



# DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN

Edited and Published By

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

P.O Box 97

MINTO NSW 2566

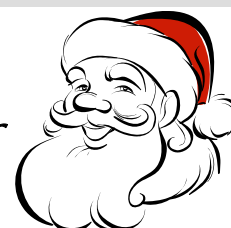
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## SUMMER

## 2009



### *COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON*



The year seems to have passed quickly and the festive season is here once more. Merry Xmas to everyone and a Happy Healthy New Year. In this time of goodwill everything should be enjoyed to the maximum but with good sense. It should be noted that the .05 bus does not seem to go too far and quite often after that transport becomes very difficult. At this time of the year many will be feeling down because of their circumstance so keep your eye out for mates who may not be travelling so well and call so that they are not alone.

A new message is now in place for everyone to become involved. The message is quite simply to take the time to ask all around you "R U OK". This question may surely break the ice and those asked could be ready to accept assistance.

Probably the time passed very quickly this year as everyone has been so busy. Six new forums for veteran matters have now been put in place. With reports distributed down to Sub Branch level all members have a chance be aware of what each forum is dealing with. This then gives you the member, through your Sub Branch, the chance to raise matters of concern to you that may be handled by the relevant forum.

Everyone should be urged to become involved because the VVAA, like all other bodies, is suffering from the fact that it is always the same people doing all the work. More hands make light work. . Become engaged with your Sub Branch and get involved in the activities

If you have suggestions for change have it discussed, you may have a suggestion for some activity that would appeal to other members so it could happen. On the other hand it may well have been tried before without success. That does not necessarily mean it would fail again.

Just remember this is your Association and the members make it function. Be there, have a say and participate your lot in life will be improved.

#### CONTENTS

Presidents Report	Pg 03
VVAA Portfolios	Pg 04
Vic Report	Pg 05
Qld Report	Pg 06
NT Report	Pg 07
NSW Report	Pg 08
VVAA issues– based Policies	Pg 10
WA Report	Pg 13
Letter to the editor	Pg 14
Kalgoorlie Memorial Dedication	Pg 15
Riverland SA Memorial Report	Pg 16
Tas Report	Pg 17
Repatriation Benefits List	Pg 18
ACT Report	Pg 19
20 Bulletin Board	Pg 20
Changes to DVA Cards	Pg 21

#### DISCLAIMER

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





Left.  
The Kalgoorlie-Boulder Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication day was held at Centennial Park in Kalgoorlie on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009.  
Full story page 16.

Below L & R.  
The opening and dedication of the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and Garden at ANZAC Park, Somerset, Tasmania.  
Story pg 18.



Left & Below.  
The Riverland Vietnam Veterans—Post World War II Veterans Memorial has officially been opened. See story in Riverland Vietnam veterans Sub branch report on page 17.





## NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT



Another year draws to a close and as everyone ages and health in many starts to become a problem the welfare of members becomes paramount. Everyone should keep an eye on those who maybe experiencing some difficulty. Make a point of keeping in touch with all on their network. The welfare aspect of the

Association's business is now the priority.

On the subject of ill health there was a change to the executive made at the October National Council in Adelaide. Due to health problems Brian Harper moved from the position of National Secretary to National Vice President in a switch with Ken Foster who has now assumed the role of National Secretary. I take this opportunity to thank them both for the effort they put in in their previous roles and look forward to their continued contributions

The last part of this year has been very hectic with all the new forums now in place and having meetings. A watching brief will be kept to ensure that the new forums cover all aspects of veteran matters. At the same time there are reviews, some requiring submissions, now being conducted. These reviews are all part of the Government's Veteran Platform and they include reviews of Pharmaceutical, DVA funded Advocacy Services and the MRCA among others. We will be focused on the outcome of all of these reviews.

In my last report it was emphasised that the Association must maintain scrutiny on the services of DVA in their ability to provide services to veterans. Some areas of concern in the claims processing area have been brought to the attention of both the Secretary of DVA Ian Campbell and the Minister Alan Griffin. Although these concerns have been raised for sometime now at this time little action appears to have been taken to address the problems. Some of the concern is the inconsistency between State Offices in systems and procedures. Be sure that the pressure to correct the problems will continue.

It should be noted that in all communications on the above matters the input of VVAA has been welcomed and valued. Everyone involved is on the same page whether we are talking about the Minister or the Secretary. Other ESOs have voiced concerns over some of the same matters. Now we all await action so that the best outcome can be achieved.

There are many questions asked on what the policies of the VVAA are on issues. Most States have a manifesto of policies on their web page but just to keep members informed here are some of the issues for which we have a policy

BEST Funding for Advocacy and Welfare Services must be continued.

Defence Superannuation must be indexed in the same way as all other Federal Pensions.

Disability Pension to be indexed in the same way as all other Federal Pensions and not lose value.

Mental Health ensure Government funding to allow easy access to treatment and ongoing care.

Pharmaceuticals for veterans to be free.

Veteran & veteran Family Counselling Service is resourced to continue to provide services to the veteran community.

Veterans Aged Care ensure the Government treat veterans as a special needs group and that adequate funding and aged care packages are provided for veterans.

Merchandise sales continue to grow and many telephone their orders. After placing their order most have then wanted to have a talk with me about what is happening in the veteran community. This two way feedback raises points that in many cases can be addressed or gives the veteran a better understanding of exactly what is occurring. It is a very good feed back from the people on the ground.

As stated earlier in this report welfare is becoming an increasing workload for all those concerned in providing this service. Contact your Sub Branch to become involved, if the workload can be spread it is much easier. You will be rewarded just by your better outlook on life. While we are considering that aspect it is of great concern in the number of veterans who have had no contact. We need to be aware of this and seek these people out. Just let them know you are there and what may well be available to them, some are doing it real tough and you may be able to assist.

This has been a good and successful year and we must be looking forward to an even better one in the New Year. Keep up the great work and we will enjoy the future.

I take this opportunity to thank all involved and wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Stay safe and keep well.

**Ron Coxon**

National President.

## VVAA PORTFOLIO AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION AS AT 24 OCT 2009

Portfolio	Manager	Committee & Organisation	Representative
Health	David Mccann	National Health, Aged & Community Care Forum (NHACCF)	Jan Properjohn
		National Mental Health Forum (NMHF)	Brian McKenzie
		Veterans Medicines Advisory and Therapeutic Education Scheme (MATES)	Peter Ryan
Compensation & Rehabilitation	Ron Coxon	Operational Working Party (OWP)	Ron Coxon
DVA Operations	Ron Coxon	Ex-Service Round Table National Presidents	Ron Coxon
Administration	Ken Foster	Constitution & Policy	
		Register of Practitioners	
		Administration	
		Membership Data Base	
		Debrief Editorial Committee	National Executive
		National Grievance Committee	Appointed by National Council
Management, Media & Education	Ken Foster	Liaison with Government, Minister, Shadow Minister, Repatriation Commission & DVA	Ron Coxon
		Media Releases	Ron Coxon
		Public Officer	Ken Foster
		AVCAT	Ken Foster
		Museum National Liaison Officer	Bob Elworthy
		National Kindred Organisation Committee (KOC)	Peter Ryan
		Veterans Indemnity Training Association (VITA)	Peter Ryan
		National Solicitor	As Required
Finance	Rob Cox	Website Webmaster	Rob Cox
		Finance Committee	National Executive
		Grant & Budget Preparation	Rob Cox
		Register of Assets	Rob Cox
		Merchandise & Memorabilia	Kath Coxon
Welfare & Income Support	Brian Harper	Welfare	Brian Harper
		Service Pension	Brian Harper
		Income Support War Widow	Brian Harper
		Rent Assistance	Brian Harper

## Notes

1. The National Executive determines portfolio responsibilities at the conclusion of the VVAA National Congress.
2. All State Branches are to be notified of these allocated responsibilities by the National President in accordance with Policy GE 012.
3. A member of the National Executive has overall responsibility for the management of each portfolio, including Sub Committees.
4. The National Executive or National Council in special circumstances may appoint a Sub Committee to manage a specific task or project.
5. All representatives are to ensure that a Briefing Note and minutes of meetings attended on behalf of the Association are made available to the Portfolio Manager for distribution to the members of the National Council.
6. Correspondence relating to any representation must be sanctioned by the National Executive and privacy markings determined together with the level of distribution (Policy GE008).
7. All representatives shall be included on the normal National Council distribution list to ensure they are kept up to date with current VVAA issues and policy.
8. Those appointed to represent the Association should have suitable expertise and experience.
9. Where an expert is required or geographical reasons dictate, the Council may appoint a representative under Clause 21(e) of VVAA Constitution and Policy GE003.

## VICTORIA

The devastating February bushfires will long remain in our memory, such was the impact of the fires on the Vietnam Veteran family. Happily, rebuilding and rehabilitation are well underway, new houses are springing up, late Spring rains have brought some relief to the parched landscape and the bush is springing back remarkably well.

Generous donations from within the state branch and from others outside of the state have been distributed to those impacted and to a worthy community rebuilding project. In excess of \$20,000 has been distributed, and I can't help but think that because the donations came from the veteran community, each amount was accepted with a special level of gratitude. All donations will be formally acknowledged in the near future now that the final distributions have been made.

Our state wide grass roots welfare program kicked off mid-year. Presentations have been made in a number of rural and regional centres, and with the co-operation of the SA and NSW Branches, Mt Gambier, Wagga and Tocumwal will also have been visited by year's end. The presentations are open to any and all veterans and partners, not just Vietnam Veterans, and the response from the older and younger veterans has been encouraging. Additionally, information about the other major ESO's and veteran community support associations has been included in the presentations in order to provide attendees with the best possible access to the nearest support services. All ESO's are invited to have representatives in attendance.

The presentations have been supported superbly by RSL Victoria, through unrestricted access to RSL Sub-Branches across the state, VVAA Victoria Sub-Branches, DVA Victoria through mail outs, VAN office support, VVCS and regional ABC Radio. The spin offs are a better informed veteran community, a raised profile for the branch through activity in remote areas of the state, re-connection with past members or contact for the first time with Vietnam Veterans, and increased membership.

Key focus issues for Victoria have included the National Constitution, a review and update of our key issues Manifesto.

### **Victorian Veterans the Winners in State Government Response to the Victorian Veterans Sector Study**

The Victorian government has supported all of the eleven recommendations and many of the specific actions suggested by the Victorian Veterans Council made in the Victorian Veterans Sector Study, and has committed \$6.6million over 4 years from 2009-2010 to support their implementation.

The study highlighted the challenges facing the veteran community over the next ten years, particularly around the impact of age, health, mobility, and declining veteran numbers. The eleven recommendations covered four major themes:

\*Sustainability of ex-service organisations and options for support to build their capacity to meet veterans' welfare needs.

\*the well-being and social engagement of veterans and war widows.

The Victorian community's understanding of Australia's war-time history.

\*Improving collaboration throughout the veteran community by sharing information and better co-ordination.

One of the key issues examined related to accommodation for veterans, and the State Government has committed \$2M towards alleviating the problems identified. Work on identifying specific accommodation needs and the best ways to meet the challenges of providing suitable accommodation will proceed in consultation with major Victorian ESO's.

