Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

Victorian Branch Inc.

FSB-VIC

WINTER 2019 EDITION

HONOURING OUR HAT DICH/BINH BA VETERANS





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Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living

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Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living



Membership

Despite the closure of four Sub-Branches over the past three years, the Branch again managed to keep its membership base hovering around the 2000 mark. This is a remarkable achievement given the Sub-Branch closures and the consequent loss of members (experience shows that less than 5% of members from Sub-Branches that close take up membership elsewhere), member deaths and non-renewals. The number of veterans who have never been members continues to rise, helping to balance the loss of members who have been with the Branch for some time and who are now signing off. These trends are worthy of further analysis in terms of a better understanding of why ageing veterans are joining for the first time, and some dropping off, which in turn will help to inform decisions to provide better welfare (wellness) related services.

SEATO Civilian Medical and Surgical Teams Gold Card

It was with great delight that we were able to report that we had finally achieved a major breakthrough in our decades long campaign to secure DVA entitlements for the civilian SEATO Team members. The breakthrough was achieved by abandoning the fruitless pursuit of DVA disability and pension compensation, and seeking to have the Government include the SEATO teams as being eligible for the DVA Gold Card. When DVA announced a decision to provide Gold Card eligibility to civilians who may have been impacted by the British Nuclear testing in Australia and stated. "Civilians who were not members of the Defence Force nor working for the Defence Force during the testing…….will be eligible.", our campaign zeroed in and defeated one of the last Government arguments for denying SEATO members DVA benefits(i.e. they were civilians and not part of the ADF in Vietnam).

The State President attended the formal announcement by the Minister for Veterans Affairs and Federal Treasurer, along with some members of the SEATO teams, at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance in December 2018.

Originally, the entitlement for the Gold Card was to be July 2020, with government arguing it would take that long to pass the necessary legislation. Following further submissions, the Government "fast-tracked" legislative amendments and the Gold Card will now be available from July 2019.

This is another great achievement in the history of the VVAA, and testament to the determination and endurance of our members who refused to give up on what seemed a hopeless task. Fittingly, the National Council also voted unanimously to extend ordinary membership of the Association to include SEATO team civilian members.





Branch – Sub-Branch Elections.

At the 2018 Branch AGM conducted in Echuca-Moama in February, the State Executive was re-elected unopposed. It is interesting to report that there was significant movement at the Sub-Branch level, with several new members elected to senior committee positions; this is a healthy sign. As is the normal practice, a state executive member attends each Sub-Branch AGM. This provides the opportunity for members in rural areas to meet the executive members, the executive member can assist the meeting if governance or meeting protocol issues arise, and also provides an opportunity for the executive member to address the meeting on key branch issues. This practice has been highly successful, and

Sub-Branches are genuinely pleased that executive members attend their meetings.

Branch Meetings

As is our custom, the State Council continues to conduct business in regional areas. To promote the Branch, local Sub-Branch and the work of the Branch Education Team, a newspaper and radio media campaign is conducted in the area in the lead up to the meeting, including open invitations to schools and community groups to attend the E Team display, which is established in the area three days prior to the council meeting. The community response and interest has been excellent, with interest already being generated for our next meeting in Bendigo in June.

Constitutional Change

The Branch Constitution was amended to include SEATO medical and surgical team members and others in accordance with the agreed national council constitutional amendments, and submitted to Consumer Affairs Victoria for approval to meet our Patriotic Welfare Fund and charity status reporting responsibilities.

Administrative Change

Administrative changes flagged in our 2017 report have been bedded down with minor adjustments. As advised, the DVA Story Writing and Arts Competition, of which the Branch has been a significant sponsor, concluded in November. The Branch Executive Committee has changed the annual donation to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum from an amount equal to one dollar for each member to a standard donation of $2000; the donation is found from capitations to state.

Victorian Branch Education Team (www.vvaaeducteam.org.au)

The team continues to represent the Branch and the Association through its incursions into schools, displays at community activities, interaction with the Vietnamese community and attendance at VVAA Victorian Branch and Sub-Branch commemorative activities. During 2018, the team attended over 40 schools, providing presentations to 3000 students and many teachers. The team continued to support community and Sub- Branch ANZAC Day services, school presentation nights, community groups and Cadet Units. It is estimated that the team will again have reached an audience in excess of 6000 when static displays at community fairs, TET and

other activities, including a display stand at the History Teachers Association of Victoria annual conference are included. The E Team has continued its magnificent work with the Berry Street Program for disadvantaged school children and involvement with year 11 and 12 students undertaking the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program for challenged secondary school students. The Veterans Unit of the State Government Department of Premier and Cabinet reaches out to the E Team for assistance with discussions with students selected to attend the Premier's Spirit of ANZAC Prize when the tour visits Vietnam.

Branch Involvement in VCAL Program at Montmorency Secondary College

A number of Branch members took part in a Montmorency -Eltham RSL organized project with students from the college culminating in the students presenting their reports as part of their assessed work. The Branch organized a tour of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum for the students.



Branch and E Team Involvement in the Vietnamese Community Dual Identity Program







Both the Branch and the E Team work closely with the Vietnamese Community in Victoria, including presenting awards to young Vietnamese Australians who have excelled at their studies and their commitment to the Vietnamese-Australian community.

Vietnam Veterans Day 2018

As is our custom, the VV Day 2018 commemorations noted the anniversary of the battle of Long Tan and then focused on the battles at FSB's Coral and Balmoral. The Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Trustees generously allowed the branch to use a large screen during the commemorations. The screen was used to project the conduct of the commemorations from cameras placed around the Shrine forecourt and instead of a guest speaker, the stories of two Coral/ Balmoral veterans, who had told of their experiences during pre-recorded interviews, were played on the screen. This was an emotionally charged part of the commemorations.





Prior to the commemorations, a gunfire breakfast was conducted on the Shrine lawns. This is a significant part of the day where veterans and their families mingle for an hour or two prior to the march.









With the assistance of a number of ADF Senior NCO's who volunteer their time, the veterans are then lined up for the march which commenced at 11.00. a.m. The march was led by Mentone Grammar cadets, each carrying a flag in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the battles at FSB's Coral and Balmoral. Following in pride of place in the march were Vietnam veteran unit associations with links to the battles.

A group from ELTHAM College magnificently performed 'I am Australian" and "I Was Only Nineteen" (not a dry eye anywhere) after which the cadets formed an guard of honour at the Shrine Eternal Flame, marching forward in pairs as the names of the fallen from Coral/Balmoral were read to the tolling of a bell. A Shrine catafalque party took post, and floral tributes were placed at the eternal flame.



As usual, there was a strong Vietnamese veteran and Vietnamese community presence.

State Government Grant for Veteran Welfare and Student Education

The Victorian State Government has advised that a $1M grant will be made available over four years to the Branch to conduct veteran welfare and student education programs. It is expected that access to the funds will be available after

the state budget in May 2019. The student program will involve providing free transport and entry to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum along with tours of the museum

tailored to the current curriculum. The E Team links with the Victorian History Teachers Association will also be used to promote the program.

The Branch has already started planning for how the welfare funds might be used, with an initial meeting to "crystal ball" ideas. The Branch will work closely with the Depart-

ment of Premier and Cabinet Veteran Unit in relation to the amount of funds to be delivered each year, and to inform the unit of our plans, and to agree expenditure and acquittal procedures. The branch treasurer will create specific accounts) for the grant.

It is expected that the provision of welfare services will include regional health and well-being presentations and information seminars.



Geelong and Districts Sub-Branch

Veterans Precinct Project

The Geelong and Districts Sub-Branch is one of the largest groups within the Branch and can lay claim to being one of, if not the first formal gathering of Vietnam veterans in the state prior to the creation of a State Branch. Over a 15 year period, the Geelong members have established a Vietnam veterans' precinct at the northern entry to the city.



A federal government grant in 2018 was provided for the creation and installation of a series glass interpretive panels to be unveiled in 2019. The panels will complement the



highly visible images of the Vietnam War experience and are sure to attract significant attention. When completed, the Geelong and Districts Sub-Branch Vietnam veterans walk will be another outstanding contribution to the preservation of the Vietnam veteran story in Victoria. The Geelong Sub-Branch deserves high praise for their dedication to this most worthwhile project.

The precinct is now protected by a heritage overlay.

Badge Week

The museum provided a range of merchandise to supplement the items sourced by Sub-Branches. A fund raising win-win for all. The future of badge week has been discussed and it is likely that the effort will cease within the next few years as member involvement wains. Badge week has been a very successful fund raiser for Sub-Branches over the years.

Honorary Branch Life Membership

The Branch has bestowed Mr. Robert Winther OAM with Honorary Life Membership. Robert Winther is the Veteran Liaison Officer at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital Campus of Austin Health, and he has been a tireless worker for veterans for decades. He has always ensured that Vietnam veterans have strong visibility within the hospital grounds and he is a very worthy recipient of Honorary Life Membership. In its history as a Branch which dates back to

1985, a total of nine Honorary Life Memberships have been awarded.

