://southwestnsw.tripod.com/>

Contact: Gordon Irvin

042838 1292 M

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**PO Box 1923 CANBERRA ACT 2601**

President: Pete Ryan

(02) 6257 0687 V 0407 922 591 M

Email: vvaact.pres@gmail.com

A/Secretary: Robynne Mitchell

(02) 6257 0687 V 0418622320 M

Email: vvaact@gmail.com

VICTORIA**Anzac House, 4 Collins Street, MELBOURNE VIC 3000**

Phone: (03) 9655 5588 V (03) 9655 5582 F

Website: www.vvaavic.org.au

President: Bob Elworthy

(03) 9432 7441 V 0402 106 262 M

Email: president@vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Peter Bright

(03) 9749 8125 V 0438 597 932 M

Email: secretary@vvaavic.org.au

BALLARAT

PO BOX 180, SEBASTOPOL VIC 3356

President: Bill Dobell

(03) 5336 1538 V 0417 616 759 M

E-mail: president@ballarat.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Yvonne Thomas

(03) 5335 8360 V

E-mail: secretary@ballarat.vvaavic.org.au

BENDIGO

PO Box 89 BENDIGO VIC 3552

President: Richard Penna

(03) 5443 3549 V 0408 324 590 M

Email: president@bendigo.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Maurie Betts

(03) 5448 4470V 0400 979 042 M

Email: secretary@bendigo.vvaavic.org.au

BOX HILL

PO BOX 280, DINGLEY VILLAGE VIC 3172

President: John Haward

(03) 9803 3301 V

Email: secretary@boxhill.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: John Burgess

0439 378 989 M

Email: secretary@boxhill.vvaavic.org.au

CASTLEMAINE

1/A Myring St, CASTLEMAINE VIC 3450

President: Ernie Plumridge

(03) 5472 4652 V

Email: president@castlemaine.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Bob Miller

(03) 5472 4146 V

Email: secretary@castlemaine.vvaavic.org.au

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

2 WINCH ROAD, DIGGERS REST VIC 3427

President: Frank Donovan

Email: president@centralhighlands.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Dave Parrot

(03) 5420 7723 V 0419 590 088

Email: secretary@centralhighlands.vvaavic.org.au

DIAMOND VALLEY

PO Box 542 GREENSBOROUGH VIC 308

President: Peter Blackman

(03) 9459 5117 V 0400 363 143 M

E-mail: president@vdiavalleymay&districts.vvaavic.org.au

Secretary: Martin Craze

(03) 9459 3235 V 0418 760 520 M

E-mail: secretary@vdiavalleymay&districts.vvaavic.org.au

ECHUCA

PO BOX 743 MOAMA NSW 2731

President: Ken Jones

(02) 5480 0139 V 0408 384 670 M

Secretary: Robert Johnson

(02) 5483 7411 V 0408 384 670 M

Email: secretary@echuca.vvaavic.org.au

FRANKSTON

PO Box 1429 FRANKSTON VIC 3199
 President: Ray Weston (03) 5241 1813 V
 Secretary: Cheryl Myers (03) 9776 6600 V
 Email: secretary@frankston.vvaavic.org.au

GEELONG & DISTRICTS

PO Box 484 GEELONG VIC 3220
 Secretary: Ken baker (03) 5267 3180 V 0414 683 190 M
 Email: president@geelong.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Bruce Ellis (03) 5267 3180 V 0414 683 190 M
 Email: secretary@geelong.vvaavic.org.au

GIPPSLAND

PO Box 902 SALE VIC 3850
 President: Lindsay Morton (03) 5144 6526 V
 Email: president@gippslandlatrobevalley.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Mick Hawryluk (03) 5144 3542 V
 Email: secretary@gippslandlatrobevalley.vvaavic.org.au

GOULBURN VALLEY

139 FUZZARDS ROAD, NUMURAH VIC 3636
 President: Bill Lee (03) 5873 5391 V
 Secretary: Jeff Stanyer (03) 5862 3829 V 0419 135 909 M
 Email: secretary@goulburnvalley.vvaavic.org.au

INTERNATIONAL & HEADQUARTERS

Anzac House, 4 Collins Street, MELBOURNE VIC 3000
 Administrator: Ron Mc Mullen (03) 9369 6435 V 0432 628 700

LATROBE VALLEY

PO BOX 149, TRARALGON VIC 3844
 President: Jim Saddington (03) 5174 3239 V 0417 392 938 M
 Email: president@latrobevalley.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Gerry Sexton (03) 5174 3891
 Email: secretary@latrobevalley.vvaavic.org.au

MARYBOROUGH

PO Box 274 MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465
 President: Lee Turton: (03) 5461 1962 V 0422 825 381 M
 Secretary: Bob Florance (03) 5460 5407
 Email: secretary@maryborough.vvaavic.org.au

MELBOURNE WEST

PO Box 1430 WERRIBEE PLAZA VIC 3030
 Web Site: <http://melbournewest.vvaavic.org.au/>
 President: Vic Pilch 0410 350 889 M M
 Email: president@melbournewest.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Ray Matthew (03) 9749 2835 V 0400 107 130 M
 Email: secretary@melbournewest.vvaavic.org.au

MELTON & DISTRICT

PO Box 981 MELTON VIC 3337
 President: Gary Paterson (03) 9747 6496 V 0438 313 344 M
 E-mail: president@meltonanddistrict.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Jim Fitzgerald 0415 679 677 M
 E-mail: secretary@meltonanddistrict.vvaavic.org.au

MITCHELL

PO Box 812 SEYMOUR VIC 3660
 President: Ross Stewart (03) 5792 2666 V 0407 646 988 M
 Email: president@mitchell.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Ross Gregson (03) 5792 3227 V 0417 973 573 M
 Email: secretary@mitchell.vvaavic.org.au

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

PO Box 4012 ROSEBUD VIC 3939
 President: Kevin Mawdsley (03) 5982 0817 V
 Email: president@morningtonpeninsula.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Bob Francis (03) 5981 1285 V 0408 808 041 M
 Email: secretary@morningtonpeninsula.vvaavic.org.au

MURRAY BORDER ASSOCIATION

PO Box 8084 WODONGA VIC 2641
 President: Gary Treeve (02) 6059 2765 V 0407 480 201
 Email: president@murrayborder.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: John Walpole OAM (02) 6059 3216 V 0407 078 317
 Email: secretary@murrayborder.vvaavic.org.au

MUSEUM

5 Veterans Drive, Newhaven
 PO Box 318 SAN REMO VIC 3925
 Phone: (03) 5956 6400 V (03) 5956 6406 F
 Web Page: www.vietnamvetmuseum.org
 President: Gary Parker (03) 5956 6400 V 0429 105 330 M
 Email: president@museum.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Ian Diss (03) 5956 6400 V (03) 5956 6406 Fax
 Email: secretary@museum.vvaavic.org.au

NOBLE PARK

PO Box 295, NOBLE PARK VIC 3174
 President: Ray McCarthy (03) 9798 5379 V 0418 552 804 M
 Secretary: John Pilkington (03) 9737 9393 V 0413 163 749 M
 Email: secretary@noblepark.vvaavic.org.au

NORTH WEST

PO Box 211 GLENROY VIC 3046
 President: Tom Clayton (03) 9306 7474 V 0438 306 709 M
 Secretary: Basil Tiligadis (03) 9354 5299 V 0419 890 340
 Email: secretary@northwest.vvaavic.org.au

OUTER EASTERN MELBOURNE

PO Box 763 BORONIA VIC 3155
 President: Gerry Turner (03) 9800 1118 V 0425 862 858 M
 Email: president@outereasternmelbourne.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Judy McQuillan (03) 9799 7739 V 0400 822 644 M
 Email: secretary@outereasternmelbourne.vvaavic.org.au

RAAF

PO Box 462 ASCOT VALE VIC 3032
 President: Lee Scully (03) 9827 8313 V 0419 687 438 M
 Email: president@raaf.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Rick Holmes (03) 9317 7304 V
 Email: secretary@raaf.vvaavic.org.au

SWAN HILL

PO Box 21 LALBERT VIC 3543
 President: Harold Heslop JP (03) 5033 1896 V 0448 778 010 M
 Email: president@swanhill.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Ron Martin (03) 5033 1909 V or (03) 5033 1117 V
 Email: secretary@swanhill.vvaavic.org.au

WARRNAMBOOL

C/O 9 JAMES STREET, PORT FAIRY VIC 3284
 President/Secretary: Don Roberts (03) 5568 1837 V 0467 556 818
 Email: secretary@warrnambool.vvaavic.org.au

WEST GIPPSLAND

PO Box 556 DROUIN VIC 3818
 President: Gary Elliot (03) 5940 2216 V 0409 594 114 M
 Email: president@westgippsland.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Frank Grant (03) 5625 4457 V
 Email: secretary@westgippsland.vvaavic.org.au

WIMMERA

PO BOX 345,, HORSHAM VIC 3400
 President: Barry McClure (03) 5382 7752 V
 Email: president@wimmera.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Tony Welbourn (03) 5381 2438
 Email: secretary@wimmera.vvaavic.org.au

