



DEBRIEF

Patron: RADM Neil Ralph AO DSC RAN (RTD)

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Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Inc.

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD

As you would all be aware I have now handed the baton to Ken Foster. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you, the members, for having let me experience the great honour of being the National President of the VVAA for seven and a half years. To me this has been a journey I have enjoyed.

Travelling around the country for functions and meetings gave me a chance to meet with many of you and provided me with a lot of information into your expectations of what we were doing and where you, the members, felt we should continue to advance your causes. This allowed the VVAA to continue to strive to achieve your objectives and opinions. I am sure the new Executive will continue in this task.

I thank you all but more importantly I thank all of those, especially the Executives, who have supported me in all the time I have been the National President. Without these people behind me it would have been a much more onerous task.

Special thanks go to Kath who has been behind me all the way without that it would not have happened. I also appreciate the work she does on the merchandise which keeps her busy almost all day so I do get some break.

As stated above it has been a great honour and I feel humble appreciating the opportunity given to me to lead this great Association.

Again I say thank you to everyone in the VVAA and especially those who have worked with me to allow me to have had the opportunity to lead such a great organisation.

I will continue with my work as a Pension Officer and Advocate. Strangely it seems that since standing down as National President this facet has increased.

Ron Coxon OAM



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NATIONAL PRESIDENTS REPORT



As the newly elected National President of our association I must firstly acknowledge the efforts and contribution made over the past years by our Immediate Past President Mr Ron Coxon and his good lady Kath, these two were there when the wheels were

wobbly if not in danger of falling off.

Ron and Kath took over the leadership, managed the Debrief magazine and more importantly the merchandising side of our operation and kept the ship on course.

As with all changes of executive there are changes in style, I will be basing my presidency on our motto, to honour the dead by ensuring the memory of our departed comrades is not forgotten or dishonoured.

Secondly I will ensure we fight like hell for the living, that will be based around supporting a strong welfare, pension and advocacy service that ensures our members, and any veteran or ex-service man or woman that asks for or needs our support receives the best assistance possible.

We are an organisation with a limited life expectancy, they are not making any more Vietnam veterans, we may need to consolidate our sub branches and change our approach to how we do business but we will continue to be relevant.

The national council has decided to hold a workshop in Adelaide in October this year, in conjunction with the national council meeting to formulate a futures plan, not a plan to close but to plan an orderly future to best support our members.

I strongly believe in the guidelines that the majority opinion is paramount that said I will always take on board a minority or even an individual opinion on any matter and give it due consideration, while I may not always agree with an opinion I respect the individual's right to have that opinion.

My experiences over the past years as a national vice president and secretary have, I believe, given me a good grounding and insight into the workings of and wishes of our association, my task now is to consolidate that experience and knowledge into the new role of

national president, with the support of our members and their families I believe we can achieve worthwhile results to the benefit of veterans into the future, that is my wish and my ambition for the future.

Hen Foster

National President

VISIT TO AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL JUNE 2013

In early May 2013 an invitation was mailed to Ron Coxon as National President to attend the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial followed by a function to farewell the Long Tan Cross prior to its return to Vietnam.

On 27 May 2013 I accepted the invitation as VVAA National President.

On 12 June 2013 I travelled by road, with my wife, and arrived at around 3.00 pm, paid our respects to the Long Tan Cross and made ourselves known to the AWM Staff.

At 4.55 pm we were escorted with other guests, including the VVAA ACT President and Vice president and their partners, to an enclosed area on the balcony that houses the honour rolls to witness the Last Post Ceremony, I would recommend the new format to all our members if they are visiting Canberra.

Following the ceremony we were escorted to a reception area where drinks and finger food was served, Dr Brendan Nelson as Director of the AWM spoke and introduced Harry Smith as official guest and recognised my presence as VVAA National President, Harry Smith spoke in response to Dr Nelson's words.

There were a number of photographs taken of the guests with the Long Tan Cross which will be returned to Vietnam in the near future.

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GRAHAM DONALD ANDERSON OAM JP

As I was only elected at the last National Congress I have decided to give a brief background of my life.

I had the pleasure of serving in the Australian Army for 23 years. I served in the Royal Australian Regiment, Royal

Australian Army Service Corps and Royal Australian Corps of Transport in administrative and regimental positions. My overseas service was in Japan, Korea (1 RAR and 3 RAR), Vietnam (86.Tpt Pl RAASC) and Papua New Guinea. I retired as a Warrant Officer.

Before I joined the Army at seventeen I worked for number of businesses, mainly in and around Brisbane. After retiring from the Army I worked in the Supreme Court of NSW as personal assistant to two Judges. Then as a Court Officer at the Local Courts of NSW. After leaving the court system I became a Barrister's Clerk in Sydney.

Since retiring from paid employment I've been Past President and Past Secretary of Nowra Legacy Group; St Georges Basin RSL sub-Branch; VVAA Jervis Bay sub-Branch. Currently I'm serving as Vice President on the Board of the New South Wales Justices Association.

My Honour's and Awards include the Medal of the Order of Australia (Military); Commendation from The Commander, Papua New Guinea Defence Force; and a Life Member of the Vietnam Veterans Association NSW of Australia.

I have been associated with the VVAA before the split occurred in the Association. On the formation of VVAA Jervis Bay Branch on June 18, 1998 with 30 other veterans I had the pleasure of being one of the inaugural members of the Jervis Bay Branch. In my role as National Secretary please feel free to contact me at any time, and if I am able to help in any way, I will endeavor to do so.

REUNION - 1 ALSG

Meet & greet, Mildura RSL Thur 24/4/14 @ 4.30pm
This reunion is for all members who served with 1 ALSG Vung Tau, and wives & Children of members who have since passed away.

For Accommodation and reunion details contact:
Tony Brown 03 5021 2066 V 0428 852 736 M
Email: tonyraye11@bigpond.com

Shipmates for Cancer Foundation

For the care, Support and research of cancer for all ex and serving personnel of the Royal Australian Navy

I have seen at first hand the care, love and support given to my ex shipmate and friend of over 40 years by another shipmate Phil Heritage. The dedication to our friend Alan Yates and his wife Anna and their family by Phil both before and after Alan's fight with brain cancer has inspired me to set up the Shipmates for Cancer Foundation.

My aim is to give Care and support to all of our shipmates their wives, husbands and families who are affected by cancer.

I know through the grapevine this is happening in many cases and I encourage you to keep up this support.

I wish to create a focal point to be able to pass on information to each other and support those who need our help. After being a hospital visitor for veterans and being a legatee in the past it is amazing how just a visit can mean so much those in this situation.

If I am able to get enough support for this foundation from the Naval community the second aim is to establish the Alan Yates Memorial Trust, a not for profit trust to further the advancement of cancer research into the cancers most common in our shipmates and their families.

This would encourage members and the business community associated with the RAN to provide funds for the further development of research in Australia into brain cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, skin cancer, asbestosis and prostate cancer that takes so many of our shipmates and their families.

I would ask everyone to pass this onto all of our shipmates through your various organisations and associations. I would also ask that serving personnel will join past members in fighting the cancers that take so many of our shipmates and their families.

I have the expectation that the setting up of Shipmates will take a couple of years as I am still working full time. I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

Contact:

Paul (Fuzz) Fernyhough ex PORP

Mob: 0439 757 100

shipmatesforcancer@gmail.com

Facebook Shipmates for Cancer

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>

NEW SOUTH WALES

I would like to start this report by thanking my executive for all the hard work they have put in to getting some great results for the State Branch this year, special thanks must go to Len and Ken for their tireless efforts in helping the Vietnamese Community of Australia and the ARVN NSW Inc. in their fund raising endeavours on our behalf, we (State Branch) came out on top with an incredible amount of money to go towards our Welfare Fund, as I have previously reported the effort and generosity put in by the VCA was greatly appreciated. Our Sub-Branches, St Marys, Ryde City and Macarthur were very involved in this effort as well by members turning up at functions arranged by the fund raisers.

In the latter part of the year Greg Cant, Ken Foster and myself went to a briefing by Invitation with Southern Pacific Private (SPP) which is a Treatment Centre specialising in the integrated Medical, Psychiatric and Psychotherapeutic treatment of addictions and mood disorders. This Centre is a Private Hospital as well as a research facility, the presentation was enlightening in the fact there is such a wide range of disorders being treated at the same time by qualified health professionals. Not only does the centre treat all aspects of PTSD, they have a specialised Family Program as Mental Illnesses and addictions impact the whole family. Without going into everything we learned from these professionals, we were very happy to join them (SPP) in creating a Memorandum of Agreement between them and the VVAA NSW in bringing immediate help to those veterans in most need (Vietnam Veterans, Veterans from all theatres of action, and most important at this stage, Post 75 Veterans).

The general consensus from our Sub-Branches seems to be a move away from the Pensions area and more into the Welfare section, although a couple of the Sub-Branches have reported an increase in Pension applications and these are still coming through from Viet Vets as well as younger Veterans, there is a general call that all of our Pensions and Welfare Officers are TIP trained and Qualified so as to be continually covered by VITA, our State Advocate has assured me he has approached the powers that be in TIP to try and create more Refresher courses.

Education Trips continue to do excellent work in visiting schools in the Central Tablelands, with Vice President Len Schulz, lovely wife Wendy and our intrepid State Treasurer Tony Walker, visiting Orange Christian School, the interest shown by approx 40 year 10 students was quite gratifying making the effort worthwhile.

St Marys Choir took part in the Penrith/ Nepean Valley Relay for Life, in support of the Cancer Council (not sure if Greg is one of the singers), a wonderful effort was by all those who took part in the Relay but in excess of \$400,000 was raised and making this the highest fund raising relay in NSW.

Its great to see South West NSW and Wagga Sub-Branch doing so well and their Retreat is still a pretty good attraction – to Quote “the Murruguldrie retreat has been going very well with an increase of travelling Veterans, service personnel from the Kapooka Army Base and RAAF cadets utilising this facility. We have been encouraged by the number of travelling veterans that have revisited the retreat and with the number of enquiries that we have received would indicate a busy Spring-Summer time at the retreat”. Quite a few of our Nomads from the Hunter area have visited Murruguldrie in their travels and as I have said before cannot say enough good things about it. Keep up the good work ladies and gents, what you are doing is obviously working.

National Congress was held in late May up on the Gold Coast, it was great to catch up on all the news and such from the other States. Next big thing for our State is the Vietnam Veterans Day Commemorations at the Cenotaph, ably organized by VP Len Schulz and Events Coordinator Carol Ward, also have contacted a gentleman named Steve Austin (Director of Training) who is with the Digger Dogs Programme and has welcomed our involvement in this Program, Len has come up with a couple of great ideas as to how we can help this group (Digger Dogs is the training of companion dogs to help with those younger Vets suffering with PTSD etc), we will certainly know more when they have their meetings and then let us know how we can help them, I think this is a very worthwhile idea and will pass on any information I get to all states, it is one way all states can help our younger veterans.

I would like to extend congratulations to two members of the Hunter/Central Coast Sub-Branch on being awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to the Veteran Community, they are Trevor Lawrence OAM JP and Wayne Meech OAM JP, congratulations gentlemen.

All the very best
Regards
David McCann
President VVAA NSW

A class action is taking place for all those injured by mines in south Vietnam from 67 on. Contact Graham Cook on email; trevorlawrence2@bigpond.com

Vietnam War Comradeship Memorial



On the 11th November 2012 the Vietnamese community and Australian Vietnam Veterans gathered at the Vietnam War Comradeship Memorial in Cabramatta NSW to attend the unveiling of a series of 10 bronzed plaques listing the names of 521 Australians that paid the supreme sacrifice in South Vietnam.

The planning, production and presentation of the plaques was an initiative of the Vietnamese community in conjunction with Fairfield Council initiated by Dr Tien Nguyen, a prominent member of the Vietnamese community in Cabramatta.