Disquiet within the ESO Community

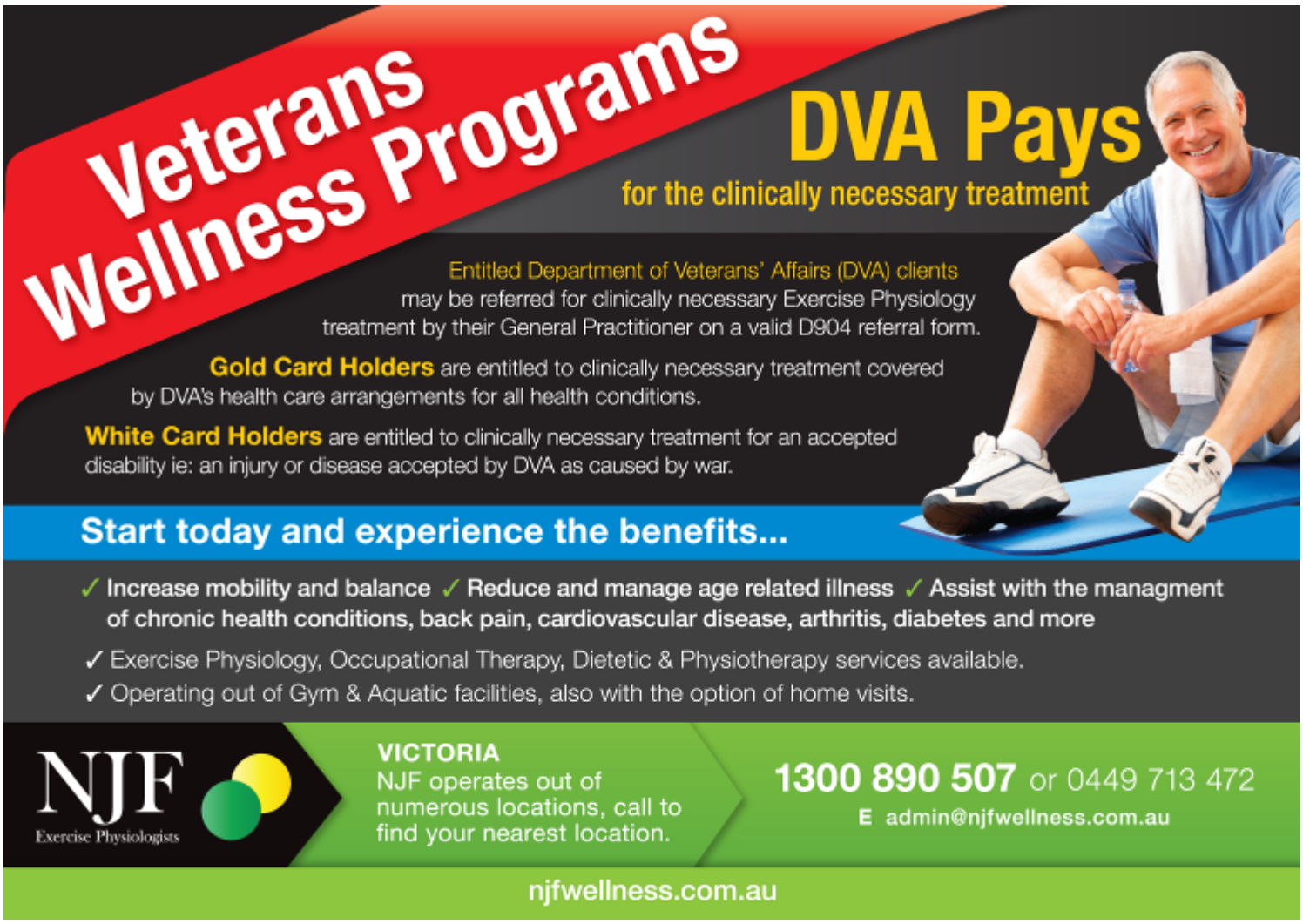
In the current climate where issues surrounding use of funds appear to remain unresolved at National RSL, NSW RSL (SA RSL Branch?) and TPI Victoria, it has been imperative that the Branch maintain its good relationships with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) in relation to the management of Patriotic Welfare Funds. Additionally, actions by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission to tighten reporting requirements for registered charities-including removal of charity status from some non -compliant "charities" has meant that the Branch has come under additional scrutiny from CAV. Happily, it can be reported that we have met all of the reporting requirements of CAV, and have responded positively to their queries.

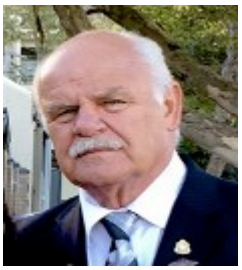
Additionally, the Branch has kept itself at arms-length from the ructions within TPI Victoria, save for providing guidance to interim committee members where to go to seek support from Victorian regulatory bodies. Also, the Branch has kept a watching brief on the activities of a small group of younger veterans who have embarked on a campaign to de-stabilize a small traditional RSL Sub-Branch.

Despite all this we continue to maintain a good working relationship with the major ESO's in Victoria, the State Government and the State authorities overseeing the veteran community in Victoria.

Bob Elworthy AM

VICTORIAN BRANCH





Let me begin with some good news which and I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Bob Elworthy AM on his Life Membership with VVAA National. Bob has worked tirelessly over many years in ensuring we, as an Association, remain the dominant State within VVAA. Under his leadership VVAA Victoria has grown and now ranks as the largest State Branch with-in VVAA, so from us all congratulations Bob for this well deserved honor.

Capitations are coming in at a great rate and we are already well ahead in comparison to the same time last year and moving steadily towards last year's figure of 2000 strong. On current indications we may even exceed that.

2019 has not been kind to us we have had a substantial increase in veterans passing away *(a total of 20 to date)* with, amongst these, several who have passed away alone. With this in mind we will be looking at ways of creating a Vietnam Liaison Officer (VLO) program in hospitals and aged care facilities to assist the veteran and his family at this difficult time ensuring no more veterans die alone. It is important we remain in contact with as many veterans as possible. The VLO program and how we turn it into reality will be discussed at length at our next VVAA Victoria State Council meeting on the 29th June 2019.

After an initial shock from METRO, Station permits for Badge Week are expected to be in hand by late this month. Initially when applications were forwarded to METRO, in early April, the response back was *"as we are dealing with a third party we will be unable to process these any earlier than 3 weeks prior to the event."* Since then sanity has prevailed, the policy has been reviewed and permits will be issued like in previous years. Badge Week has always been a great fundraiser for us however as volunteer numbers decrease it is expected it will only exist for another couple of years or so.

I had the honor of attending three functions during May, the first being the unveiling of 9 Interpretive Panels by the Geelong Sub-Branch depicting the stories of the Vietnam War in words, images and illustrations. This unveiling on the 10th May 2019 marked the 3rd and final stage at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park at North Geelong. Congratulations Geelong for such a marvelous tribute.

Together with other members of OEM Sub-Branch I attended the annual Veterans Breakfast hosted by students of Monbulk College in the Yarra Ranges as part of their VCAL program. The students take great pride in preparing and serving a meal for the veterans. A chat with students one on one just prior to breakfast being served tends to set the scene. After breakfast we sit in a circle for a round table question and answer session and discuss each veteran's time in Vietnam and the treatment received on return to Australia. The students are always an inquisitive bunch which makes for, as always, a very enjoyable day.

It was a pleasure attending the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Commemorations on 31st May 2019 at the Shrine of Remembrance where Bob Elworthy AM laid a wreath on behalf of VVAA Victoria. The service was very moving with performances by the acclaimed Dhungala Children's Choir *(made up of children aged between 9 to 17)*, and Short Black Opera *(Australia's National Indigenous Opera Company)* leading the way. It was an excellent service paying tribute to our Indigenous service men and women who served from the Boar War through to the present.

The future of VVAA Victoria is in good hands and we look forward to many more years of service to the members. It has been several years now since we have lost a Sub-Branch all due mainly to our very dedicated Executives who run them. As an association we feel confident in our future for a few more years yet.





VVAA Vic State President Bob Elworthy AM presents Jenny Nguyen Pham with the ***VVAA Education and Community Volunteer Award..***



Thomas Nguyen Pham with the VVAA Phil White OAM 2019 Memorial Bursary Award.

Jenny Nguyen Pham with the VVAA Education and Community Volunteer Award



VVAA Vic ETeam Steve Lowe presents the ***Phil White OAM Memorial Bursary 2019*** to Thomas Nguyen Pham.

VALE

43331 Ronald (Ron) Coxon

18th May 2019 in Tasmania.

102 Field Workshop Vietnam 7/70 > 8/71.

Former National President,

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia.

Ron took over after some somewhat turbulent years at the national level and set about healing old wounds and focusing the Branch on veteran welfare. I had a very good working relationship with Ron, and regarded him as a personal friend. He was a significant contributor to the VVAA and will be sorely missed.