VVAA VIC EDUCATION TEAM

14 SUNNYSIDE ROAD, MT WAVERLEY VIC 3149
 President: Phil White OAM (03) 9544 7837 V 0412 592 915 M
 Email: secretary@educationteam.vvaavic.org.au
 Secretary: Chris White (03) 9544 7837 V
 Email: secretary@educationteam.vvaavic.org.au

QUEENSLAND

48 ALEXANDER CRESCENT, MORAYFIELD QLD 4506
 Web site: www.vvaaqueensland.asn.au
 President: John Smith, OAM, JP (07) 5498 5202 V 0407 460 358 M
 Email: president@vvaaqueensland.asn.au
 A/Secretary: John Smith, OAM

BRIBIE ISLAND

PO Box 1001 BONGAREE QLD 4507
 Web Site: www.diggerz.org/~vvaabi
 President: Warren Johnson (07) 3410 8606 V
 Secretary: Jock Young (07) 3408 8644 V
 Email: brivets@bigpond.net.au
 Drop In Centre: (07) 3408 0405 V
 The Recreational Hall 156 First Ave, Bongaree Qld 4507

BRISBANE NORTH

PO Box 61 KALLANGUR QLD 4503
 Web Site: www.vvaabrisbanenorth.asn.au
 President: Peter Thorne (07) 3285 4823 V
 Email: Kerry.thorne@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Peter Farrelly 0408 214 532 M
 Email: vvaabrisbanenorth@bigpond.com
 Drop In Centre: Black Duck Cottage
 (07) 3886 5411 V
 Email: vvaabrisbanenorth@bigpond.com
 : 3 Ogg Rd, Murrumba Downs, QLD 450
 Open 0800—1300 hours every Wednesday
 General Meeting: Third Sunday each month @1000

BUNDABERG & DISTRICT

PO Box 2955, BUNDABERG QLD 4670
 President: Fred Vincent Email: vvaabundaberg@hotmail.com
 Secretary: Terry Binyon Email: vvaabundaberg@hotmail.com
 Drop In Centre: (07) 4153 4599 V
 Corner Pitt & May Street, BUNDABERG

BURDEKIN

PO Box 1285 AYR QLD 4807
 President: Robert Marriott (07) 4782 2961 V
 Secretary: Don Bailey (07) 4783 6627 V 0427 636 685 M

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

PO Box 669 ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700
 President: Nick Quigley OAM (07) 4928 2554 V
 E-mail: nickq@cqnet.com.au
 Secretary: Phil Aplin (07) 4928 6711 V
 E-mail: philpauline@cqnet.com.au

COOLANGATTA/TWEED HEADS

PO Box 7 CURRUMBIN QLD 4223
 President: David Donlan 0418 344 213 M
 E-mail: ddonlan@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Martin McFaden 0422 037 594 M
 E-mail: mcgool944@optusnet.com.au
 Support Centre (07) 5559 5022
 Currumbin Creek Raod, Currumbin Creek Qld 4223

COOLOOLA COAST

PO Box 184 TIN CAN BAY QLD 4580
 President: Col Gibbings (07) 5486 2537 V
 Email: kevanne@dodo.com.au
 Secretary: John Koosache (07) 5488 0282 V
 E-Mail: vvaacc@skymesh.net.au
 Drop IN Centre Veterans & Community Hall
 Cnr Nautilus & Santa Maria St, Cooloolo Cove

GRANITE BELT

PO Box 860 STANTHORPE QLD 4380
 President: Graham Cockerell (07) 4683 5282 V
 Secretary: Kerry Ryan Ph : 07 4683 7135 V (07) 4683 7003 F
 Email: vvaagranitebelt@halenet.com.au

GYMPIE

217 MARY STREET, GYMPIE QLD 4570
 President: Len Herron (07) 5476 3114 V 0428 799 416
 Secretary: Len Herron Email: secgymmie@yahoo.com.au

HERVEY BAY

PO Box 3243 PIALBA QLD 4655
 Web Site: www.vaasc.com.au
 President: Daryl McPhee (07) 4124 9527 V
 Email: darylmcphoe@bigpond.com
 Secretary: John Rutland (07) 4128 8030 V
 Email: vvaaherveybay@bigpond.com
 Drop Inn Centre : (07) 4128 3759 BH
 Freedom Park, Main Road Pialba Qld 4655

LOGAN AND ALBERT

PO Box 6197 LOGAN CENTRAL QLD 4114
 Web Site: vvaalogan.org.au
 Email: loganvva@gmail.com
 Sub Branch Phone: (07) 3472 5064 V 0410 924 566
 President: James Hunt (07) 3808 7504 V 0417 380 883 M
 Secretary: Tom Welsh (07) 3208 5293 V 0410 924 566
 Office Community Office 6, Logan Central Library
 26 Wilbur St, Logan Central Qld 4114
 (07) 3472 5064 V 0410 924 566

NOOSA

PO BOX 974, TEWANTIN QLD 4565
 President: Mal Boyle (07) 5455 5195 V
 Email: malnoosa@activ8.net.au
 Secretary: Dave Beveridge (07) 5442 4017 V

REDCLIFFE

PO Box 38 KIPPA-RING QLD 4021
 President: Charles Parsons (07) 3880 4082 V
 Email: blackhat47@optusnet.com.au
 Secretary: William Stowers (07) 3204 1125 V
 Email: joybil@optusnet.com.au

SOUTH BURNETT

354 J HUNTERS RD, BALLOGIE QLD 4610
 President: Trevor Sanderson (07) 4168 3115 V
 Email: tsanderson4@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Don Davy (07) 4164 1050 V 0407 300 844 M
 Email: vvaasbsec@hotmail.com

SOUTHPORT AND DISTRICT

PO Box 8718, GOLD COAST MAIL CENTRE QLD 9726
 President: Rick McIntyre (07) 5571 7141 V
 Email: rickmac2@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Guy Robinson (07) 5537 5718
 Email: scruff77@optusnet.com.au

SUNSHINE COAST

PO Box 533 COTTON TREE QLD 4558
 President: Kevin Leadbetter (07) 5437 0679V
 Email: pgejas@bigpond.net.au
 Secretary: Peter Veltmeijer (07) 5453 5591
 Email: petersheilav@westnet.com.au

TOWNSVILLE

PO Box 1654 THURINGOWA QLD 4817
 President: John Trewern (07) 4723 2327 V AM
 Email: president@vvaatvl.org.au
 Secretary: Jim Kjellgren (07) 4788 0358 V 0414 553 172 M
 Email: secretary@vvaatvl.org.au

Zac's Place Accommodation Centre

715 Ross River Road, Kirwin Qld 4817
 Manager: Mrs Margaret Standfast
 (07) 4773 6980 V (07) 4723 7022 AH

SOUTH AUSTRALIA**Torrens Parade Ground, Victoria Drive, ADELAIDE 5000**

Phone: (08) 8232 9422 Fax: (08) 8232 9899
 E-mail: vietvetsa@chariot.net.au
 Website: www.vvaa-sa.asn.au
 Office hours: Mon to Fri 1000-1400
 President: Mike Benyk JP 0414 880 671 M
 Email: vietvetsapres@chariot.net.au
 Secretary: Mattie St John 0409 282 681 M
 Email: vietvetsasec@chariot.net.au

COPPER COAST

PO Box 80 MOONTA SA 5558
 E-Mail: coppervets@yp-connect.net
 Web Site: www.vvaacoppercoast.org.au
 Phone: (08) 8825 1583 V
 President: Kevin Sobey (08) 8821 2369 V 0429 671 203 M
 Secretary: Judy Nankivell 0428 256 201 M
 Club rooms: Military Road, Moonta

NORTHERN SUBURBS

PO Box 2193 SALISBURY Downs SA 5108
 Peter Badcoe V C Complex
 Building 200 East Ave, Edinborough SA
 (08) 7180 0899 V; ((08) 8252 1633 F
 E-mail: vvaanssb@iinet.net.au
 President: Pieter Dawson 0431 513 711 M
 Secretary: John Oldfield 0422 875 492 M

PORT AUGUSTA

PO Box 2243, PORT AUGUSTA SA 5710
 Office: Hugh-Davies Memorial Centre
 Clyde Engineering Crib Room. Cnr Railway & Carlton Pdes
 (08) 8641 9165 V (08) 8641 2211 F
 E-Mail: mensshed2@portaugusta.sa.gov.au
 President: Max Hedley (08) 8641 9165 V 0427 893 786 M
 Secretary: Irene Hedley (08) 8641 9165 V 0429 652 887 M

RIVERLAND

PO Box 127, MONASH SA 5345
 President: Roger Edmonds (08) 8595 8085 V
 Email: rbedmonds@active8.net.au
 Secretary: Kevin Drew (08) 8583 5172 V

WALKERVILLE

PO Box 71, (98 Walkerville Tce.) WALKERVILLE SA 5081
 (08) 8269 7679
 President: Bob Majba 0411 103 391 M
 Secretary: Vic Natale 0406 939 449 M

TASMANIA**PO BOX 64 PERTH TAS 7300**

President: Warwick Luttrell (03) 6431 2627 V 0408 333 360 M
 Email: vvaataspres@aussiebbroadband.com.au
 Secretary: Brian Harper OAM (03) 6398 1454 V 0417 074 616 M
 Email: vvanec@netspace.net.au