The unveiling of the plaques was conducted by the Governor of NSW Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO who was attended by the President of the Vietnamese community in Australia NSW Chapter Mr Thanh Nguyen, The president of the ARVN Veterans Association in Australia Mr Tran Dang Vinh AND Mr Dave McCann NSW president of the V.V.A.A. A large crowd of Vietnamese and Australian veterans, their families and supporters witnessed the unveiling and associated speeches.

Two weeks before the unveiling the Vietnamese community commenced a fundraising venture with the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia NSW Branch to establish a welfare fund to support Australian veterans of the Vietnam war and their families, the funds being initially managed by the Macarthur sub branch of the VVAA.

A component of the fundraising activities was a radiothon conducted on the Vietnamese community radio station that generated a lot of interest and support.

On the evening of the 11th November 2012 the Vietnamese community hosted a fundraising dinner that had approximately 700 attend and the spirit of friendship the memorial attended earlier represents was evident as the Vietnamese community and the Australian Veterans and their families that attended mixed freely. The attendance of two widows and some family members of those listed on the plaques added a special meaning to the plaque dedication and the later function



Pictured above... Mr Dave McCann JP, Mr Ken Foster OAM, JP & Mr Tran Dang Vinh President of ARVN Ass.

The outcome of the fundraising venture was a total in excess of \$85,000.00 that far exceeded the expectations of the management committee and on the 8th December 2012 representatives of the V.V.A.A. attended the annual general meeting of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter inc to accept a formal presentation of the funds raised.



The Veterans of the NSW VVAA would like to extend their many thanks to the Vietnamese Community for their wonderful effort and tremendous generosity in raising such an amount of money for the welfare of their fellow veterans, words do not seem to be enough, but, thank you.

David McCann
President VVAA NSW

The Wagga Wagga 2013 ANZAC Challenge Trophy

On Friday 19 April 2013 the Annual ANZAC Challenge Trophy was held at The Robertson Oval in Wagga Wagga. This game has now been written into the Riverina AFL League, and next year will be the fifth anniversary. The game is played between Marrar AFL Club and The Rock - Yerong Creek AFL Club; these teams wear the same coloured guernseys' as Collingwood and Essendon in Melbourne. This year's game was the first League fixture played under lights at the newly developed Robertson Oval.

The game was scheduled to start at 6.30pm, and the VVAA members were gathered by 6.15. The Ceremony opened with a reading by John Robertson, President of Junee RSL sub branch, followed by the Last Post and Reveille, blown by trumpeter Shane Logan. The Ode was spoken by David Williams and the toss overseen by Hewett Whyman with a "two up" kip. Despite the final score the game was a hard fought affair with The Rock-Yerong Creek running out winners again. The lead, however, changed hands several times as sides took advantage of a stiff breeze.



Above. Opening address by John Robertson President Junee RSL with the players and official, the Australian and New Zealand flags are held by the linesman. The last Post was played by Shane Logan.



Above. Michael O'Loughlin (played with Marrar), Michael Mazzocchi (The Rock-Yerong Creek Captain), Hewitt Whyman, Clint Taylor (Marrar Captain)

The 25LB Field Gun shell ANZAC Challenge Trophy was presented by Hewitt Whyman to the winner The Rock - Yerong Creek and Bill Shea presented the Pearce-Shea medal to the player deemed to be the best on the Ground for the game; originally this medal was jointly presented by Hal Pearce and Bill Shea, unfortunately Hal has passed away so with this medal Hal's memory lives on.



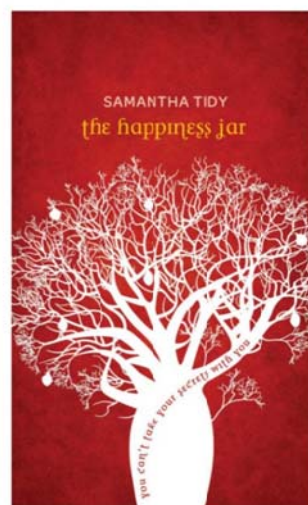
We would also like to thank our hosts for their hospitality and making us so welcome, including the lady who bakes the delicious slices.
David Williams

NEW BOOK



"A wonderful read from start to finish. Those who served in South Viet Nam and other conflicts will find this book well worth reading, and give comfort to those with whom we have shared our lives since returning from the war."

Gary McKay MC, Platoon Commander, 4 RAR, South Viet Nam 1971



The Happiness Jar by SAMANTHA TIDY

Brian Hudson, a Vietnam veteran struggling with the long-term effects of the war, has been missing ever since he walked out on Beth and their two children in the dead of night twenty years ago. Matt dreams of one day finding his own path like his heroic father. His daughter Rachel might just be Brian's only salvation.

In bookstores nationally from September or order online now for immediate delivery, using PayPal, credit card or bank deposit.

Order online at www.storytorch.com.au

The Happiness Jar is also available through VVAA National Merchandise @ \$25 per copy.

The VVAA QUEENSLAND BRANCH “REMEMBRANCE HOUSE” Gifted by “THE DIGGER’S ASSOCIATION”



The new Remembrance House, purchased by VVAA Queensland Branch has now been fully opened and is a magnificent reminder of the hardships that our veteran fore bearers dealt with and also a lasting reminder to their courage and sacrifice that we as Australians should never forget. It is a continuing and ongoing tribute to Vietnam veterans and to those military veterans who serve this country at present.

Funding for this project was a gift to the VVAA Queensland Branch from the Digger’s Association of their building in South Brisbane. Unfortunately, because of the location, lack of parking for visitors and the general dilapidation of the building it was considered unsuitable for our future use, and following consultation with our members it was decided to sell the building and purchase elsewhere.

The name Remembrance House has been continued as a mark of our respect for the original founders, The Diggers Association, and as a thank you for their services and their wonderful gift.

The new Remembrance House is situated at 61 – 67 Progress Road, Burpengary, Queensland, 4505 down a quiet and tree laden Court and set on several acres which has been selectively cleared to give a broad outlook to the vista, and supply a peaceful and serene setting for our veterans and friends to visit.

Remembrance House is open Monday to Friday from 0900 to 1300 hours, with a special activity function on the third Friday of each month. All veterans, their partners and visitors are welcome to visit, meet old friends, or just partake of the friendly atmosphere that this wonderful area exudes. Presently there is parking for short term caravans, and the association is still looking at emergency type accommodation and will advise their decision in due course.

The house is manned by Pensions and Welfare Officers, and they are available to assist you if you require assistance. Their direct line is (07) 3888.7001. The General Administration staff can assist on a variety of matters, and they may be contacted on (07) 3888.6004. Generally, these officers are very busy and we request your patience in any dealings with them.



The grounds are quite extensive and allow for quiet walks amongst the trees and creek and various small lagoons that abound the property. For the wild life followers you will not be disappointed. Your PTT Editor has spied four types of wild ducks, kookaburras nesting in the trees, several koalas amongst the gum trees; ring tailed possums, water lizards, and the usual array of wildlife seen generally in the bush type area. Truly a remarkable spot to walk around in the peace and quiet, rest and be lost in your own thoughts or explore to your hearts content amongst the flora and fauna.

Remembrance House is for all veterans and its purpose is to provide a restful and peaceful building and surrounds for the enjoyment and comradeship of all walks of allied veterans. The name Remembrance is synonymous to all military veterans. We remember our mates, we remember our fallen, and we remember our service.

Our photos: The old Remembrance House in Brisbane. The lagoons, driveway, and grounds at the new Remembrance House.

The World War One wheel chair from Remembrance House.



The hallway entrance at Remembrance House.



What more fitting name our fore bearers thought of when the original house was opened. Let us trust that we may continue the name, the goodwill, and instil in our grandchildren the legacies we have fought and died for.

IN REMEMBRANCE. LEST WE FORGET.

Post Script. *The original Remembrance House was sold to a Sydney corporation early in 2012 and since that time has sat vacant awaiting their re-development and or repair. The Council gave their approval just recently for the refurbishment, but before the workmen moved in the building was completely destroyed by fire. We believe that a young 15 year old has been charged with arson. His actions were picked up by the surveillance cameras at the museum just across the road from the building. During the height of the blaze one eye witness account said it appeared that the old diggers were dancing in the flames in anger. Let's hope by re-officiating Remembrance House at Burpengary, they may once again rest in peace.*

Story and photographs by Peter Farrelly (VVAA Brisbane North)



Long Tan Day at Standown Park 18th August

Commencing at **9am**
With the Mini Standown Games (all aged friendly)
ie. marbles, darts, quoits etc.

BYO Finger food lunch to share; 3pm March and
Service; Smoko ~ Happy Hour
Then Camp Oven Dinner and top entertainment

NEW!! Saturday 17th August - Fun Happy Hour
Markets and Free Sausage Sizzle

Tuesday 20th August: Amazing, discounted trip to
Fraser Island

For bookings phone 07 5486 5144
or email: info@standown.com.au

Standown Park
91 Radtke Road,
GOOMBOORIAN Qld 4570
www.standown.com.au

QUEENSLAND

We had the Official opening of Remembrance House in November 2012 and it was very well attended and a great time was had by all.

We applied for a grant for solar panels for the house which was successful, and they are now installed and operating, saving the VVAA QLD money on electricity bills (our hopes). Coming by mid July the house will be available for short term accommodation as the furniture and other household items totalling some \$9,000.00 have been purchased. We had applied for a grant which we unfortunately missed out on. We used some of the money from the sale of the car.

The House and surrounds are looking great due to the hard work of the past Executive, Rob Moseley, The Cadets, The Caboolture Sub-Branch and many others, many thanks to you all.

With the mention of Caboolture, I welcome the Caboolture Sub-Branch back into the fold. It has been a long time between drinks as the sub-branch closed in 2009 due to the lack of being able to form a committee. So, to the members welcome back to VVAA QLD.

Ron Strong, Snr Vice President and I attended the National Council/Congress at Coolangatta. The Congress was a great success and many thanks go to John Smith, David Fiechtner, Rob and Gwen Moseley for organising this event. Thank you and well done.

The Bribie Island Sub-Branch is having a Commemorative Day on the 29th June 2013 to dedicate a replica Long Tan Cross at the Sub-Branch. VVAA National President Ken Foster and other dignitaries will be in attendance.



The State is running well and sub-Branches are interacting well. As we are getting older the State and most Sub-Branches at this time are working on succession plans, looking into the future of the VVAA.

Thanks to all.
Peter Hindle
President

TASMANIA

For the most part, the preceding year in Tasmania has been relatively quiet with our membership wishing for nothing more than their association to transform itself into a social organisation with its focus upon the camaraderie and welfare of its members. Of course we have one or two *die hards* who are determined to continue swimming against the flow - but doesn't every State?

The mortality stakes among our veterans and their partners over the past year in our community has been significant and regrettably almost a weekly occurrence while the sick lists never seem to shrink. Our total membership is slightly down on that of last year as a consequence.

With that in mind it was difficult to comprehend the rationale behind the DVA's calculations on the nett value of a volunteer Welfare officers time when its final decisions were presented to the ESO round tables. While there is general acceptance that welfare activities within all areas of the veteran population are rapidly increasing across the board, one is left to contemplate whether the department seriously remains committed to supporting veterans in these roles given its formula for calculating work value.

This was one of several reasons that the Tasmania Branch opted to withdraw from the BEST Joint venture in February 2013. Ron Coxon has been appointed the VVAA Tasmania Advocate/Pensions Officer following his retirement from the position of National President.

While there is no doubt the requirement for welfare services is rapidly increasing, I would encourage those of our members who are able to do so to register with your sub-branch for inclusion on one of the T.I.P. training or refresher courses.

Similarly, if you believe that a particular skill course is required that does not appear on the yearly projections, let us know and we will ask TIP Tasmania to explore the possibility of running that course. We need trained welfare officers in all regions to help spread the load.