Bob Elworthy AM

State President VVAA Victoria



The Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize (SOAP) is an annual competition held to select Year 9 or 10 students for an overseas study tour of sites where Australians have served in war.

This year Gary Treeve was nominated by VVAA Vic. to be a veteran escort on the recent SOAP trip to Vietnam.

It was a memorable trip.

Our first stop was the Cu Chi Tunnels where the students were amazed at the life in the tunnels as explained by our very knowledgeable tour guide Martin.

We visited the War Remnants Museum in Saigon; the students and adults found some of the displays very confronting, but clearly gave them an overview of the horrors of the war.

Vung Tau is now a city of Hi-rise buildings, motels and lots of tourists, no longer visible as once ALSG.

We went to Long Tan, visited the Cross and laid a wreath - no longer have to get permission from local police; once again many visitors. There is a memorial that has all the names of those killed at Long Tan and other battles.

The next area of interest was the site of FSB Coral & Balmoral where there is a memorial in the rubber plantation.

Overall a fantastic trip. The Students had researched and presented their topics well. Rob and I and the Adults had some quality time.

Regards

Gary Treeve



Site of FSB Balmoral battle.



SOAP Students



Gary in tunnel entrance.

GEELONG & DISTRICT

ANZAC Day in Geelong was busy with G & DVVAA representatives laying wreaths on behalf of the Sub Branch at various services around the Geelong region from the Surf Coast (Torquay) to the Bellarine (Leopold, Portarlington & Drysdale) through to Norlane, Lara and Inverleigh. Here in Geelong the ANZAC Dawn Service at Eastern Beach was attended by over 7,000 people. The March along Malop St. culminating in a Service in Johnston park was also well supported. It was so pleasing to see so many young people showing their appreciation to the veterans.

There was the annual South Barwon vs St.Joseph's Football & Netball game, preceded by a wreath laying ceremony. Later, President Rieny presented the ANZAC Medals to the best players in football and netball.

Geelong members attended the ANZAC lunch with over 145 members and their families present.

On Friday 10th May the Sub Branch celebrated the unveiling of 9 Interpretive Panels telling the story of the Vietnam War in word and images. This is the third and final stage in the Restoration of the ***Vietnam Veterans Avenue of Honour Project***, started some six years ago. The main panel was unveiled by State President Bob Elworthy AM in the presence of State and local dignitaries.

Rieny Nieuwenhof

President G & DVVAA

















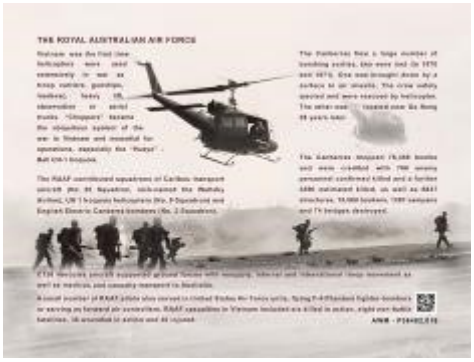
GEELONG & DISTRICT

Unveiling of the 3rd and final stage of the ***Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, North Geelong***.

This project is a credit to the VVAA Geelong & Districts Sub-Branch who have worked long and hard over many years.

Congratulations for a job well done.





















MELBOURNE WEST

Melbourne West has headed into May with a small increase to our 2018 Ordinary membership and a healthy financial situation, which is a good sign of continued viability to see us hold steady as a Sub-Branch of VVAA Victoria.

We started the year with a few changes in the executive, were lucky to retain nearly all last year's committee, and are looking forward to a good year, both socially and financially.

In early March we undertook a bus trip to the Dahlia Farm near Winchelsea, with lunch at Geelong RSL, an outing enjoyed by all. Our Social Committee is working on at least two more trips in the second half of the year when the weather will be nicer to us oldies.

Our Drop In Centre at Central Park, Hoppers Crossing each Wednesday has seen an improvement in numbers as well. Our best so far was 34 when we were addressed by one of our members, Jules Perin, who, in conjunction with Werribee Rotary, has been utilising his 3D printers to produce plastic prosthesis hands for under-privileged young people in some of the world's poorer countries. A very interesting and informative day, which has us now collecting milk bottle tops to be recycled into the plastic filament used by the 3D printers. As a Sub-Branch, we are more than happy to help in this small way.

The last Friday of March saw a good number of the Sub-Branch attend the Serviceman's Luncheon at Werribee RSL, which is a nice way to catch up with those members who we don't see regularly.

April, was, as I imagine similar with other Sub-Branches, a pretty busy month, with the lead up to, and including, Anzac Day.

Our Sub-Branch has for many years taken part in Werribee's pre-Anzac Day march along Watton Street to the Station Place Cenotaph for a service run by Werribee RSL. This occurred on Sunday 14th April, as the following weekend was Easter. As our Sub-Branch was the only group to march behind a banner, we were joined by a good number of other veterans, which was pleasing to see. I had the honour of laying our wreath to remember our fallen comrades and those who have since passed on.

We were invited to be represented at both Thomas Chirnside Primary School (TCPS) and The Grange P-12 College, which we gladly accepted, both falling on Wednesday 24th at the same times. Our association with both schools has been a part of our Sub-Branch life, and this year was the 15th Anniversary of our linkage with TCPS. We split our duties that day and relied on our Secretary, Ray Matthew and our Vice-President, Vic Pilch to represent us at the Grange, while I and about 12 others attended TCPS. Ray and Vic laid wreaths at both the Senior and Junior school's services at the Grange, while Di Reynolds, the widow of a former member of the Sub-Branch, laid our wreath at TCPS. I had the honour of addressing the students at TCPS about Anzac Day.

The next morning many of us gathered for the Dawn Service at Werribee Cenotaph with a very strong public attendance, which seems to be slowly increasing each year. This seems to be a common trend with the general populace as I believe the solemnity of the Dawn Service is proving more moving and attractive than the Anzac Day March.

May has started out similarly to April with the Unveiling and Dedication Service of a new Memorial on the corner of Cherry and Synnot Streets, Werribee. This was a Werribee RSL project undertaken by two of Sub-Branch members, Lyle Raison and David McDiarmid. Ray Matthew and I officially represented the Sub-Branch and it was pleasing to see a good number of our members in attendance.

On 13th May we took 69 students from MacKillop College Werribee to the NVVM on Phillip Island. These students will be studying Australia at War as part of their curriculum and this will be followed up with face-to-face interviews later in the Year. While we have done similar things with both Wyndham Central School and the Grange College in previous years this is new ground for us and we look forward to a continued association with MacKillop College.

Finally, a big "CONGRATULATIONS" to Bob Elworthy and those involved in pushing the envelope on behalf of the SEATO Medical teams. It must have been quite frustrating at times but the end result is definitely a "feather in our hat" for the Victorian Sate Branch of VVAA. Well Done!

Regards to all our fellow Victorian VVAA members,

Glen Smith
President
VVAA Melbourne West

Micks Wife and Mick started Dieting a couple of weeks ago.
His wife proposed to have a cheat day today.
She bought home McDonalds burgers, KFC wings and Mick bought home his Secretary.
From his hospital bed Mick was wondering "When will men understand women?"

DVIETS

2019 has seen a good start to the year by the DViets with current membership at 218. We have managed to not only hold our numbers but increase them with some new members. It is sad when you see the number of Vale reports from across the nation for Vietnam Veterans and we all mourn their passing.

Our elections were held in February and the Committee remained as previous with an additional committee person, John Boniface and we anticipate another good year. The Members at the AGM also approved Life Membership for Peter Blackman.

Last year closed off with our Annual Xmas Party and for this year, we have continued the trend with not only our regular Friday meetings, but also at least one trip a month for members.

We had another 6 day trip in March this year to the Great Ocean Road, staying at Lorne and Warrnambool, 40 members were on the coach and a great time was held by all.

This is an important year for the DViets as it marks our 20th Anniversary year as a sub branch and we are celebrating with a special luncheon at the Watsonia RSL on Sunday 14th July. There will be well in excess of 100 members at the function so it will be a great together.

Peter Blackman

President DViets



Watergardens Day Out



Great Ocean Road



Dixons Creek



Trivia Night



"You really did it that time, Blue, telling 'em that anything before the Vietnam show was just a minor skirmish !"

SUB BRANCHES ~WHAT'S ON

MARYBOROUGH

Once again the sun shone brightly following some much needed rain to green up the fairways beautifully for our annual golf day starting with a raffle several weeks before to help with trophies and prizes for the day.

Our members Derek and Shirley Allan putting in hours of time getting out flyers across the state, also their input with the Talbot Golf Club as members arranging sponsors and arranging trophies and prizes for the raffle and spinning wheels on the day - must remember our Jim Dewar for his help with the above.

Ben Holscher and myself were kept busy on the sausage sizzle all day doing snags, bacon and onions to keep the hungry happy, not forgetting Garry Mayall sitting on the raffle table and Russ Scott putting his hand in.

An "A" and "B" grade open was held for Ladies and Gents with Magpie Balls, Nearest the pin and Straightest Drives plus the NAGA Trophy.