BURNIE & DISTRICTS

P.O. Box 723 BURNIE TAS 7320
 President: Tony Hughes
 Email: mareetony518@bigpond.com
 Secretary: Dave Russell 0411 415 134 M
 Email: rsl.burnie@bigpond.com

EASTCOAST (TAS)

14 OSPREY DRIVE, ST HELENS TAS 7216
 President: Jim Imlach (03) 6376 3567 V
 Secretary: Brenda Imlach (03) 6376 3567 V
 Email: brendaimlach1@bigpond.com

GREATER HOBART

P.O. Box 472 KINGSTON TAS 7050
 President: John Thompson (03) 6229 3049 V
 Email: jat4411@bigpond.net.au
 Secretary: Elizabeth Chaffey (03) 6229 3049 V
 Email: howard.chaffey@bigpond.com.au

LAUNCESTON

PO Box 139 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
 Email: vvaalauncestonas@gmail.com
 President: Terry Byrne (03) 6344 7725 V
 Secretary: Carol Cunningham (03) 6344 2271 V

WESTERN AUSTRALIA**CITY and COUNTRY**

38 KALGOORLIE ST, MT HAWTHORN WA 6016
 President: Richard Williams 0424 368 670 M
 E-mail: president@vvaawa.org.au
 A/Secretary: Richard Williams

VVAA NATIONAL MERCHANDISE**PO BOX 89 HUONVILLE TAS 7109**

Manager: Kath Coxon (03) 6266 6467 V (03) 6266 6478 F
 0411 054 654 M
 Email: rkcoxon@netspace.net.au

**Any change of address is to be sent to
 your Sub Branch NOT TO DEBRIEF**

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The South Australian Branch recently marred the loss of its Patron Lt. Gen. Sir Donald Dunstan AC KNE CB (Rtd) who passed away on the 15th October 2011.

A State funeral for the former Governor of South Australia (1982 – 1991) took place on Tuesday 25th October 2011 at St Peters Cathedral, North Adelaide. At the end of the ceremony, he was given a full military send off to the Centennial Park Cemetery where he was cremated.

With the passing of our original Patron Lt. Gen. Sir Donald Dunstan AC KBC CB (Ret) the Association is pleased to announce that Brig Laurie Lewis AM (Rtd) has accepted our invitation to be our new Patron.

On Friday 21st October 2011, the Hon Jack Snelling MP was sworn in as the State Minister for Veterans Affairs. Minister Snelling paid tribute to his predecessor the Hon Tom Kenyon MP, who in his last week, officially opened the 2011 National Council in Adelaide. Minister Kenyon's, interest of and genuine concern for the veterans Community will be sorely missed.

Minister Snelling is well known to the sections of the Veterans Community, from when he was previously Minister for Veterans Affairs from March 2010 till February 2011. Minister Snelling has had first hand experience the Veterans Affairs as his father is a Vietnam Veteran who served with 1RAR and 5RAR between 1968 and 1969.

Veterans Health Week which ran from the 24th to the 30th October went very well with many ESO including various VVAA sub branches taking part in holding Heath events.

On 11th October 2011, the then Minister for Veterans Affairs, Tom Kenyon MP attended the VVAA Northern Suburbs sub branch to present a cheque for \$1000 for a new mower. This will allow the Northern Suburbs guys to help veterans who are unable to mow their lawn themselves due to health or disability.

At this meeting, Dr Anh Tuan Ngo, President of the Friends of the Vietnamese Invalid Veterans Association made a sound presentation on how they assist many former members of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces who were forced, to continue to live in very difficult circumstances.

The Northern Suburbs sub branch raised \$1500 on the day, in addition to the State Government cheque also for \$1500.??????????

Presentations were also made by Meredith Wyles (Legacy), Francis Bedford MP, Michael Benyk JP (VVAA), Eric Ciracivitch (VVF), Greg Dwiwar (RAR)

and Greg Nybo (on behalf of the Nybo family).

As we are all very much aware, that BEST funds is slowly being reduced, for the second year in succession VVAA South Australia has not received any BEST funds which has forced this Association to provide Pension and Welfare work from its own revenue source and donations from its membership. As a result of this erosion we are also engaged in seeking sponsorship from Commercial interests in order to continue representing the Veterans Community.

VVAA-SA is currently undertaking talks with the Holdfast Bay Council in setting up a State Branch and Mens Shed in Glenelg North. This will give many Veterans in the Southern Area the ability to intergrate with each other on a greater scale.

In closing, I just want all members to remember why we excel as an Association and the words of our Motto. We are Veterans helping Veterans by "Remembering the Dead but Fight like Hell for the Living"

Mike Benyk
State President

Great Southern Railways are running a Special Anzac Day Train from Darwin to Adelaide next year (2012). Costs to Darwin and from Adelaide are ones own care.

Proposed Itinerary is :-

- Day 1 Tuesday 24/4/12. Depart Darwin 3.30pm for Adelaide River.
Go to Adelaide River War Cemetery
Depart 6.30 pm for Katherine and pull into siding at some ungodly hour.
- Day 2 Wed 25/4/12 Dawn Service at Katherine
Breakfast at Katherine R.S.L.
Participate in Anzac Day March at Katherine if you wish
Tour of Katherine.
Depart Katherine 6pm for Alice Springs
- Day 3 Thurs 26/4/12 Arrive Alice Springs 9.10 am
Local tours (at your own cost)
Depart for Port Augusta
- Day 4 Fri 27/4/12 Take Old "Pitchie Ritchie" War Train from Port Augusta to Quorn & return
Depart for Adelaide
End of Tour.

Cost Gold Kangaroo For TPI \$1206
includes all meals in Queen Adelaide Restaurant

Carers Same Price.

Price includes all of the above except Alice Springs Tours. Bookings are now open.

VIETNAM VETERANS FRIENDLY RETREATS

Queensland

Standown Park: 91 Radke Road, Kia Ora (halfway between Gympie and Tin Can Bay). Power, water, pets, open fire, showers, toilets, disable facilities, coin laundry, secure off the highway, restful surrounds. No cabins/onsite vans. Discount for veterans.

Contact owners Rod (ex 9RAR) and Pam Elkington (07) 5486 5144 or 0417 718 127

Cockscomb Veterans Camp: Located only 23km from Rockhampton, camp kitchen, showers, toilets, no power, \$ 5 donation.

Contact Allan Evans (07) 4934 4941 for directions

Pandanus Park: Follow the three red stripes from Mareeba, no facilities, take all and remove your rubbish. This is an isolated retreat in Cape York

Sapphire Gemfields: Located behind the post office at the RSL, power, toilets, showers, water, and barbecue. The Club bar is open Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. \$5.00 per night Contact Peter Johnson (ex 6RAR) 0439 797 175

Alaric Homestead Veterans Retreat at Quilpie: The Homestead is fully furnished and managed by a Veteran Duty Officer. Very low nominal fee charged per day. Caravans and camper trailers can be parked at a low daily fee. Booking essential for the Homestead (not necessary for caravans/campers) Contact the Duty Officer (07) 4656 4740. Email: alaricretreat@activ8.net.au C/O PO Quilpie Qld 4480

Rocky Creek War Memorial Park: This camp spot is located at Tolga. The Atherton Shire Council maintains it. There is a 72-hour limit and a gold coin donation. There are toilets, barbecue, and non-potable water. It is a memorial site to all soldiers, who trained on the tablelands before being sent overseas. There is a caretaker on site.

Zac's Place: Located on 715 Ross River Road, Kirwan, Townsville, run by VVAA Qld Branch. There is accommodation for up to 11 people with all facilities. Tariff is \$25.00 Accommodation, Breakfast and Light Lunch. Contact manager Mrs Margaret Standfast Ph. (07) 4773 6980 or A/H (07) 4723 7022

Homestead Caravan Park: , located along the Landsborough Highway at Barcaldine Queensland Every day in the late afternoon during winter your hosts Ben and Thanh prepare the campfire with damper and billy tea proved prepared the old bush way. Entertainment nightly. They always have something special on for Vietnam Veterans Day 18th August. Cabins available.

For Reservations ph. Ben or Thanh on (07) 4651 1308

South Australia

Bublacowie Military Museum:

Located between Stansbury and Giles Point Yorktown. Three Veteran Museums - \$5.00 admission, \$2.00 children Accommodation enquiries: Contact owner Chris Soar (ex vet of Malaya) (08) 8853 4379 or 0419 853 294

Camp Andrew Russell: in South Australia is located 35km Sth East of Loxton along the Murray Bridge Road, turn left (or right if coming from Adelaide) onto the Lameroo Road, taking the right fork along the road. The entrance is marked with a cream tractor tyre, just past a road sign.

