

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Victorian Branch Inc



SUMMER EDITION ~ 2009

**Brig. Colin "Genghis" Khan DSO addressing Vietnam Veterans' Day 2009
at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.**



**ALSO
IN
THIS
ISSUE:**



- ★ Snapshots
- ★ Pensions & Concessions
- ★ Victorian Veterans Sector Study
- ★ Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Walk Seymour
- ★ Pension updates
- ★ Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Veterans
- ★ All MIAs Home
- ★ Veterans' Children Education Scholarships
- ★ Veterans Family Study
- ★ SWAC
- ★ Suicide Prevention Workshops
- ★ VVCS programs
- ★ Museum Info

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

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Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

FROM THE *PRESIDENT*

With the year drawing to a close, it is interesting to look back on some of the important issues that we have faced and dealt with.

The Branch galvanized to support those impacted by the bushfires in February, phase three of the welfare program-presentations across the state-was conducted, our membership remained above 2300, thanks in the main to a substantial number of new members joining and lost members re-joining. VV Day 2009 was highly successful-a focus on Binh Ba attracted a large number of veterans, and for the first time, State council was conducted outside of Victoria.

The Branch was successful in obtaining grants from the Victorian Veterans Council to assist with the functioning of the executive, education bursaries and VV Day 2010. These grants- not to be anticipated in subsequent years- will help to allow us to upgrade some of the executive machinery and computers that are ageing, and to improve a range of internal processes through updated software, assist welfare related activities across the state and to build a reserve of funds that will be available to meet any emergencies by retaining some of the membership capitations.

On the matter of finances, sub-branches will soon be called on to provide annual audited reports to the State Treasurer for submission to CAV-please pay due attention to this important requirement. It is critical to our

good standing in the veteran community and to our continued ability to attract grants that we remain scrupulously transparent in all our financial dealings, ensure the prudent and proper use of welfare funds and ensure that our accounts meet all of the CAV requirements. State Legislation demands it, our reputation hinges on it.

By my calculation, 2010 is the 25th anniversary of the raising of the branch in 1985. As such, I will be looking for ideas for suitable and meaningful ways to celebrate this important milestone. This state has an enviable record of service to the veteran community and for consistently doing what we do best-grass roots welfare.

It is interesting to look at the names on the state honour board over the past 25 years: the striking thing is the relatively low number of names that have served as President, Secretary or Treasurer over the years, with a significant number of these also serving at national level. This continuity of service has meant that the state has been fortunate to have settled and experienced committees guiding the fortunes of the state. The flip side is that such consistency of service can lead to complacency within the membership with a resultant lack of nominations for executive positions. This situation will be tested next year, when we will be confronted with experienced members leaving the committee; an influx of new faces is ur-

gently needed to ensure that the state maintains momentum.

On the policy front, our key issues manifesto has been ratified and it will help us to remain focussed on what we regard as important. The manifesto will allow us to clearly indicate to government what our priorities are as we confront government attitudes to indexation of DFRDB, increases to DVA disability pensions, and a review of DVA funded advocacy and pension officer services that may have a significant impact on how the Regional Veteran Centres function throughout Victoria.

The state will engage in letter campaigns aimed at Victorian based federal politicians in relation to the DFRDB and DVA disability pensions matters.

The State Government responses to the veterans' sector study are now being implemented, the key issue being an assessment of the actual need for veteran housing and how best to deliver it. We are likely to be approached to be involved in the consultation. Additionally, further municipal rates discounts will now be available to EDA,s.

The new DVA state consultative committee has commenced, in line with the commencement of the new committees at national level. Mick Pignatelli from Diamond Valley is representing the state branch on the Victorian committee.



Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

Next year this Branch will need to make decisions on our commitment to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, and arrive at a consensus on the level of support we can reasonably give over the longer term. One of the key issues in ensuring the future stability and viability of the museum is to find ways to pay down the existing mortgage-I am hoping for some ideas from the membership.

At national level, I express my disappointment that a submission to DVA on the review of DVA paid advocacy and pension service was not adequately circulated to the states for comment, as it is critical that any submission is not adverse to the RVCP in any way. Victoria voted against the adoption of a plain English version national constitution as directed by council: it was our view that the new

constitution did not materially improve on the existing version that had served us well.