Result:

A. Grade. G. Rayworth and K. Atkinson with 45 pts.

B. Grade. A. & G. Lamb with 42 pts after a 4 way countback.

Apart from golf the Sub Branch is travelling fine with the grey nomads doing their thing and the Firewood raffles in full swing and looking forward to the rest of the year.

Lee Turton President.

DVA UPDATES PHONE SYSTEM

As a part of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) transformation program, the Department is improving the way veterans and their families interact with us over the phone.

Upgrades to the Department's telephone system are largely due to feedback from veterans and their families who told us it was difficult to navigate the existing system. Work already done has reduced the number of unnecessary phone lines which moves DVA towards a single point of contact – 1800 VETERAN.

Further upgrades to simplify the telephone system are planned to commence on 6 March 2019. DVA will be gradually introducing a new 'open speech' service where callers will be able to 'Tell DVA' why they are calling.

Initially only a very small portion of callers will experience this technology (5 per cent of calls to DVA's main veteran phone line, which is about 200 calls a day).

These callers will hear a message asking them to say why they are calling, before they make a keypad selection from the usual menu of options. As we capture enquiries and work out how best to direct them, more and more calls will be directed through to the right area of DVA without the need to use the phone keypad. If there are any issues during these phone calls, they will be redirected through to a staff member for assistance.

Over the coming months as we build our capability to implement this technology, we will continue to expand the percentage of callers given access to 'Tell DVA'.

Throughout 2019, further enhancements will be introduced to DVA's telephone system. This will include the option for callers to request a call back at a time that suits and the opportunity to provide feedback via a post call survey. The Department will use this feedback to continue to improve its systems and services.

As we roll out these system improvements for veterans and their families, we will continue to keep you updated. Your support and feedback during our transformation program is very valuable to us and we continue to invite you to participate in our ESO round table and other engagements to ensure we are designing and delivering the services that veterans and their families need to live healthy, successful lives.

Veterans and their families, as well as the general public will be kept updated of the changes on the Department's website and through our social media channels.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know by emailing us at AMBERT@dva.gov.au or calling our general enquiries line on 1800 555 254.



E-TEAM ON THE ROAD

The V.V.A.A. (Vic) Education Team (ETeam) was invited to set up their full display at Moama for two days prior to the VVAA Victorian Branch State Conference held there last February.

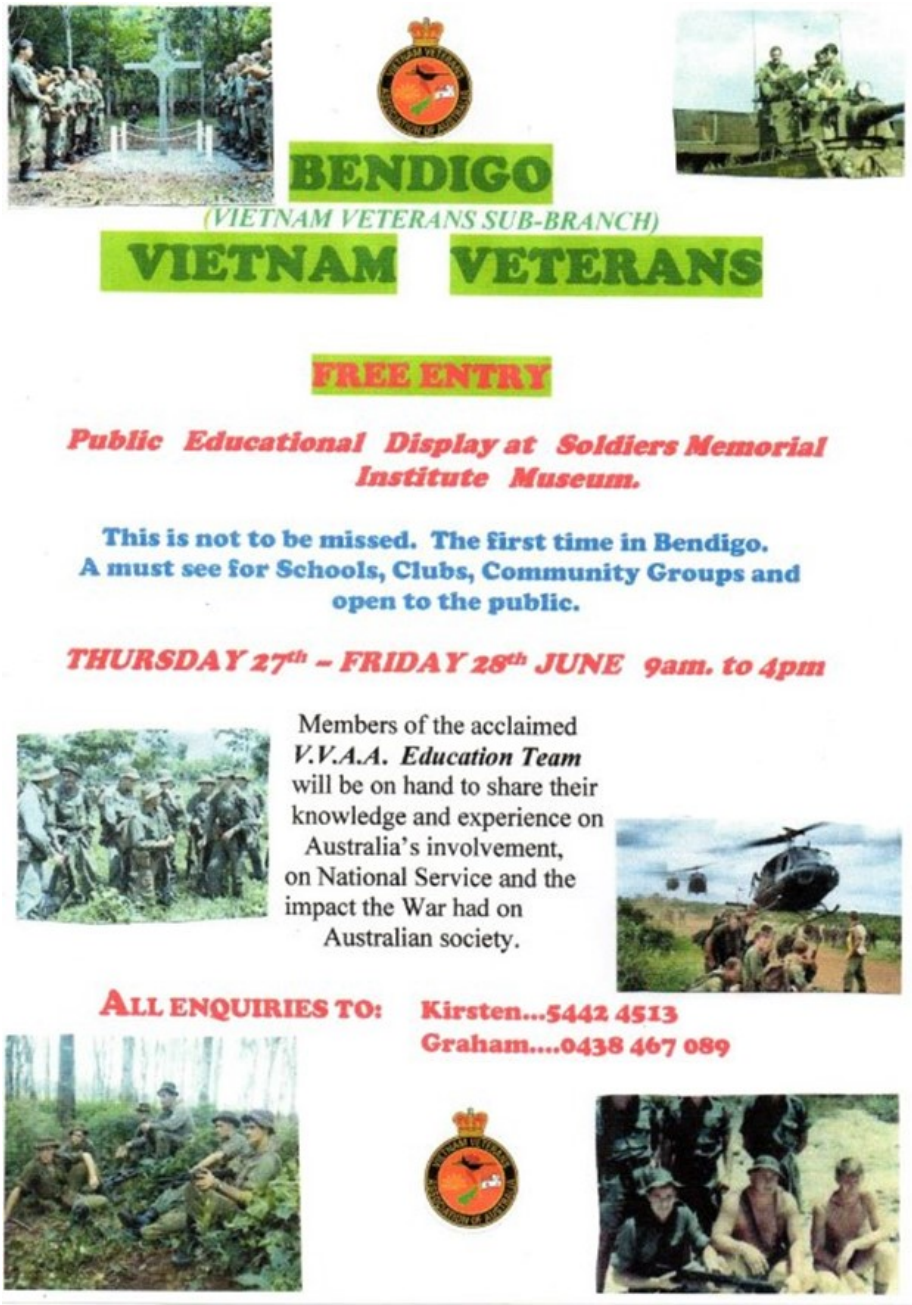
Many thanks to Echuca Sub Branch President Ken Jones and Secretary Bob Johnson as schools from both sides of the Murray were invited to attend and their media coverage saw lots of interested public attend.

Many Vietnam Veterans brought their families along to see what they did all those years ago.

The "Nam Van" was parked out front and also drew a lot of attention.

The display attracted so much interest that the ETeam was invited back for three days to talk to a number of schools that missed out on the display. Some schools even went to other schools to sit in with them for joint sessions to make sure they didn't miss out. Pretty impressive and another big "tick" for the VVAA Vic ETeam.

The ETeam will be setting up at Bendigo Soldiers Memorial Institute Museum two days prior to the State Conference scheduled for June this year to allow all to see our display. Paul Penno, Graham Flanders and the Bendigo Sub-Branch are busy making sure they are ready for as many schools as possible are invited to attend. This also gives all the local Veterans a chance to bring their families along to check it out.



DVA REFORMS DENTAL AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES MANAGEMENT

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) is reforming its dental and allied health service arrangements.

The reforms, announced in the 2018–19 Budget, has four main elements and will be implemented in a phased approach (see Budget 2018–19 fact sheet — Improved Dental and Allied Health).

Around 140,000 DVA cardholders who access DVA dental and allied health services will benefit through improved communication between GPs and allied health service providers, access to an expanded range of services, and opportunities for enhanced complex care management.

Further information can be found at the following frequently asked questions (FAQs) document:

Improved Dental and Allied Health—Allied health providers and GPs—FAQs (PDF 470 KB)

Improved Dental and Allied Health—Allied health providers and GPs—FAQs (DOCX 25 KB).