You will need a key for access and thus need to contact [John Hough](#) mobile 0409 098 093

New South Wales

Ramon Deed Veterans Retreat: This retreat was named after Ramon John Deed, of 1Fld Sqn, Vietnam. The retreat is located at Dareton, 17Km from Mildura & 16Km from Wentworth and is open to all Veterans, serving & ex-service personnel & their families. There is power & water. Un-powered (\$10.00 per night) powered (\$20 per night) Phone: Barry & Di Langan (03) 5027 4447

Email rdveteransretreat@bigpond.com

Murraguldrie Veterans Retreat: It is situated on the edge of the Murraguldrie State Forest about forty minute drive from Wagga Wagga, and approximately seven kilometres from the Hume Highway turn off point to Tumbarumba on the Tumbarumba Road. To arrange to meet Jimbob Peat at the gate call (02) 6931 6261 or 0429 414 909 or phone Les White 0428 226 097 or Gordon Irvine 0428 381 292 Email murraguldrie@gmail.com

Tasmania

Tasmania Veterans Retreat: Offers fully equipped-House accommodation in the remote Central Highlands area, 20 minutes from Bothwell. \$30.00 per double + \$5.00 per extra person. Bookings made through the State RSLA Headquarters, Hobart.(03) 6224 0881. Open to all APPVA members.

Western Australia

Camp Hart: Camp Hart is a combination of private and crown land vested with the Shire of Kulin. It is situated 3.5 hours south east of Perth, 14kms east of Kulin, Camp Hart is a memorial park located next to Lake Jilakin and in the shadow of Jilakin Rock. It offers shade, ablution block, sheltered barbecue and bush kitchen. Donations are welcome. Open to all ADF Veterans. All inquiries are to be made to Roger Lingard (08) 9527 8000 or 0419 944 627.

Bruce Rock: situated 254 Km from Perth in the wheat belt. Vets always welcome but each year in November they conduct a Vietnam Veterans activity. Most stay at the Bruce Rock Caravan Park Ph. (08) 9061 1070

Northern Territory

Roper Retreat: Same as for Pandanus Park, take only Photos. Leave no footprints, Located 31 Klm along the Northern Territory Highway turn north at Elsey Station sign. 3 Klm along you pass the Manager's House and just 5km you reach the Roper. PH Tony 0401 100 514 or Jimbob 0419 414 209

Coral House: Located 107 Bagot Rd, Ludmilla run by VVAA NT, shared kitchen facilities, laundry and bathroom, linen, TV in common room three shared bedrooms providing seven beds. Contact manager Jack Hamilton on Ph. 8948 0050.

For any further information on any of these retreats please visit our website www.vvaa.org.au

If any of you Grey nomads know or hear of any other veteran friendly retreats please let us know by notifying John P Smith, Email vvaanvp2@gmail.com or Warwick Luttrell

Email: vvaataspres@aussiebroadband.com.au together with details

An Unofficial Handicap

For Moff, a true blue mate and Digger.

A reinforcement arrived to join our happy band
 A smart arse who never tried to understand
 Such was his manner he was given the thumbs down
 His presence caused friction and certainly lots of
 frowns
 So we turned to our hero, Moff, who was surely one of
 the best
 To sort out this bloke who didn't want to soldier with
 the rest
 Moff, an old veteran, listened and played the cards
 close to his chest

Then came the annual test; a nine mile run with rifle,
 equipment and pack
 If you failed to finish in the time given then it was
 worse than getting the sack
 The day arrived and our platoon was at the start line
 waiting to go
 The "Salvos" turned up with a brew and to say hello
 Moff stayed with our gear all left in a neat line
 We returned to our packs to see him wink that all was
 fine
 The whistle blew and we all took off, determined to
 finish in time

It was a very tough run under a boiling hot sun
 Halfway, the new chum was puffing and blowing as if
 carrying a ton
 With a mile to go he was way behind as the rest ran on
 as one
 All met the time limit, well, that is, all except one
 The major cursed "what a bloody disgrace"
 The RSM raved and ranted "One of my soldiers has
 failed the race"
 We weren't sorry to see our smart alek in such a pa-
 thetic state
 As he staggered to and fro wondering his fate

We headed home on the truck with all aboard
 The dejected soldier sat staring at his pack then uttered
 "Oh gawd"
 A scream as he opened the pack to find a large rock as
 extra weight
 It was then he realised he had been nobbled at the
 starter's gate
 The years have passed and after several more wars
 Moff is still around
 We gather at the odd reunion and old stories do abound
 Including the one of the annual tests and the famous
 race
 When a smart arse with extra weight in his pack failed
 to keep the pace
 George Mansford©July 2011

Winners or Losers

In far distant foreign fields, our fallen do sleep
 Coral crusted steel chariots rest in oceans deep
 Strategic hills now forgotten and with no name
 Overgrown jungle tracks of past misery and fame
 Gone the dreams of men and women from yesterday
 Scattered, broken or lost in many ways
 Those before us gave all for a bright tomorrow
 A terrible price with personal grief and national sorrow
 So many empty beds and others half filled
 How many loved one maimed or killed?

What price did past generations of our nation pay?
 In sacrificing their tomorrow for our today
 A precious legacy they handed to me and you
 Freedom, a way of life and a happy future to pursue
 Yet today, political correctness dominates with strong
 reign
 Opposing views countered with screams of bigot, racist
 and shame
 Who now walks the streets at night without fear?
 What of respect and social standards once held so
 dear?
 Gone the days when citizens would speak up and not
 falter
 Waving a beloved flag that strangers seek to alter

Battlers eat crumbs and taste Canberra's sour wine
 As blind leaders with fat wallets do greedily dine
 Such shabby suits prostitute our Nation when seeking
 votes
 Aided by Spin Doctors with sly slogans already wrote
 A nation without purpose and divided by political fools
 Broken promises, waste and murky deals to maintain
 rule
 Empty farm houses amid busy drill rigs raping deep
 Foreign companies buying rich dark loam forever to
 keep
 Soon hungry generations seek alms and food as they
 beg
 In what was a true blue land; now dying if not already
 dead

As you seek our wonderful glorious past
 There are many questions to be asked
 Perhaps the most important I now choose
 Did we win those wars from yesterday or did we lose?
 Or is it you and me with our apathy and greed so rife
 Ignoring the tumbling building blocks of a wonderful
 way of life?
 George Mansford©October 2011

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CLIFF DOHLE MID

Cover sheet

Name of Inquiry: Defence Honours and Award's Tribunal.

Person Making Submission: 41961 W.O.1 (Ret) R.C. (Bob) Thompson.

On Behalf of: O39642 Flt. Lt. (Ret) Cliff Dohle MID.

Reason: Restore original recommendation of DFC that was down graded to MID.

I have been asked by Cliff Dohle to act on his behalf (authority attached) as he is seriously ill and is constantly in and out of hospital. The reason for his illness is the result of his war caused injuries alone that has resulted in DVA awarding him TPI. (Temporary and Permanently Incapacitated) Cliff has since died.

I am a Vietnam Veteran with extensive experience. I was the Task Force Armourer that seen myself in and out of helicopters. I am aware of similar conditions that Cliff flew in i.e. monsoon, with thunder and lighting and generally the excessive noise within a Huey Helicopter.

Reference: (a) Review of Recognition for the Battle of Long Tan. Dated March 2008

(b) McAulay, Lex, 1986, *Battle of Long Tan*, Century Hutchinson.

Attachments;

Pages 84/85/86 Lex McAulay's Book 'Battle of Long Tan'

Pages 27 5.4 'Injustices arising from special circumstances-RAAF'

Authorisation for Bob Thompson to act on behalf of Flt. Lt. (RET) Cliff Dohle.

NB. Cliff Dohle has seen and read the submission and declared to me it was accurate in every detail.

Cliff Dohle hearing 22 Apr. 09.

Definition of DFC award: 'This silver cross is awarded to officers and Warrant Officers for an act or acts of valour, courage **OR** devotion to duty preformed whilst flying in active operations against the enemy.'

It appears that the recommendation for Cliff's and Frank's DFC's were written and recommended in September 66 (Review Mar.2008 5.4 p.27 2nd paragraph) just weeks after the action of Long Tan. I believe that this recommendation would be the most accurate because of the time frame. It appears that the recommendation was for the first part of the reason for the DFC. Awarded for an act or acts of valour, courage.

Then at a later date in April 1967 some 7 months on, the following year, another new citation is made which is different to the first recommendation. By this time the CO of the unit Wing Commander Raymond Scott (CO during the Battle of Long Tan) has left the unit and Vietnam. His official duty ended 19 Dec 66.(Ref: Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans) This would mean that the new recommendation would have to be signed by a CO that wasn't familiar with the circumstances of the original recommendation for Cliff Dohles' DFC. It is also noted the original recommendation for Cliff's DFC was deferred. According to the Macquarie Dictionary this means: To put off to another time. It appears that this didn't happen it was just left in abeyance. Does this mean it can still be bought forward? A new citation was raised and submitted recommending a lower order of recognition i.e. MID and the wording has been changed. (Review, March 2008, 5.1 p.25)

It appears that Cliff's MID was awarded for the first part of the definition of the DFC that being for an act or acts of valour, courage and according to the Review dated March 2008, 5.5, page 28 under RAAF which states '*the DFC awarded to FltLt Riley, whose award recognised achievements for his entire tour of duty.*' To me this seems all a bit suspect and as the panel has indicated in its statement in Review 5.1 last paragraph, '*Additionally, the citations for the DFC for both FltLt Dohle and FltLt Riley were very similarly worded, while the second set of citations were clearly different from one another.*' They the Panel, were not entirely happy with this anomaly. I know that Cliff was pleased that the Panel took this line.