The full report and the Victorian Government response can be viewed at: [www.veterans.vic.gov.au](http://www.veterans.vic.gov.au)

### **Euroa Vietnam Veterans Honoured**

The small Victorian town of Euroa has honoured 18 Vietnam Veterans with the unveiling of a plaque at the local RSL by Victorian State President Bob Elworthy. The 18 veterans honoured include three RAN veterans and a fairly even split of Army Regs and Nashos.

Euroa is a sleepy small town, population about 2700, between Seymour and Benalla, and is now bypassed by the Hume Highway. Wikipedia records Euroa's only claim to fame being that Ned Kelly robbed the town bank in the 1880's!

On closer examination however, Euroa has a magnificent history of its young men pulling on the uniform to defend the empire, the commonwealth, our own shores, and to confront the spread of communism in Asia: a monument to the fallen in the town bears the names of 161 soldiers from Euroa and surrounding towns who did not return from the Boer War, WW1, WW2 and Korea, including three VC winners.

During the Vietnam War years, highlights in Euroa included a local man cracking the Olympic Team, the local high school opened, bushfires took the lives of seven family members and the town's Olympic sized swimming pool was built-progress bush style!

Wikipedia is short on information: Euroa is also the home town of Merv "the swerve" Hughes!

### **Help needed.**

"I am writing on behalf of the committee of the memorial Hall at Bridgewater (Vic). The committee intends to update the Roll of Honour, to include those who served in Vietnam, who came from Bridgewater and district.

I extend an invitation to your organisation to become involved if they wish too. If you have any suggestions or any ideas they will be gratefully received.

At the moment we have six names, 4 of which have been contacted, the other 2 will be contacted shortly.

Bryan Ryan (54373022) email [glenalvi@aapt.net.au](mailto:glenalvi@aapt.net.au)"

## QUEENSLAND REPORT

Well here it is nearly the end of another year and what a year it has been. Qld membership at the moment stands and just over 1500, all classes. We can do better.

Having just attended our National Council meeting in Adelaide, may I say that it is pleasing to see that we are finally moving forward, hopefully together in some areas? I believe that the Victoria Welfare Project is an excellent initiative and that we in Qld are looking at adopting it although we do have the added problem of distance. The other area involved is the National Manifesto of Issues being evolved and placed on the National Website.

I am sure that the majority of these issues will relate to all States but each State will have issues specifically in relation to their own. These are both excellent big steps forward in getting back to our Core Business. Qld believes that we must take a very active role in assisting the Post 75 conflict people in all matters concerning their Welfare, Health and Well Being as well as looking after our own. We are also looking at developing Admin instructions etc so as to assist in the smooth running of the Qld Branch.

Once again it was very pleasing to get back and visit old friends and meet new ones. On behalf of the Qld delegation, I would like to thank the SA boys and girls for their great efforts in looking after us.

The VVAA Qld Branch took a massive kick in the guts in June this year when the Qld RSL evicted us from Angus House after us running it very successfully for 23 years. The Qld RSL believes they can do it better. We can only wait and see. We are still hopeful that we may get some financial remuneration for the assets etc. At this time we have not received a cent

On a more pleasing note we have almost completed the handover of Remembrance House from the Diggers Assn to us. This group is a break away group from the RSL. Remembrance House is located on Grey Street, Sth Brisbane about 200 metres from the Sth Brisbane Railway Station. With the hand over of this building, the Diggers Assn has also gifted us the running of the main ANZAC Day Dawn service in ANZAC Square, Brisbane with the proviso that the Qld RSL does not run it. It is the only State Dawn Service that is not run by the RSL.

Qld is still taking our State Meetings to the Sub Branches and this year we have been up to Home Hill, Bundaberg, Redcliffe, Stanthorpe, Gympie and Kallangur and next year we will be travelling to Hervey Bay for the AGM, and then Kingaroy, Gympie, Gold Coast, Southport and Redcliffe.

The planning for the National Congress in May 2010 is well and truly under way and we are looking forward to hosting this in Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast. Remember the saying here in Qld 'Beautiful one day perfect the next'. Bring your sunnies, swimmers and sun tan lotion and be prepared for a great time.

Qld believes that we need to become more visible and

pro active in matters concerning the Veteran community and hopefully with the introduction of the Welfare Project and the adoption of the National Manifesto of Issues we will go a long way in achieving this. We must be seen and heard and take a leading role and not depend on others.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of the VVAA Qld Branch wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and safe New Year? Remember don't drink and drive as you may spill it.

## NATIONAL CONGRESS 2010

Good day to one and all from Sunny Queensland, Beautiful one day, perfect the next. Speaking of next, the VVAA National Congress for 2010 is to be held up here in Qld from 19<sup>th</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> May and what better place to have it than on the Sunshine Coast. Yes the Congress is to be held at the Caloundra RSL. They President at the moment is the one and only Barry Johnson an Past State President and well known to the old and bolds.

The accommodation will be at the Rydges Oasis Resort situated in Caloundra and within walking (long) distance to the RSL. Accommodation rates have been circulated to all states so anyone interested, please check with State branches.

We have been in touch with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and they are happy to host a Civic Reception on the Wednesday evening commencing at about 6.00PM and going through to about 7.30PM, location still to be advised. Attendance at this activity will be restricted. The dress for this activity will be coat and tie with miniatures for males and appropriate dress for Females The Congress is to be officially opened Thursday morning 20<sup>th</sup> may commencing at about 9.00AM and we are hopeful at this stage of having none other than Qld own Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to officiate at the opening. The dress for the official opening is normally coat and tie with full size medals for males and appropriate dress for females.

The Congress itself will be conducted over the Thursday and Friday with a Congress Dinner being conducted on the Friday night. At the moment we are endeavouring to get Radio Saigon a group comprising 5 people, one of which is a Vietnam Veteran who sings songs of our ear and dress accordingly, including Cams. The dress for this activity will be smart Casual. Attendance at this function is open to all, the more the merrier. We are currently endeavouring to sort out a couple of bus trips for the observers, one on the Thursday afternoon and the other on the Friday. We are currently looking at the possibility of putting on a Bar B Q on the Thursday night. This could be at the Caloundra RSL or at the Oasis Resort

Remember this is your congress and if you have ever wondered about what happens at these meetings then this is the ideal opportunity for you to come along and attend and what better place than on the Sunshine Coast of the Sunshine State. If you require any further information then please contact John P Smith, Qld State President on mobile 0407 460 358 or via email at [president@vvaaqueensland.asn.au](mailto:president@vvaaqueensland.asn.au) Come along and see your National Executive and Council at work and play and join in and have fun. See you there.



### **NORTHERN TERRITORY**

This years' Vietnam Veterans Day in the Top End was a great success with the Vietnam Veterans contingent being one of the largest in many years and attracted a larger number of guest and supporters. Publicity in the local NT News paper, TV stations and the on the local radio stations was well received.

Membership is on the rise with membership reaching the 79 mark and growing.

During the month of July the Royal Darwin Show was held and members of the association maned an information stall within the Defence Recruiting Area to handout information on Vietnam Veterans Association, DVA and VVCS. This was also a success as we had over 140 inquires.

Coral house is running well. 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 state branch has received a grant from DHF and has employed the services of Murdock Advantage, Consultants to develop the Policy and Procedures Manual, and hopefully they will be completed shortly.

The last of the Veteran's get-togethers has come and gone and by all accounts those monthly BBQ's were a great success. We have hosted many Veterans who were visiting the Top End. They all remembered the hospitality they received and will return on their next visit.

With the onset of the Wet Season it is now time to venture inside and plan our monthly activities such as trivia nights and talent quests. So if you are visiting the N.T. during the Wet Season call in and see us.

Melbourne Cup Day this year saw our Rural Sub branch members catering for the Noonamah Frog Races. All had a good time and the Sub Branch was the winner raising \$800 which will go towards maintaining Reg Hillier House.

The Rural Sub Branch also received a Veterans and Community Grant to remove the old glass louver windows and replace them with security screens.

The Territory local newsletter has now had a name change from MAINTDEM to the TERRITORY FOOTPRINT. The new name of our newsletter is starting to grow on our members and they can be ensured that the publication will still contain the relevant up to date information.

I would also like to thank Dan Thatcher for all he has done for our association as the President of the Rural Sub Branch and wish him and his wife well south of the boarder.

Colin Hill has now moved up to take over the reins as Rural President and the new Vice President is Ron Hancock.

Our Pension and Welfare Officers workload has increased from previous months mainly due to the large number of young veterans in Darwin.

#### Figures from April to September

Pensions: Interviews	164
Pensions lodged	6
Pensions finalised	4
Hospital visits	6
War Widows	1
VRB/AAT	6
Welfare related contacts:	63
Funerals:	1

#### **D.T.MEREDITH**

President  
VVAA (NT)

### **Interstate Ambulance Travel**

The Department will transport veterans to the nearest available treatment location that can meet their clinical needs by the most appropriate mode of transport applicable in each case. If a veteran lives in one state and requires ambulance transport for their clinical needs and the closest suitable facility is in another state then the Department would fund that transport i.e. coverage is not limited to the state of residency.

However, if a veteran travels to another state for non medical reasons such as recreation and then requires ambulance transport to a hospital or other facility this would only be covered from their place of temporary residence to the nearest suitable treatment facility. The veteran will not be able to elect to be transported back to their home state for treatment or back to their permanent residence after treatment. Such transport is not dictated by clinical need, only personal preference. The Department would transport them back to their temporary residence after discharge from hospital via the most appropriate transport mode.

Transport of veterans between facilities whether within states or between states is based on clinical need and at the discretion of the medical professionals treating the veteran. This is not something the veteran can elect to do and be funded by the Department.

Veterans are encouraged to take out travel insurance when making long trips interstate. This statement is found in the DVA ambulance Fact Sheet HSV120 and in "Before You Travel" HSV 129.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Issues-Based Policies

The most important out-come of the Adelaide National Council Meeting in October, from the point of view of members, is that the NSW motion concerning issues-based policies was carried unanimously. We put together a tranche of policies from the still-current NSW Policy Manifesto and combined it with the Victorian Branch's policy document.

Two or three other issues were raised at the Council and we drafted those policies at the time. They've now gone back to the State Branches for endorsement by the membership and I understand will be published in this edition of Debrief.

This might sound a little bit back-to-front, but the context is that the membership of the VVAA needs to know where the organisation stands on veterans' issues. We elect the National Executive and entrust the day-to-day management of the VVAA to these people, so we need to let them get on with it. To that end, the National Council endorsed the need for the National Executive to develop and publish issues-based policies for emerging issues as and when they are required.

This also lets the rest of the veteran community know where we stand, what issues we will support, what issues we oppose, what values we represent.

### Review of DVA-Funded Advocacy & Welfare Services

This Branch made a substantial submission to what is generally known as the BEST Review. VVAA NSW Branch is the recipient of quite substantial support through BEST, and the management of these funds is a significant piece of work for us.

Our submission made 13 recommendations, all of which are consistent with our approach of work-ing collaboratively with other ESOs for the betterment of veterans of all conflicts, their partners and children.

The Veteran Centre approach which is a manifestation of this cooperative approach began in Victoria and to some degree has spread to other States. Victoria's relatively large population within a relatively small geographic area lends itself well to this model. One of the outcomes of establishing these centres is that there is a need for premises, so one of our most important recommendations was to accept rent and utility charges as valid BEST expenditures.