A NEW TREATMENT CYCLE FOR ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

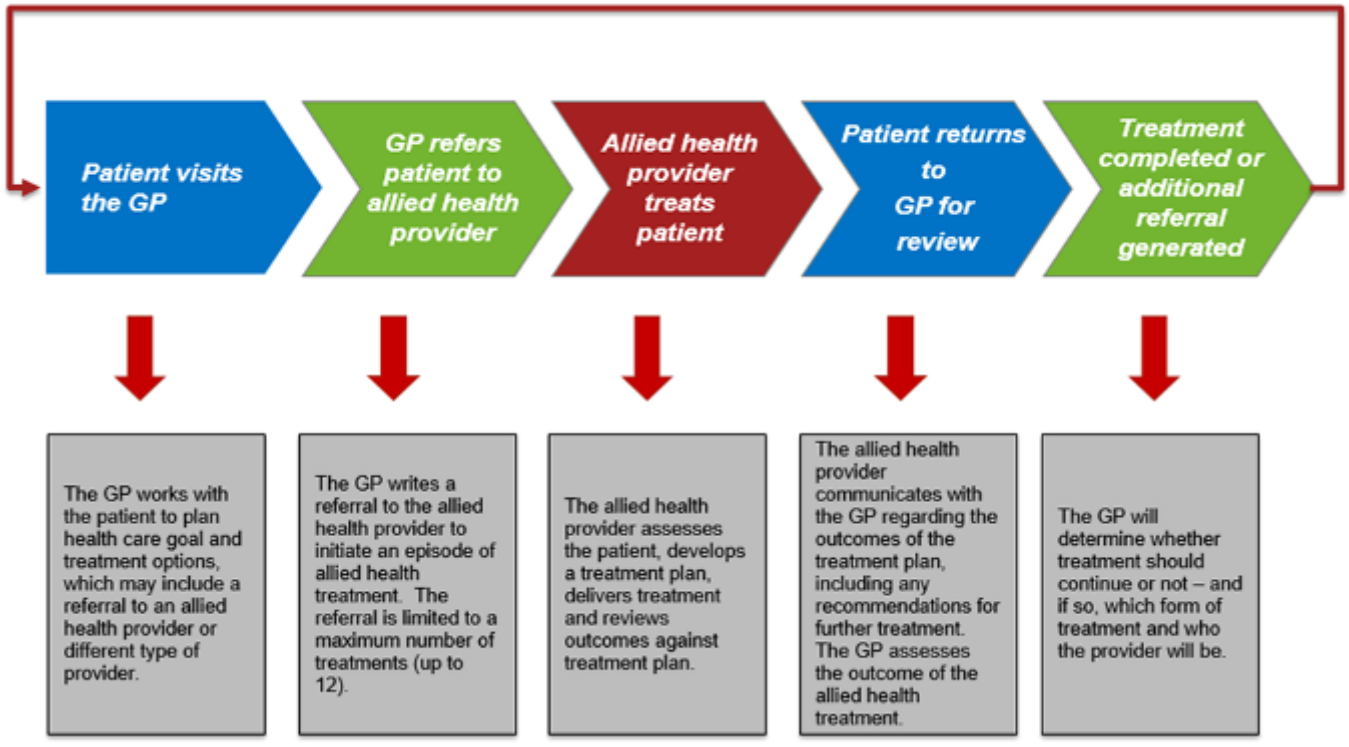
In July 2019, a new allied health referral treatment cycle will start. Under this model, the GP may refer a client for up to 12 sessions of allied health services if it's clinically required. This new referral method will apply to all DVA allied health services, excluding dental and optical services.

When the client starts the allied health treatment, the allied health provider will devise a treatment plan and then undertake treatment for up to 12 sessions. At the end of the treatment cycle, the allied health provider will report back to the GP. A client may have as many treatment cycles as are clinically required.

Involving the GP in assessing and monitoring treatment means that DVA cardholders will receive treatment that is effective and the level of clinically unnecessary services will be reduced.

The initiative will be designed in 2018–19, including consultation with allied health providers, medical associations and ex-service organisations. DVA will evaluate the implementation of the treatment cycle in its first year of operation and report back to government in 2020.

OPERATION OF THE TREATMENT CYCLE



AUSTRALIAN VETERAN'S COVENANT AND CARD

The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant was announced by the government on 27 October 2018.

The Covenant encourages Australia to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service, and support veterans and their families.

The Covenant includes an oath, which the Australian people will be encouraged to take at community commemorative events, such as Remembrance Day.

The new Veteran Card and an Australian Veteran Lapel Pin and a Reservist Lapel Pin underpin the Covenant.

The intention of the Covenant is to provide employers, businesses, local communities, and veteran and sporting organisations the opportunity to commit to supporting veterans and their families.

Cards will be issued automatically – first to new DVA 'customers' followed automatically to existing DVA health card holders (Gold or White) and concession card holders (Orange).

The new-look card will be issued automatically over coming months (early 2019), along with a Veteran Lapel Pin and Oath as part of a phased roll-out.









'We're on the brink of extinction and you have a headache?'

A Catholic padre who served a total of 391 days with the troops in Vietnam has been farewelled at St Nicholas Catholic Church in his home town of Tamworth NSW.

The death of Fr Thomas Harold Shanahan saddened a wide cross section of the communities he served during his 62 years as "a priest for the people of God".

In 2013 Fr Tom Shanahan was honoured with the Order of Australia Medal for his "service to veterans and their families and to the community".

Fr Tom knew at the age of 18 that he wanted to be a priest and his special gift meant a great deal to the many parishioners and Vietnam veterans he served. He was born at Tamworth on October 1, 1932 and ordained at St Nicholas Church on July 24, 1956. After serving in parishes around the Armidale diocese for 10 years, Fr Tom was appointed Chaplain to the Australian Military Forces (Service No: 216768), a posting he held for four and a half years, and included his service in Vietnam.

Although Fr Tom went out on missions with the troops, he never carried a weapon and was soon withdrawn when there was enemy contact. He also said Mass for the troops and visited orphanages, where he helped the Sisters with their English.

Returning to Vietnam 40 years after he had served as a chaplain, Fr Tom said in an interview with the Namoi Valley Independent, that he had been "overwhelmed at the sense of peace and joy that filled the lives of its people, especially the children".

He said that it was wonderful to see "that children were once again allowed to be children and not mini soldiers".

After returning twice to Vietnam, Fr Tom accompanied a group of 19 to Nui Dat for the Long Tan Memorial service in 2010. Four Vietnam veterans travelled with the group, including two who had never returned since the war. Fr Tom said the veterans had all been very pleased to see how settled the country was and how different life was for the people.

The group attended the commemoration service at the Long Tan Cross replica on August 18, 2010, where Fr Tom offered prayers for the veterans and the Vietnamese people. Fr Tom said the veterans who "were never going back" had returned with a sense of healing when they saw the chaos of war replaced by peace.

After resuming civilian life in 1970, Fr Tom was posted to Narrabri and then Warialda as parish priest. Before his war service he had been in Gunnedah, Armidale and Inverell. In 1982, his priestly journey took him to the Barraba-Bingara parish until 1998 when he retired to Tamworth but still continued his chaplaincy work with the RSL.

He was president of the Tamworth sub-branch of the RSL for three years. This role included speaking on behalf of the War Widows Guild or Remembrance Day as well as Vietnam Veterans Day and counselling veterans returning from the war zones. In 2010 Fr Tom was honoured with life membership of the Returned and Services league of Australia.

When the diamond jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood came around, Fr Tom was presented with the Papal Medal by Bishop of Armidale Michael Kennedy

Fr Tom died peacefully at Nioka, Tamworth Regional Hospital on December 22, 2018, at the age of 86.

St Nicholas' Church was filled to overflowing for the funeral Mass, with the RSL forming a guard of honour. The Mass, concelebrated by Bishop Kennedy and diocesan clergy, on January 2, 2019, was followed by interment in the Lincoln Grove Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Tamworth.



I finally remembered—red with hunter, white with fisherman.



The Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia is working towards the production of a record of our history

We need your stories! A book on the war is in the works, thanks to a top Australian publisher.

And we need your stories, yarns, reflections, anecdotes and more to make it be the book we aim for. This book will tell the history of the war under the working title of "Our Vietnam, Heroes, The People, The Stories & the facts"

Any stories funny or wry, sad or sombre, offering insights, untold tales and thoughts that reflect what the 50,000 Aussies who went to Vietnam went through.

Many histories are told through the memories of top brass and we want a dinkum account that as near as possible captures the spirit of Vietnam Diggers as the war retreats from the memory of some people, but remains alive to so many others. We want to preserve those memories forever in the best way possible.

Send your stories to the Editor V.V.A.A. Debrief, at debrief@vvaa.org.au, aim for up to 1000 words, and they will be forwarded to the publisher.

Ken Foster OAM JP

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

National President



I was born in India and went to boarding school there. With my Family we emigrated to Australia in 1947 after Indian partition.

After schooling in Tasmania I trained as an Officer at Royal Military College, Duntroon . I studied Civil Engineering at Sydney University and graduated into the Royal Australian Engineers. Now life became sensational with some amazing experiences in my Army postings, including being part of the first Tunnel Rats pioneering the search of the tunnels of Cu Chi, during the war in Vietnam, where I was awarded the Military Cross.

I transferred from the Regular Army to the Army Reserve where my civilian life became an interesting kaleidoscope of varied and fascinating careers. My personal life also changed for the better when I re-married and had 2 more children.

Within the Army, Leadership has played a huge part in my life and I have been honoured with the responsibility of commanding two elite Army Training Units.

The Opening Paragraphs of the FOREWORD are:
Like all young Sapper officers fresh out of Duntroon, I first encountered Sandy when I read his book "No Need for Heroes". This was required reading on the Regimental Officers' Basic Course, where we learned our trade as leaders in the Royal Australian Engineers. There was no requirement for compulsion, as it was a gripping read and richly described all the experiences we yearned to have ourselves. Sandy's deployment to Vietnam included all the great aspects of service in the illustrious Corps we were so proud to have joined: providing specialised expertise to support the infantry, either well forward with them in the fight or out in front of them being the absolute tip of the spear.