According to the Review dated March 2008 5.4 headed 'Injustices arising from special circumstances-RAAF' 2nd paragraph, the reason the citations were not forwarded was and I quote; '*the commanders in Vietnam should hold the citations until the end of the two pilots' tours, to take into account their performances in a wider context, and then re-submit them.*' I believe this to mean resubmit the original citation not a new one. This action of holding a citation or recommendation is not new in the armed forces it is done regularly. If you stuff up big time the citation (original) is torn up. Does this mean that the citations were rewritten by someone at RAAF HQ Australia and not referred back to the CO of 9 SQD? Or to the person that originally signed the first citation? This seems very unusual in the extreme.

This is were I become confused. Under, 1.6 Summary of claims, para 5. p.5 It states;

The evidence indicates that in September 1966 two citations recommending immediate awards of the DFC to FltLt Riley and FltLt Dohle were processed through the RAAF chain of command in Vietnam and forwarded to Australia. COMAFV was not involved in this process.

The reason that COMAFV were not involved was that in 1966 the RAAF 9 Squadron, only had a small amount of Iroquios, I think 7 aircraft and the CO was Wing Commander Ray Scott. He, his staff lived in a hotel in Vung Tau. To my knowledge they at that time didn't have an Officer at COMAFV Saigon. Hence all correspondence, signals went direct to Canberra. *Group Captain Raw recognised the difficulty of tasking 9 Squadron helicopters into an unsafe area in contravention of the Air Staff directives. It was suggested that Canberra would need to be contacted to give approval.* (Grandin p. 145.) This means that Raw didn't have a senior officer on staff at COMAFV.

To add to my further confusion, Review 3.6 'The End of War List-Vietnam as precedent for review.' P. 16. 1st paragraph, 1.6:

The decisions of commanders in the field were not interfered with.

It appears in the case of Cliff Dohle that his original recommendation/citation was altered and it appears that it was done in Australia.

I also note Review 'Criteria for a "fair and sustainable" outcome' 3.7 p.17 para.1: *TOR require the Panel to strike a balance between reviewing decisions of commanders in the field and maintaining the integrity of the Australian honours system. I also note that Cliff Dohle's recommendation for a DFC would not be encumbered with the quota system: the quota wasn't formally approved until 1968*

It appears the citations were rewritten by someone at RAAF HQ Australia and not referred back to the CO of 9 SQD? Or to the person that originally signed the first citation? This seems very unusual in the extreme.

I note that the Panel in 1.7 Nature of the review. P.6 states:

The panel was mindful of the difficulty of making fresh judgements on events that took place over 40 years ago. Awards for individuals gallantry involve subjective decisions made by those with the authority and knowledge to make the best possible judgements.

Given that statement I don't think it would be right that someone in an office in Australia alters and rewrites a citation some 7 months later and then resubmits the altered citation. There is no doubt in my mind and it appears the Panel is of the same mind when it states that 'Awards for individuals gallantry involve subjective decisions made by those with authority and knowledge to made the best possible judgement.'

The original recommendations for Flt.Lt. Riley and Flt.Lt. Dohle were essentially worded the same. The

report goes on to say the citations were held till the end of the pilot's tour of duty. It appears that if Cliff Dohle had completed his tour of duty he would have also received the original recommendation of the DFC. (Review, dated March 08, section 5.4) The reason that Cliff Dohle didn't finish his tour of duty was no fault of his own. On the 18 Oct 66 while transporting Royal Australian Engineers, complete with their high explosives that they were going to use to blow up a tunnel complex, Cliff Dohle's aircraft suffered a loss of power. This happened over the jungle and the Huey went into Auto Rotation and crashed into the treetops. It was only because of Cliff Dohle's piloting skills that he got the plane down in one piece, this in turn saved 6 lives, including his own.

As a result of the crash Cliff Dohle suffered internal injuries and fractured his back.

He was Medivaced to US 36 Evac Hospital on the same day, the 18 Oct 66, where he was hospitalised for 13 days. On the 31 Oct 66 he was further Medivaced to RAAF Base Hospital, Butterworth. After about 10 days in hospital at Butterworth he was further medivaced to Australia. Cliff eventually ended up at RAAF Base Hospital, Richmond NSW's. All told his recovery took 3 months with him returning to duty on the 10 Jan 67. (Reference Cliff Dohle's Pilot Flying Log Book.)

The last 3 lines of 'Injustices arising from special circumstances-RAAF' 5.4 States: *'Flt Lt Riley's citation recognised distinguished flying during his full tour of duty in Vietnam, whilst highlighting his action in the Battle of Long Tan. The citation for Flt.Lt. Dohle referred only to his achievement during the Battle of Long Tan.'*

I think you will agree with me there is an anomaly in this case, because Cliff Dohle who saved 6 lives because of his flying skills when he suffered a loss of power in his Huey that in turn crashed into the jungle of Vietnam through no fault of his own, caused him to be Medivaced out of Vietnam. This it unfair in the extreme to see him being judged and have his original recommendation for the DFC downgraded because he did not finish his so-called tour of duty.

Cliff Dohle arrived in Vietnam on the 12Jun66, Francis, known as Frank Riley arrived two days later on the 14Jun66, and Frank finished his tour of duty on the 5Jun67. (Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans) I note the reason the citations were held according to the Review March 08 was, Para 2 *'to take into account their performances in a wider context, and then resubmit them.'* This statement was not adhered to because the citations for both Frank and Cliff were forwarded in April 1967 that is at least two months prior to Frank Riley's end of tour in Vietnam, which was on the 5Jun67. (Ref: Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans.)

According to the Review dated March 2008 5.1 page 25 last paragraph last 3 lines '*Additionally, the initial citations for the DFC for both FltLt Dohle and FltLt Riley were very similarly worded, while the second set of citations were clearly different from one another.*' Has the Panel come up with any reason for this difference?

According to McAulay. P.84, para 4. '*Cliff Dohle in command of the second Huey, was quite experienced, having initially been trained as a wireless/operator/air gunner and then remustered to pilot training. He has flown jets, including the Canberra bomber, in Australia, Malaysia and Thailand, and found the helicopter "very heavy and sluggish to lift off". He had intended to follow Riley and Grandin, but soon after take-off they lost visual contact in the storm.*' As stated, (McAulay p. 84, para 1) *Cliff would follow in one minute after Riley and Grandin took off, but because of the storm and the fact Riley went immediately to 600metres (2000 ft) they lost visual contact before take off. "The intensity of the rain reduced the efficiency of the rotors, and the engine was in danger of "flaming out". The heavily laden Huey was able to fly only at treetop height, at reduced speed. Dohle remembers it was "uncomfortable"*

Because of the weight, Cliff estimated the all up weight in his aircraft to be about 1200kg's, and monsoon downpour he thought his speed to be between 20 and 30 knots.

Cliff and I spent some time on the weight of the resupply ammunition because we were trying to work out the number of boxes that he would have had on board. We were trying to get some sort of time it would take to unload/throw out when over the target. The Huey in good conditions was designed to carry 1815kg of cargo. RSM Chinn who was responsible for resupply would know that he would have to at least send 1st line requirements is the following according to Lt.Dave Sadden a 'D' company who told me over the phone. (Conversation Wed 1Apr09)

Rifleman =	60 rounds each
MG. M60 =	1000 rounds per gun
Owen 9mm =	250 rounds per gun

According to Training Information Bulletin number 28 an Inf Company consists of 5 Offr 121 OR's a platoon = 1 Offr 33 OR.

Each Platoon on average would require
 60 rounds 7.62 = 540 rounds
 GMP group M60 7.62 = 1000 rounds
 3 sections not counting Platoon Comd. = 4620 rounds
 Company total rounds without CHQ = 13860 rounds

According to the Manual of Land Warfare Vol 6 Pam 2 Aid Memoire page 13.3

	Rds/box	KG	lbs
9mm	1995	33.5	72
7.62	1680	26.8	
7.62 link 800		33.3	72
7.62	1000	37.2	82

Taking an average 900 rounds per box = 15 boxes this in some cases was further broken down to: (Grandin p.147 para. 3) '*they decided to break some of the boxes open, and to package some machine-gun ammunition belts in sandbags, to make it easier for Delta Company to distribute under fire.*' Cliff Dohle remembers that all the loose ammunition in sand bags and the blankets were on his aircraft.

Cliff thinks that Frank had 3 to 4 boxes on his aircraft and the rest was on his Huey. All this ammunition had to be thrown out by the two soldiers on board that were not secured with safety harness.

According to McAulay p.84 para.2 '*As soon as Riley and Grandin had some ammunition on board, they lifted off, into the rain.*'

McAulay, p.84. para 1 '*the pilots had decided to use a technique developed by SAS. Cliff Dohle and Bruce Lane would take most of the cargo, and follow one minute behind Riley and Grandin, who would locate the correct spot for them.*' All the pilots were familiar with this technique, as they had practiced with SAS many times.

The technique works like this: Because the jungle and especially rubber plantations have a lot of overhead foliage, (show pictures) anything under the trees is very hard to see at treetop level. The only way you can see through it is to be directly overhead and at height that way you can see over a large area. Bob Grandin in Frank's aircraft says: '*The lead helicopter, with Frank and I on board, was to take the lighter load and go out at height (about six hundred metres) to locate the target zone and make contact.*' (Grandin. P.148. para 2) That is 2000ft.