Splitting Grant in Aid from BEST was another recommendation, as the expenditures are in-compatible.

### Indexation of Commonwealth Superannuation

I cannot endorse strongly enough the Defence Force Welfare Association push for individuals to write to their MPs and Senators about the indexation of Commonwealth Superannuation Schemes. Queensland, NSW and Victorian Branches have adopted this as their own.

Recipients of Centrelink pensions have their payments indexed to measures which reflect not just rises in the cost of living, but also rises in the standard of living. DFRB, DFRDB, CSS and PSS payments are linked only the Consumer Price Index. As a result, recipients will see their stand-ard of living degrade over time, and that's not something to look forward to.

Talk to your partner; make time to make your voice heard! The more voices there are, the greater the likelihood that we will be heard.

### Personal Welfare Conferences

The Executive has coordinated with the Victorian Branch to conduct personal welfare conferences in various locations in southern NSW. There were some initial misgivings from other ex-Service Organisations (ESO), but I was able to allay these fears and let them know that it wasn't an invasion!

Bob Elworthy and the Victorian Branch have been conducting the seminars as yet another example of working in cooperation with like-minded people in order to help veterans and their families. Well done Victoria!

### National Constitution – yet again!

The proposal for a plain English constitution failed to gain the necessary support at the National Council meeting after having been carried over from National Congress in May. This version was demonstrably incomplete and failed to meet the minimum requirements of the Dept of Fair Trading.

Now that we're back to working with our old constitution, National Secretary Ken Foster has been looking at some of the more pressing issues.

In my view we need to approach these matters in slow time. We also need to let go of the baggage that many of the National Councillors carry over from the attempted re-writes over the last few years.

It's too easy to harbour resentment that the work you've put in was so easily thrust aside and your motive for doing it dismissed. Those thoughts make you bitter. Put them aside - I have, and I know Ken has too. He's setting an example for the rest of us to follow.

*Cont....next page*



### What I've Been Reading

I've been back browsing through Bruce Davies and Gary McKays *The Men Who Persevered* (ISBN 1 74114 425 6, Allen & Unwin, Sydney). This is the story of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, the unit, the places, the individuals. The narrative is sprinkled liberally with quotes from those individuals. This first person narrative makes it an easy read, and having served with many of these people in later years I can imagine them delivering the lines in their own inimitable styles!

The Nominal Roll is comprehensive, as you would expect in an appendix of some 146 pages covering name, alternative names, rank, honours (but only Imperial awards), service with AATTV, area of service and remarks which include Corps, other units served with in Vietnam and date of death where applicable.

Ray Simpson VC DCM probably has the longest entry, given the time spent in-country, but Geoff Munro's five tours of duty are a close second. If you can borrow a copy from your local library, it's well worth your time.

### Finishing Up

It's been another hectic year in the veteran calendar, with some major changes in the dynamic between the veteran community and DVA, new forums, new business and new appointments. It will be a while before we see how these new arrangements work, so that's something to look forward to.

A lot of the administrative arrangements that the State Executive have put in place are bedded in now, and seem to be working at least as well as we expected. I'd like to thank the Executive for the hard work they've put in over the last year, and assure them that it's more of the same next year! My goal is to make the workings of the State Council as transparent as we can make them.

At times this leads to awkward questions, but that's the price we pay for democracy. Those handling members' funds must expect close scrutiny because it's the responsibility of management to know what's going on and to make sure that individuals with those responsibilities are protected.

Reports, particularly financial reports must be easily read and understood; administration must be consistent and consistently good. Without these things behind us, it's difficult – if not impossible – for the real work of the Association to continue.

That's the hospital and welfare visits, the pensions and advocacy support, the socialisation, the involvement of families and the mutual support which is the lifeblood of the VVAA

I'm grateful for the work put in by the Sub-Branch members and their Committees. It's easy to sit back and let others take the responsibility, hard to put your hand up to take responsibility and the blame should things go a little awry. Thank you all.

It's coming up to Christmas, school holidays and the silly season. So many of us are on the road at this time, visiting children and grandchildren, friends and other family members.

Please take it easy on the roads – drive safely, assume that the other driver's going to do the most stupid thing that they could possibly do – and make sure that you're back with us in the New Year.

### That's Your Lot!

Best regards to all,  
Clive Mitchell-Taylor

### Vale — Kevin James ROBERTS OAM

Advising that Kevin Roberts passed away Wednesday 7 Oct 09.

Not only was Kevin a member of the Jervis Bay Sub-Branch, but he was also an active member of the Huskisson RSL sub-Branch, Nowra Legacy and Lions Club.

Name: Kevin James ROBERTS OAM  
DoB: 9 Dec 39  
Service No.: R52808  
Service: RAN

Kevin served as a Naval Air Mechanic on HMAS Melbourne on one of its trips to SVN from 31 May 65 to 22 Jun 65.

Kevin succumbed to cancer, he will be missed by all members of the Jervis Bay Sub Branch

### Vale Garry Taylor.

Garry Taylor formerly of St Helens Park has passed away.

He is ex R.A.N. serving on H.M.A.S. Duchess and a Vietnam Veteran, serving there from June 1970 to May 1971.

He was also a member of the Vietnam Veterans Macarthur.  
He was 58 years of age.

## VVAA Issues-Based Policies

It's been some time since the Association policies on issues involving Australian veterans and their families were published. It's important that our members and other Ex-Service Organisations know what we support, what we don't support and where we stand. So here they are:

**Advocates, Paid** - Opposes the creation of a second tier of paid advocates as recommended by the Dunt Report.

**Aged Care** - Secure and manage the provision of aged care facilities for veterans, providing assistance for veterans in meeting the cost of retirement village type accommodation.

**Alternative Medicines** - Examine the role of alternative medicines and therapies in the treatment of conditions suffered by veterans

Accept alternative medicines and therapies for eligible veterans.

**Bereavement Payments** - Provide unpartnered veterans with the same bereavement payment benefits and partnered veterans.

Provide disability bereavement payment equal to six fortnightly payments to the estate of unpartnered veterans.

**Funeral Benefits** - Increase the funeral benefit in line with MCRA funeral benefit.

Discontinue offsetting of funeral and bereavement benefits in the calculation of funeral benefits.

Provide the same funeral benefit for partnered and unpartnered veterans.

Introduce a mechanism whereby funeral benefits keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

Establish parity between VEA and MRCA funeral benefits for entitled veterans.

**Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST)** - Acknowledge the value provided by services funded through the BEST funding.

Maintain BEST funding levels to ensure that medium-term commitments entered into by ESOs are maintained.

### DFRB/DFRDB

Cease the recovery of commutation once repayment is complete

Acknowledge that BEST funding and Grants In Aid are incompatible and revert to separate arrangements.

**Compensation, General** - Amend the term "pension" to read "compensation" within the relevant Acts.

Declare obesity to be a medical condition in the same manner as other conditions resulting in overweight are treated.

Declare stress to be a condition that is manifested within other diagnosed conditions such as IHD, hypertension and psychiatric conditions.

### DFRB/DFRDB

Provide taxation relief through the recognition of the 5% of salary contribution by military members to the schemes

Define a specific level of vision loss as a test for "blindness".

Enable veterans to flag existing conditions as unchanged and remove them from reassessment when submitting new claims.

**DFRB/DFRDB** - Cease the use of outdated 1962 actuarial tables for DFRB/DFRDB.

Cease recovery of commutation once repayment is complete.

Provide taxation relief through recognition of the 5% of salary contribution of military members to DFRB/DFRDB.

**Disability Payment Indexation** - Index all disability payments, whether fortnightly or lump sum, at least twice yearly against the greater of Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE).

**Disabled Descendants** - Implement an assessment procedure to reinstate provision of medical treatment from DVA resources to those descendants of deceased veterans who would otherwise have been supported by their parents.

Provide an income support supplement, similar to that paid to war widows, for qualifying descendants.

Establish criteria based upon the "reasonable hypothesis" standard, for medical conditions or deformity claimed by the descendant to be a result of the service of the parent.

**[Contributed by NSW Branch]**      *Cont....next page*

### GOLD CARD

Enable the extension of the Gold Card to the spouse/partner of an entitled individual

Where such a link from parent to descendant is proven, provide for the descendant in the same manner as if the descendant were a veteran.

**Education Support** - Extend education support eligibility to veterans in receipt of the General and Intermediate Rate of pension.

**General Rate of Pension** - Index the General Rate of Pension in the same way as the Special Rate and Extreme Disablement Adjustment.

**Gold Card** - Enable the extension of the Gold Card to the spouse/partner of an entitled individual.

**Historians** - Veterans, their advocates or pension officers to have the earliest possible access to historian's reports in order to seek clarification or correction.

**Intergenerational Health Study** - Supports the conduct of the study.

**Legal Aid** - Veterans to have access to legal aid in every State, regardless of the type of case.

**Medals and Awards** - Conduct reviews into Imperial and foreign awards for those who served in Vietnam

Introduce processes and procedures to overcome long delays in the issue of medal entitlements to Service and ex-Service personnel

Extend award criteria for the Australia Active Service Medal to include certain logistic support and evacuation operations.

**Mental Health** - Improve and simplify mental health assessment, treatment and compensation regimes, including psychiatric condition acceptance criteria.

Provide adequate funding to ensure that veterans have timely and adequate access to mental health professionals, programs and facilities, including specialist hospital treatment.

**Names on Databases and Rolls of Honour** - Record the names of all deployed Australian Service men and women who are KIA, DOW or DOI as a result of their service on the Roll of Honour in the Australian War Memorial and all biographical databases held by the Armed Services and government agencies.

### QUALIFYING SERVICE

Introduce a category of Hazardous Service to attract the beneficial standard of proof.

**Nurses, Civilian** - Support civilian nurses who served in Vietnam in obtaining compensation through the means outlined in their contracts, except where they came under direct Australian military command.

**Pharmaceutical Co-payments** - DVA concession card holders to be deemed to have reached the Pharmaceutical Benefits Safety Net threshold at the commencement of each calendar year.

Where a RPBS item is priced above the lowest priced brand or product in a therapeutic group of medicines the concession card holder may seek reimbursement from DVA where:

- (i) the illness or injury is an accepted disability; and
- (ii) the treating physician affirms in writing that the higher priced item is the only appropriate item for that treatment.

### PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENTS

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- (i) the illness or injury is an accepted disability; and
- (ii) the treating physician affirms in writing that the higher priced item is the only appropriate item for that treatment.

**Qualifying Service** - Retain the definitions and application of warlike and non-warlike service.

Retain the eligibility rules as they apply to membership of the ADF or a civilian under direct command of the ADF; being allotted for full-time duty within a defined area of operations and maintenance of the port to port provisions.

Preserve the link between warlike and qualifying service for the purposes of entitlement to Service Pension.

Allocate eligibility in an equitable and consistent manner.

*Cont.....Next page*



### TERMINOLOGY

Endorses the terms Killed in Action (KIA), Wounded in Action (WIA) and Died of Wounds (DOW) as the only terms to be used in relation to the death or wounding of deployed Australian Service men and women in action.