The State Branch would also like to publicly acknowledge and thank Ron for his direction and leadership at the helm of National over the course of his tenure. It has at times been difficult by the very nature the position, and often been made more difficult by some unnecessary mischief. Whatever has arisen, Ron has steadfastly held to his personal principles and the imposed constraints of his office, to deliver sound decision making that has best served the VVAA. Our sincere thanks and gratitude to Ron from Tasmania.

At the April State Council meeting, Council delegates expressed their concerns on what they perceived as the inappropriate use of ADF uniforms by gender

challenged members of the ADF at an annual NSW event. I was directed to prepare a discussion paper for inclusion at Congress and subsequently did so. Remarkably, within just a few hours of the paper being distributed nationally there were responses to the paper expressing personal views, obviously not those of their members given the response time, while also endeavouring to skew the nature of the paper into something it was not. Tasmania was not objecting to anything other than the wearing of ADF uniforms at what can only be viewed as a festive political event for a vocal minority, while those very same uniforms would be worn on 25 April at an occasion more representative of their intended purpose.

ANZAC Day turnouts around the State continue to show increased support from the general public and particularly so from the school generation. It is extremely pleasing to listen to heart felt emotions of school age speakers as they recount their experiences abroad visiting various ANZAC sites.

A less pleasing event at Burnie saw the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Garden Wall receive the unwanted attention of local vandals. The mindless acts saw commemorative name plaques of deceased members interfered with and badly damaged. Restoration is well underway and should be completed well before 18 August.

Saturday 1 June, I was invited to attend the 40th anniversary commemorations of 44 Transport Squadron at Kokoda Barracks, Devonport. The event was well attended by past and present members of RACT (RAASC) Tasmania, together with members of the State and National Branch APPVA. The commemoration service paid particular respect to Captain Peter McCarthy a former training officer of the squadron who was killed by a landmine while deployed with the UN Truce Supervision Organisation in Lebanon on 12 January 1988. Others remembered also were all those who have made the supreme sacrifice post Vietnam, and included a special mention of Drummer Lee Rigby of the Royal Fusiliers.

LEST WE FORGET

Warwick Luttrell
President
Tasmania Branch

2nd Intake JRTE HMAS Leeuwin 1961

First ever reunion

Approximate date is yet to be confirmed, assume Feb/March 2014.

To be held in the Shellharbour area NSW about 110km south of Sydney.

To register your interest and for further details:

Contact Dave Turner or 02 9520 2810

Email: davkat@bigpond.net.au

VALE TASMANIA BRANCH PATRON

HONOURABLE WILLIAM MICHAEL HODGMAN A.M., Q.C.

16 November 1938 – 19 June 2013

It is with immense sadness that the Tasmania Branch announces the passing of its long standing Patron, William Michael Hodgman AM, QC, on Wednesday 19 June 2013 at the Vaucluse Manor Retirement Home following a long battle with emphysema and Alzheimer's disease.

Michael as he preferred to be known, was born at Hobart, and following in his father's footsteps studied law at the University of Tasmania and then into politics. He first entered politics in 1966 at the age of 27, becoming the youngest member ever elected to the Upper House.

He held this position until 1974 when he stood down to run as the Federal member for the electorate of Denison. His first attempt proved unsuccessful however, following the 1975 double dissolution of the Whitlam government Michael was elected and held the seat until 1987. During the Fraser government 1980 - 1983 he held the portfolios of Minister for the ACT, and minister assisting the Minister for Industry and Commerce. Following a brief return to work at his law practice Michael re-entered Tasmanian State politics in 1992 successfully challenging for the lower house electorate seat of Denison, which he held until defeated in 1998, when the size of parliament was reduced from 35 to 25 members. He regained the position in 2001 after a recount of votes to fill a casual vacancy following the retirement of Ray Groom. Michael retained the seat following the 2002 state election and held it until his retirement in 2010.

Throughout his life Michael maintained a strong tie with the RAN where as an RANR volunteer he held the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He would later confide that had the 1966 Legislative Council elections not been successful for him, he would have taken a full time commission with the RAN, an offer that was held out to him on many subsequent occasions.

Twice President of the Tasmanian Bar Association, Michael Hodgman was also well known for his strong opposition to the republican cause and a fierce defender for retaining Australia's Constitutional Monarchy in his role as the Tasmanian Legal Director and Chief Advocate for Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy. He met the Queen on six occasions and was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977 for service to the community.

As a vocal and passionate Tasmanian who often found himself on the periphery of conservative political policies Michael Hodgman through his daunting oratory '

skills earned himself the nickname and tag he proudly wore 'The Mouth from the South'.

He achieved further fame in 2007 when, during a speech, he rallied fellow Liberal party members to give "the Labor party one right up the bracket". A catch phrase he dearly wished to see realised in 2014.

In June 2010 Michael was made a well deserved Member of Australia for his service to politics through the parliaments of Australia and Tasmania, and to the community through a range of ex-service, charitable and multi-cultural organisations.

Michael was immensely proud of and committed to Vietnam Veteran's, and particularly so in Tasmania. It was a demonstrated commitment to our Branch over many years with several of our members receiving *pro bono* assistance regardless of their circumstances or difficulties. When presented with a commemorative plaque in March 2011 recognising services to the Tasmania Branch as their patron, Michael made known his pride and gratitude for that recognition.

Michael is survived by his three children Will, Angie and Tori, and his second wife Lindy.

Michael Hodgman was indeed for many years a central and influential entity in Tasmanian politics and law in addition to being among the state's most respected, widely known and treasured identities who will be missed by all who knew him. A true gentleman has left us.

We wish you calm seas, blue skies and fair winds wherever you sail old friend.



Last year I had the good fortune of being able to visit Mr. Michael Hodgman A.M. QC., Patron of the Tasmania Branch and present him with a Plaque. It was a memorable occasion for the both of us and I know that Michael was immensely proud of his long association with the VVAA

Warwick Luttrell State President

Travelling for Treatment

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) arranges transport for eligible veterans and war widow/ers (veterans) to travel to and from their approved medical appointments. This is known as the Booked Car with Driver (BCWD) Scheme, and more than one million journeys are undertaken throughout Australia each year under this scheme. The BCWD is delivered at no cost to eligible veterans and war widows as DVA is invoiced directly by the contracted taxi or hire car company.

Veterans may travel by a DVA arranged taxi or hire car for treatment purposes if they:

- are aged 80 years or older; or
- are legally blind; or
- were unable to use public, community or private transport due to lack of availability; or
- have any of the following medical conditions listed below:
 - dementia, psychosis, hemiplegia, ataxia, blindness (both temporary and permanent)
 - respiratory insufficiency severely limiting independent activity
 - cardiac failure severely limiting independence, recent coronary occlusion or peripheral vascular disease severely limiting independence
 - amputation or arthritis severely limiting independence
 - recent surgery severely affecting capacity to use public transport
 - conditions that would cause grave embarrassment or that are unacceptable to other passengers in public transport e.g. incontinence of bladder or bowel, severe deformity or disfigurement
 - significant trauma and/or frailty that severely limits independence.

From 1 March 2012, a number of existing taxi and hire car providers have had their contracts renewed and a number of new providers have been appointed to increase coverage and to increase the number of wheelchair taxis available.

DVA currently has formal arrangements with more than 330 taxi and hire car providers around Australia which includes eleven providers in Tasmania. DVA's contractual arrangements have been significantly enhanced with more stringent monitoring of performance levels and the use of

veteran satisfaction ratings to assist in determining the future allocation of work to providers.

DVA monitors the performance of transport providers to ensure veterans and war widows receive a reliable, timely and high quality service with trained drivers who are aware of the needs of the aged and frail veteran community. All drivers who undertake DVA work are required to provide a level of assistance which includes helping passengers in and out of vehicles, setting down passengers as close as possible to the entry of their destination, and ensuring passengers are comfortable in their vehicles especially for long distance trips.

To assist in monitoring performance, DVA is actively encouraging veterans to advise if they receive poor service from taxi providers. To report any transport issues, or complaints with drivers or service please call **133 254** or **1800 555 254** from regional Australia.

To book DVA transport for your medical appointments please call **1300 550 455** or **1800 550 455** in non-metropolitan areas.

Bruce Rock Back to the Bush Veterans Reunion 2013

28th October 2013—4th November 2013

There will be many of the same activities as previous years with Golf, Rifle shooting, Morning Tea, Town Tours and an informative health evening. There will be the annual school concert at the Federation Amphitheatre. Saturday morning will see the street markets and a town hall full of information booths.

Saturday night entertainment will be provided with a free barbecue at the Recreation Centre.

So, come prepared to enjoy real Country Hospitality, have a great time and catch up with old mates and maybe make some new ones!

REDGUM
Will be performing for you in 2013!!!!

For more information contact:
Shire of Bruce Rock
Ashleigh Waight
Phone: 08 9061 1377 or
email: exo@brucerock.wa.gov.au
www.brucerock.wa.gov.au

LUSCOMBE BOWL - THE CONCERT STAGE

Until now, the history of the Luscombe Bowl has never been recorded, its importance almost forgotten. With the help of veterans all over Australia, I have been able to piece together the story of the Luscombe Bowl for the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk here in Seymour, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank every one of those veterans for assisting me so enthusiastically with their information, memories and photos. I could not have achieved this without you. Please share it, add to it, and never let the history be lost again.

Cheers, Carolynne Burgess

VIETNAM VETERANS COMMEMORATIVE WALK,

High Street, Seymour Victoria Australia
www.vietnamvetswalk.org.au

A replica of the Luscombe Bowl was completed in March 2011 as part of Stage One of the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk in Seymour. In wanting to find out more about The Bowl, I discovered that its history hadn't been recorded. And so the search for information began.....



EXCAVATION OF THE LUSCOMBE BOWL AMPHITHEATRE



Luscombe Airfield was constructed in 1966, with allowance being made for an over-run at the eastern end which could later be converted to extra runway, should it be required. The airfield was named after Captain

Bryan Luscombe (RAA), who was one of the early post WWII Army aviators. He was killed in action in Korea on 5 June 1952 whilst flying an air observation post mission as a member of 1903 (Indep) Air Op Flight - RAF.

In the first half of 1967, the plant operators of 21 Engineer Support Troop, attached to 1 Field Squadron, RAE, excavated the eastern end of Luscombe Airfield to create a massive amphitheatre which was to be used as an aircraft over-run and turning circle. Under orders from Task Force HQ, Maj Brian Florence, OC of 1 Field Squadron, had the amphitheatre enlarged during the excavation to allow for the building of a concert stage on its southern perimeter, and requested that the embankment be specifically shaped in order to accommodate an audience of more than 1,000 troops. 1 Field Squadron's diaries note the airfield over-run as being 100% completed on 23 July 1967. The amphitheatre soon came to be known as Luscombe Bowl.

BUILDING OF THE LUSCOMBE BOWL STAGE



Photo courtesy D.M. Omond

During April/May 1967 Capt Graeme Hellyer, Florence's 2IC and a qualified engineer, did the structural design for the stage then handed this on to Sapper Jim Collett, a qualified architectural designer and draftsman, to produce the working drawings for the construction of the stage. (Hellyer was never to see the stage completed as he was severely injured in a helicopter accident on 2 June 1967 and medevaced home to Australia.) Under the supervision of S/Sgt "Darby" Munro, 9 and 10 Troops of 17 Construction Squadron, as well as tradesmen from 1 Field Squadron when available from operational duties, began building the concert stage in late July 1967, with the pine and oregon timbers being supplied by the US Military. 1 Field Squadron's diaries first mention the stage in their work sheets on 27 July 1967 as "Concert Stage 5%" (complete).

"... the construction was boxed beamed portal frame at the front with boxed beams spanning from rear to front. Timber purlins went across the beams to take the corrugated iron sheeting. The intermediate wall gave mid-span support to the beams."