Later on Grandin states in the same paragraph: '*this was designed to improve our safety, as at height the probability of being hit by small arms fire is greatly reduced.*'

When Cliff arrived at the target area to which they had to navigate themselves, because they had lost sight of Riley before Cliff took off and because of the lack of visibility, Dohle was worried when he couldn't see Riley's aircraft, that in turn meant Riley wouldn't be able to see him, Cliff switched on his Anti Collision Rotating Red Light.

As you would be aware the red light is very bright and flashes on and off and is easily seen for a great distance. (McAulay p. 85, last paragraph) *'They'd put on their red light on the top, to give us an easy identification. We (Riley and Grandin) directed them in, straight in, to the position, gave them a little left and right steering at treetop level.'*

Cliff Dohle remembers very clearly that he had to hover over Delta CHQ and that he was directly over the smoke. *'Cliff Dohle saw the smoke below, and felt the helicopter lightening as the heavy boxes slid out, straight into the trees immediately below them. It seemed to take forever,'* (McAulay P. 86. para 1)

Harry Smith the Company Commander later told a reporter that resulted in being printed in The Sun on the 27Aug66, which stated *'The helicopter hovered at treetop level-20 feet from the ground.'* Cliff said he was worried that because of the weight of the boxes that if they hit anyone they would be killed. Cliff could see that the flare was away from soldiers and he could see them all clearly. He said he had to hold the aircraft very still in the monsoon to make sure the boxes and the loose ammo all landed where they were supposed too. He thought he was over the drop zone for between 1 and 2 minutes it was the longest time in his life. The welcome cry of the crewman to get going was heard as well as the voice over the radio that informed them it said *"You bloody beaut, that was smack on"* (McAulay. P.86. para 2) Cliff immediately headed for Nui Dat.

As soon as Cliff and Bruce arrived back at Nui Dat they were on standby. As the night wore on Cliff and his crew were ordered back to an area created by the APC's just outside the main battle area. They were to pick up the wounded and the dead. According to McAulay. P. 166 the listed for medical evacuation flight on the night of 18 August are: and in the list is, *A2-1022 Dohle, Lane, Harrington, Hill and A2-1020 Riley, Graddin, Collins, Stirling.* There are other aircraft listed

According to McAulay, p. 123, 2nd last paragraph, *'for Clif Dohle, this part of the mission was certainly the most difficult action I can remember during my Vietnam tour. We assembled over the Dust-off area at 4,000feet [1200 m] all milling around in the same piece of air space, not being able to see each other,*

waiting for a radio call directing us one by one to make our approach to the helipad.' According to Cliff's Log Book he and his crew flew 7 sorties. (Give copy to panel.) That is the first one being the resupply to 'D' company.

Cliff's Pilots Log Book reads: August 18 Resupply Ammo, Night Casevac 1.50hrs 7 sorties.

The last paragraph in the Review of Recognition for the Battle of Long Tan, section 5.4 states that FltLt Frank Riley *'carried the risk of being the first engaged by a possible attack. In the final stages of their approach to the D Coy position they flew low and slow over enemy positions.'* This is not true as already explained, and backed up by proof when FltLt Bob Grandin stated in his book: *'The lead helicopter, with Frank and I on board was to take the lighter load and go out at height (about six hundred meters)'* and then later in the same paragraph Grandin states: *'This was designed to improve our safety as at height the probability of being hit by small arms fire was greatly reduced etc.'*

Cliff Dohle discussed with me what actually happened and why, I have already explained the procedure and the reason for the technique that the RAAF developed in conjunction with SAS.

The statement in the last paragraph (Review dated March 2008 5.4) that *'FltLt Dohle's aircraft had the advantage of being able to hang back and be alert to enemy fire and to be more alert to possible enemy fire, and to react to conditions affecting the lead aircraft.'* is not true, because as stated earlier the lead aircraft had already left the scene and was already at height given the one minute delay that Cliff was to have. This one minute was to give Frank enough time to get to a height, 600m or 2,000ft and to locate the target. Given the weather conditions with huge droplets falling on the fuselage, the thunder and lightning, all this noise plus the huge amount of concentration required in this tense situation, add to that the noise of the engines and that the crew of the aircraft all have on head sets, they wouldn't know if they were under fire unless they seen a tracer bullet coming up at them. Cliff's aircraft had on all his navigations lights as well as a Strobing Anti Collision light, the aircraft would not/could not fly any higher that treetop.

Cliff was the first over 'D' company, he had to fly first over the enemy to get to the target and lit up like a Christmas tree and as he had most of the ammunition it took longer to unload and as stated in McAulay's book and reported in local newspapers: *'Cliff hovered just 20feet above the ground'* and had to hold his position until the complete load was thrown out. Cliff told me he thought he was over the target for between 1 to 2 minutes, Major O'Brien stated in Grandin's book page 148, 3rd paragraph he estimated that he expected Cliff Dohle to be over the target *'perhaps one minute.'* In McAulay's book page 86 it was reported that, *'it seemed to take forever.'* FltLt Frank Riley's aircraft flew at what is considered a safe height from small arms and when he descended from 2000ft with a small load, his time over the target compared to Cliff Dohle's was a lot less.

It is my considered opinion that Cliff Dohle action at the battle of Long Tan was exemplary as was his action when his aircraft crashed in the jungle in October 1966, it was his skill that saved six lives that were aboard his helicopter, he deserves his DFC as recommended by his CO at the time, Wing Commander Raymond Scott DFC.

Bob Thompson



Above. W01 Bob Thompson



Above. FL LT Cliff Dohle and Maj Harry Smith shake hands at Nui Dat after the Battle. GR CPT Peter Raw looks on.

AWM photo VN/66/0043/08 courtesy Australian War Memorial.



Above. Cliff Dohle.



The Governor General chats to family of the late FT LT Cliff Dohle after the presentation of the Distinguished Service Medal.

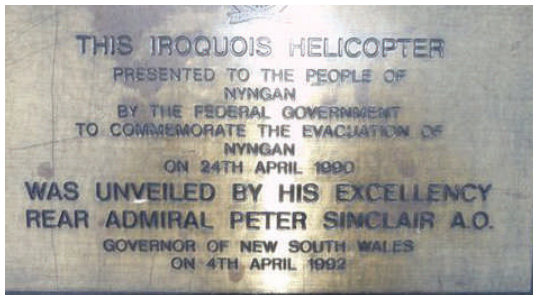
R to L Her Excellency, daughter Lisa Arrowsmith, grandson Max (aged 7), son Peter Dohle and widow Joan Dohle. Photo, courtesy Government House, Canberra.

ICONIC WAR RELIC HEADED FOR MUSEUM

A dedicated group of Veterans supported by RAAF Cadets has painstakingly toiled since August 2010 to recover Long Tan Huey helicopter A2-1022 from a state of disrepair in a park at Nyngan NSW and restore the chopper to its Vietnam configuration in preparation for display at the Caloundra Queensland RSL war museum next March.

A2-1022 cemented its place in Australian military history when, in company with A2-1020, it delivered the critical ammunition to the troops of Delta Company 6RAR then deeply engaged in the Battle of Long Tan on 18Aug1966.

Long Tan Veterans Laurie Drinkwater and Bob Buick have stated recently that but for that ammunition resupply by the two aircraft captained that August 1966 evening by Cliff Dohle and Frank Riley none of Delta 6 would be alive today.



Plaque unveiled in Nyngan 1992

26 years after Long Tan, A2-1022 was presented to the people of Nyngan in recognition of the helicopter evacuation of the people during the severe 1990 floods. On 4Apr1992 the then NSW Governor, RADM Peter Sinclair RAN (retired), unveiled a plaque commemorating the helicopter presentation. That plaque made no reference to the military historical significance of the aircraft.

The Bogan Shire Council of which Nyngan is a major population centre agreed to donate the original A2-1022 to the Caloundra RSL war museum after the significance of its historic military value was explained. A major condition of the donation was the RSL had to provide a suitable replacement chopper for installation in the same park as the original aircraft. The Caloundra RSL war museum after the significance of its historic military value was explained. A major condition of the donation was the RSL had to provide a suitable replacement chopper for installation in the same park as the original aircraft.

Cooroy based McDermott Aviation donated a badly damaged airframe to the team and work commenced to bring the wreck to a state suitable to meet the requirements of Bogan Shire.



A2-1022 in Nyngan Park 1992

Veteran Bob McInnes took on the project management role ably supported by project technical advisor, Canberra based Rob Gee. Rob is well credentialed for the job, having worked on Iroquois helicopters in Australia, Malaya and Vietnam and was recently heavily involved in the restoration of Huey A2-1019, now the centrepiece of the two audio-visual helicopter displays in the Australian War Memorial post '45 galleries.

The suitably restored replacement aircraft was transported to Nyngan over the weekend 21/22 May2011 and installed on a pole to hopefully raise it to vandal proof height.

The original A2-1022 then began its journey to Caloundra and the second stage of the project.

Since then the aircraft has undergone major refurbishment and, compliments of Dupont who donated the paint and Caloundra Heli-Centre who made their spray paint booth available, is scheduled for final painting early in November 2011.