I am pleased to note that we have continuing good relations with the other major ESO's in the state, especially the RSL, and I acknowledge RSL support through the provision of office space in ANZAC House and office support.

I want to express my sincere thanks to your executive committee who have served the branch well during the year. I particularly thank Peter Bright who is stepping down as state secretary. Peter has been a highly efficient secretary who has introduced many new administrative processes and certainly could not be accused of not passing information on down the line or providing as much background to issues as possible;

he will be sorely missed. I note the excellent work done by Len Barlow in relation to our website, and I note the substantial effort that John Ockwell has put into the welfare presentation program-John has been instrumental in obtaining substantial media coverage for the program and for local sub-branches. I thank Maurie Benson for his outstanding work on the newsletter, VV Day and office management, David Weeks for running a tight financial ship, Ron McMullen for wrestling enthusiastically with the frustrating membership portfolio and Jim Saddington for playing the "bad cop" at national. I thank you all for your work for veterans and your friendship, and wish you all a happy and holy Christmas and a prosperous New Year .

Bob

FROM THE *SECRETARY*

Here we are, at the end of the year again – and you always think “where has the year gone”!!

The newsletter has gone from strength to strength over the past two years, topical and informative information and all that - what do you think?

From my perspective, I will not be standing as the State Secretary, or any other State Executive position, for the 2010 year – someone will need to put their hand up to do the job. I would be happy to provide assistance

to the incoming Secretary as they start to take on the job.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following members - the work they have done has assisted me very much as the State Secretary:

Len Barlow: for filling in for me on a number of occasions, his sage advice and also for his work as our webmaster. Involvement and efforts very much appreciated.

Maurie Benson: for working as the State Office Manager, the FSB-VIC Newsletter Editor and

being a major player in the organisation of VV Day each year. Job(s) well done and very much appreciated.

Murray Lewis, Barry Brewer and Rob Huggan for working at the State Office at ANZAC House during the week. Contributions and endeavours very much appreciated.

Finally, best wishes for the coming festive season and if you are travelling, please drive carefully and aim to arrive at your destination, and ultimately at home, safely.

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VVAA VICTORIAN STATE MANIFESTO

Draft – for discussion at 14 Nov 09
State Council Meeting

Disability Payments Treated the same as Federally Funded Pensions

Ensure that all disability payments are indexed the same as other Federally funded pensions and are included in pension indexation rounds, and in any other lump sum increases that are applied to other Federally funded pension payments.

Disability Payments - Maintenance of Value

Ensure that the value of all levels of disability payments (general rate increments, intermediate rate, special (TPI) rate and EDA rate) are maintained through the continued application of the most beneficial indexation formula.

Veteran Aged Care

Government act immediately to secure and oversee the provision of aged care facilities for Veterans, and provide assistance to Veterans to meet the cost of obtaining retirement village type accommodation.

Mental Health – Condition Acceptance Procedures and Funding

Provide better and simplified mental health assessment, treatment, and compensation regimes, including improving and simplifying psychiatric condition acceptance procedures.

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

Defence Superannuation Fairly Indexed

Immediately abandon the CPI linked indexation of Defence Superannuation payments and apply future increases based on the greater of the increases of the CPI index or MTAWA.

BEST Funding

Ensure that adequate BEST funding is provided to meet, at least, all of the costs of operating the Regional Veterans Centre Project in Victoria.

Pharmaceuticals

Provide free pharmaceutical services for entitled Veterans

Alternative Medicine and Health Services

Provide free access to all alternative medicine and health services for eligible veterans.

Spouse Carer Gold Card Entitlements

Extend gold card entitlements to Carer spouses of gold card holders.

Funeral Benefit

Funeral benefit currently payable under VEA be increased to the same level available to other Veterans under MRCA.

Counselling Access

Remove time limits for access to VVCS Counselling Services for divorcees.

Role of Carers

Give proper recognition to the role of Carers of Vietnam Veterans.

Provide funding and resources to allow access to community

health facilities and adequate respite breaks.

Extend Education Support Criteria

Extend eligibility criteria for education support to include eligible Veterans on the General or Intermediate Rate of disability compensation.

Legal Aid

Provide the same legal aid service level through state legal aid commissions to Vietnam Veterans in all States irrespective of the case.