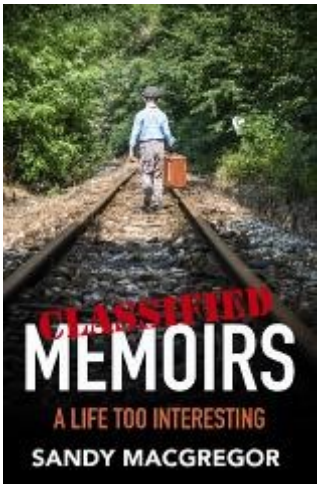
Brigadier Rupert Hoskin AM
Commandant, Royal Military College of Australia

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eBook, with internal links. It can be read easily in a PC, tablet or Kindle:

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TO COMMEMORATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE HONOURS OF HAT DICH, BINH BA AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT BATTLES OF 1969

I am writing to you regarding an Art Exhibition which will be held in Southern Tasmania on the 21st July and the following week, hosted by the ***Hobart Sub Branch of the Vietnam Veteran's Association***.

"THEN SOMEONE CALLED OUT "CONTACT"

AND THE BLOKE BEHIND ME SWORE"

You can bet your combat boots that every Vietnam Veteran in Australia instantly recognises the above lyric from Redgum's song "I was only 19" also known as "A Walk in the Light Green". Penned by John Schumann and released as a single in 1983 it was based on an event that occurred in Vietnam on the same day (21st July 1969), that the USA landed men on the Moon. Also on that day an Australian soldier, Dave Sturmer, was wounded in a minefield incident in the Light Green.

Dave Sturmer will be exhibiting his paintings of Vietnam and the soldiers who fought in the war at this event. We are also seeking artwork from Veterans, or their families, of any conflict. The artwork can be in any medium, photographs, memorabilia or other items from their war experience.

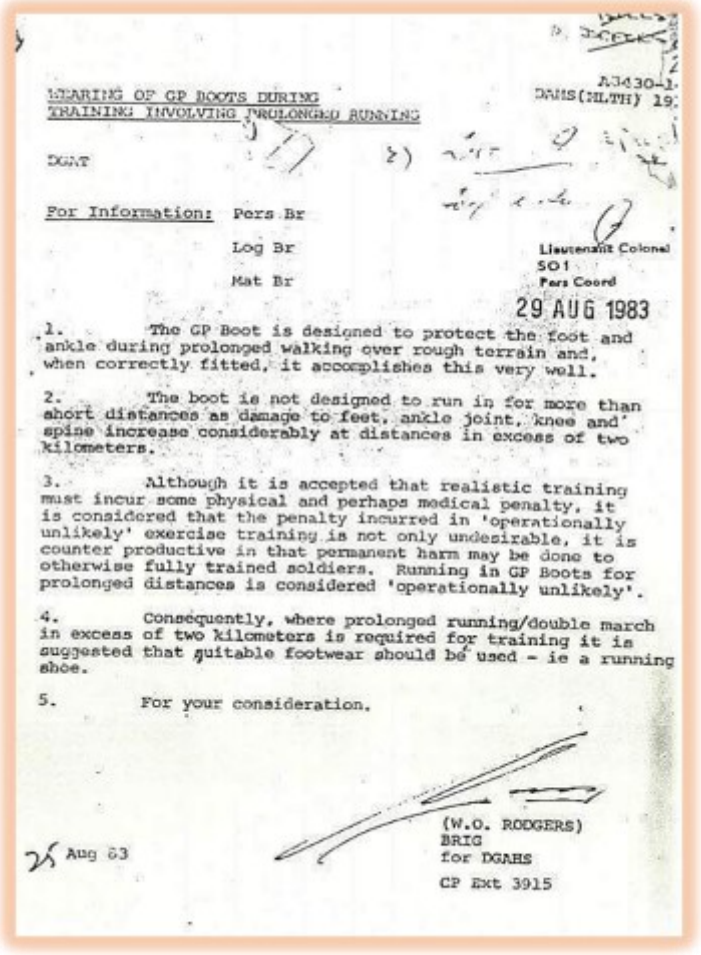
The Committee is also calling for volunteers to assist with the exhibition in various roles including fundraising to help with the cost of bringing the artwork to Tasmania.

If you are able to help, in any capacity, please contact me on Ph: 62641485 or Email

rob05woolley@yahoo.com.au.

Regards,

Rob Woolley,
President
Hobart Sub Branch VVAA
26th April 2019



WEARING OF GP BOOTS DURING TRAINING INVOLVING PROLONGED RUNNING

DGAT

For Information: Pers Br
Log Br
Mat Br

Lieutenant Colonel
SO1
Pers Coord
29 AUG 1983

1. The GP Boot is designed to protect the foot and ankle during prolonged walking over rough terrain and, when correctly fitted, it accomplishes this very well.

2. The boot is not designed to run in for more than short distances as damage to feet, ankle joint, knee and spine increase considerably at distances in excess of two kilometers.

3. Although it is accepted that realistic training must incur some physical and perhaps medical penalty, it is considered that the penalty incurred in 'operationally unlikely' exercise training is not only undesirable, it is counter productive in that permanent harm may be done to otherwise fully trained soldiers. Running in GP Boots for prolonged distances is considered 'operationally unlikely'.

4. Consequently, where prolonged running/double march in excess of two kilometers is required for training it is suggested that suitable footwear should be used - ie a running shoe.

5. For your consideration.

25 Aug 83

(W.O. RODGERS)
BRIG
for DGAHS
CP Ext 3915

I went through the McDonald's driveway window and I gave the cashier a $5 note.

Our total was $4.25, so I also handed her 25c. She said, 'you gave me too much money.'

I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a dollar coin back.'

She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request.

I did so, and he handed me back the 25c, and said 'We're sorry but we don't do that kind of thing.'

The cashier then proceeded to give me back 75 cents in change.

******

We had to have the garage door repaired.

The repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener I thought for a minute, and said that

we had the largest one made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower.

He shook his head and said, 'You need a 1/4 horsepower.'

I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4 and he said, 'NOOO, it's not. Four is larger than two.'

We haven't used that repairman since.

The following is an address by Kel Robertson to the VVAA National Council gathering in Canberra held in May 2019.

Thanks for inviting me to observe proceedings today and tomorrow, and for giving me the opportunity, today, to explain a bit about my project.

I thought I should quickly talk to you about the formal topic for my research (in case it's caused any misgivings), let you know what I've done so far, explain how I think things will proceed and, finally, reveal what you can do to make my task easier.

The topic for the thesis: I understand that the Association put a few possible subjects to Professor Tom Frame. I was excited by one of those subjects – the history of Vietnam Veterans organisations (plural) - but soon concluded that just covering your history would be a challenging enough task, so decided to limit myself to it.

However, you probably know, that a thesis needs to propose and answer a question, so I had to come up with a question or questions that enabled me to tell the Association's story. After considering alternatives, I concluded that asking why the Association came into existence and asking why it has survived – when some other veterans' organisations have come and gone - would enable me to look at the (nearly) forty-year life of the organisation and to explore what made it tick.

You might reasonably think that accounting for the establishment of the Association is a fairly easy thing – no one else was pushing for an investigation into herbicide and chemical exposure in Vietnam, so veterans had to form their own organisation to take up the cause.

Likewise, you might think that explaining the continued existence of the Association is a simple matter – that it's a reflection of the grit and the determination of office bearers and of the general membership. You might argue that it continues to exist because no one else would understand your war experiences and was therefore able to properly advance your interests. Alternatively, you might argue that there is unfinished business, and that's what keeps the organisation operating.

These explanations are all fair enough but I happen to think there's quite a bit more to the establishment of the association and there's certainly a lot more to its continuance.

Representative organisations of any sort need to be relevant from the time they commence and need to remain relevant. They need a self-replenishing core of committed individuals to be the office bearers and carry out their functions. They need appropriate governance arrangements, structures and finances to continue. They need the authority to speak for their members. They need the capacity to forge and maintain alliances. They also need the resilience to overcome crises.

By writing about these sorts of things, I should end up with a history that covers the range of activities undertaken by the organisation at national and State branch/sub-branch levels – everything from welfare and advocacy through to education, representation and lobbying. And this sort of history should explain how the organisation works, in addition to focussing on people.

It's these things, along with the longer time period to be covered - the four decades - that will make the thesis very different from the one that was written a couple of decades ago (which was upper level, outward looking and mostly about the first ten years).

I began work well before the topic and research plan were both approved by the university, gathering materials, principally from the 1980s and 90s. Most importantly, I've spent about four months combing newspapers from the late 1970s and very early 80s for information on the events leading up to the establishment of the VV Action Group. I've gathered information that's enabled me to test whether the two book-form accounts of the organisation's beginning are accurate and to add more detail to those accounts (which are, frankly, a bit light on and not consistent).

In recent weeks, I've started working my way through the Association's 1980s records at the Australian War Memorial. I'm about to start work at the Australian Archives looking at DVA records. I hope, too, that the RSL will soon give me access to its papers; I've been through the index of their 1980s and 90s materials and there's a lot there of potential interest to me.