Replacement chopper on pole in Nyngan Park

According to Rob Gee, the aircraft will be displayed as it was in Vietnam circa late 1967. Major restoration work necessary to bring the aircraft to an acceptable museum display condition included replacement of several cockpit window panels, manufacture of damaged fuselage and tail boom parts, and the fitment of main rotor control components. The aircraft display is scheduled for dedication by ADF Chaplains on Friday 16Mar2012.

Indications are former Chief of the Australian Defence Force, ACM Angus Houston (Retired) will attend and officiate at the dedications. ACM Houston as a WGCMDR was the final Commanding Officer of 9SQN RAAF.

Caloundra RSL expects several unit reunions to be scheduled to coincide with the dedication.

All 9 & 5 SQN RAAF personnel, D6RAR 1966, ASASR Veterans and all those who have flown in or can identify with Iroquois operations are encouraged to attend the dedication and associated events.

These will be posted on the various web sites and in unit newsletters.

Long Tan Veterans Laurie Drinkwater and Bob Buick have stated recently that but for that ammunition resupply by the two aircraft crewed that August 1966 evening by Cliff Dohle, Bruce Lane, Frank Riley, Bob Grandin, Dave Collins, George Stirling, Bill Harrington and LAC Hill of 9 SQN RAAF none of Delta 6 would be alive today.

Information for this story and photos were supplied by Caloundra RSL, Bob McInnes and Rob Gee

CALLING ON THE GREY NOMADS!

I would like to start a section in Debrief called "The Grey Nomads Corner"

If you are one of the many grey nomads out there who

- Have a good story to tell
- Want to share some photos
- Have some good recipes to share
- Have some useful & handy hints on caravanning
- Know some good fishing spots
- Know of a good place to be around 18th August

I think by now you have the general drift. Sent in your stories, photos hints etc to the editor of Debrief
Kath Coxon

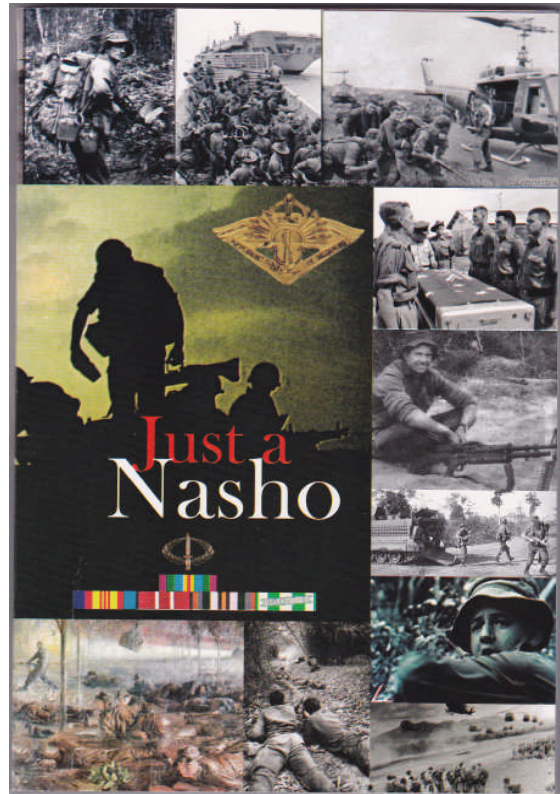
Email rkcoxon@netspace.net.au

PO Box 89

Huonville Tas 7109

Ph 03 6266 6467 Mob 0411 054 654

BOOK REVIEW



This book is a TRIBUTE mainly to our era of THE NASHOS, we trained and took to Vietnam. The book contains a general rundown of the old and our era National Service Scheme, followed by personal stories and then a story which is fiction based on truth of nine members of a Rifle Section in Vietnam. I HAVE PUBLISHED THIS BOOK BEFORE IN 2003 and sold 800 copies and since then have been constantly asked when I was printing more.

I WAS NOT COMPLETELY HAPPY WITH ALL OF THE FIRST ONE SO REVISED IT.

Bill Parry

Just a Nasho is available through VVAA National Merchandise Cost \$30 plus \$9 postage.

Debrief articles.

Any articles, poems, stories, correspondence etc re Debrief to:

Debrief Sec. Warwick Luttrell.

Email: vvaataspres@aussiebroadband.com.au

Or Editor Kath Coxon:

Email: rkcoxon@netspace.net.au

If you are receiving more than one copy of Debrief per household but only require one, please notify Debrief Sec

Your legacy needs some lifeblood.



The multi-award winning National Vietnam Veterans Museum (NVVM) at Phillip Island continues to expand, develop and amaze. Since it's relocation and official opening in March 2007 it has doubled in size and continues to impress.

The Museum works hard to be an educational resource for future generations and you would be pleased at the increasing number of schools that are coming through. When they have been through once, they continue to come with each new class.

The Museum is established as the Spiritual Home of Vietnam Veterans and after a visit you will understand why.

Perhaps more importantly, the NVVM is the legacy of ALL Vietnam veterans. It is your Museum. When we all 'fall off the perch', the Museum will remain.

Most Corps and Services are represented; some better than others. Recently as a result of a visit by one person, the members from the 1 Australian Field Hospital Association Committee visited and now there is a drive for better representation of the important work that they did for us. Unfortunately the Medical Corps, the Nurses and the Red Cross don't have the coverage that they deserve. That is now being rectified. If you can assist – please do.

The point is that one person with a bit of drive can make a difference. That could be you and your unit may have its' story told.

Please have a look at your memorabilia (Stuff), work out what the kids are going to do with it – and then if there is any doubt - give it to us. We want your photographs / slides – or copies of them. If you can fill in some gaps and say who is in them or where they were taken – so much the better. Even if you can't or don't have the time – we still want them.

Any letters to or from home. You could put a caveat on them if you want to, that they are not to be displayed until ... 2015! These help provide a snapshot in time and may have immense value in years to come. Sometimes we forget that we are living history- and in years to come, people will be even more interested.

Roll Books, Phone books, text books. Pamphlets, Cards, Aide memoirs.

Uniforms or part thereof, instruments, anecdotes, old newsletters, old newspapers.

If it was interesting enough for you to store it, we are happy to receive it.

We will acknowledge all donations to the Museum and specifically forget who gave things to us, if that is what you want. As a rule, things are gifted to the Museum and they then become the property of the Museum. That way we don't get caught up in disputes at a later date.

Please don't be too fussy: let us sort out what is junk. One fellow who visited the Museum and got the 'What are your kids going to do with it' story and said he might have something. He sent us little chipped rice bowl, a tiny cracked Chinese tea cup and a little pill bottle with a small wick coming from it as a make-shift lantern. Junk from his drawer. When he added that they were taken from a cave in the Long Hais on Operation Pinaroo they become diamonds in context.

The Museum is pleased to have a marching banner from the Nurses. But that is all we have. Many soldiers at one time or another were in love with a nurse (or would liked to have been!) We do not even have a nurse's uniform. This is an area that we are criticised on – so we really need your help.

National Council Support

We were delighted with the support received from the National Council at their recent meeting. The national approach to Vietnam Veterans Welfare Badge sales will end up with a considerable windfall to the coffers of every Sub-Branch and the Museum also benefits directly with some dollars and by making purchasers aware of your national entity.

The greatest idea was the notion of making a direct allotment to the Museum of perhaps \$10.00 per month – and a couple of the Board have already. As was stated that is only one coffee or one schooner per fortnight. If we can get some numbers behind that proposal it will make a considerable difference to the Museum development

Other ways to Help.

Volunteering: We can always use a helping hand in almost every field. If you have the time and are able to commit to being there regularly – you can assist. Even a few hours or one day per month. Don't underestimate your skills – put some of your experience to good use.

Donations: Memorabilia is the thrust of this article but if you have something that is from outside of the services that could also be welcome. Recently we have benefited with display cabinets from a change in furnishings in a Mess, the closing down of an RSL and a Chemist Shop having a new fit-out. Quality display furnishings in each case.

We are really short of mannequin dummies too – even boy / youth size for some of our smaller uniforms ie Montagnard Ceremonial. We are hopeful of obtaining Nursing uniforms so women dummies are required too.

Money:

Recently we have been the beneficiary of two small bequests and they have been of great support. We can help with information on bequests if required.

We continue to have the Buy-A-Brick program for the maintenance and development of the Museum but recently have added Buy-A-Slab program, from Bronze through to Platinum – plus Corporate, which is specifically designed to pour the Slab floor for the Museum extension. Any funds over after we seal the floor and we will extend the mezzanine.

Significant Events

Patron. We can now announce that we have a new Patron of the Museum and we were delighted when he accepted our invitation. Air Vice Marshall Alan Reed AO is an active outgoing person who is a Vietnam veteran who completed 100 combat missions in RF-4C Phantoms while attached to the USAF 12th TRS /460 TRW.

Including the RAAF Phantoms, he logged over 1,000 hours in them. He also has another affinity with the Museum in that while he has logged an additional 1,000 hours in Canberra Bombers, his log Books reflect that he has flown in the Bomber that we are restoring, on five occasions.

Book Launch. The book on the history of the Museum has been completed. Titled ‘Soldiers are Persons’ the book mirrors the progress of Vietnam veterans since the end of the conflict. The author Ken Anderson AM has done a great job and created an ‘easy read’.