Endorses the terms Died of Illness and Died of Injury (DOI) to be used in relation to the death of deployed Australian Service men and women not in action.

Introduce a category of Hazardous Service to attract the beneficial standard of proof.

Opposes the granting of qualifying service to those warned for deployment but not deployed due to illness, disease, injury or cessation of conflict.

**Special Rate of Pension** - Recommends automatic indexation twice-yearly to maintain parity.

**Statements of Principle and Standards of Proof** - Australian government to acknowledge historical changes in the standard of proof and address the diminution of the beneficial standard of proof for veterans.

Acknowledge RMA's decision-making outside the application of the VEA veteran standard of proof. Correct the narrow interpretation of wording within SoPs.

Address the practical difficulties associated with an objective test for the existence of a stressor for psychiatric disorder SoPs.

Address the failure to recognise the validity of a single or less than mainstream medical opinion or limited medico/scientific research.

Correct the situation where the opinion of a selected group of doctors is used to establish a legal standard, turning medical opinion into law.

**Superannuation (Commonwealth Employees)** - Supports the indexation of DFRB, DFRDB, CSS and PSS superannuation by the greater of CPI or MA-TAWE as articulated by DFWA.

**Terminology** - Endorses the terms Killed in Action (KIA), Wounded in Action (WIA) and Died of Wounds (DOW) as the only terms to be used in relation to the death or wounding of deployed Australian Service men and women in action.

Endorses the terms Died of Illness and Died of Injury (DOI) to be used in relation to the death of deployed Australian Service men and women not in action.

**Veterans and Veterans' Families Counselling Service (VVCS)** - Remove time restrictions on access to counselling services to divorced/separated spouses/partners.

**Veterans Childrens Education Scheme (VCES)** - Expand to include the children of veterans whose disabilities are assessed at not less than 70% and who are in receipt of Service Pension or part Disability pension from CENTRELINK.

**Veterans' Entitlement Act** - Conduct a full review of s120 (Standard of Proof), including the use of historian's reports.

**Veterans Review Board (VRB)** - Opposes the appointment of Mental Health professionals to the VRB which is under consideration as a result of the Dunt Report on the basis that medical specialists advise the VRB but are not members.

**Vocational Rehabilitation** - Create a two tier structure for vocational rehabilitation Implement the VVAA provisions for tier one veterans between the ages of 19 and 50.

Extend the provisions of the over-50 tier two veterans to include training related to community work.

**Voluntary Work** - Acknowledge the value of veterans doing voluntary work and ensure that voluntary work continues to be excluded from consideration for the purposes of compensation payments

**War Widow(ers)** - Adjust the War Widow(ers) pension to 75% of the Special Rate while retaining current entitlements and benefits regardless of the rate received by the partner prior to death.

Continue eligibility to the Income Support Supplement, thus giving the war widow(er)s a minimum annual income of \$14,079 which, with the Income Support Supplement is raised to \$17,329.00 per annum.

Provide all war widow(er)s with entitlement to the DVA Concession Card, whether or not they are in receipt of the Income Support Supplement.

**War Graves** - Maintain the graves of those who died in Vietnam as official war graves, whether or not the funeral was conducted privately.

### VOLUNTARY WORK

Acknowledge the value of veterans doing voluntary work and ensure that voluntary work continues to be excluded from consideration for the purposes of compensation payments.

### Western Australia

2009 is all but gone and it is time to reflect on what has happened during the year in W.A., where we have succeeded, where we have fallen short and time to look at direction and priority for 2010.

Have we achieved in 2009, that is debateable, we are still here and operating as a State Branch but that is only due to the efforts of a few hard workers. We have managed to produce 3 state newsletters for the year, a step forward from 2008. The V.V.A.A. W.A. website has been out of service for a number of months but it is up and operating again, while upgrade work continues. There is always more work to be done, than there is workers to do the tasks, it has been pleasing to see a number of members, in the past few months, offer assistance to the state executive.

Looking forward to 2010, our priority at this time is to get nominations for the State Executive for the coming year. While a number of the current executive members will continue in office in 2010, there is a need and room for a number of new people to nominate for executive and committee positions. For the past few years the Association has struggled, with the bare minimum number of office bearers/committee, this trend has to change for the W.A. State Branch, to begin to function properly again.

Vietnam Veterans Day 2009.

Our Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Service was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, attendance was down on numbers to previous years, hopefully that was due to the wet weather on the morning. His Excellency the Governor of W.A. Dr Ken Micheal attended the service for the first time and was very impressed with the Memorial Pavilion and the conduct of the service. The Memorial Day Address was delivered by the Consul General of the United States of America, Dr Kenneth Chern. Chaplain David Cockram, is to be commended for his arrangement and conduct of the service. Thanks also go to Donna, Jason and Meg for their musical input, the Air Force Cadet Drum Corps and the Guildford Grammar School Cadets for their assistance. Hollywood Hospital, again sponsored the service.

The 2009 Back to the Bush Reunion was held from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, at Bruce Rock. All the usual activities of the week were held, with the football oval, converted to caravan park, filling with vans and tents as the week progressed. The small group of Wheatbelt Veterans and the Bruce Rock Shire are to be congratulated for their efforts in organising and promoting this annual event. Planning is under way for next years 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Back to the Bush.

Merry Xmas to all from W.A.

Richard Williams.  
State President.

### Presentation of Medal Group.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 the medal group and other service memorabilia of Malcolm [Tubby] Campbell, were presented to the Army Museum of Western Australia, by the family of the late Malcolm Campbell. Malcolm Campbell. 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1932 > 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2008.

Service numbers – 516747, 51648.

Service. CMF. 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1950 to 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1950.

ARA. 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1950 to 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1974.

Rank on Discharge. Lance Corporal.

Malcolm served with 2 RAR, during the Korean War and was present at the Battle of the Hook, a decisive battle in the Korean campaign in 1953.

During the Malayan Emergency, Malcolm again served with 2RAR.

The Vietnam War and Malcolm completed 2 tours of duty with 6RAR, serving with D Company in 1966 and was present at the Battle of Long Tan.

It is significant that this Australian soldier, saw action in 2 major and decisive battles in 2 military campaigns, 13 years apart, while serving with the Australian Defence Forces.

### Army Museum Appeal Launch.

The Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation launched its appeal for the Gallery Upgrade Project, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2009. The Gallery Upgrade will cost approximately \$2.5 million, with Lotterywest providing up to \$1.5 million in funding, matching \$ for \$ money raised by the Army Museum. A \$500,000 cheque was presented by Lotterywest to launch the appeal.

It is interesting to note that Western Australia is the only state that returns the profits from the Lottery Commission, to the community through sponsorship of organisations, public projects and events.



## Funeral of the Last Vietnam Veteran killed in Action.

Where were our Federal leaders when it **really** counted???

Last Monday saw the funeral of the last Vietnam veteran killed in action - Flying Officer Michael Herbert was buried in Adelaide after a funeral service with full military honours attended by over 1000 concerned Australians.

It was a cathartic experience for all, especially Michael's family who have suffered such enormous pain over nearly 40 years since Michael went missing.

It was also a day of closure for the many Vietnam veterans who attended.

The attendance at a State level was impressive and respectful (the State Governor, almost the entire Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet attended - indeed the Premier spoke eloquently)

However, the burning question on the lips of many was **"Where were the Prime Minister and the Governor General when it really mattered?"**

Where was the man who has already exercised the ultimate responsibility of sending young men and women to offer their lives in our name?

Where was our "Head of State"?

This was an open funeral and a personal invitation had been issued to both these leaders?

This was a unique day.

It was day that closed a chapter on Australia's most controversial war.

It was day that could have finally proved to Vietnam veterans that their service was valued and that they were the peer of their forefathers!

Where were our most senior leaders at this crucial time?

After all the Prime Minister has managed to attend the funerals of all the young men killed in Afghanistan, except one where he was represented by the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Governor General has also attended several of these important events - but not this one!

Where were they on this last day - a day that could finally underline the respect for a family that suffered so much and a generation of young men that served their nation under such difficult circumstances?

Well, I'll tell you - the Prime Minister was - to quote the Australian newspaper "Laud(ing) the eye-witness march of history".

Not acknowledging the very last Vietnam Veteran killed in action and his courageous family but at a launch of (yet another) political history!

How cynical can you get?

Full on rhetoric - short on action!

Why, less than three weeks prior at a Long Tan Day service Mr Rudd implored us "never to forget" and told

us "that service and sacrifice for others are the heart and soul of any nation that lays claim to greatness."

He went on to acknowledge the "controversy concerning the (Vietnam) war" and the "loyal and patriotic sons of Australia "who fought in all our names."

Full on rhetoric - short on action!

And the Governor-General - where was she?

As Michael Herbert was being buried she was awarding fashion guru Carla Zampatti with her Companion of the Order of Australia for "her service to the fashion industry, multicultural broadcasting and mentoring women"!

The Governor General spoke at length about "her love of Zampatti's classic frocks and skirts".

Why even the Army - the service that suffered most in the Vietnam War failed to show up!

I acknowledge that the Prime Minister sent a respected representative - Senator Faulkner.

That is hardly the point!

This was a generation defining moment.

For Vietnam Veterans it said once and for all what some politicians really felt about service to nation and the sacrifice of 520 young Australian lives made at the behest of political masters.

This generation of Federal leaders elected and appointed, pathetically failed the test!

Remember that next ANZAC Day and as we head toward the centenary of ANZAC.

And - don't worry - you will continue to be reminded!

You cannot rewrite history!

Name & address supplied.

### **First-Time Golfer**

A retiree was given a set of golf clubs by his co-workers. Thinking he'd try the game, he asked the local pro for lessons, explaining that he knew nothing whatever of the game. The pro showed him the stance and swing, then said, "Just hit the ball toward the flag on the first green." The novice teed up and smacked the ball straight down the fairway and onto the green, where it stopped inches from the hole.

"Now what?" the fellow asked the speechless pro.

"Uh... you're supposed to hit the ball into the cup," the pro finally said, after he was able to speak again.

"Oh great! NOW you tell me." said the beginner.



## THE KALGOORLIE-BOULDER VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION.

The concept of a Kalgoorlie-Boulder Vietnam Veterans "Goldfields" Memorial, took root in 1996, a Committee formed, and eventually with everything to bear fruit during an absolutely wonderful and memorable weekend and 'dedication day' at Centennial Park in Kalgoorlie on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

Six of us with goldfields backgrounds from ASASA attended – Brian Tierney, Kevin Bovill, Gordon Herbert, Rick Giblett, Mal Waters and Paddy yours truly. In fact, Mal and his good lady had driven all the way over from NSW, arriving in the nick of time at the 'meet 'n' greet' at the Boulder Ex Services Club and on the eve of the occasion.

On the dedication day itself, we were further joined by Kalgoorlie-ite Cliff (Cliff Baston?? Confirm this Bill), an ex 22 SAS member, and also a member of 'the House'. All up however, there were well over two hundred visiting veterans and spouses in town for the occasion. Many had arrived in organised RSL groups.

On the Saturday evening prior to the dedication, we the veterans attending, were shouted to a most delightful three course meal at the very historical Boulder Town Hall. This included a band, feature artist, beer, wine and soft-drinks - with more table service than you can imagine – again via the eighty or so plus sponsors and whose generous dollar donations had made the entire project and weekend a reality. The rumour was, be it true or not, that it had only taken around a fortnight or so to collect in the vicinity of \$250,000 off the local Corporate community. But a wonderful effort and whatever the truth.