Later this year I would hope to be interviewing people about the very early years. I can't do this any earlier because the University requires all postgraduate research students to do a "research preparation course" before interview or survey questions can be put to an Ethics Committee. I'll do the preparation course in July and would hope to have interview questions to the Ethics Committee soon after.

University processes affect the work I do in one other important way. I have to submit draft chapters to my two supervisors from time to time; I can't write away and submit everything, in one big wallop, at the end, as I'd do if I was writing a book. It seemed to me that the easiest way of meeting this requirement was to focus on the national story for my first two years of work, on the assumption that the materials I'd rely on for this phase of the work will be

more easily accessed. I'd write first about the establishment of the Association and then write a series of chapters following the national executive story from 1980 to 2020. Then, with those five or so chapters under my belt, I'd spend the final two years writing chapters about the Branch and sub-branch activities – relying on records around the nation – and would slot these chapters in behind the national or "big picture" chapters.

So, what would the thesis look like? After an introduction, and a chapter on the establishment of the Association, you'd have the national activities chapter for, say, the period 1981-86, followed by the Branch/Sub-Branch activities chapter for the same period, and then the national chapter for maybe 1987 to 1995, followed by the branch/local activities chapter for 87-95 …. and so on up until the present.

I'll acknowledge that there are going to be some hard calls to make about where some activities fit - whether they fit in the national chapters or in the State/local chapters – and I'll admit, too that I'm not sure about the time periods for each pair of chapters i.e. where exactly they should begin and end – but I think this stuff will sort itself out as I proceed.

The important thing to note is that this structure and strategy have, once again, been approved by my supervisors at the university …. but are acknowledged to be flexible/to be subject to testing. In short, we'll see how it goes.

What can you do to my task easier?

As I've already said, later this year I'd hope to talk to people who were around at the beginning of the Association. I'll produce a list of names derived from the research I've done and will supply them to Max. I'd be grateful if you could use your networks to track the listed individuals down, add anyone I've missed and could see if they are happy to chat with me.

As I move from 1979 forward, I'll seek your help in tracking later tranches of people down, so that I can get benefit from their recollections … until I reach recent times and, presumably, you.

I'd be grateful, too, if you could manage expectations because, while I'm interested in talking to people, there's an optimal order in which to do things and I can't be everywhere at once. I have a limited budget for travel and I need to be writing. I also need to comply with Ethics Committee requirements.

Rest assured that if I'm going to be in your state, talking to people, I'll be sure to take advice from you about who to talk to and so forth, so that I'm not blundering in, causing distress or angst or spending time with someone dubious. If I'm going to be in your vicinity for any period it would be at least good to say hello and have a therapeutic chat.

I'm undecided about a survey of members – perhaps asking "when did you join?", "why did you join?", "what aspects of membership do you most value?" … that sort of stuff – but if I decide to do that, bearing in mind that your members must be heartily sick of being questioned, I'll come back to you with a proposal.

Records: Records are nearly everything. Newsletters, minutes of meetings, scrapbooks, flyers, letters and financial records are the core of my work; they help me when memories are foggy and they, to some extent, spare me the effort of going, page by page, day by day, through local newspapers – like I've been doing – to reconstruct events and to put dates and names to things that happened**. It would be useful for you to have a discussion about how you might gather materials and keep them safe until I have an opportunity to get to them**, bearing in mind that if you donate them to an institution, before I get to see them, I might not ever get access to them, because most institutions are understaffed and they won't give anyone access to materials before they've been catalogued.

While on records, If anyone has a complete copy of Council or Congress minutes, or branch meeting minutes I would be excited to hear from them.

If the thesis is easily turned into a book, as I'd hope it would be, photos will be really important. Don't throw out those old photo albums, just yet.

At the moment my focus is, as you know, on the earliest days of the Association. I'm consequently keen to get my hands on very early copies of Debrief (Numbers 1-4 and 6) and I'm especially keen to see any records people might have for the period leading up to and including the 1982 National Conference. I'd welcome your advice on how best to canvas for that information and canvas for information on later periods. (I was thinking about an advert in Debrief that tells members what I'm currently working on and how to get stuff to me …. but I'm worried that I'll be inundated … and I don't have a garage or a shed. Anyway, you'll know how best to secure the cooperation of people.)

Finally, I'll leave reporting or the frequency of reporting – me to you - up to you. I'll rely on Max to

tell me when and how you'd like me to report.

Any questions?

Thanks, again, for inviting me to be here. Your history deserves to be written – it's a terrific project – and I'm delighted it's come to me.

Kel Robertson

"SKIPPY SQUADRON" AT THE NVVM

QANTAS SKIPPY SQUADRON

On Saturday 25th June 2019, VVAA Vic State Vice President Brendan Kincade OAM attended the opening of the "***Qantas Skippy Squadron***" exhibition at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island.

> "*A great deal of research has gone into the display and the museum staff are to be congratulated.*
>
> *After the official speeches we heard from Mr. Keith Burson, a former Steward with Qantas, who flew on many missions carrying young Australian troops to and from Vietnam and related many stories of his sometimes dangerous flights in and out of Vietnam.*
>
> *He was quite emotional about the young Australian service people whom he said went over as young boys and came home as old men."*





Brendan Kincade OAM (VVAA Vic), Alan Murrell (Qantas), Phil Dressing (NVVM), Keith Burson (Qantas).

Project Welcome Home - Museum of Flight Seattle

Kingsley Mundy AM recently travelled to the USA and had the opportunity to be present when the Museum of Flight unveiled B52 "Midnight Express" as the centrepiece of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park.

The dedication ceremony included aircraft flyovers including a Huey & Cobra flyover, flag raising, introductions of Vietnam B52 crews, former PoW's, two Medal of Honor recipients, and a range of distinguished guests including four star General Jim Mattis USMC (ret'd) and the 26th Secretary of Defence. While there Kingsley had the opportunity to meet General Mattis and shared a laugh.

The project to restore and display the B52 began in 2012 and took 7 years and US$3m to complete. During the Vietnam War the U.S. lost almost 10,000 aircraft and a significant number of crew ..."***The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park*** provides visitors with an understanding of the role aviation played in the war and the scope of loss in human life and aircraft. It provides a setting for veterans to connect, as well as a place to promote healing, generate discussion and stimulate learning".





On 23rd January at 11am I was presented with a piece of granite from the construction of the "Wall", at the Wall in Washington DC, by Jim Knotts the President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation who built and manage the Wall. http://www.vvmf.org/aboutus

Myself and Brigadier General Gabriel and Sergeant Major Jarvis of the Australian Embassy were also present and the Brigadier also received a piece on behalf of the Australian War Memorial.

We laid a wreath, we each spoke and then a lone trooper played Taps (the American equivalent of our Last Post).

There are 58,318 names inscribed on the wall and each one had a brother, a sister, a mother, a father and loved ones just like our 521 fallen.

A number of American Vietnam Veterans attended and I presented each with our "Vietnam" scarf from the National Vietnam Veterans Museum in Australia (I am wearing one in the photo).

This piece of granite is symbolic of the enduring strength of the relationship between our two militaries, and also the strength of the friendship and camaraderie between our soldiers, sailors and airmen, and between our people at large.

I am very grateful to Jim and his staff for making this happen and for the friendship between our two organisations.

Lest we Forget!

Kingsley

Photo credits to Bill Shugarts

Kingsley Mundey AM

Chairman

National Vietnam Veterans Museum

Phillip Island Vic 3925





Certificate of Authenticity

Original Granite from the

Vietnam Veterans Memorial

This is to certify that this granite piece is from the original granite used to construct the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982.

The Memorial was established by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc. (VVMF), the nonprofit, charitable organization incorporated on April 27, 1979, by a group of Vietnam veterans.

The Memorial Fund wanted Vietnam veterans to have a tangible symbol of recognition from the American people. By separating the issue of the service of the individual men and women from the issue of U.S. policy in Vietnam, VVMF hoped to begin a process of national reconciliation.

On July 1, 1980, Congress authorized a site of three acres in Constitution Gardens near the Lincoln Memorial. In October of that year, VVMF announced a national design competition open to any U.S. citizen over 18 years of age. By December 29, 1980, there were 2,573 registrants, and the compe-tition became the largest of its kind ever held in the United States.

By the March 31, 1981 deadline, 1,421 design entries had been submitted. All entries were judged anonymously by a jury of eight internationally recognized artists and designers who had been selected by VVMF. On May 1, 1981, the jury presented its unanimous selection for first prize, which was accepted and adopted enthusiastically by VVMF. The winning design was the work of Maya Ying Lin of Athens, Ohio, a 21-year-old senior at Yale University. Maya Lin conceived her design as creating a park within a park — a quiet protected place unto itself, yet harmonious with the overall plan of Constitution Gardens. To achieve this effect she chose polished black granite for the walls. Its mirror-like surface reflects the images of the surrounding trees, lawns and monuments. The Memorial's walls point to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, thus bringing The Wall into the historical context of our country. The names are inscribed in the chronological order of their dates of casualty, showing the war as a series of individual human sacrifices and giving each name a special place in history.