The book was launched in front of most Victorian Sub-Branches and a good representation of the Vietnamese Australian Community and Vietnamese veterans at the Back to the Museum Day at the end of November. The book is available from the Museum at \$25.00 for Veterans and Sub-Branches. (RRP \$33.00)

Iroquois. We have signed the Contract of Sale documents and expect to take delivery before Christmas. We are also tendering for three M60 Ds – used by Door Gunners which will enable us to restore the aircraft back to the Bushranger configuration that it had in Vietnam. Next Challenge – M113 APC.

2012. Next year will be a big year – for all of us. With the above promotions and other activities associated with the 50th Anniversary of our first troops in to Vietnam, We expect the Museum to be more prominent.

Two activities which are certain to get airspace in the media is VetRide, a bicycle ride over 4 days from Echuca to outer-Melbourne to raise funds and awareness of the Museum. More about that later but there are some details on the VVAA Vic website.

The other activity is new to Australia but big in America and we have tacked ourselves on to it. The event is called Tough Mudder and will be launched on Phillip Island at the end of March. This will rival Iron Man for degrees of difficulty but seems to be based on an exaggerated image of a ‘Special Forces / Marines boot camp. You are sure to hear about it. They are sponsoring Legacy in Australia but in America they sponsor the ‘Wounded Warrior’ organisation.

Finally: When the slab is down the next project will be to utilise the new display space available. To this end The Mezzanine will be extended down the west wall by another 30+ metres and the east wall mezzanine will extend over the top of the ‘Light and Sound show’ and 2/3’s across the interior back wall. All of the corresponding bays will be lined to significantly increase the display area.

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum has won a number of both business and Museum awards. What this indicates is that your Museum is in good hands. Come and see us. Get a feel of the place and see how you as a veteran are portrayed and how your Corps or unit is represented. Any comments are listened to and most donations are displayed. If you are considering a bequest – please let us know.

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Article is submitted by Gary Parker, NVVM President

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum is open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day between 10.00 and 5.00pm. Ph: (03) 5956 6400

Physical address is 25 Veterans Drive, Newhaven – next to Phillip Island airfield.
Postal: P O Box 318,
San Remo Vic 3925

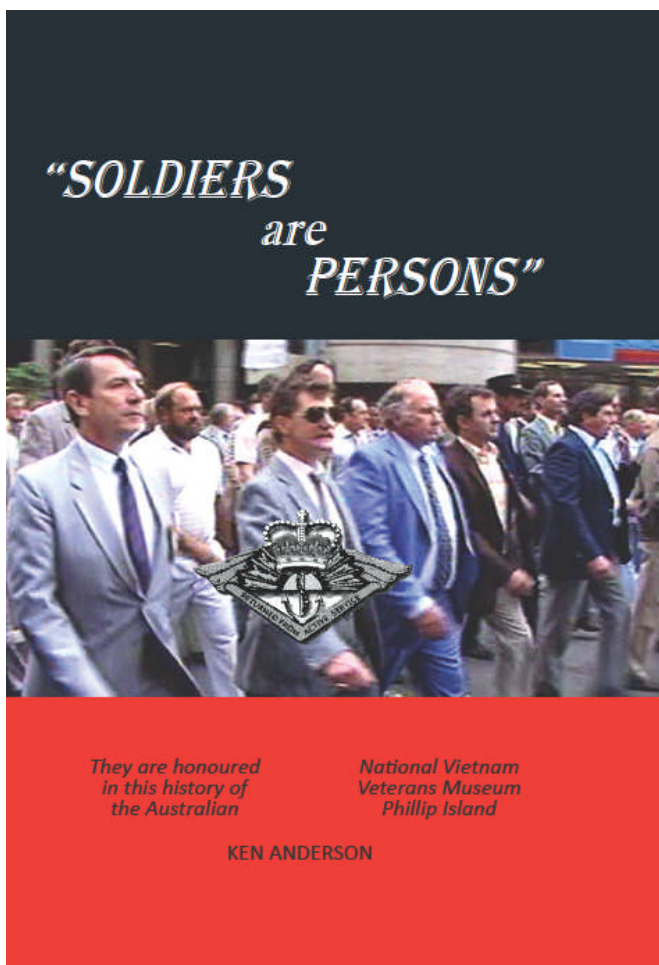
www.vietnamvetmuseum.org (Note the website is undergoing a makeover. It can be used but is not current at the moment.)

All you ever want to know about Vietnam

This site is very good for research

<http://www-static.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html>

VIETNAM VETERANS NATIONAL MUSEUM



“SOLDIERS ARE PERSONS”

The war in Vietnam was cruel and costly in every sense, as indeed all wars are! However the nature of this war not so markedly different from any other armed conflict in which Australian troops had been involved—certainly not to degree that would justify the creation of a special purpose single interest museum, which is the case of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum—so why does this particular museum exist(?).

The title of the museum provides a clue with the emphasis being the word “Veterans”, which indicated that it is dedicated to the veterans in particular, not the war in general. It was the adverse reception that troops had to endure on their return to the homeland that created a heartfelt need for them to want to be remembered as persons who were good soldiers who had done a good job.

The written history seeks to record their emotional need and to detail the path walked by a group of totally committed volunteers who created an incredible museum over a seventeen-year period. It is a work of non-fiction based on personal interviews and submission; plus impressions derived from unsolicited and un-attributed observations and comments from a very extensive range of museum patrons.

The book is available from the Vietnam Veterans National Museum or VVAA National Merchandise — cost \$33.00 Plus \$9 postage.

Right.

The Wessex has arrived at the museum.

Vetride

“Tour of Duty” 2012

VetRide invites you to be a part of the inaugural Victorian 'Tour of Duty' fundraising recreational bicycle ride. The tour will be about 400 kilometres, commencing from Echuca on the Murray River, on Sunday 25 March 2012. It will then travel to Bendigo, Castlemaine, Maryborough, Ballarat and finish at Melton. Each day's ride (except for the last day) will be broken into four easy stages.

There will be an optional later ceremonial stage at Phillip Island in November where the recipient of the fundraising proceeds, the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, will play host to all of the participating riders.

Ride Timetable:

Sat 24 Mar 2012

Meet & Greet Echuca

Sun 25 Mar 2012

1st Leg > Bendigo

Mon 26 Mar 2012

2nd Leg > Maryborough

Tue 27 Mar 2012

3rd Leg > Ballarat

Wed 28th Mar 2012

4th Leg > Melton

Enquiries to:

Maurie Benson

VetRide Secretary

Telephone: 0417 588 886

Email: vetride@vvaavic.org.au

Mail: PO Box 587 MENTONE VIC 3194



3 CAV Memorial Wall

The 3 CAV Memorial Wall opened at Tongala Victoria on 31st Oct 2011. This was built by the son of a Vietnam veteran, Duncan Willis, who lives here on the Gold Coast as does his Mum & Dad .

Duncan has always been a great supporter of the veteran community as his Pop was WW2 veteran & his Dad a Vietnam vet.

Duncan has a few factories now having just opened the latest in Melbourne called "Willis Bros. Marble & Granite".

If anyone would like to give Duncan a "Well Done" his addy is below. .

Email: duncan@willisbros.com.au

Who would have thought 30 yrs ago there would be beautiful reflecting memorials like this for veterans and families to visit



VVAA National Merchandise New Products



RAN Ensign 1911-2011
\$6.50each



RAN Centenary
\$6.50each



Vietnam 4 Ribbon Scarf \$25each



Cloth Patches \$8 each
Somalia, Afghanistan,



Wooden Bottle Opener
RAN, ARMY, RAAF,
VVAA \$30each

THE WAITING GAME

It seems our Nation is often involved in someone else's war

As always, there are casualties and that's for sure
Thus a terrible game is to be played now and then
Waiting for news, good or bad, from the lion's den

The ritual begins at the starter's gate
The rules are simple; all you do is listen, pray and wait.
The signal to start is heard by more than a few
It's what the media calls "Breaking news"

The dice are rolled at any time be it day or night
There is no warning and for players it surely is a fright
With the news that some of our military are wounded or dead
Just numbers given but not the names to be heard or read

The word quickly travels that the game has begun
Media and word of mouth helps the game to run
It quickly gathers pace and even those who are beginners
Already know full well that in this game there are no winners

It's mostly the soldiers' wives, sweethearts and parents who play the game

Be they at home or work, all dreading to hear a loved one's name

In time the casualties are called from the dice which have been thrown

Then the couriers go forth prepared for the screams, sobs and groans

There's fear and panic when strangers in uniform knock at the door
Watching them shuffle with grim long faces staring at the floor
Hearing their news; knowing that all has been lost in terrible strife
No more loving hugs, happiness and security from yesterday's life

The garlands are laid amid much reverence for those who died
Honour rolls amended with new names scribed
Lovers in mourning now alone drift with neither purpose nor song
New widows, confused families and crippled veterans urged to move on

Time passes, names slowly forgotten and most do not care

Next of Kin continue to grieve for loved ones who once did dare

For those who must play it, the waiting game has ended once more

Until the next breaking news and unwelcome messengers arrive at the door

George Mansford ©November 2011

IT WAS GROUND HOG DAY

Story pg...20



This is the hard working group that got the two aircraft flying, together with the outgoing crew