Fred Abbot, 9 Tp, 17 Const Sqn

The frame was then lined with ply, weatherboards used to finish the exterior, and the stage floorboards polished until they shone like mirrors.

"... I remember standing on the roof of the stage when two gunships 'buzzed' us. We nearly fell off the roof in fright."

Alan Rothwell, 17 Const Sqn

"The stage took awhile to build", Peter Allen recalls. "We had many other jobs to complete during that time at the Dat". Alan Rothwell also remembers the stage being low priority, to be used as a "filler" when other jobs couldn't be carried out.

Brian Florence recalls that the entertainers had certain requirements for their acts: special lighting and some other amenities had to be flown out from Australia via the Engineers in Vung Tau, in order to put the finishing touches to the Luscombe Bowl concert stage. As a result, it took almost eight weeks to build the stage, with 1 Field Squadron's diaries recording it completed on 18 September 1967. The water tank and toilet facility were added at a later date.

The concert stage very quickly came to be named after the Luscombe Bowl amphitheatre in which it resided, although the troops promptly nick-named it "The Dust Bowl" due to the thick red clay dust which blanketed the area during summer.

The first concert was held on the stage the very next month - October 1967.

THE ENTERTAINERS



Photo courtesy Peter Chapman, 6RAR

Hundreds of Australian entertainers volunteered to go to South Vietnam and they brought a few hours of normality, and a taste of home, to our troops. Although the entertainers received security, transport and basic accommodation, their time in Vietnam could be very difficult. Conditions were often dirty and uncomfortable, the humidity rotted their clothes and equipment and the pace was arduous, with several performances each day interspersed with long trips by road or air. In addition, travel orders had to be correct and were rigidly enforced by the Vietnamese Military Police, who were in charge of all civil matters. The concerts, however, were greatly appreciated by the troops, giving them badly needed respite from the stresses of war. They could be sure to see a variety of acts, including bands, dancing girls, comedians, jugglers and singers.

Prior to the building of the Luscombe Bowl stage, most concerts at Nui Dat were held on the back of flatbed trucks or on a canvas-covered, impromptu stages. A number of Col Joye/Little Patti concerts were held on the 18th August 1966 when the Battle of Long Tan took place. Adrian Roberts, OC of 3 Tp, 1APC Squadron at the time, recalls:

"... heavy artillery fire beginning just to the right, and almost over the top of, the troops in the concert audience". He then slipped away to find out what was going on. He remembers having to pull his men away from the concert when he was ordered to pick up A Coy, 6RAR in his APCs and go to the aid of D Coy, 6RAR on the battlefield.

Some of the other famous performers of the time include Johnny O'Keefe, the ABC Show Band and Dinah Lee. A couple of the more popular songs with the troops were 'These Boots Were Made for Walking' and 'We Gotta Get Outta This Place', and Lorrae Desmond was well-known for her soulful rendition of 'Leaving On A Jet Plane'. The entertainers also made time to give small, intimate performances to the sick and injured in the hospitals.

"One of the interesting things I remember about The Bowl was that everyone took a chair... and their rifle!"

Gordon Taylor, 104 Sig Sqn, 1968

"... we sat on the ground in the heat/rain/ monsoonal weather just to attach oneself to a bit of Aussie!"

person unknown

OTHER USES OF THE LUSCOMBE BOWL

Luscombe Bowl also served other purposes, as well. It was used for the awarding of military medals and citations at the end of tours, and many veterans have memories of Christmas Mass held at the Luscombe Bowl by the Task Force Chaplains. Vin "Jerry" Neale

remembers Christmas '69 when hundreds of men attended, weapon in one hand, folding chair in the other and a couple of cold ones, as well.

"What a sight! There were drunken diggers all over the stage and all around the altar (... taking communion). Some were serious in their befuddled intent, and others just following the crowd. But it was all goodhearted... the Spirit of Christmas in all its forms was in ample supply."

Luscombe Bowl, the concerts, the entertainers... hold wonderful memories for Vietnam Veterans. By their very presence, the entertainers lifted the morale of the Australian troops and reminded them that they were supported by their families and friends back home.

VIETNAM VETERANS COMMEMORATIVE WALK,

High Street, Seymour Victoria Australia
www.vietnamvetwalk.org.au

Stage Two of the Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk opens in just a few weeks, on the 9th of March 2013. The photo above shows just a small part of the 80 metre long, 6 feet high, double-sided curving digi-



glass wall which showcases a photographic history of the Vietnam War along with the name of every Australian veteran who served in Vietnam. The Wall is framed by trees and gardens representative of rubber plantations and rice paddies, with winding paths and various interesting artefacts and storyboards throughout.

We'd love to have you visit!



Above. M040. Rising Sun Bar Runner.

Did you serve at Ubon?

RAAF personnel who served at Ubon, Thailand during the Vietnam War may now be entitled to be added to the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans.

The service of RAAF personnel at Ubon has historically been tied to Thailand service and not recognised on the Roll.

Recently, the Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal re-evaluated the actual work undertaken by those serving at Ubon between 25 June 1965 and 31 August 1968 and found there was more to be recognised and honoured.

The Tribunal's recommendation for the award of the Vietnam Logistic and Support Medal (VLSM) to those personnel is public recognition that the work undertaken was in support of the Vietnam War. A copy of the Tribunal's report is available at <http://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/inquiries/completed-inquiries/raaf-ubon/>

In response to the Australian Government's acceptance of the Tribunal's findings, the Repatriation Commission has endorsed the addition of RAAF personnel who served at Ubon to the Nominal Roll of Vietnam Veterans.

To qualify, this service must occur between 25 June 1965 and 31 August 1968, the same date range that applies to their eligibility for the VLSM.

RAAF personnel who served at Ubon during this period are encouraged to contact DVA at nominal.rolls@dva.gov.au or telephone 1300 780 133 to ensure that their details are included on the Nominal Roll.



VICTORIA

As is our usual practice, the State Branch Council will again visit country areas for its meetings in 2013. This practice is designed to give rural sub-branch memberships the opportunity to interact with the state executive and other sub-branch leaders as well as provide important exposure for the host sub-branch through local media. In July, the State Council meets in Bendigo and in October Port Fairy in the west of the state.

Our annual General Meeting was held in Horsham in February and was opened by the Victorian Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon, Hugh Delahunty, a great supporter of the Vietnam veteran family in Victoria. Minister Delahunty is the local National Party member for Wimmera and a former player with the Essendon Football club.

State Executive members took the opportunity to visit most sub-branches for their 2013 annual general meetings. This provides a unique opportunity for sub-branch members and executive members to interact, for sub-branches to raise local issues with executive members and for the state executive to form an overall view of the health of the sub-branches. Follow up action in relation to any significant issues encountered is usually completed by the end of March, thus clearing the decks for the remainder of the year. The practice can be taxing on the executive members and requires significant travel, however it is an excellent way of starting the year, sub-branches look forward to visits by executive members and it is an effective way of getting the whole branch "on the same page" early in the year.

The Victorian state had a change of leadership early in the year when the Hon. Ted Baillieu was replaced as Premier by Dr Dennis Napthine. Ted Baillieu had a great affinity with veterans-his family has a proud history of service in the armed forces-and he will be sorely missed. However, we are fortunate that Victorian veterans have strong bi-partisan support from both sides of state government so we expect that the level of support that we have become accustomed to will continue.

The Victorian Branch, and I am sure that the same can be said of other branches, is fortunate to have a strong and dedicated volunteer force who achieve great things on behalf of veterans and their families. Our sub-branches and veteran welfare centres exist almost solely because of the tireless work of volunteers, and without them we would not be able to exist and to function as we do today.

The Victorian Branch newsletter *FSB Vic* continues to improve with every issue, due in no small part to the excellent input from sub-branches. This does not happen by chance, and at each of our State Council meetings, the first major item of business is always a report from each of the sub-branches. Through this practice, council members pick up on a range of innovative and interesting ideas that may have broader application, and as is often the case, the council has on the spot solutions to problems that are raised during the report time. We regard this interaction as a key part of our council meetings. The response to the newsletter from other state branches has been encouraging.

Our membership data base continues to be improved, and our state executive finances are in a very healthy state. We continue to enjoy excellent relationships with the Deputy Commissioner DVA Victoria and the DVA office, Veterans and Veteran families Counselling Service (VVCS), Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), RSL Victoria, Victorian Veterans Council (VVC) TPI association, Carry On, Legacy, War Widows Guild, Wives and Partners, Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Trustees and local ADF assets. These relationships are critical to our existence and capacity to keep abreast of veteran community issues across the state. There has never been a serious issue in relation to ESO cooperation in Victoria in recent memory and in particular our relationship with the Victorian RSL remains strong. The Victorian Branch continues to have a seat on a number of important committees: VVC, VVCS Regional Consultative Forum, ESO Round Table, DC DVA Victoria Consultative Committee, Regional Veteran Centre Project Committee (project co-sponsor) and Austin Health Repatriation Hospital Consultative Committee.

The branch continues to be successful in obtaining grants from the VVC and from DVA for the conduct of welfare related activities across the state. However we cannot presume that grants will continue to be available into the future, so we have deliberately set tight budgets with the aim of squirreling money away for the special commemorations in 2015 and 2016.

Recently the State Council approved the revised state constitution which has undergone change to conform to the recently issued Consumer Affairs Victoria model rules, and confirmed the branch welfare priority list.

Looking outside of the typical veteran welfare related activities, the branch has decided to provide sponsorship to the 2013 Variety Bash Rally in August. This annual rally raises large sums for under privileged children, and sponsorship will provide significant media exposure for the branch which may prove useful when

we turn to the public for support during badge week. The vehicle, *The Lime Spider*, will carry a large VVAA logo on its door during the rally from Echuca, across the top end and to Broome. At the time of writing, the WA Branch has also indicated that they will also contribute to the sponsorship.



Above. Bob Elworthy pictured with the Lime Spider.

Our annual badge week will be conducted in the week leading up to Vietnam Veterans Day. The week provides the opportunity for sub-branches to raise significant welfare funds-in the order of \$80-90K- through the sale of our badge range as well as other items offered for sale by individual sub-branches.

The Seymour Commemorative Walk project continues to gain momentum and the Mitchell Sub-Branch and Mitchell Shire Council are to be congratulated on the recent opening of phase two of what will be a magnificent tribute to Vietnam veterans when completed. The state executive has made two contributions to the walk; funds for two flag poles and for the installation of a large paver to acknowledge the existence of the state branch. Most sub-branches have also purchased pavers.

The official handover of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum land from the state branch to the museum trustees and the payment of the outstanding land mortgage debt signalled a major milestone in the development of the museum and a significant chapter in the history of the State Branch and the Museum Sub-Branch.

The Museum now stands as its own entity, separate from the Victorian Branch, with its own board of trustees: AVM Alan Reid AM has agreed to be the museum patron. There are exciting plans afoot, including a state grant for the development of a business strategy to take the museum forward. A great deal has been achieved at the museum through the generosity and support of the Victorian sub-branches, and it is intended to seek that significant contributions to the museum are recorded in a prominent place there, in much the same way as hospital benefactors are acknowledged in the entrance to hospitals.

The branch transition plan continues to be refined. The existence of this document has resulted in some interesting comment from other state branches. The document does not, as has been suggested, point to a date when the branch will close. What the document in its final form will do is to provide certainty and guidance to all levels of the branch when the current organisation is faced with decisions related to the future viability of the branch in its current form. The document will provide a road map for the branch to undertake any structural changes needed, and to make such changes under our own control.

The state branch has been invited to attend Victorian APPVA quarterly meetings. This provides a unique opportunity to be better informed on the major APPVA issues, to forge better relationships with the national and state APPVA executives and to listen to the way in which senior DVA members and politicians approach APPVA issues. It also provides an opportunity to promote the Memorandum of Agreement and encourage APPVA to look for ways of utilising the agreement.