As a further adjunct to the dining-in. The tables were so arranged that each group of ten ex Service personnel, were in a position to mix with and entertain a sponsor concerned. As such, at our table and also as a further example of the general calibre of the township's populace perhaps, we had the pleasure of being joined by Andrew Smith and his wife Lisa. Although Andrew is the CEO of a number of mineral drilling concerns, he nevertheless 'still finds the time', to roster himself each week to deliver 'meals on wheels' for the district's infirmed and elderly – country folks!

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial itself, would do justice to anything we have up at Kings Park. The main memorial area excluded. It consisted of a gently curved wall of black Italian marble - approximately of fifteen metres length and about three high, with a steady trickle of water running down it to enhancing the facia. The highlight is a stark and very distinctive white Long Tan cross in the centre, flanked by the dates 1962 and 1972 on either side. The simple word "VIETNAM" was then placed in the same manner

above the whole design. A small base pelmet shields the foundations, both to catch and recycle the water, plus to provide space for the laying of wreaths. Above all, it's sited in the most prominent spot within Centennial Park. And we can only hope that the vandals will also pay due respect!

The Dedication Day, the 16th, commenced in very bright sunshine at 1100 hours and assuming an AN-ZAC day type format. This complete with a march led by a pipe band, plus a tricky about turn, which the blokes with the walking sticks etc - managed

in fine spirit. After normal military formality and appreciation procedures; during which ex MP Graham Edwards gave the best speech on Vietnam and its aftermath I have ever heard – bar none, the memorial was officially handed over to Lord Mayor, Mr Ron Yuryevich of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, for ongoing maintenance and upkeep. Ample TV presence was evident, and the 'Kalgoorlie Miner' dedicated a double issue central-pages feature towards the coverage of the ceremony. As such, I doubt if anyone of the six thousand of the area and very much further still, anywhere GWN, WIN and the ABC could reach, were left unaware of the event.

At conclusion - it took about an hour, the crowd and which could be estimated at around a thousand, engaged in eats and drinks. Yes the hard stuff! And I personally fail to see how anyone present could have walked away anything but impressed. Tired, tiddly, sunburnt or all whichever, but unimpressed, no! A most wonderful and concerted effort by the local ESOs concerned as well as the general folks of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, towards a just and most worthy 'remembrance' cause. It was all perfectly done, plus a great weekend for all of us to remember and look back on.

### Paddy Bacsikai.

#### The Bath Tub Test

During a visit to the mental asylum, I asked the director how do you determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

"Well," said the director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand," I said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No." said the director, "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

G'day from the Riverland Vets and families.

South Australia

Well it has finally happened. Our memorial has been opened.

The day was very successful with a lot of positive feedback. Brigadier Rick Burrs' address and unveiling of the official plaque was fantastic and was well received by the crowd of about 600. We were extremely proud and honoured to have had Brigadier Burr to officially open our Memorial as he was raised in the Riverland and after completing his training at Duntroon his extensive operational experiences included Command of the Aust. Special Forces Task Groups in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Commanding Officer of the Special Air Service Regiment and he was a distinguished graduate of the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College in Quantico, Virginia. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, US Bronze Star Medal and is a Member in the Royal Victorian Order. Rick was assisted with the unveiling by Canon James Stacey of Renmark who then went on to dedicate the Memorial to all Riverland Post WWII Veterans.

The Australian National Anthem was led by Bill Casey a former veteran of Korea, Malaya, and Borneo.

The other highlight of the day was the flyover of a Blackhawk chopper flown by Captain Adam Richter, Aircraft Research and Development Unit, Supporting Aerospace Operations Edinburgh S.A. He was a former student of Glossop High School. Adam completed two tours of Timor, toured Middle East area of Operations, and a tour of Afghanistan. We are also extremely proud and honoured another young man from the Riverland was able to help make the day so successful.

The memorial final cost was around \$84000 of which the vets raised \$52000 including the sale of 240+ pavers, bingo nights, cooking of barbecues at the Barmera market, manning stalls at boat races in Berri and raffles etc.

We received donations from Renmark and Berri RSLs, Barmera War Memorial, Garden of Memory and excellent support from the Berri Barmera council but the most outstanding donation came from Berri War Memorial of \$11000.

The cost does not include of course the many hours put in by the RVVA. So it was a fantastic effort by the RVVA and wives and partners. Thanks also go to the Riverland community who supported the construction of the memorial especially when times are so tough and uncertain in the Riverland at the moment.

Our long weekend camping up the river at Bordaringa was another great weekend. On the Saturday the Vets were challenged to a game of cricket by the "Razorbacks" a group of Renmark fundraisers who also camped out.

A total of \$1960 was raised for breast cancer.

The game was played on the river flats with a piece of old artificial hockey matting as the pitch. The Vets were beaten this year by younger legs and dubious umpiring decisions. There will possibly be a rematch in two years time.

But (!) the fishing comp. on the Sunday was taken out by the Vets with Roy Rogers leading the charge and collecting most of the prizes. Well done Roy.

The annual general meeting was held on the 3/11/09 with all positions being filled without any changes.

We looked forward to a more social year next year and wish all other Vets a healthy 2010.

Seasons best wishes

Roger Edmonds

President Riverland Vietnam Vets.

### **John Schumann touring East Timor**

John Schumann, the singer-songwriter famously known for his Vietnam veteran's anthem 'I was only 19', will be touring to East Timor next month to entertain our Australian service men and women, performing the hit track after it was first recorded over 25 years ago.

A lifetime honorary member of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Schumann will travel to East Timor with his band The Vagabond Crew to meet with and play for the troops based within the Dili surrounds.

"It has been a long time coming. We've had so many requests from serving men and women of the Australian Defence Force that it's nice to be able to finally go. We are all really looking forward to the tour and we hope to bring a bit of home to our troops in East Timor who will no doubt be missing their families over the Christmas period," Mr Schumann said.

"We have heard a lot of artists who have been on these tours have played our songs for the troops, in particular 'I was only 19', so it will be fantastic to be able to perform these tracks myself. All the preparation leading up to the tour has been great and we can't wait to board the flight."

John Schumann holds a distinguished place in the Australian music industry and first came to national attention in 1980 as the lead singer-songwriter legendary for folk-rock band Redgum.

The Vagabond Crew made up of Schumann, Redgum band mate Hugh McDonald, Kat Kraus, Mick Morena, Alexander Stuart Black and Sam Willoughby, will perform old Redgum songs, and classic Australian songs from the solo albums Lawson and Behind the Lines.

The Forces Entertainment tours travel to East Timor, the Middle East and the Solomon Islands to provide entertainment to our serving forces and to improve morale by bringing 'a little piece of Australia' to far-flung places.

### Tasmania

2009 has been a reasonably quiet year, compared to other years, as the formation of the DC's Forum has now taken the place of three other committees, saving time, money and traveling around the State, it also gives the ESO's a stronger voice from the State, from one Forum not from many avenues. Congratulations to all the members who have been appointed to these Forums and Committees.

Veterans' Day this year, was very well attended at all venues around the State, also many Veterans, and Guests, including the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club, attended at the Dedication of a new Memorial Wall for the Burnie and Districts Sub-Branch, VVAA, it is situated in park surrounds in Somerset on Tassie's North West Coast. The Sub-Branch and the Waratah / Wynyard Council are to be commended for their forethought with the site and with the construction of this Memorial Wall, dedicated to all who served in Vietnam.

Our Memorial Bush Retreat is continuing to function well, with around a 60% occupancy through out the year. We thank all the volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to maintain this facility to the standard that it is.

Bookings through RSL State Branch, Hobart,  
Phone Tamara; 03 6224 0881

When visiting Tasmania and you need a break or a spot of fishing, put the Retreat on your itinerary and enjoy all the comforts that the Retreat offers. The water levels in all the lakes on the Highlands are up and the fishing is the best it has been for many years.

Our State raffle, again, was a big success, and we thank all who donated to the Welfare of Veterans and congratulate those lucky enough to have their number pulled out of the barrel.

As of February 2010, I will be standing down as VVAA Tasmania President and nominating for Vice President on State Branch. I wish to thank all who have led me (astray), helped me, assisted me, confided in me, worked with me and my wife Gail for putting up with me over the last 5 and a half years, whilst I've been in this job.

It is a position that I have enjoyed being in and have met many new friends and many people from all areas connected with Veterans and Communities of which I will stay in contact with.

Warwick Luttrell, Burnie and Districts Sub-Branch President, will be stepping up to the plate in 2010. He is a person who is dedicated to the Welfare of Veterans and I wish him the best for his term in office.

Thanking you all again and wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Prosperous New Year.

John Wright  
Tasmania President



### Dedication of new Memorial in Tasmania

The opening and dedication of the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and Garden at ANZAC Park, Somerset, Tasmania, has finally given the Burnie & Districts Sub-Branch a permanent memorial site.

The Memorial was officially opened and dedicated on Vietnam Veterans Day 2009

The shape of the wall incorporates a similarity to the cross arms of the Long Tan Cross, with a replica of the cross displayed on the southern aspect of the wall, and is easily seen from the Bass Highway by all vehicles traveling in both directions.

ANZAC Park at Somerset is a fitting and popular location for the memorial as even during the construction stage, well before completion, it attracted personal wreaths and flowers from unknown members of the public.

The photographs supplied depict the official unveiling of the memorial by the Tasmania Branch President John Wright, and President of the Burnie and Districts Sub-Branch, and State Vice President, Warwick Luttrell, and the Wall and Garden after wreath laying, *See photos page 2.*

### A FORGOTTEN SOLDIER

*He was a happy caring lad to meet  
Vibrant with life of which to sing  
Faithful dog, fishing rod complete  
Cared for birds with broken wing*

*When war arrived, he was there  
Muddy, cold, hungry and frightened too  
Surrounded by constant death and despair  
So many comrades reduced to a few*

*Aged beyond his quickened years  
In an bloody arena of maim and kill  
We left him with no time for tears  
On some lonely foreign stony hill*

*Today those who shout and whine  
Constantly complain of many things  
Speak of rights including yours and mine  
But never, never do they mention him*

*George Mansford (Copy Right July 09)*



## Operation *Life* suicide prevention workshops

The Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service has increased the number of free Operation *Life* suicide prevention workshops for people who are concerned about family, friends, mates or others in the veteran and ex-service community.

“So far 119 participants have been trained in suicide prevention strategies at workshops over the past three months and I encourage more people in the veteran and ex-service community to register their interest in attending,” Mr Griffin said.

Operation *Life* is a strategy to prevent suicide and promote good mental health and resilience across the veteran community. Its major components include workshops providing introductory, intensive and refresher courses in suicide prevention. Welfare, pension officers and others from ex-service organisations and the veteran community are encouraged to attend.

Mr Griffin said World Suicide Prevention Day provided an ideal opportunity to promote the Government's work in suicide prevention and mental health, especially for veterans.

“The Government made a commitment to enhance suicide prevention and it has done this by expanding Operation *Life* and providing an additional \$9.5 million to implement the recommendations made following a major study by Professor David Dunt into suicide in the ex-service community.