Retrospective Awards

Continue reviews into the lack of bravery awards made to Vietnam Conflict service personnel with the aim of retrospectively making appropriate awards, including allowing foreign awards to be recognized.

Broaden the award of active service medals to include personnel who were engaged in certain logistic support and evacuation operations.

War Graves

Maintain as official war graves, the graves of all Vietnam Veterans who died on active service and are buried in Australia, irrespective of whether the funeral was conducted privately or with Military Honours.

Voluntary Work

Acknowledge the value of TPI Veterans undertaking voluntary work, and ensure that voluntary work is not considered in relation to any compensation or pension payments.

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VVAA VIC STATE

State Council Meetings

Bendigo will host the 2010 State Congress and Council. The Council will also visit Maryborough in May, Murray Border in August and Frankston in November. Geelong will host Congress 2011.

Proposed Constitution Rejected

The proposed "Plain English" constitution version was rejected by the national council, in favour of retaining the existing constitution that has served the Association well. Minor changes in order to comply with NSW laws and changes to the policy hand book and guidelines will be forthcoming.

State Honour Roll

Recent changes to the VVAA Victorian State Office Honour Roll have seen the removal of "dittos" for those serving multiple terms in office at State Executive level. Instead, their names are now recorded in full.

Life Members and deceased Office Bearers are also recorded on what is an historic register of those who have contributed to the success of VVAA in Victoria with their service on the State Executive.

Jim Bourke named Patron of VVAA Outer Eastern Sub Branch

Well done to the Team at Outer Eastern Sub Branch for having been privileged to have Jim Bourke accept the roll as Sub Branch Patron.

Jim Bourke, as leader of the Team Operation Aus-sies Home (OAH), saw all 6 Australian MIAs returned to Australia.

Jim is well known to us through the efforts of his OAH Team who worked tirelessly for so many years to bring our mates home, and in January 2009 he was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

State Office Christmas Closure:

Please note that the State Office will be closed from close of business 23 Dec 2009 and reopen Monday 11 Jan 2010.

All urgent matters should be directed to State President Bob Elworthy 0402 106 262 and urgent welfare matters to Kevin Hunter 0408 448 280.

GRASS ROOTS WELFARE PROGRAM

The state-wide grass roots welfare program hit the road in the second half of the year and provided presentations at Hamilton, Warrnambool, Ararat, Colac, Lakes Entrance, Horsham, Wangaratta, and Wodonga. A successful visit to Mildura-where a Sub-Branch once existed, was followed by a visit to Mt Gambier in SA, and Wagga Wagga and Tocumwal in NSW. The only headwinds experienced came from Merimbula where some protective souls were not keen on Mexicans coming into their territory.

The welfare presentations have been very well received and have been attended by a good cross section of older veterans, widows, Vietnam Veterans and younger veterans. A number of VVFA members have also attended. The activity has been supported wonderfully by RSL Victoria through access to RSL buildings, VVCS, DVA through mail outs and VAN office support, local sub-branches and the RVCP.

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S N A P S H O T S

NEW DVA CARDS

New Gold, White and Orange DVA cards will be issued in March 2010. The cards will use similar technology to the Medicare Card and each card will contain a metallic strip identifying the holder, DVA File Number and Card Type.

MILITARY SUPERANNUATION-DUDDERED AGAIN

The government has accepted the central recommendation of the Mathews Report that Military superannuation payments continue to be indexed to CPI movements. A nation-wide call to action campaign involving press releases and lobbying of parliamentarians has been called for. More to follow.

DVA DISABILITY PAYMENTS MISS OUT ON INCREASE.

Sold by the Government as part of the national stimulation package, Commonwealth provided pensions, disability payments and other welfare payments re-

ceived increases in the order of 11%, however, DVA Disability Payments missed out. Expect activity on this issue to heat up, more to follow.

DVA-FUNDED EX-SERVICE ORGANISATION ADVOCACY AND WELFARE SERVICES REVIEW

The Review will look at the BEST grants program, TIP and the Veteran and Community Grants Program. The outcomes of the review may have significant ramifications for the Victorian Regional Veterans Centre Project.

VETERAN CENTRES GAIN FUNDING FROM ANZAC DAY PROCEEDS FUND

An application for funding to cover BEST funding shortfalls at Victorian Veteran Centres for 2010 has been successful, including funding to help with establishment costs for a centre at Horsham.