The Regional Veterans Centre Project in Victoria continues to be hit hard by cuts to BEST funding. Some centres have closed, some amalgamated and some small operations have been absorbed by local RSL's. It is right and proper that BEST funding, like all government public money grant programs be subject to scrutiny in order to ensure efficiency and value for money, however when the severity of the cuts imposed are shown to significantly impact on the welfare of veterans and the morale of the volunteers delivering welfare services, then it is time for a serious rethink of government policy.

The state Education Team continues to deliver quality sessions to schools across the state, and at the AGM, presented a \$7000 cheque to the state education fund, being donations received from grateful schools. These funds, plus the occasional VVC education grant, have allowed us to continue to offer a tertiary education scholarship-the William Hacking Bursary- valued at \$3000 p.a. for three years- and to provide other education grants as required. In a further initiative from the E Team, it has been decided that two \$500 scholarships will be offered to Vietnamese students. This initiative is seen as being a practical way of supporting the Vietnamese community and a means of further cementing our relationship with the Vietnamese veterans and broader Victorian Vietnamese community.

Why

Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?

Is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe, you believe them but, if they tell its wet paint, you have to touch to check?



vetRide 2013

Myrtleford

Saturday 16 March - Tuesday 19 March 20



The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia invites you to join with us, for four days of road, rail trail or mountain bike riding, in Victoria's picturesque North East.

This event is suitable for everyone from first timers (we can supply a bike) to those who like a challenge. Cycle through the diverse countryside of the North East Victoria - natural bushland, open farmland, hidden valleys and some of the most beautiful mountain ranges in Australia.

Our base, Myrtleford, is situated on the scenic Great Alpine Road, set against the stunning backdrop of a dense forest mountain range and is perfectly located for access to all forms of recreational cycling.

When not on the bike you can partake of the many and varied attractions that the region has to offer, or just relax and enjoy the comradeship of fellow cycling enthusiasts.

See our website www.vetride.org/ for accommodation and entry details, and for more information about the area, have a look at the Murray to Mountains website: www.murraytomountains.com.au/.

Cost: \$100.00 which includes breakfasts, a b'bque welcome on Friday and a great night out on Monday, accommodation and all other meals at your cost.



Join the Chief Executive of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum to hear about how, over a 20 year period, a Land Rover and trailer evolved to become a National Museum and the spiritual home of Vietnam veterans. The National Vietnam Veterans Museum tells a story about the people involved throughout a divisive era of Australian society.

Presenter: Gary Parker

Cost: Free, gold coin donation welcome.

For more info Phone: (03) 5956 6400

Lest We Forget

On this special morn throughout our great southern land

We salute our fallen mid sobs of bugle and band

During the declared silence, we reflect

On the misery and agony of war when so many wept

Fleeting images of yesterday capture the consequences of Mars

Of smiling youth marching by and bloody arenas afar

Grieving widows wonder on lost youthful dreams

Converted by searching shrapnel into terrible screams

Sad mothers recall "Cheerio" at the front gate, ship, train or plane

That final wave from a loved one never to be seen again

Old soldiers hear yesterday's brave laughter and merry songs

See familiar ghost in an ever growing column marching along

Today's service has ended; our flag is raised and made fast

Once more we've reflected on sacrifice in our Nation's past

Honouring the fallen who at home or in foreign fields do lie

Once breathed duty, love of country and never questioned why

Soon after, laughter, music and busy traffic return to the streets

Yet in lonely homes with empty rooms or half-filled beds, many still weep

George Mansford©November 2012

NATIONAL MERCHANDISE

NEW ITEMS



**Australian
Vietnam
Veteran**

ST053

Australian Vietnam Veteran



Above. ST047. \$5.50
Rising Sun. Army

Below. ST046 . \$5.50
RAAF



**Australian
Afghanistan
Veteran**



**Australian
Iraq
Veteran**



**Australian
Timor
Veteran**



**Australian
Somalia
Veteran**



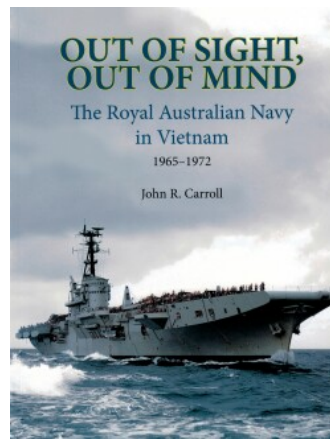
Above. All stickers \$5each.

ST049 Australian Afghanistan Veteran

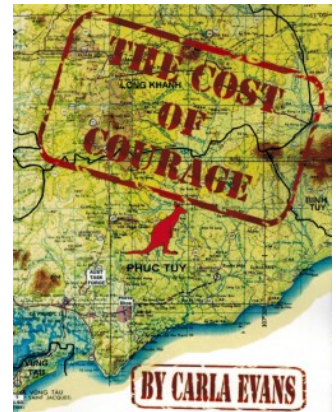
ST050 Australian IRAQ Veteran

ST051 Australian Timor Veteran

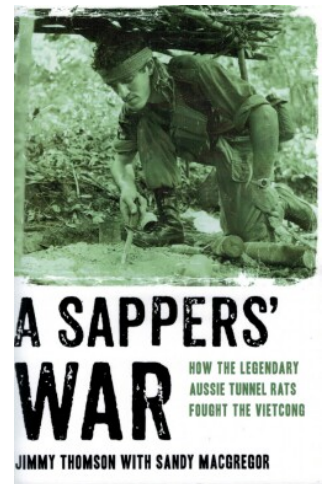
ST052 Australian Somalia Veteran



Above. BK144. \$25
Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind.



Above. BK143 \$30
The Cost Of Courage.



M032. \$17.
4 Ribbon Magnetic Bracelet.
**Note. This Bracelet now has a
new improved elastic band.**



**Infantry
Combat
Badge**

Above. ST048 \$5.50
Infantry Combat Badge

M042 . Mouse Pad \$5ea.

BK142. A Sappers War \$25



M028. 4 Ribbon Scarfe. **Made in Australia** 180cm x 16cm.
Due to a rise in materials this Scarfe is now \$40ea.



Above. M038 Gallipoli Scarfe. \$40. Size 180cm x 16cm.
The scarf will only be available for a limited time. One end
of the scarf has Lest We Forget, the other end has Gallipoli
1915—Digger Centenary 2015 on the other side. The Rising
Sun is in the middle. **Note. Made in Australia.**



Above. M041 Australian National Service Scarfe \$27.50
This scarf has been redesigned to have Australian National
Service in the middle with the NS ribbons at each end (no
dates) **Note. Made in Australia.**

BIBLES THAT WENT TO WAR.

I'm John Harris and I look after the Bible Society's wonderful collection of Historic Bibles.

In the collection is a special set of military Bibles which went to the various wars. We frequently display them but in particular we want to have a good display for 2015, the centenary of Gallipoli, probably at Parliament House.

We have some marvellous examples of Scriptures which were taken to various wars, including the Boer War and 1st and 2nd World Wars (including a new Testament from Gallipoli with a bullet lodged in it).

However, we have nothing from more recent wars and active service theatres.

What we are seeking to add to our collection are donations of Christian Bibles or more likely the smaller New Testaments that went to Korea, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq, any Peace Keeping assignment etc. We are interested in Bible Society-issued Scriptures of course but also any private Scriptures that went to the wars. We are particularly interested in Scriptures which have a name, rank and location written in them and even better if the donor can give us a little story. Army, Navy and Air Force are all very interesting to us. Of course, we still accept older wars too, but our biggest gap is the more recent campaigns.

A donation would give the donor a little bit of immortality in a permanent collection which will be regularly displayed for ever! Perhaps some Vietnam vets have a little new Testament somewhere which they would like to give a future to!

We would be delighted to receive any!

Kind Regards

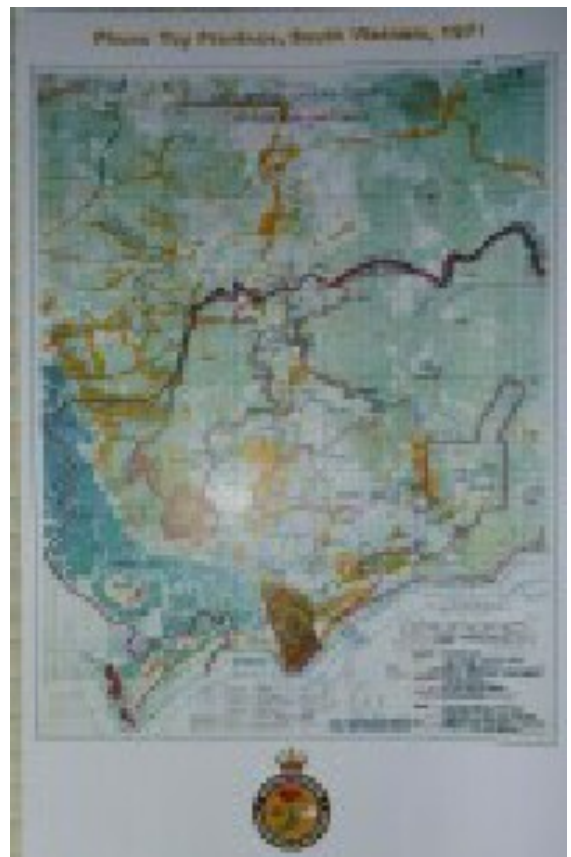
John

John Harris

Rev Dr John Harris,
36 Kangaroo Close,
Nicholls, ACT 2913
AUSTRALIA

P: 61-(0)2-62418472

E: john.harris@biblesociety.org.au



Above.
MAP003. 1 ATF Map \$20.



Above.
Navy Veteran Polo Shirt. \$40ea

SH147 Small
SH148 Med
SH148 Large
SH149 XL
SH150 2XL
SH151 3XL
SH152 5XL



Discontinued line
Above. LP085
Sea Dragon \$3.50

Discontinued line.
Right. VM014
Vietnam Memorial Plaque
\$15.00 until sold out

**Discontinued lines.**

Above. LPO82 \$3.50 CP049 \$3.50

Above Right. CAP 29 \$10
Below Right CAP 30 \$10

Below. LP081 \$3.50 CP048 \$3.50



Ph: 03 6266 6467 Fax: 03 6266 6478 Mob 0411 054 654

VIETNAM VETERANS FAMILY MEDALLION



Actual size...80mm high by 50mm wide.
"Trade Mark pending"

During World War 1 the Department of Defence issued the Female Relatives Badge to the wife or mother (or the nearest female relative) of those on active service overseas and this tradition continued on into World War 2. There were two badges issued during World War 1. One was issued to the nearest female relative of soldiers, airmen, nurses and masseuses who left Australia for active service abroad; the other to the nearest female relative of members of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) who had enlisted for general naval sea service for at least a period of the war, and who actually performed service outside of Australian waters. A bar was suspended below the badge to indicate additional relatives abroad involved in the war effort.

During the First World War a Mothers and Widows Badge was issued to the mother and/or the widow of all members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) or the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force who had been killed in action, or subsequently died of wounds sustained.

The badges were suspended from a white metal bar which bore laurel leaves. Stars were added to the bottom bar, each representing the death of one man.

During the Second World War there was only one badge issued to the nearest female relative of members of the RAN, Australian Imperial Force(AIF), (including members of the Australian Nursing Service), and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on active duty abroad.

The Second World War Badge was round and silver in colour. Suspended from two securing rings from the bottom of the badge was a flat rectangular bar to which stars were added representing the number of relatives involved in the war effort, as with bars for the First World War badge. The badge bore the words "to the women of Australia".

The Mothers and Widows Badge of the Second World War was issued to the mother and/or widow of a member of the (RAN), (AIF), (including the Australian Army Nursing Service), Citizens Military Forces, or RAAF killed in action, or died of wounds or from other causes whilst on service or as a result of such service. (Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial web page)

All of these badges have one thing in common, they featured a metal bar to which stars or bars were added for overseas service or those killed in action or died of wounds.