“This is in addition to the Government's commitment of \$83 million over four years to address gaps identified in mental health care in the ADF and transition through discharge,” Mr Griffin said.

“Operation *Life* workshops are not treatment programs but are designed to help members of the veteran community to recognise someone who might be having thoughts of suicide and to link them in with appropriate help.”

To find out more about Operation *Life* workshops, contact VVCS on **1800 011 046** (during normal business hours) or visit [www.at-ease.dva.gov.au](http://www.at-ease.dva.gov.au).

## Repatriation Benefits List

(The following is a list of products, that are available on a Doctors prescription, for Repatriation Patients.)

### Skin Care

Q V bath Oil, Hamilton's Body Wash, Sorbolene and Glycerine Cream, Calmurid Cream, Pinetarsol Solution.

### Hair Care

Sebitar Shampoo, Sebi Rinse Conditioner, Nizoral Shampoo, Selsun.

### Sun Care

Hamilton's 15+ Cream, Lotion, and Solarstick, Ego Sun Sense 30+, Aquasun.

### Oral Hygiene

Savacol Mouth Wash, Aquae Spray for Dry mouth.

### Allergies

Telfast, Claratyne, Zyrtec, Phenergan, Drixine Nasal Spray, Beconase Nasal Spray, Rhincort Nasal Spray, Sudafed, Demazin Tablets.

### Cough Mixtures

Senagar & Ammonia, Durotuss Fibre Supplements & Laxatives Nucolox, Normacol, Metamucil, Coloxyl with Senna, Senokot, Glycerine Suppositories.

### Dressings

Micropore Tape, Cutilfilm Plus Waterproof Dressings, Melolin Dressings, Handy Banages, Cotton Wool, Betadine Antiseptic, Solugels, Barrier Creams, Disposable Gloves, Prantal Powder.

### Antifungal Agents

Lamasil cream, Canesten Cream, Loceryl Nail Paint.

### Haemorrhoidal Treatments

Proctocedyl Ointment & Suppositories, Anusol.

### Ear Preparations

Ear Clear for Wax, Waxsol, Ceromol Ear Drops.

### Vitamins & Minerals

Calcium (Cal sup Tablets, Caltrate), Vitamin B1 (Betamin), Magnesium Tablets (Mag-Min), Accomin Liquid Tonic.

### Joint Pain & Arthritis

Metsal Cream or Liniment.

### Sexual Health

Viagra, Cilais, Caverject

### Pain

Asprins Cartia, Astrix Capsules, Cardiprin, Paracetamol, Ibuprofen.

### Weight Loss

Optifast, Xenical.

### Various

Nicorette Patches (Quit Smoking), Vermox (Worms), Ural Sachets (Urinary Alkalinizer)

- Always check with your GP, **as this list changes from time to time.**  
(You could have been paying full price for any of these items without realising you could have them on prescription.
- **Remember after your 56 prescription PA, your prescription are free.)**

### In The ACT

With just under fifty days to the new year, the ACT Branch can report a year with both highs and lows.

Without doubt the Vietnam Veterans' day Service on 18 August surpassed all expectations. In front of a congregation of more than 500 including Her Excellency the Governor General, Mr Bryce, the Prime Minister, Service Chiefs, Diplomats and elected ESO heads, the family of David Fisher, MIA 27 September 1969, unveiled the "Home at Last" plaque on David's MIA seat at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade.

All indications point to the families of our final MIAs, Mike Herbert and Bob Carver, 2 Sqn RAAF, unveiling their "Home at Last" plaques at the 2010 Service. The organising committee are planning to make this occasion one memorable for all Vietnam Veterans and their families.

Another highlight is our healthy and growing membership. This gives us greater access to more Vietnam Veterans and their families which means we can track more of those in need of pensions, welfare and other assistance. Our growing membership means also that Vietnam Veterans must be seeing an end to the debilitating effect of the negative influences that plagued this Branch since the schism in the mid 1990s. Hopefully they have moved away never to return.

Our pension and welfare workload is increasing and, while placing pressures on our resources, we are still able to cope.

We see the "On the Radar" grass roots welfare program instituted by Victoria as a very large step in the right direction to push our people to take charge of their affairs. ACT has requested Victoria to schedule a presentation for the Capital district Veterans' community for early in the new year.

While hosting Congress 09 somewhat drained our coffers, they are steadily being replenished due to the untiring efforts of our volunteer fundraisers. These splendid workers ensure that ACT always has funds to run the operations necessary to ensure the health, welfare and well being needs of our people can be looked after.

One of our fundraising events this year supported the prostate cancer charity operation of the VVMC Federal Chapter. This is but one indication of the co-operative spirit that exists here.

VPs Barry West and Wal Brewer are well down the track of setting up a day club. This will operate in conjunction with other likeminded ESOs in premises with a long heritage of assisting Australian and allied servicemen and women.

2009 saw a record number of school visits by our education team. This group travelled throughout our district to bring the personal message of "life in Vietnam for a digger." The effectiveness of the program is reflected in the number of repeat visits scheduled for 2010 and the accolades passed to the teams by students and teachers. We will probably need to expand our volunteer presenter numbers next year to cope with demand. A very positive by product of the program is the satisfaction it provides for the presenters. All in all a very positive program for all concerned.

ACT sees the policy initiatives taken by National VP, now Secretary, Ken Foster as a very positive and much needed step forward for the VVAA. This will go a long way to

ameliorating the concerns of ACT members that the VVAA has been "asleep at the policy wheel" for too long.

Over the past few months, a highly experienced, professional journalist and editor who toured 1968 – 69 ICAU, has offered his services to assist the incumbent to bring *Debrief* up to magazine standards equal to or better than other ESO publications. This cannot be seen as anything other than an offer to help the volunteer who has, without doubt, operated within her capabilities and resources after taking over when the previous editor resigned suddenly. This is an opportunity to recruit a person whose stock in trade is magazine and newspaper design, editing and layout as well as possibly reducing the costs to members' funds. This latter effort will mean more funds available to assist with Veterans' welfare needs. Part of this operation will be a survey to ask you what other things you want to read in your magazine. Things like personal interest stories about our people, travel, caravanning, book reviews or whatever. Take this opportunity to tell what other things you want to see in your magazine. Let us all hope the greater good of the VVAA prevails over personal interests and *Debrief* can move forward towards being the equal or better than other ESO publications. A win win for all concerned.

ACT members expressed concern on a number of issues during the year. Uppermost is the pension indexation problem. We are working on an effective political solution that we intend to promote nationally. Hopefully it will have the desired effect and result in justice for those adversely affected by a clearly unjust decision by government. This is just one of a number of issues, some of which Ken Foster has put onto the VVAA policy development agenda.

Sadly on the downside ACT like most jurisdictions is seeing far too many funerals of Vietnam veterans. While this "comes with the territory", all too often we have to assist the widow and grieving family with picking up the pieces after the funeral. Hopefully the "On the Radar" program will go some way to being a preventative measure in this regard.

As the year draws to a close it is opportune to thank the ACT executive and volunteers for a splendid job well done yet again.

We can but hope that all in the VVAA especially those in elected positions see their responsibility as looking after the health, welfare and well being of our people and put this as a goal supplanting any thoughts or actions that would do other than good for this Association, our members and their families and the Veteran community at large.

So in the twilight of 2009, the ACT wishes all Vietnam Veterans and their families all the best for the festive season and all they wish for them and theirs for 2010,

Pete Ryan

ACT Branch President.



## BULLETIN BOARD

### **RAAOC SVN REUNION**

All ex RAAOC personnel who served in SVN in any **unit, stores section, stores cell**, etc are invited to attend the above reunion to be held in Brisbane over the Queen's birthday weekend, **Fri 11 to Sun 14 Jun 2010**.

As it will 45 years since the Ordnance corps first served in SVN we are encouraging as many to attend as possible.

Contact details are:

John Dolton OAM

07 38881656 or 0408075229

Email: [jdolton@bigpond.com](mailto:jdolton@bigpond.com)

Please contact John for further information.

### **Reunion.**

8 FD AMB, DET 1 FD HYG COY, 'A' SECT 33 DENT UNIT

Bi-annual reunion on Saturday 24th April 2010 at 1800 (6pm) for Dinner - and After-March on Sunday 25th April - at the Water Rat Hotel, cnr Park & Moray Sts, Sth Melb. Wives, partners and families welcome at both events.

Further details: Jim Bell 03 9703 1390; Dave Burton 03 9701 0595; or John Hallas 03 5659 6217.

### **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary CD of Regimental**

The RAR Foundation has, with the support of the Australian Band Corps, a new RAR 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary CD of Regimental Marches to replace the previous Regimental Marches (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) CD which has been sold out. The new CD, removes many of the no longer relevant items on the previous CD, such as the bugle call of D445 VC battalion, and includes many new marches played within the Regiment and the current more popular Army bugle calls.

This CD can be obtained by sending \$18.00 for postal delivery, or for \$15 for collection at the RARF office in RMC-A, Duntroon, on Wednesdays and/or Thursday mornings. Telephone (02) 6265 9842.

RARF,

GPO Box 3112,

Canberra ACT 2601

Please make cheques payable to RAR Foundation

### **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>

### **DVA Christmas Closure**

The Dept of Veteran Affairs will be closed from COB 24th December 2009. The office will re-open for normal business on Monday 4th January 2010.

After hours during closure

VVCS Crisis Line..... 1800 011 046

Defence service Homes Insurance 1300 552 662

Payments 1300 304 989

### The Victorian Branch of the **HMAS SYDNEY & VIETNAM LOGISTICAL SUPPORT VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION**

are celebrating their  
**25th ANNIVERSARY**  
Vietnam Logistical support sailors in 2010

#### **WHEN?**

ANZAC DAY LONG WEEKEND 23 26 April 10

#### **WHERE?**

MELBOURNE.

For all details please contact Victorian Association Secretary David (Speed) Dwyer

**EMAIL:** [davidgdwyer@hotmail.com](mailto:davidgdwyer@hotmail.com)

#### **POSTAL:**

SECRETARY H.M.A.S. SYDNEY & VLSVA VIC

PO BOX 645

HEATHMONT VIC 3135

**PHONE:** 03 9729 6874

### **H.M.A.S. Melbourne Reunion.**

"Expression of interest"

The Association Committee met last week and due to the promising response of emails and other promotion of the proposal, it was decided to proceed with the idea and hold the event on Saturday the 18/10/2010 in Nowra N.S.W. The venues, format and program for that weekend will be determined at a later date. The Captain of H.M.A.S. Albatross, Manager of the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Fleet Air Arm Association, Shoalhaven Naval Men's Association and others have generously offered their support.

The Association will continue to seek further expressions of interest through Ship, Branch and Association websites as well as newspapers, magazines and journals. We would appreciate if you would inform those you know, who may be interested, to contact me at the address below. The invitation is open anyone who has served on any of the H.M.A.S. Melbourne's and their partners/friends.

I will regularly keep you informed of progress and any decisions made by the Association. Early in 2010, we will be looking for an "intention to attend" so the organisers can then investigate suitable venues.

Dean Gedling.