LETTER CAMPAIGNS

The Victorian State Council has approved letter campaigns to all Victorian based federal politicians on the matter of DFRDB superannuation/disability payments .

DVA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

DVA Consultative Committee Commences. The new committee met for the first time in November, with DC DVA Victoria chairing the meeting. Michael Pignatelli from the Diamond Valley Branch represented VVAA Vic. Meeting minutes will be circulated.

IT'S AN HONOUR

Harold Heslop, the Swan Hill Sub-Branch President, was awarded the Pte Leslie Farren Perpetual Award at the Vietnam Veterans' Day commemorations at the Austin Health Repat. Campus in August in recognition of Harold's outstanding service to the veteran community. Well done Harold!

DEFENCE HEALTH INSURANCE



Defence Health (formerly known as Army Health Benefits Scheme) is a not-for-profit private health insurer

that has been serving the Defence community since 1953.

Eligibility: As an ex-serving member of the ADF you are eligible to join Defence Health. As a result of your service, the following family members are also eligible to join Defence Health:

- * Spouses and Partners
- * Former Spouses and Partners
- * Dependent Children

- * Adult children
- * Sisters and Brothers and their partners and dependent children
- * Mothers and Fathers
- * Grandchildren

For further information go to the Defence Health website www.defencehealth.com.au

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VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES ~ Final Summary

From	State	Amount
Redcliffe SB (Qld)	Qld	\$1,000
Echuca SB	Vic	\$1,000
Macarthur SB (NSW)	NSW	\$500
RAEME Vic Assn	Vic	\$500
Murray Border SB	Vic	\$500
Maryborough SB	Vic	\$1,000
Brisbane North SB (Qld)	Qld	\$1,000
Swan Hill SB	Vic	\$1,000
Bendigo SB	Vic	\$1,000
Geelong SB	Vic	\$500
Gippsland SB	Vic	\$500
Goulburn Valley SB	Vic	\$500
Outer Eastern SB	Vic	\$500
North West SB	Vic	\$2,000
Mr K Pryor	Pers	\$200
State Branch (Qld)	Qld	\$500
Gympie SB (Qld)	Qld	\$500
Coolangatta/Tweed Heads (Qld)	Qld	\$1,500
Northern Suburbs SB (Adelaide)	SA	\$850
Hervey Bay SB (Qld)	Qld	\$545
Murwillumbah VV Social Group	NSW	\$1,800
Logan & Albert VVAA sub branch, Qld	Qld	\$300.00
VVAA NT Rural sub branch (meat raffle)	NT	\$435.10
VVAA NT Branch	NT	\$1000.00
NSW Jervis Bay VVAA sub branch	NSW	\$500.00
Sunshine Coast VVAA Qld	Qld	\$1000.00
VVAA Tasmania Branch	Tas	\$2200.00
VVAA WA Branch	WA	\$200.00
VVAA WA Branch cash tin	WA	\$90.60
VVAA Noble Park	Vic	\$1,500.

Letter of Thanks Victorian Bushfires

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the VVAA for their kind and generous support following the “Black Saturday” bushfires during which our house was destroyed. As a daughter of a Vietnam Veteran, it was extremely heart warming to receive such an immediate and overwhelming response from the Association.

The personal and financial support offered to both myself and my family is greatly appreciated as we begin to rebuild our home and our community.

With thanks,
Kristy Thompson
Marysville
(Daughter of Peter Slattery, Diamond Valley Sub-Branch)

Now that final distribution has been made for all money raised through donations to the Bushfire Appeal the VVAA Victorian State Branch wishes to extend a heartfelt thanks to all those who generously donated money, goods and time to assisting those adversely effected by the catastrophic fires that ravaged our State last summer.

This is welfare at work and a great example of the team pulling together in time of need.

Each donor will be formally recognised by the State Branch.

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AMBULANCE COVER FOR TPIs

So you think you are covered for Ambulance cover on your TPI Gold Card.

Be aware that the ambulance service provided for gold card holders **ONLY COVERS THE STATE IN WHICH YOU LIVE**. If you are interstate, the ambulance service provided only covers transportation to the nearest hospital. If there is a need for a gold card holder to be moved from a local interstate hospital to a specialist hospital or to be transported back to their home state from interstate, **THEN IT WILL BE AT THE GOLD CARD HOLDERS EXPENSE**.