No such badges were issued during or after the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the War in Iraq or the War in Afghanistan. It is time for this miscarriage to be rectified, even if belatedly so. Not just only for recognition of mothers or the nearest living female relative, but specifically extended to include recognition of widows, wives, partners, children and grandchildren of veterans of these conflicts, particularly the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam Veteran Family Medallion (vvfm) has been designed to recognise and honour the families of Vietnam veterans and follows a long established tradition tracing its history back to the start of World War One. This tradition will celebrate its 100 year anniversary next year, 2014.

Stars will be added to the bottom plate to identify your relationship to your Vietnam veteran. A gold star represents a mother, widow, wife or partner of a Vietnam veteran. A silver star in the bottom plate will identify the son or daughter of a Vietnam veteran and a bronze star represents a grandchild of a Vietnam Veteran

THE RETAIL PRICE OF THE VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILY MEDALLION, INCLUDING GST AND REGISTERED POSTAGE IS \$79.75. TO APPLY FOR THE VVFM YOU MUST BE A MOTHER, WIDOW, WIFE, PARTNER, CHILD OR GRANDCHILD OF A VIETNAM VETERAN.

The information supplied by the applicant in the application form will be checked against the NOMINAL ROLL OF VIETNAM VETERANS. **WANT TO KNOW MORE:**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, HISTORY, PHOTOGRAPH, ARTWORK AND ORDER FORM.

GO TO: www.vvfm.com.au

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC.

VIETNAM VETERAN FAMILY MEDALLION ORDER FORM

First Name:	
Middle Name:	
Last Name:	
Street Address:	
Suburb	
State & Postcode:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address	
	VIETNAM VETERAN INFORMATION Note: All fields below must be completed
First Name:	
Middle Name:	
Last Name:	
Relationship:	
Service Number:	
Unit Details:	

COST: \$79.75 PER Medallion

The above fee includes Postage by Australia Post, registered mail, signature on delivery.

Note: Each medallion is individually numbered.

SEND ORDER FORM AND CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER TO:

VVAA NATIONAL MERCHANDISE

PO BOX 89

HUONVILLE TAS 7109

PHONE 03 6266 6467 FAX 03 6266 6467

Email...rkcoxon@netspace.net.au

PLEASE ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY



NORTHERN TERRITORY

Up here in the NT it is all happening with BBQ's, moving of displays, donations to and fro, agreements signed, Vietnam Vets Day organizing, new fans and lighting for Reg Hillier House, fund raising and also increases in Pension/Welfare work.

Firstly our Pension/Welfare officers have an increase owing to the returning of Diggers from Afghanistan and other postings around the world.

I am handling about on average 15 inquiries per week for MCRA and 3 VEA, SRCA. The files never seem to shrink but we are making headway.

The paper put out by the Rehabilitation and Support Division (DVA) is a very good review in relation to a more professional process and I hope that all Pension Officers have a real hard look at all 50 pages of the discussion paper.

We have just signed the funding agreement for Coral House for the next 12 months and Jack Hamilton is happy to continue on as House Manager.

This has come about because of a change in NT government and we are now under the control of NT Housing not NT Health Families etc.

The Vietnam Veterans memorabilia, photo's and poems display that has been on public view for about 14 years at the Aviation Heritage Centre has now been relocated to the new Darwin Military Museum at East Point. The staff there will take control of the correct protocol of the display and it will have its own area in the Bunker which is situated under the main gun position of the original fortification in defence of Darwin during WW2.

The display will be open in about mid August.

Moving into August we are going to be quite busy with several functions around Vietnam Veterans Day.

Firstly Saturday 17th the Vietnam Veterans have been invited to join with the Vietnamese Community for the annual Long Tan Get Together dinner. There will be a TV crew there from VNTV Melbourne and they hope to screen the whole weekend on their program (SBS I think), great food and a very social event.

Sunday 18th 5.00 pm our memorial service, with the address by the NT Administrator Her Honour the Honourable Sally Thomas AO, followed by a reception at Parliament House in recognition of Vietnam Veterans.

Monday 19th 5.00 pm a reception at Government House hosted by Her Honour Sally Thomas AO and presentation to the VVAA NT.

If any Veterans are planning to be in Darwin on these dates please advise us as the receptions are by invitation only and we would like to know numbers for catering purposes.

Please take note especially the Government House reception as NO INVITE NO ENTRY.

In the past month we have donated amounts of money to the car to be sponsored by VVAA in the Variety Cub Bash, the Young Diggers Dog Squad, and the Mates 4 Mates organization for the recovery needs of our younger veterans.

In the other hand we have had a donation from the Patriots Australia NT Chapter to help with the expenses of the Pensions Officers as the BEST funding is inadequate and we have helped several of their members.

Our fund raising never stops and we are very grateful to the members who put their time and effort into it.

This fund raising has helped us to enjoy a great weekend at Corroboree Park with great food and companionship, the next one will be bigger.

Also our grey nomad BBQ's have been well attended with some unbelievable stories by our visiting Vets but not too far behind are the local adventures with the crocs and buffaloes.

Reg Hillier House has received some needed maintenance with the replacement of all the fluoro lighting as they were deteriorating to a dangerous state and also the ceiling fans with stainless steel ones and are mounted lower to create additional air movement. Also the wiring had to be replaced as some hungry little rats had taken a fancy to the insulation, but now all is ok.

I think that covers the NT and I hope to see all who make the trek up north as we now move into the rest of the year.

Cheers
Peter Mansell
President

Reunion. HQ Company, 1st Australian Logistic Support Group, (1.ALSG)

From Thursday 24th April 2014

Meet and greet at the Mildura RSL

This reunion is planned for the Anzac week end in 2014. Already we have veterans indicating they would like to attend however there are a lot of vets that have never been to a reunion and with your help we may be able to let others know that it is on.

We have managed to secure very reasonable accommodation for twin and double rooms (some meals included) we have arranged various activities for the reunion, such as river cruises to the wineries and loads more for more details contact..

Contact:

Tony Brown 03 5021 2066 V 0428 852 736 M

Email Tonyraye11@bigpond.com

PATHWAY TO IMPROVE VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental health support for contemporary veterans and their families was boosted today with the release of the new Veteran Mental Health Strategy and the inaugural meeting of the Veteran Mental Health Clinical Reference Group.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon, said supporting the mental health needs of all veterans, including those who have recently left the defence force, is a high priority for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).

"The new Veteran Mental Health Strategy and the Clinical Reference Group will help the Government to ensure our services cater for contemporary veterans who may have different circumstances and needs to their predecessors.

"It also builds on the strong links that the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Defence have in supporting veterans and their families," Mr Snowdon said.

The Veteran Mental Health Strategy provides a ten year framework for the provision of mental health care to support veterans underpinning the \$26.4 million veteran mental health budget package, announced in the 2013 Budget.

Initiatives funded in the package include:

- \$14.6m to extend existing arrangements for immediate access to mental health treatment without the need to make a compensation claim;
- \$1.1m for post-discharge health assessments by General Practitioners;
- \$6.4m to extend Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) coverage to include specified peace-time service and family groups; and
- \$1.7m to make improvements to the processing time for compensation claims.

"The implementation of the Veteran Mental Health Strategy will be supported by the establishment of the new Clinical Reference Group," he said.

"The Clinical Reference Group is an important component of our commitment to improving mental health support and services. It will provide expert clinical and program advice.

Under the capable leadership of Dr Graeme Killer AO, Principal Medical Adviser to DVA, membership of the Clinical Reference Group is comprised of leading experts from both clinical practice and research.

The group includes psychiatrists, psychologists and a social worker and brings together all the key components of the mental health service delivery system.

"With the drawdown in Afghanistan in motion, more service men and women will be returning to our shores, and we must ensure we are well positioned to provide them with the best possible support, should they need it," Mr Snowdon said.

DVA spends around \$165 million per year on mental health services and offers online mental health information and support, GP services, psychologist and social work services, specialist psychiatric services, pharmaceuticals, posttraumatic stress disorder programs, and hospital services for those who need it.

A suite of mental health support and self-help programs are currently available through DVA including:

- Free specialised counselling and group programs through the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service for veterans, peacekeepers and eligible family members;
- Free treatment for diagnosed depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder for eligible clients, regardless of whether or not the condition is related to military service;
- A series of short videos of serving men and women, veterans and family members aimed at overcoming the stigma associated with mental health - www.youtube.com/DVAAus.
- Self assessment and self-help modules - www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au; and
- Information on alcohol and a healthy lifestyle - www.therightmix.gov.au.

For more information on the Veteran Mental Health Strategy, visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

Finding assistance:	Phone numbers:
Dept of Veteran Affairs	
Metropolitan area	133 254
Callers from regional Australia	1800 555 254
Veterans & Veterans Families	
Counselling Service	1800 011 046
Lifeline	131 114
Suicide Helpline	1300 651 251
Carers counselling Line	1800 007 332
Web sites	www.dva.gov.au
VVCS	www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs
Beyond Blue	www.beyondblue.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Halfway through the year, with ANZAC Day, National Congress and Council behind us, in W.A. we are now working towards Vietnam Veterans Day and our AGM in October.

The Western Australian weather was kind to us again in 2013, for all ANZAC Day services, when the W.A. public turned out in record numbers to participate in the Commemoration services, with Perth having possibly the largest Dawn Service crowds, of all state capitals.

Transport and parking planning for the Dawn Service in Kings Park, with shuttle buses running from the Vietnam Memorial, to the State Memorial and returning following that service, ensures an increased attendance at our Vietnam Memorial ANZAC morning service.

In 2013 there was a larger contingent of veterans marching behind the V.V.A.A. W.A. banner. In recent years, there has been changes in the format and parade route, for the City parade and service at 10.00am. One concern for the parade and official ANZAC Day service organisers [RSL], is that many of the veterans, on completion of the march, do not remain in formations, for the service but choose to leave for other locations and activities. Stay for the service or go for a beer, I don't know the solution for this problem.

The V.V.A.A. W.A. organised activities, the Gunfire Breakfast, the after march Luncheon and Entertainment at Rigby's, being well supported. While predominately a Vietnam Veterans function, each year we appear to be getting more veterans from other era's attending, in particular younger veterans and serving ADF members.

Again the Sunset Service at ANZAC Cottage, was well supported by the Mt Hawthorn community and other regulars. The Friends of the Cottage, Anne and Valerie, arranged wreath making activities for the children, during the afternoon, with these wreaths being placed at the Memorial plinth and flag pole during the service.

Prior to ANZAC Day, I attended a number of schools and one aged care facility for services. This year, Vietnam Veterans, were again recognised, at the Len Hall Game at Subiaco Oval, with veterans marching on to the oval, pre match.

Perth Racing, again made tickets available for veterans and families to attend the running of the Diggers Cup, at Ascot racecourse on the 27th of April.

The Guildford Grammar School, held an ANZAC service, at the start of the school term, on the 8th of May, dedicating the service to Korean and Vietnam Veterans, that had attended the school. A well conducted service and an enjoyable lunch following the service.

It was with regret, that we note the passing of Colin

Evans, in April, ex 1 RAR, SVN 1965/66. Colin, was the second State President of the V.V.A.A. W.A. and National Life member of the association. Our condolences go to Joan and the family. RIP.

In my W.A. report to the National Congress, I was critical of the performance of the national executive, during the past few years, a view held by the V.V.A.A. W.A. executive. At this time in W.A. we are confident that the changes made to the national executive, at the 2013 Congress, will be beneficial to the administration of the V.V.A.A.

ANZAC Cottage, in conjunction with the Friends of the Cottage, the V.V.A.A. W.A. are busy applying for funding grants, to enable project relating to the Interpretation Plan for ANZAC Cottage, to proceed, in preparation for the centenary of the Cottage in 2016. These plans include an education package, as well as improved displays within the Cottage and the gardens, to better portray the Porter family and life at the Cottage.