Vice President

c/o H.M.A.S. Melbourne Association,

P.O. Box 4011 Bradbury. N.S.W. 2560

[sicambre@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sicambre@optusnet.com.au)

### **Apply for lost medals**

Click on the website below and apply for any medals which you may be entitled to and have not yet received.

<http://www.lostmedalsaustralia.com/>



### Changes to DVA Cards

In March 2010 the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) plan to commence reissue all DVA Repatriation Health Cards - Gold, White or Orange (DVA Cards), as the majority of DVA cards expire during 2010. The reissue will incorporate changes to both the look and functionality of DVA cards.

#### What's different?

##### Security Upgrade

All OVA cards will have microprinting and a DVA registered hologram added as security features. The features have been designed to be "minimalistic" in terms of look for DVA clients, while at the same time adding features making unauthorised card reproduction more difficult.

##### Magnetic Stripe Functionality

The magnetic stripe on the cards will contain the following information:

- full name;
- file number; and
- expiry date.

The changes to the magnetic stripe also allows health care providers to enable swipe card technology, similar to Medicare or Private Health Fund Cards, and utilise the information to lodge claim information with DVA. This feature reduces the possibility of errors such as transposing or omitting characters.

##### Overseas Clients

All eligible clients currently living overseas will have their DVA card eligibility reinstated and will be issued with a DVA card. This will remove the need for DVA to issue temporary letters of authority as well as enabling provider claims for overseas clients to be paid more efficiently.

##### Disclosure Statement

The brochure to accompany the DVA cards will contain a statement that allows DVA's participation in the COAG Better Health for all Australians Strategy of 2006 and to disclose information to health providers under the DVA MATES initiative.

The COAG strategy involves healthcare identifiers being issued to all Australians and health providers which will enable more effective, secure and efficient electronic storage and communication of health information.

The statement is:

By taking delivery of your new Repatriation Health Care Card you acknowledge that:

1. Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) may disclose some of your personal information to Medicare Australia for the proposed initiative of assigning you an Individual Healthcare Identifier;
2. DVA may provide:
  - information to a contracted organisation on the nature and/or quantity of medications prescribed to you for the purpose of assessing potentially hazardous dosages and/or drug combinations; and
  - your doctor(s) with advice on the nature and/or quantity of medications prescribed to you.

Any information provided to your doctor(s) will also include advice of potentially hazardous dosages and/or drug combinations.

#### What if an old card is presented after March 2010

It will be necessary to contact DVA's Health Provider number 1300 550 457 (option 3) to confirm the patient's eligibility.

#### **Payment of your phone bill.**

To any pensioner friends that actually still pay their phone bills with cash.

There is a number you can phone to get a pensioner exemption for the soon-to-be-introduced ripoff. This is the \$2.20 you will be charged if you front up to the PO or Telstra with your bill to pay it in person.

Phone 1800 445 708. They require your phone number, name, dob and pension card number to register for exemption from this fee. You can register your home & and mobile phones.

Hope this is helpful, even if you pay online, please pass this on to any pensioners you know who may be able to use it!

#### **Finding assistance:**

##### **Phone numbers:**

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

##### **Web sites**

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

## ***COSTELLO CALLS TO BUY A COMPUTER FROM ABBOTT***



*You have to be old enough to remember Abbott and Costello, and too old to REALLY understand computers, to fully appreciate this. For those of us who sometimes get flustered by our computers, please read on....*

*If Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were alive today, their infamous sketch, 'Who's on First?' might have turned out something like this:*

ABBOTT: Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?  
 COSTELLO : Thanks. I'm! setting up an office in my den and I'm thinking about buying a computer.  
 ABBOTT : Mac?  
 COSTELLO : No, the name's Lou .  
 ABBOTT : Your computer?  
 COSTELLO : I don't own a computer. I want to buy one.  
 ABBOTT : Mac?  
 COSTELLO: I told you, my name's Lou .  
 ABBOTT : What about Windows?  
 COSTELLO : Why? Will it get stuffy in here?  
 ABBOTT : Do you want a computer with Windows?  
 COSTELLO : I don't know.. What will I see when I look at the windows?  
 ABBOTT : Wallpaper.  
 COSTELLO : Never mind the windows. I need a computer and software.  
 ABBOTT : Software for Windows?  
 COSTELLO : No. On the computer! I need something I can use to write proposals, track expenses and run my business. What do you have?  
 ABBOTT : Office.  
 COSTELLO: Yeah, for my office. Can you recommend anything?  
 ABBOTT : I just did.  
 COSTELLO : You just did what?  
 ABBOTT : Recommend something..  
 CO! STELLO : You recommended something ?  
 ABBOTT : Yes.  
 COSTELLO : For my office?  
 ABBOTT : Yes  
 COSTELLO : OK, what did you recommend for my office?  
 ABBOTT : Office.  
 COSTELLO : Yes, for my office!  
 ABBOTT : I recommend Office with Windows.  
 COSTELLO : I already have an office with windows! OK, let's just say I'm sitting at my computer and I want to type a proposal. What do I need?  
 ABBOTT : Word.  
 COSTELLO : What word?  
 ABBOTT : Word in Office.  
 COSTELLO : The only word in office is office.  
 ABBOTT : The Word in Office for Windows.  
 COSTELLO : Which word in office for windows?  
 ABBOTT : The Word you get when you click the blue 'W'.  
 COSTELLO : I'm going to click your blue 'w' if you don't

start with some straight answers. What about financial book-keeping? You have anything I can track my money with?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO : That's right. What do you have?

ABBOTT : Money.

COSTELLO : I need money to track my money?

ABBOTT : It comes bundled with your computer.

COSTELLO : What's bundled with my computer?

ABBOTT : Money.

COSTELLO : Money comes with my computer?

ABBOTT : Yes. No extra charge.

COSTELLO : I get a bundle of money with my computer? How much?

ABBOTT : One copy.

COSTELLO : Isn't it illegal to copy money?

ABBOTT : Microsoft gave us a license to copy Money.

COSTELLO : They can give you a license to copy money?

ABBOTT : Why not? THEY OWN IT!

*(A few days later)*

ABBOTT : Super Duper computer store. Can I help you?

COSTELLO : How do I turn my computer off?

ABBOTT : Click on 'START'.....

\*\*\*

### **Soldiers are not allowed to cry**

When you hear our Pollys' claiming  
 "Those who wore the uniform come first"  
 Then you must begin to wonder why  
 Is it them or you whose marbles have burst?  
 None of it makes sense-- you just wanna cry

Today, via media, we hear their political spin  
 With shiny mirrors and smoke screens galore  
 Casting magic spells, weaving webs and praising CPI  
 Uttering "how grateful you should be, don't ask for more  
 You're old soldiers, and don't you dare to bloody cry"

It's true that soldiers we have surely been  
 Made a life of it with no regrets I would say  
 Paid our super and tax--planned for a rainy day  
 Believing there was enough to live in a modest way  
 Then hung up our boots and said a fond hooray

But when old mates have to join the pension queue  
 Cos now their super's hardly worth a zac or sou  
 Then if the CPI is so great for us, the privileged few  
 Could the PM explain to all who wore such  
 honoured cloth  
 Why doesn't everyone, including ex Pollys' use CPI too?

George Mansford 19 August 09

Wednesday, 28 October 2009  
068/2009

## RELEASE OF INQUIRY INTO UNRESOLVED RECOGNITION ISSUES FOR THE BATTLE OF LONG TAN

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, the Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, today announced that the Government has accepted the recommendations of the independent Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal Inquiry into Unresolved Recognition Issues for the Battle of Long Tan.

The Report recommended that:

1. Flight Lieutenant Cliff Dohle be awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the contemporary equivalent award to the Distinguished Flying Cross, the original award for which he was properly recommended in 1966 by all levels of Australian command in Vietnam;
2. No other individual awards be made to participants in the Battle of Long Tan; and
3. Delta Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), be awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry for its performance at the Battle of Long Tan in August 1966.

The Battle of Long Tan was fought on 18 August 1966 when Delta Company, 6 RAR came into contact with a much larger enemy force while patrolling outside the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam. Seventeen members of Delta Company were killed during the battle, and another 21 were wounded.

"The release of the findings fulfils a Rudd Labor Government election commitment. The Government has accepted the Tribunal's findings, and I have directed Defence to implement the recommendations," said Dr Kelly.

"I am delighted that the Tribunal has recommended the award of an Australian Unit Citation for Gallantry to the men of Delta Company 6 RAR. This ensures that all are recognised for what was in effect a magnificent team effort. It has only been in recent years that we have come to appreciate the full significance of the battle in the context of the conflict."

"For the South Vietnamese Government at the time it meant that the Phuoc Tuy Province was effectively neutralised as a concern. For the US it contributed to the overall effort in that it enabled resources to be focused elsewhere.

For Australia it was significant because we now know that this was a planned and determined effort to annihilate the Australian Task Force before it had settled in."

"The result of the action was not only that the enemy was prevented from achieving this objective but was never able to mount such an effort again in Phuoc Tuy Province for the remainder of the Australian presence."

"I also commend the Tribunal for upholding the recommendation made in 1966

by RAAF command in Vietnam to award Flight Lieutenant Cliff Dohle the Distinguished Flying Cross," said Dr Kelly.

"I would also like to thank the Tribunal for its work on this and the other matters it has dealt with or is continuing to deal with. I believe all members of the Tribunal have undertaken their work diligently, fairly and with an open mind. I continue to have complete confidence in the Tribunal."

"The release of the Tribunal's report and the acceptance of the recommendations clearly demonstrate the Government's commitment to the independent review of long-standing Defence honours and awards issues."

The Tribunal's full report is available at [www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au](http://www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au).

Further information on Defence honours and awards is available at: [www.defence.gov.au/medals/](http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/)

### The guys were all at a hunting camp.

No one wanted to room with Bob, because he snored so badly. They decided it wasn't fair to make one of them stay with him the whole time, so they voted to take turns.

The first guy slept with Bob and came to breakfast the next morning with his hair a mess and his eyes all bloodshot. They said, "Man, what happened to you?" He said, "Bob snored so loudly, I just sat up and watched him all night."

The next night it was a different guy's turn. In the morning, same thing -- hair all standing up, eyes all bloodshot. They said, "Man, what happened to you? You look awful!" He said, "Man, that Bob shakes the roof with his snoring. I couldn't sleep. I watched him all night..."

The third night was Fred's turn. Fred was a tanned, older cowboy; a man's man. The next morning he came to breakfast bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.. "Good morning!" he said. They couldn't believe it. They said, "Man, what happened?" He said, "Well, we got ready for bed. I went and tucked Bob into bed patted him on the butt, and kissed him good night.

Bob sat up and watched me all night."