Some simple advice for TPI's if travelling: either have travel insurance or maintain membership of an ambulance service.

State Government Energy Concessions

If you have a Centrelink Card or Veterans Affairs Pension Card you may be eligible for a concession on your energy accounts. Recent changes to concession claim processes mean that the concession amount will only appear on issued bills if the customer has provided their concession details to the utility provider. Customers will no longer be able to claim the concession amount at Australia Post unless they have pre-registered their details with their energy retailer.

If your current bill already shows the concession amount deducted from the total amount you do not need to call your energy retailer. If you are a Centrelink Card or Veterans Affairs Pension Card holder and your bill does not show the concession amount deducted, call your energy supplier.

For further information go to:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions

AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPING MEMORIAL PROJECT

The design concept for the memorial, which will be erected on ANZAC Parade in Canberra, has been announced and a fully developed and costed design for the memorial and working drawings for its construction will be completed in the latter part of this year.

Approximately \$4M needs to be raised and a target completion date of 14 September 2012 (the 65th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping) has been set. Donations towards the memorial project are welcome. Visit www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au for more information.

MUNICIPAL RATES CONCESSION EXTENDED TO POW's AND EDA's

The Premier has announced that from 1 July 2009 ex Prisoners of War and disabled veterans will receive municipal rates concessions that will be funded by the State Government.

Veterans who hold a Prisoner of War or Extreme Disablement Adjustment Gold Card will become eligible for the municipal rates concession for the first time. The municipal rates concession is a 50 per cent reduction in council rates for an eligible ratepayer's principal place of residence, up to an annual maximum concession value: in 2009-10 the maximum concession available is \$184.30.

Eligible veterans will receive a letter from the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs outlining how they go about claiming the discount. Further information is available by contacting the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521.

This action follows a recommendation in the Victorian Veterans Sector Study that municipal rates concessions be extended to ex Prisoners of War.

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CHANGES WITHIN RMA

The Chair of the RMA, Professor Ken Donald AO, advised in the RMA Annual report that Professor Beverly Raphael and Professor Robyn Ward have departed the RMA.

Professor Raphael, a founding member of the Authority in 1994, played a key role in establishing, developing and refining a new and untried system—the system of SOPs, which at that time had been without precedent either nationally or internationally. Professor Raphael also recently revised a large number of mental health SOPs and was involved in the development of an innovative system of stressor definitions.

Professor Robyn Ward was appointed to the authority in 2004. Professor Ward is a world-renowned researcher and practicing oncologist, and following her appointment as chair of the Medical Services Committee by the Minister for Health, tendered her resignation.

“I had the pleasure of meeting both Professors at the RMA Forum in 2008, and I am sure you will join me in wishing them both well. Bob Elworthy”

I remember when Father Christmas first passed his sleigh-driving test. He came skidding down in front of the toy factory. 'Have you passed?' I asked. Father Christmas pointed proudly to the front of the sleigh. 'See for yourself!' he called proudly. 'No-el plates!'

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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SINGLE CLAIM FORM TRIAL

The Central Victorian Veterans' Support Centre in Bendigo and the Hume Veterans' Information Centre in Wodonga were chosen as the Victorian trial sites for a new single claim form, designed to streamline processing of claims under the three Acts administered by DVA.

DVA advises that a total of 135 single claims forms, that represent 331 separate conditions, have been received: 53% of the total number of claims will be assessed under more than one Act. DVA has ceased taking in any new claims for the trial and will now concentrate on finalising those already lodged so that evaluation can commence. Work will continue with the centres to obtain feedback on the next phase of the trial that will concentrate on business processes through to finalisation of the claim. Participation of the centres in the next phase and the evaluation will help to ensure that DVA gains a good perspective of the issues that need attention prior to any national implementation.

DViets 10th Anniversary Bash

Diamond Valley Vietnam Veterans Sub-Branch (DViets) celebrated their 10th Anniversary on Sunday 18th October at Wellers of Kangaroo Ground with an Anniversary Luncheon.

The event was attended by 102 members and partners, including some of the original founding members.

The event was a great day and strengthened our presence in the Valley.