The Memorial was dedicated on November 13, 1982 and is listed as one of the most iconic Memorials that forever changed America.





Authentication by the President and Chief and Executive Officer
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund





national vietnam veterans museum

national vietnam veterans museum

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TESTIMONIALS

The first word every student utters as they enter the NVVM is 'wow'. While at school they analyse documents and pour over texts, at the museum they can touch, carry and wear the actual artefact's of the war.

Our boys are always impressed with the aircraft and weaponry, but it is the opportunity to wear the gear while chatting to real veterans about their experiences that leaves the most profound impression. It might seem like a long trip down to the island, but we take the opportunity to show a Vietnam War film on the bus and contrast the Hollywood version with the experiences of the vets.

It is never a question as to whether our students go to the NVVM, only when.

Matt Fyfield,
Mazenod College Mulgrave

The Vietnam Veterans Museum is one of the best museums our school has visited.

Absolutely fantastic! Well laid out and easy to navigate, lots of things to see and do, great little café and super friendly staff.

I highly recommend this museum to any school for an amazing experience which provides a greater understanding about what our veterans went through in Vietnam.

Jason Kurfurst
Heatherwood School Donvale.

national vietnam veterans museum

25 Veterans Drive, Newhaven
Phillip Island (behind the helipad)
CALL 03 5956 6400 for more information
www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org
NationalVietnamVetsMuseum
@nvvmuseum

national vietnam veterans museum

FREE SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM

SECONDARY COLLEGE

A UNIQUE FREE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Through a grant from the Victorian State Government, the museum is pleased to provide a free educational visit to the museum. Education programs can be customised to meet the needs of individual school groups. Programs are designed with the Victorian Curriculum and VCE/VCAL focus to fit the duration of your visit and are most suited to students from Years 9 – 12.



national vietnam veterans museum

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM.





HOLOGRAPHIC LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW which covers the causes and consequences of the Vietnam War (18 minutes in length)



GUIDED TOUR OF THE MUSEUM. Highlighting the most important aspects of the exhibits, including conscription marbles, Missing in Action bracelets, weapons/armory display, 'A Queer Place' scroll by Peter O'Neill, a Vietnam veteran, who struggled to make sense of his war time experiences, uniforms, helicopters, tanks and numerous dioramas. (Up to 60 minutes)

The tour can take in topical aspects relevant to students' study requirements - please liaise with the Museum for specific topics which need to be addressed.

ACTION STATION. A selection of equipment used by soldiers in Vietnam. Learn about the history and usage of these items from a Vietnam veteran. Examine, investigate and take photos. (20 – 30 minutes)

UP THE RAMP AND INTO THE CARIBOU CLASSROOM PRESENTATION BY A VIETNAM VETERAN WITH Q & A TIME. Seated in Caribou 231, you will be taken back in time to give you an indication of the conditions servicemen and women experienced on their tour of duty in Vietnam. (20 minutes)

TOUR FULLY PAID. Your tour, including bus hire and entry fees are covered, thanks to a grant from the Victorian State Government. Lunch is available on special request and at additional cost or students are welcome to bring their own.

If you require a customised program, please contact Sonia Hogg. Worksheets are available for students to use during the visit and in follow-up classes.

TEACHING RESOURCES.
Please look at our website under Education and Teachers Resources for worksheets and teachers information.

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VICTORIA State Government

The following article is a summary of the role of the Forward Air Controller in Vietnam by retired WG CDR Peter Condon. A comprehensive coverage of Peter's "story" is soon to be available in the NVVM" .

The Forward Air Controller's (FAC) job was one of the most dangerous flying occupations in Vietnam. It involved flying slow light aircraft over enemy territory at low altitude for up to six hours in a day searching for the enemy and then directing pilots flying ground-attack aircraft onto those targets—the average FAC mission lasting just under three hours. Other FAC tasks included artillery adjustment, visual reconnaissance and assisting ground forces with navigation. During the war the USAF lost 223 FACs killed in action, which is about a 10% loss rate. 36 RAAF fighter pilots flew as FACs with the USAF in Vietnam between 1966 and 1971 and we had no losses. We flew either the Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog', the Cessna O-2 or the new OV-10 'Bronco' aircraft.

After seven days and seventeen hours flying at the USAF FAC training school at Phan Rang, I was checked out as a Forward Air Controller in the Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog', one of the slowest aircraft in the world! It had a maximum level speed of 100 knots; but the usual cruise speed was around 70 knots. Its maximum 'g' limit was "pull until the door pops open." It carried eight smoke marking rockets.



A Cessna O-1 'Bird Dog' fitted with four marking rockets. (Photo by USAF FAC Gary Dikkers).



Cessna O-2. (Photo Dick Roberds Collection).

I was assigned to the US 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta area south of Saigon. After a few rides in the back seat of the O -1 watching experienced FACs controlling some airstrikes I was placed in the front seat with an experienced FAC supervising me from the back seat as I controlled my first air strikes in anger. It was difficult getting used to operating three radios, all at the same time, especially when working with troops in contact. We controlled the fighters on UHF, we spoke with Brigade HQ on VHF and we spoke with the ground forces on FM. I was sent solo after seven days and ended up controlling 34 airstrikes and flying 75 hours in my first month as a FAC. The next month I controlled 35 airstrikes and logged 78 hours flying time. The pace was high compared to my 22 hours per month back in 76 Squadron.

There was a general rule that FACs should not fly below 1,500 feet to remain safe from enemy ground fire. In the early days many FACs were shot down trying to win the war at low level all by themselves; hence the height rule. However, If low flying was necessary to complete the mission, especially when friendly ground forces were in serious trouble, then a FAC would do what was necessary to get the job done



A bright white WP smoke is just blooming alongside a burnt-out smoke rocket. The larger smoke blooms are the result of bombs hitting the target nearer to the canal. (Photo Peter Condon).

Controlling fighters in troops-in-contact situations was very rewarding, especially if the FAC managed to get the fighter ordnance on target and the enemy assault defeated. I ended up being very busy during these missions, listening to all three radios at the same time and liaising with the ground forces to mark their positions with coloured smoke. Once the friendly positions were identified I would roll in to mark the enemy positions with a White Phosphorus (WP) smoke rocket. I aimed the rocket by lining up a nut on the inside of the divided windscreen with the tip of a welding rod fitted to the nose of the aircraft. In a bit over two months flying the Bird Dog I clocked up 210 flying hours and controlled 91 airstrikes before being sent back to Phan Rang to learn how to fly the new OV-10 twin-engined FAC aircraft for the remainder of my eight-month tour.



An OV-10 'Bronco' with a centerline fuel tank. (Photo by USAF Captain Brad Wright).



Ron Slater and me with OV-10 No. 639 at Di An in September 1969. This aircraft is currently being restored by staff at the Australian War memorial for display.

I supported the 2nd Brigade of the US 1st Infantry Division, flying the OV-10, from late July to mid December 1969, ending my eight month posting to Vietnam. I logged 260 hours and controlled 48 airstrikes in the OV-10.

I flew one OV-10 aircraft which is now of particular interest to all Australians because it is being restored for display by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. It will be the only USAF aircraft in the Memorial. 131 missions were flown by seven RAAF FACs in the aircraft in Vietnam. You can check the history of the aircraft and see the restoration progress at:

https://www.awm.gov.au/about/our-work/projects/asteedreborn

Editor's note:

The above article is an abbreviated version of a much bigger story submitted by retired WG CDR Peter Condon to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum ("NVVM") where it is intended the FAC display be updated and enhanced.

Well worth a visit to the NVVM and check out the full story.





O-2s in formation. (Photo Bill Carruthers Collection).



O-2 fires rockets. (Bill Carruthers Collection)



G U N N E D A H M U S E U M M U R A L S

For all those travelling through NSW the Gunnedah Museum has recently completed a beautiful set of murals on the Museum Silo - certainly they will grab the attention of any Vets passing through the area.

For any enquiries contact:

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VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION VICTORIAN BRANCH

Vietnam Veterans Day

Sunday 18th August 2019

Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance

50th Anniversary of the Battle of Hat Dich

50th Anniversary of the Battle of Binh Ba

• 0930 - 1030 hrs	***Gunfire Breakfast in Shrine Precinct.***
• 1030 - 1100 hrs	Marchers gather at Northern Forecourt for 1100 hrs step off.
• 1100 hrs	March Step Off. Official Commemoration Service.
• 1215 hrs	Formalities conclude.

***Enquiries** to VVAA State Office*
VV Day Coordinator
Maurie Benson
Telephone 0417 588 886
Email: office@vvaavic.org.au

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY is a day for all to remember and commemorate lives lost during Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War: 1962 -1975.

2019 commemorates not only the Battle of Long Tan but the 50th anniversary of the Battles of Hat Dich and later Binh Ba - the largest Australian battles involving infantry and armour since WW2.

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living