**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 Whiteswan Ave, Bluehaven NSW 2262  
0413 968 985 M  
Email: Dmac45@bigpond.com**National Vice President:**Brian Harper OAM  
(03) 6398 1454 VPO Box 64 PERTH TAS 7300  
Mob 0417 074 616  
Email: vvansec@netspace.net.au**National Secretary:**

Ken Foster

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) 8935 5283 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 Dan Thatcher (08) 8983 3368 V A/H  
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 VICENTIA NSW 2540**

www.vvaansw.org

President Clive Mitchell-Taylor (02) 6236 8183V 0412 012 167 M  
Email: president@vvaansw.org

Secretary Pam Forsdike OAM (02) 4441 5011 V/F 0400 135 710 M  
E-mail: [secretary@vvaansw.org](mailto:secretary@vvaansw.org)

**BATHURST**

PO Box 166 BATHURST NSW 2795

President: Ken Davis (02) 6367 5338 V

Secretary: Tony Walker (02) 6355 5504 V 0427 541 852 M  
Email: doc1968@southernphone.com.au

**HUNTER/CENTRAL COAST**

PO BOX 55, MORISSET NSW 2264

Email: hunter\_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: Terry Murray (02) 4393 5301 V

Secretary: Trevor Lawrence (02) 4393 3849 V 0404 153 189 M

**JERVIS BAY & DISTRICT**

PO Box 38 HUSKISSON NSW 2540

E-mail: jervisbay\_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: Graham Anderson OAM JP

Secretary: Peter Vincent (02) 4443 2463 V 0405 932 440  
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](mailto:macarthur_sub-br@vvaansw.org)

President: Ken Foster (02) 9603 4790 V 0413 046 077 M  
E-mail: khfoster1@bigpond.com

Secretary: Bob Ellen JP (02) 9824 9657 V 0411 255 985 M

Senior Pension/Welfare officer: Ken Foster

**NORTHERN DISTRICTS**

PO Box 939 BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

President: Geoff Green (02) 9982 9663 V

Secretary: Audrey Beck (02) 9981 1224  
E-mail: gggreen@bigpond.net.au

E-mail: aundrybecksec@optusnet.com.au

**RYDE CITY & DISTRICTS**

PO Box 226 ERMINGTON NSW 1700

Office: 175 Victoria Road, RYDE 2112

(02) 9889 5211 V (02) 9808 5211 F

Email: rydecity\_sub-br@vvaansw.org

www.rydevvaa.org

President: Len Schulz OAM, JP 0423 654 832 M

Secretary: Wendy Schulz (02) 9613-9587V

**ST MARYS OUTPOST**

PO Box 3049 SOUTH ST MARYS NSW 2760

Cnr Mamre Rd. &amp; 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](http://www.vvaastmarys.org.au)

President Garry Fizzell (02) 9625 8573 V 0418 114 976 V  
Email: [thatrain@bigpond.net.au](mailto:thatrain@bigpond.net.au)

Secretary Ross Reid (02) 9625 6824

**VIETNAM VETERANS SOUTH WEST NSW & WAGGA INC.**

PO BOX 6323 WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Email: sw&amp;wagga\_sub-br@vvaansw.org

President: Keith Poole (02) 6926 1214 V 0418 692 566 M  
Email: keithspooler48@bigpond.com

Secretary: Des Davie (02) 6922 3855 V 0427 223 855  
Email: drdavie@bigpond.net.au

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

President: Pete Ryan (02) 6257 0687 V (02) 6259 1630 F  
0407 922 591 M

Secretary: Kay Brewer (02) 6259 1630 VF  
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](http://www.vvaavic.org.au)

President: Bob Elworthy (03) 9432 7441 V 0402 106 262 M  
Email: president@vvaavic.org.au

Secretary Peter Bright (03) 9747 8125 V 0438 597 932 M  
Email: secretary@vvaavic.org.au

**BALLARAT**

C/- RSL, 2 Lyons St, BALLARAT VIC 3550

Secretary: Sonya Petrovic (03) 5331 2563 V 0438 773 042 M  
E-mail: secretary@ballarat.vvaavic.org.au

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PO Box 89 BENDIGO VIC 3552

Secretary: Sue Arthur (03) 5446 9033 V  
Email: secretary@bendigo.vvaavic.org.au

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Email: secretary@boxhill.vvaavic.org.au

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Secretary: Bob Miller (03) 5472 4146 V  
Email: secretary@castlemaine.vvaavic.org.au

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

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Email: secretary@echuca.vvaavic.org.au

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PO Box 1429 FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Secretary: Cheryl Myers (03) 9776 6600 V  
Email: secretary@frankston.vvaavic.org.au

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Email: secretary@geelong.vvaavic.org.au

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PO Box 274 MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465

Secretary: Bob Florance (03) 5460 5407  
Email: secretary@maryborough.vvaavic.org.au



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 Web Site: <http://melbournwest.vvaavic.org.au/>  
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 Email: [secretary@melbournwest.vvaavic.org.au](mailto:secretary@melbournwest.vvaavic.org.au)

**MELTON & DISTRICT**

PO Box 981 MELTON VIC 3337  
 Secretary: Lynden Webb JP (03) 9743 2044 V 0407 503 393 M  
 E-mail: [secretary@meltonanddistrict.vvaavic.org.au](mailto:secretary@meltonanddistrict.vvaavic.org.au)

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PO Box 812 SEYMOUR VIC 3660  
 Secretary: Ross Gregson (03) 5792 3227 V 0417 973 573 M  
 Email: [secretary@mitchell.vvaavic.org.au](mailto:secretary@mitchell.vvaavic.org.au)

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 Email: [secretary@northwest.vvaavic.org.au](mailto:secretary@northwest.vvaavic.org.au)

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 Secretary: James Sonego Email: [secretary@wimmera.vvaavic.org.au](mailto:secretary@wimmera.vvaavic.org.au)

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 Email: [secretary@vvaaqueensland.asn.au](mailto:secretary@vvaaqueensland.asn.au)

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 Secretary: Denis Nicol (07) 3408 1683 V  
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 Email: [carlboy'e@bigpond.net.au](mailto:carlboy'e@bigpond.net.au)  
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 Email: [secretary@vvaabrisbanenorth.asn.au](mailto:secretary@vvaabrisbanenorth.asn.au)  
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 Secretary: Phil Aplin (07) 4928 6711 V  
 E-mail: [philpauline@cqnet.com.au](mailto:philpauline@cqnet.com.au)

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 E-mail: [jrd@bigpond.com](mailto:jrd@bigpond.com)  
 Support Centre (07) 5559 5022

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 Secretary: Joan Creswell (07) 5488 0436 V  
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 Secretary: Kerry Ryan Ph : 07 4683 7135 V (07) 4683 7003 F  
 Email: [vvaagranitebelt@halenet.com.au](mailto:vvaagranitebelt@halenet.com.au)

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 Secretary: Len Herron (07) 5482 7995 V  
 Email: [lenandjan@bigpond.com](mailto:lenandjan@bigpond.com)

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 President: Daryl McPhee (07) 4124 9527 V  
 Email: [darylmcphree@tadaust.org.au](mailto:darylmcphree@tadaust.org.au)  
 Secretary: John Rutland (07) 4128 8030 V  
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 Email: [vvaalogan@gmail.com](mailto:vvaalogan@gmail.com)  
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 Secretary: Lyn Morgan (07) 5485 1025 V  
 Email: [1km@spiderweb.com.au](mailto:1km@spiderweb.com.au)

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 Email: [graham.woody@bigpond.com](mailto:graham.woody@bigpond.com)  
 Secretary: Neil Layton (07) 3204 1125 V  
 Email: [nlayton@bigpond.net.au](mailto:nlayton@bigpond.net.au)

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 Secretary: Don Davy

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 President: Rick McIntyre (07) 5571 7141 V  
 Email: [rickmac2@bigpond.com](mailto:rickmac2@bigpond.com)  
 Secretary: Guy Robinson (07) 5537 5718  
 Email: [scruff77@optusnet.com.au](mailto:scruff77@optusnet.com.au)

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PO Box 533 COTTON TREE QLD 4558  
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 Email: [pgejas@optusnet.com.au](mailto:pgejas@optusnet.com.au)  
 Secretary: Peter Veltmeijer (07) 5453 4173

**TOWNSVILLE**

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

**Accommodation Centres**

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

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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: Alan Thornton 0407 012 164 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: Rob Nankivell

Secretary: Judy Nankivell 0428 256 201 M

**MID NORTH REPRESENTATIVE**

114 MOSCOW STREET, PETERBOROUGH SA 5422

Philip Smallacombe (08) 8651 2794 V 0419 828 916 M

**NORTHERN SUBURBS**

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Peter Badcoe V C Complex

Building 200 East Ave, Edinborough SA

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E-mail: vvaanssb@inet.net.au

President: Mal Pool 0421 646 745 M

Secretary: John Oldfield 0422 875 492 M

**PORT AUGUSTA**

PO Box 2243, PORT AUGUSTA SA 5710

Office: Hugh-Davies Memorial Centre

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Secretary: Irene Hedley (08) 8643 6914 V 0429 652 887 M

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President: Roger Edmonds (08) 8595 8085 V

Email: rbedmonds@active8.net.au

Secretary: Rod Kemp (08) 8588 2899 V

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E-Mail: vvtassec@yahoo.com.au

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Email: [warwick.luttrell@aussiebroadband.com.au](mailto:warwick.luttrell@aussiebroadband.com.au)

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Email: [burniersclub@southcom.com.au](mailto:burniersclub@southcom.com.au)**DEVONPORT & DISTRICTS**

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(03) 6424 5026 (H) 0439 363 149 (M)

Email: bill@insuranceadvisory.biz

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Secretary: Janet Munday (03) 6373 6132 V

Email: branch@southcom.com.au

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President: Howard Chaffey (03) 6229 3049 V

Email: howard.chaffey@bigpond.com.au

Secretary: Elizabeth Chaffey (03) 6229 3049 V

Email: howard.chaffey@bigpond.com.au

**LAUNCESTON**

PO Box 139 LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

President: Jim Jones (03) 6344 6529 V 0408 508 255 M

Email: vvaatpi@hotmail.com.au

Acting Sec: Carol Cunningham (03) 6344 2271 V

Email: vvaatpi@hotmail.com

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

PO Box 528 WILLETTON WA 6955

President: Richard Williams 0417 953 346 M

E-mail: ralbwilliams@bigpond.com

Secretary: Richard Williams

**CITY and COUNTRY**

PO Box 528 WILLETTON WA 6955

President: Richard Williams 0417 953 346 M

**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

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 Nat Sec Ken Foster: [VVAA.sec@bigpond.com](mailto:VVAA.sec@bigpond.com)  
 Or Editor Kath Coxon: [rkcoxon@netspace.net.au](mailto:rkcoxon@netspace.net.au)

Excepts taken from a Media Release  
 VA098 25th Nov 09  
 from The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
 Minister for Veteran Affairs

**SEARCH ONLINE FOR OVERSEAS AUSTRALIAN MEMORIALS**

Including a visit to an Australian war memorial during your next overseas trip is now much easier with the help of a new online resource launched today by Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin.

The *Overseas Memorials Search* <http://memorials.dva.gov.au> includes details and photographs of more than 110 official and privately constructed overseas memorials which honour Australian service across the globe.

"The stories behind each memorial are unique and provide a powerful reminder of the courage of Australians who served and died overseas."

"The Australian Government has provided funding to help upgrade and restore some of these memorials through the Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorial Restoration Program," Mr Griffin said.

"The grants program has helped local communities enhance the memorial they have maintained over the years. Through this program we are hearing stories of appreciation and gratitude for our Australian servicemen and women."

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Tamara (03) 6224 0881

**Alaric Veterans Retreat Ph: 07 4656 4740**  
PO Box 316 Quilpie Qld 4480