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

You believe in Santa Clause
You don't believe in Santa Clause
You are Santa Clause
You look like Santa Clause

Gunners & Grocers Tour Vietnam

The *Grocers and Gunners* tour to Vietnam in August 2009, as reported in *FSB-Vic* Autumn 2009, saw a group of 26 enjoy the delights of Vietnam today, soak up the history and culture and visit places that still jolt the memory banks.

One of the highlights was when Tony Simon, 52 Sup Pl, presented a Viet Cong flag (D275 Bn) to the local police chief and asked that it be returned to the people of the province.



Tony Tran (guide), Police Chief & Tony Simon Flag presentation



Mick Gibbons, Phil Brookes, Tony Simon Denis Cowling & Max Lucas at Nui Dat

The trip was escorted by Phil Brookes (ex ARA and HQ AFV 1968/69) who has a wide ranging knowledge of Vietnam and China and is presently arranging a trip to China in May 2010 followed up with another trip to Vietnam around December 2010. Anyone interested can contact Phil on Phone: (07) 33412 732 / Mobile: 0418 719 166 Email: brookes1@bigpond.net.au

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

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

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

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

The well-being and social engagement of veterans and war widows.

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

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

The full report and the Victorian Government response can be viewed at:

www.veterans.vic.gov.au

VIETNAM VETERAN HONOUR BOARD UNVEILED AT EUROA RSL

On Monday 9 November, Bob Elworthy unveiled an Honour Board bearing the names of eighteen men from Euroa and Districts who served in Vietnam.

At the Euroa RSL, in excess of 60 veterans, family members and RSL members attended the unveiling, with ten of the eighteen veterans present: one veteran travelled from Queensland.

Euroa has a proud military history, with 3 KIA in the Boer War, 130 KIA in WW1 and 30 KIA in WW2. The town boasts three VC winners. Not bad

for a small town with a 2009 population of about 2770.

During the Vietnam War years, a local became the first person from Euroa to crack the Australian Olympic Team, the local high school was opened, bushfires claimed the lives of seven members of the same family and the Euroa swimming pool was opened. Euroa's other claims to fame are that Ned Kelly knocked over the bank and Merv Hughes was born in the town.

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VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2009—MELBOURNE



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VIETNAM VETERANS DAY 2009—MELBOURNE



Brig. Colin "Genghis" Khan DSO



Photos by Sasha Uzunov



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VETERANS ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

The Veterans Sector Study identified a range of challenges in regard to accommodation:

Lack of medium to long term crisis accommodation for veterans with high dependency or complex needs. Current crisis accommodation is scarce, and veterans do not receive priority access.

Access for younger ex-service men and women to specialist disability care and support, including residential and in-home support-again veterans do not receive priority access.

Some older veterans no longer being able to care for adult children with severe and profound disability and not having access to specialist disability accommodation and support.

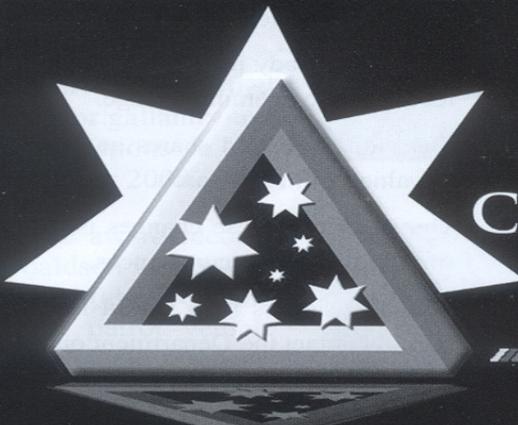
As advised, the Victorian Government has provided a commitment to make available \$2M for a veterans' accommodation project from the Victorian Property Fund. Usually, applications to the fund require that funds are matched dollar for dollar.

Discussions with key ESO's, Carry On etc indicate a desire to work collaboratively to develop a proposal, however there is broad consensus that while there is anecdotal understanding of the types of accommodation problems some veterans are facing, there is no detailed understanding of the scale of the problem, or distribution across the state. Equally, it is not certain that ESO accommodation providers have sufficient capital to put towards a small scale project of \$4M.

As such, there needs to be a consultancy undertaken to analyse the need, potentially support development of a business case and application to the Fund.