Following the V.V.A.A. W.A. 2012 AGM, our new web master, Steve Smith, now has the state web site fully operational and is regularly updated. A face book page has been added, while there is still a few blank pages, we are looking to fill those spaces and further improve the site.

Vietnam Veterans Day 2013, in W.A. will be dedicated to the Allies, those countries, along with Australia, that supported the South Vietnamese from 1962 to 1975. I am currently contacting Embassies, Consulates and hopefully veterans from those countries, for representation on the 18th of August.

During the past 12 months or so, through the V.V.A.A. W.A. I have become involved with a number of state based, government supported, Mental Health organisations. This has enabled me to attend a number of forums, dealing with mental health issues, in the work place and community. While the veteran community are well supported through DVA and the VVCS, the networking with these groups, has and will be beneficial, by gaining and sharing of information.

At a recent "Men's Mind Matters" forum, I obtained "the Blokes Book", released by the Men's Advisory Network, I will be getting more hard copies of this book. An online version of the booklet, can be found at, www.man.org.au.

For all the Grey Nomads out there, travelling W.A. direction, the annual "Back to the Bush Reunion", at Bruce Rock, will be held from the 28th of October, until the 4th of November 2013.

That's it from the West.

Richard Williams.

State President

VIETNAM VETERANS FRIENDLY RETREATS

Queensland

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

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

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

Contact Allan Evans (07) 4934 4941 for directions

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

Sapphire Gemfields: Located behind the post office at the RSL, power, toilets, showers, water, and barbecue. The Club bar is open Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

\$15.00 per night \$100 per week. Contact (07) 4985 4588

Alaric Homestead Veterans Retreat at Quilpie: The Homestead is fully furnished and managed by a Veteran Duty Officer. Very low nominal fee charged per day. Caravans and camper trailers can be parked at a low daily fee.

Booking essential for the Homestead (not necessary for caravans/campers) Contact the Duty Officer (07) 4656 4740. Email: alaricretreat@activ8.net.au C/O PO Quilpie Qld 4480

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

Zac's Place: Located on 715 Ross River Road, Kirwan, Townsville, run by VVAA Qld Branch. There is accommodation for up to 11 people with all facilities. Tariff is \$35.00 per night singles or \$55.00 per night double or \$175.00 per week singles or \$225.00 per week Doubles accommodation. Contact manager Mr Jason Spurr Ph. (07) 4773 6980.

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

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

Camp Gregory

Camp Gregory is a rural acre property inside a national park with the Gregory River running along one side.

A long drop toilet is available. It is ideal for camping and caravans free of charge to Veterans and their families. People can have a maximum stay of 2 weeks.

Contact Roger Dwyer first Ph: (07) 4129 4030

Address: 168 Darville Rd, Woodgate Qld 4660

South Australia

Bublacowie Military Museum:

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

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

You will need a key for access and thus need to contact John Hough mobile 0409 098 093

New South Wales

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

Barry & Di Langan (03) 5027 4447

Email rdveteransretreat@bigpond.com

Murraguldrie Veterans Retreat: It is situated on the edge of the Murraguldrie State Forest about forty minute drive from Wagga Wagga, and approximately seven kilometres from the Hume Highway turn off point to Tumbarumba on the Tumbarumba Road.

To arrange access or booking enquiries contact:

Gordon Irvine" 0428 381 292 M

Les White: 0428 226 097 M

Bob May: 0417 490 127 M

Email vvsouthwestnsw@gmail.com

Web <http://www.vvaansw.org/murraguldrie.htm>

Tasmania

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

Western Australia

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

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

Northern Territory

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

Coral House: Located 107 Bagot Rd, Ludmilla run by VVAA NT, shared kitchen facilities, laundry and bathroom, linen, TV in common room three shared bedrooms providing seven beds.

Contact—Manager Jack Hamilton on Ph. 8948 0050.

BULLETIN BOARD

NAVAL ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

All Ships Reunion Spit Roast

When: Sunday 29th September 2013
 Location: On the riverbank at the MARITIME MUSEUM
 Time: 10.00 to about 15.00
 Cost: \$25 per head
 Drinks: Refreshments will be available
 Parking: For buses only in the Museum grounds
 Raffle: TBA
 Sub-Sections—Please advise State Secretary numbers and forward payment to the State Office by 20th September 2013.

Email: naaqlld@bigpond.com
 Phone: 07 3891 3040 or 3848 4349

My brother, Harry Winston White was killed on 16th May 1968. I am looking for any information with regard to anyone with him at the time of his death or any info regards the battle of Coral and Balmoral

Bill White
 email: ruthenator@gmail.com
 phone: .0746 961349

103 & HQ Bty, 1st Fd Regt RAA—Reunion

16-19 August 2013

Perth WA.

5 RAR 1st Tour warriors in WA are also invited to attend the dinner and SAS House Bar B Q after the ceremonies in Kings Park.

Contact: Peter Manucci
 Mob 0404 024 700
 Email: pmanucci@gmail.com

Debrief articles.

Any articles, poems, stories, correspondence etc re Debrief
 to: Debrief Chairman. Ken Foster
 Email: vvaa.president.kf@bigpond.com
 Or Editor Kath Coxon:
 Email: rkcoxon@netspace.net.au
 If you are receiving more than one copy of Debrief per household but only require one, please notify Debrief Ken Foster.

MEDAL APPLICATIONS

ARMY OR NAVY OR AIRFORCE MEDALS SECTION
 DIRECTORATE OF HONOURS & AWARDS
 DEPT. DEFENCE
 LOCKED BAG 2003
 COOMA NSW 2630
 ARMY - 1800 065 149
 NAVY - 1800 808 073
 AIR FORCE - 1800 623 306

The 10th INTAKE

NATIONAL SERVICE REUNION AT SAWTELL BEACH HOLIDAY PARK 8TH TO 14TH OCTOBER 2013

NEWCOMERS WELCOME to come and enjoy our tried and tested events:

Camp kitchen at 5pm for Happy Hour, trivia night, Memorial service at local RSL (so bring your medals), RSL Breakfast, we provide a complementary evening meal, perhaps a "Black & Bling" dress up night, the Caravan Park provide a great breakfast for free, return of the Ladies "Sawtell Follies", State of Origin cricket match followed by a seafood smorgasbord at the RSL or a delicious Chinese dinner at the Bowling Club. There will be a White Board in the camp kitchen detailing daily activities so you can find a partner to tennis, bowl, golf or swim in the pool.

Accommodation.
 Email to info@sawtellbeachcaravanpark.com.au
 Ph 1800200555/0266484485
 Website www.sawtellbeachcaravanpark.com.au

Past reunion participants will need to ring the park (after 25th October 2012 to retain your same 2011 cabins/sites and pay a security bond of \$100)
 Remember to ask for Michelle and quote "10th Intake Reunion" for your 10% discount.

Contact:
 Richard and Yvonne Barry- 0267 923 114 richyvonn47@hotmail.com
 Email: richyvonn47@hotmail.com
 Owen and Lynn Email: Puie-owenpuie@bigpond.com
 Carol and Max Dahler- 0429 497 553
 Email: mdahler@bigpond.com

SERVICE RECORDS

NAVY
 Service Records Requests, CP
 Navy Records
 Queanbeyan Annex
 CANBERRA ACT 2600
ARMY
 Central Army Records Office
 GPO Box 393D
 MELBOURNE VIC 3001
AIR FORCE
 RAAF Records
 Department of Defence
 CANBERRA ACT 2600

"Air Story" out of Vietnam

By Lawrence E. Pence - Colonel, USAF (Ret) For most servicemen who served in Vietnam, the Freedom Bird was that civil airliner which took them back to the land of the big PX at the end of their tour. Mine was a bit different sort of Freedom Bird. In mid-1967, as a junior Air Force Captain, I was detailed to 7th AF Hq in Saigon as an Air Technical Intelligence Liaison Officer, short name: ATLO (the "I" gets left out, as people look strangely at anyone who calls himself an ATILO, thinking he is somehow related to Atilla the Hun). My job was to provide 7AF and the air war the best technical intelligence support that the Foreign Technology Division of AF Systems Command (my parent organization) could provide, in whatever area or discipline needed. Also I was to collect such technical intelligence as became available. This was a tall order for a young Captain, and this assignment provided much excitement, including the Tet Offensive. At that time, Operation Rolling Thunder was underway, the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. The weather in NVN was often lousy, making it difficult to find and accurately strike the assigned targets, so a radar control system was set up to direct the strike force to their targets.

This system was installed in a remote, sheer-sided karst mountain just inside Laos on the northern Laos/NVN border. The site could be accessed only by helicopter or a tortuous trail winding up the near-vertical mountainside, so it was judged to be easily defensible. The mountaintop was relatively flat and about 30 acres in size. On it was a tiny Hmong village called Phu Pha Ti, a small garrison of Thai and Meo mercenaries for defense, a helicopter pad and ops shack for the CIA-owned Air America Airline, and the radar site, which was manned by "sheep-dipped" US Air Force enlisted men in civilian clothes. Both the US and NVN paid lip service to the fiction that Laos was a neutral country, and no foreign military were stationed there, when in reality we had a couple of hundred people spread over several sites, and NVN had thousands on the Ho Chi Minh trail in eastern Laos. This particular site was called Lima (L for Laos) Site 85. The fighter-bomber crews called it Channel 97 (the radar frequency), and all aircrews called it North Station, since it was the furthest north facility in "friendly" territory. Anywhere north of North Station was bad guy land.

The Channel 97 radar system was an old SAC precision bomb scoring radar which could locate an aircraft to within a few meters at a hundred miles. In this application, the strike force would fly out from Lima Site 85 a given distance on a given radial, and the site operators would tell the strike leader precisely when to release his bomb load. It was surprisingly accurate, and allowed the strikes to be run at night or in bad weather. This capability was badly hurting the North Vietnamese war effort, so they decided to take out Lima Site

85. Because of the difficulty of mounting a ground assault on Lima Site 85, and its remote location, an air strike was planned. Believe it or not, the NVNAF chose biplanes as their "strike bombers!"

This has to be the only combat use of biplanes since the 1930's. The aircraft used were Antonov designed AN-2 general purpose "workhorse" biplanes with a single 1000hp radial piston engine and about one ton payload. Actually, once you get past the obvious "Snoopy and the Red Baron" image, the AN-2 was not a bad choice for this mission. Its biggest disadvantage is, like all biplanes, it is slow. The Russians use the An-2 for a multitude of things, such as medevac, parachute training, flying school bus, crop dusting, and so on.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-2

An AN-2 just recently flew over the North Pole. In fact, if you measure success of an aircraft design by the criteria of number produced and length of time in series production, you could say that the AN-2 is the most successful aircraft design in the history of aviation! The NVNAF fitted out their AN-2 "attack bombers" with a 12 shot 57mm folding fin aerial rocket pod under each lower wing, and 20 250mm mortar rounds with aerial bomb fuses set in vertical tubes let into the floor of the aircraft cargo bay. These were dropped through holes cut in the cargo bay floor. Simple hinged bomb-bay doors closed these holes in flight.

The pilot could salvo his bomb load by opening these doors. This was a pretty good munitions load to take out a soft, undefended target like a radar site. Altogether, the mission was well planned and equipped and should have been successful, but Murphy's Law prevailed. A three plane strike force was mounted, with two attack aircraft and one standing off as command and radio relay. They knew the radar site was on the mountaintop, but they did not have good intelligence as to its precise location. It was well camouflaged, and could not be seen readily from the air. They also did not realize that we had "anti-aircraft artillery" and "air defense interceptor" forces at the site. Neither did we realize this.