The Victorian Veterans Council is well placed to auspice the review and funds for the consultancy will be provided from the ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund.

Clearly there is a lot of work to be done, including stakeholder consultation, addressing the funding needs, looking for potential partners etc.



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VIETNAM VETERANS COMMEMORATIVE WALK



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project to be located in Seymour enhances the existing Light Horse Park to the east and the Army Tank Museum located at Puckapunyal to the west. This will maximise the synergy between the three attractions and ensure Seymour is readily identified as a place of national historical significance.

Following the commencement of hostilities in both Borneo and Vietnam in the early 1960s, the Australian Government enacted the *National Service Act 1964* to increase recruiting levels. The 2nd Recruit Training Battalion was formed with many thousands of personnel trained at Puckapunyal in preparation for service to their country.

On a typically foul Seymour/Puckapunyal day (anyone who had the misfortune to do recruit training, or was posted to Pucka will understand), the Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin officially launched the Vietnam Veterans' Commemorative Walk project. The ambitious project is a joint

effort between the Mitchell Shire Council and the Mitchell Sub-Branch, and Ross Stewart and his gang at Seymour have done a power of work to get the project to this stage. Ross has even got the military from Pucka onside with the promise of some bits and pieces for the site further down the track.

A sizeable crowd braved the inclement weather to participate in the launch, mercifully, the heavens opened and cut short the parade of speechmakers. All then repaired to the local offices to enjoy some Mitchell Shire hospitality.

For further information go to:

<http://www.vvaavic.org.au/mitchell.asp>

or if you prefer, log on to the VVAVIC website <http://www.vvaavic.org.au/>

and go to Victorian Memorials <http://www.vvaavic.org.au/vicmem.asp>

and find the Commemorative Walk link.

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

VIETNAM VETERANS' FAMILY STUDY

Registration for the Vietnam Veterans' Family Study, an intergenerational study, is still open. This family study is comparing the health and wellbeing of the children of Vietnam veterans with the health of their extended family and also with the health and well being of children of Army personnel who served during 1962-1975 but did not deploy to Vietnam. The participation of family members is essential for the success of the study.

Registrations are encouraged from:

- * Randomly selected Army personnel who served during the period 1962 – 1975 plus their:
 - * Children/step children;
 - * Wives/partners; and
 - * Ex-wives and partners.
- * Randomly selected Vietnam veterans plus their:
 - * Children/step children;
 - * Wives/partners;
 - * Ex-wives/partners;
 - * Siblings; and
 - * Nieces and nephews.

In particular, we are seeking registrations from the brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews of Vietnam veterans. It should be noted that it is not necessary for the Vietnam veteran to be registered in the study for their family members to be registered and no advice of registrations is given to any other family member.

You can register by calling 1800 502 302 or online at www.dva.gov.au/vvfs.

Five of the study's research components are underway with the:

- * **Children of Vietnam Veterans' Mortality Study** being undertaken by TNS Social Research.
- * **Re-analysis of the Vietnam Veterans' Sons and Daughters Project** being undertaken by Enhance Management.
- * **Semi-Structured Telephone Interviews** being undertaken by the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health.
- * **History of Health Case Studies** being undertaken by Open Mind Research Group.
- * **In-depth Case Study (Ethnographic Study)** being undertaken by TNS Social Research.

The latter four research components will provide information to assist with the development of the main survey questionnaire. It is expected results from all of this research, with the exception of the Mortality Study, will be finalised in late 2009.

For more information on the study call toll free 1800 502 302 or visit the website: www.dva.gov.au/vvfs.

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VETERANS

Are you a veteran of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent? If so, we would like to speak to you as part of a new project documenting the experiences of Indigenous soldiers and veterans both in the armed forces and in civilian life.

If you would be interested in participating in this project or would like more information, please contact:

Dr. Noah Riseman
School of Arts and Sciences, ACU

03 9953 3226

Noah.Riseman@acu.edu.au

OR

Naomi Wolfe
Coordinator, Jim-Baa-Yer
Indigenous Education Unit
03 9953 3839
jimbaayer@acu.edu.au

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

Veterans' Children Education Scholarships

Scholarships for Children of Veterans intending Tertiary Studies in 2010.