The AN-2 strike force rolled in on the target, mistook the Air America ops shack for the radar site, and proceeded to ventilate it. The aforementioned "anti-aircraft artillery" force - one little Thai mercenary about five feet tall and all balls- heard the commotion, ran out on the helicopter pad, stood in the path of the

attacking aircraft spraying rockets and bombs everywhere, and emptied a 27-round clip from his AK-47 into the AN-2, which then crashed and burned.

At this juncture, the second attack aircraft broke off and turned north towards home. The "air defense interceptor" force was an unarmed Air America Huey helicopter which was by happenstance on the pad at the time, the pilot and flight mechanic having a Coke in the ops shack. When holes started appearing in the roof, they ran to their Huey and got airborne, not quite believing the sight of two biplanes fleeing north. Then the Huey pilot, no slouch in the balls department either, realized that his Huey was faster than the biplanes! So he did the only thing a real pilot could do -attack! The Huey overtook the AN-2's a few miles inside North Vietnam, unknown to the AN-2's as their rearward visibility is nil. The Huey flew over the rearmost AN-2 and the helicopter's down-wash stalled out the upper wing of the AN-2.

Suddenly the hapless AN-2 pilot found himself sinking like a stone! So he pulled the yoke back in his lap and further reduced his forward speed. Mean-while, the Huey flight mechanic, not to be outdone in the macho contest, crawled out on the Huey's skid and, one-handed, emptied his AK-47 into the cockpit area of the AN-2, killing or wounding the pilot and copilot. At this point, the AN-2 went into a flat spin and crashed into a mountainside, but did not burn.

A couple of firsts: (1) The first and only combat shoot-down of a biplane by a helicopter, and (2) The first known CIA air-to-air victory. As an addition to this story, there is a painting of this shoot down on prominent display at the University of Texas Dallas Research Library in Richardson Texas. Also, the throttle quadrant from the downed AN-2 is displayed along with other Air America memorabilia. Have you ever seen an Air America one kilo gold bracelet? Not many of those around. Last year, the CIA finally turned over all of the Air America records to UTD. There was a reunion of dozens of CIA and Air America personnel at the event which included several panel discussions open to the public. The helicopter involved was actually a civilian Bell 205 which looks like the Bell UH-1H or Huey.

WJY

The past should be left in the past or it can steal your future.

Live life for what tomorrow can bring and not what yesterday has taken away.

Every day is a gift.

TO ALL MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS, From the 8/9 RAR Association Committee

1. Recently there have been a few enquiries ref Activities for the 40th Anniversary this year.

2. Basically to keep it simple the Committee has decided on a format dovetailed into the Units activities.

3. The CO LTCOL Kalhill Fegan and RSM WO1 Dave Trill have extended an invitation for all ex members of the BN to attend anyone or all of the activities as shown.

4. The Association intends to do the following:

a. Thu 31 Oct:

RV 8/9 RAR

Participate in the Billy Cart Race (Need a couple of entries for the Billy Cart Race, this is easier than playing Rugby)

RV at the Ram's Tour of the History Section and drinks

b. Fri 01 Nov Meet & Greet at a nominated venue during the day

c. Fri 01 Nov attend the BN Ball

d. Sat 02 Nov RV at the Ram's Retreat:

Veh, Weapon and Comms display at the Parade ground (Next to the Ram's)

Tour of the new lines

AGM

BBQ & Buffet @ \$20 per head approx

f. Sun 03 Nov Recovery Meet & Greet

5. To make this Anniversary a memorable one Members, Family and Friends are asked to spread the word far and wide, remember the nucleus of the BN came from 8 and 9 RAR however over the years members came from 1,2,3 4,5,6 RAR plus were posted to 1 & 2 RAR. I know for a fact the young men and women of the BN would like to talk to the old and bold. Although 8 & 9 RAR have their Associations and hold regular Reunions this is an important day for one and all! So please bring along any pictures, memorabilia old gear and practise telling those stories of yester year. Foot Note if you do have any old gear, flags picture and "Stuff relating to the BN or your service you don't want please bring it along and donate to either the 9th BN Association Museum which now has and 89ers Section and or the History Section at the BN

6. The BN Program:

The unit is yet to put together the instruction for the events of the Bn Birthday Week, being 28 Oct-1 Nov 13 inclusive.

A broad outline of events will be:

Old Sailors Sit.....

Old sailors sit
And chew the fat
About things that used to be,
Of the things they've seen'
The places they've been,
When they ventured out to sea.

They remembered friends
From long ago,
The times they had back then,
The money they spent,
The beer they drank,
In their days as sailing men.

Their lives are lived
In the days gone by
With the thoughts that forever last.
Of the bell bottom blues,
Round white hats,
And good times in their past.

They recall long nights
With the moon so bright
Far out into the lonely sea.
The thoughts they had
As youthful lads,
When their lives were wild and free.

They know so well
How their hearts would swell
When the flag fluttered proud and free.
The underway pennant
Such a beautiful sight
As they plowed through an angry sea.

They talked of the scran
Ol' cookie would make
And the shrill of the bos'n pipe.
How salt spray would fall
Like sparks from hell
When a storm struck in the night.

They remember old shipmates
Already gone
Who forever hold a spot in their heart,
When sailors were bold,
And friendships would hold,
Until death ripped them apart.

They speak of nights
Spent in bawdy houses
On many a foreign shore,
Of the beer they'd down
As gathering around,
Telling jokes with a busty whore.

Their sailing days
Are gone away,
Never again will they cross the brow.

They have no regrets,
They know they are blessed,
For honoring the sacred vow.

Their numbers grow less
With each passing day
As the final muster begins,
There's nothing to lose,
All have paid their dues,
And they'll sail with shipmates again.

I've heard them say
Before getting underway
That there's still some sailing to do,
They'll say with a grin that their ship has come in,
And the Good Lord is commanding the crew.

Soldiering is Constant

From Musket to Rifle with laser sight
Gruel, bully beef, hard biscuits, ration pack or rice
Redcoat, khaki, jungle green or camouflaged thread
Slept in all types of harsh terrain but rarely a bed
Walked, rode, sailed, flew and rocket belts in a year or two
Answered to Brass and Bureaucrats to name but a few
Lauded in war yet barely tolerated in peace by more than a few

No matter the season they came from all walks of life
Volunteers and conscripts in peace and strife
The training harsh cos sergeants knew the score
It had to be tough to properly prepare for war
Red eyed, sharing food, water and chores became the norm
A Spartan life be it summer heat, winter snow or drenching storm
Soon, so very soon, a new band of brothers born

When war arrived and messengers of death did sing
"Hang on mate" "Stand to" had familiar rings
These warriors charged into the fog of war and many did fall
Sometimes a truce or one side tossed in the towel
The smoke cleared and guns no longer did growl
Generals with clinking garlands received national tributes
Politicians gave stirring speeches and took the salute

Weary veterans dismissed to live with frequent nightmares
Politicians quickly forgot or didn't care
Bows and spears broken and less numbers for uniforms to wear
Soon new recruits with obsolete gear begin to train
Thus a familiar cycle in history is repeated again and again
Whatever the political spin, the consequences of war the same

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 Kath Coxon (Editor) or Ken Foster (National Pres) no later than end of Oct
 2013.

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

Combined arms contact, Vietnam

Between 1962 and 1973 almost 60,000 Australians, including ground troops, Air Force and Navy personnel, served in Vietnam. More than 3,000 were wounded. Five hundred and twenty one lost their lives.

On 18 August, the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, Australia will again remember this service and sacrifice.

Each year one Canberra-based company is working to proudly preserve the memory of Australia's engagement in Vietnam by enlisting historians and artists to capture the spirit of service and the realities of war.

This year Military Shop commissioned leading Australian artist, Drew Harrison and military historian, Graham Wilson, to collaborate on a new artwork to capture Australian troops in a combined arms contact.



While Vietnam was largely a war of boots and bush – endless patrols and close contacts with an elusive enemy fought for the most part by infantry, there were also occasions when the force of Australia's military services was brought to bear against the foe.

According to historian Graham Wilson the commission for Military Shop was designed to pull into a single image the battle-winning value of combined arms action.

"Our brief was to look at the military evidence of such encounters and then translate this through the artist into a powerful image," Graham said. "For my part it was about making sure all elements were accurately reflected, looking at the gear being used, the tactics employed and the geographic layout.

"But it is up to the artist to chronicle this in such a way that the viewer can relate to the action and the perspective."

"Historically this type of encounter could have taken place anytime between 1969 and 1971. The armoured vehicles, including their markings (or lack of markings), the uniforms and weapons of the ground troops, their webbing and equipment, all are authentic for the period."

The painting shows a contact where the invisible enemy is cloaked in the jungle's shadows. But where this may have provided a winning advantage against a single unit, it provided no such benefit against the firepower brought to bear by Centurion tanks of the 1st Armoured Regiment and an M113 armoured personnel carrier from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment.

In his painting Drew Harrison captures all elements of the engagement and the tactics employed. The tanks and APC provide valuable cover and fire support, allowing the machine gunners with their M60 general purpose machine gun, to move forward. The infantry platoon commander, with his signaller close by, controls the battle from behind the M113 as a medical orderly uses the cover provided by a Centurion to attend to a severely wounded digger.

Overhead two helicopters of the Royal Australian Air Force move in, guided by a smoke grenade marker. One is ready to add its firepower to the fight and provide air cover as the other comes in to "Dust-off" the critically wounded and speed them back to life saving medical support. It can be assumed they will also deliver much needed ammunition and reinforcements.

Drew Harrison is widely regarded as one of Australia's most versatile artists, who seamlessly blends his passions for fine art, historical detail and acrylics, to create some of Australia's richest artworks. Drew's military art represents a culmination of his artistic experiences in aviation, wildlife and contemporary interpretation of society. This blend affords his military artworks a fresh and unique atmosphere. Drew's aviation-based works have won numerous *Royal Australian Air Force Heritage Awards* and his works in this area are part of the Service's permanent collection. Artworks from his other collections have also won national awards.

Graham Wilson is a widely published investigative historian. In his 2012 book, *'Dust, Donkeys and Delusions: The Myth of Simpson and his Donkey Exposed'*, he challenged the national psyche when his investigations debunked the revered story of the Man with the Donkey. Although controversial, the evidence presented was overwhelming, and his work applauded as an outstanding and accurate investigative piece.

The products are available from
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See products next page

National Merchandise New Items - Combined arms contact, Vietnam Limited Edition



LT38 Centurion Medallion



LT39 Huey Chopper Medallion



LT40 Infantry Medallion



LT41 Medic



LT42 Signals



LT36 \$5

Lapel Pin on card



LT37 \$9

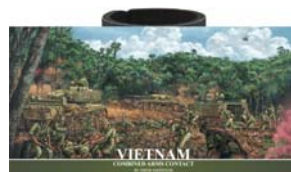
Medallion on card

Above.

CAP40 Cap \$17.50

CAP41 Beanie \$17.50

Right. M045 Stubbie Holder \$5

All Medallions
\$45each.

Medallion presented in protective box



Above. Left LT43 Medallion Set \$185.00

Above Right. LT44 Medallion Set \$67.00

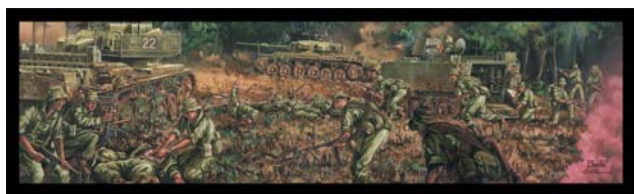


Print Limited edition

PCT 08 Lg \$1900.00 Postage \$25

PCT09 Sml \$325.00 Postage \$15

PCT10 Unframed \$135.00 Postage \$10



Above. M046 Bar Runner \$27.50



Above.M047 4 Ribbon Scarfe \$20.00



M943 Jigsaw Puzzle 750 Pieces \$27.50

M044 Jigsaw Puzzle 100 Pieces \$17.50