In 2010 the Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) is expecting to give financial assistance for up to 65 students under many different scholarship schemes. All schemes help the selected children in need of the Australian veteran community with the costs of tertiary education. Applicants are considered for all schemes for which they are eligible.

Applications open on 18 August 2009. To apply you must be:

- ★ Within the means test. That is eligible on assets and income grounds for Youth Allowance benefits for full-time education.
- ★ Enrolled, or planning to enrol in a full-time course of tertiary education in Australia by attendance at a university, TAFE or college. The course must be of one or more academic years length and at undergraduate level.
- ★ The child or grandchild of a person who has operational service with the Australian Navy, Army or Air Force, or if not has three or more year's continuous full-time service as a member of the Australian Defence Force.

- ★ Under the age of 25 when applying, unless exceptional circumstances related to veteran's service exist.

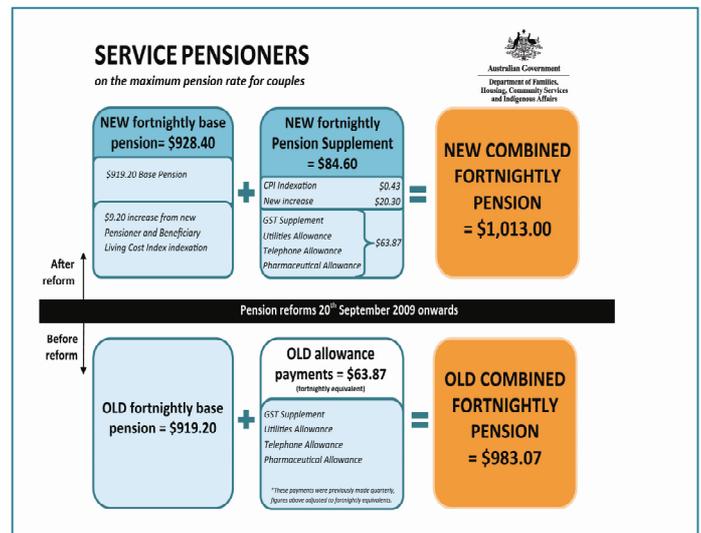
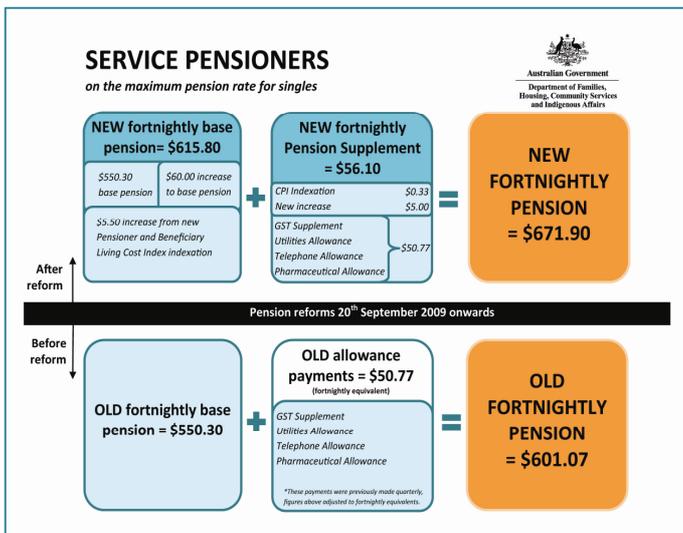
The largest scheme is the Long Tan Bursary funded by the Australian Government. There are 50 new bursaries each year. They are valued at \$9,000 each which paid at \$3,000 per year for three years. There are selection number targets for each State and Territory. To apply you must be the child or grandchild of an Australian Vietnam Veteran, be resident in Australia, be entering any year of tertiary study, having not previously received a Long Tan Bursary.

VVAA Victoria funds two William Hacking Bursaries of \$3,000 per year for 3 years and we will be looking for applicants to start in year 2011.

Applications or requests for information should be directed to:

*State Secretary,
VVAA Victoria,
ANZAC House,
4 Collins St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000*

SERVICE PENSIONS



For further information go to www.australian.gov.au/pensions

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS MUSEUM



The National Vietnam Veterans Museum brings to life exhibits depicting the period of Australia's longest war.

A vast display of weaponry, vehicles and equipment from all Services and participating nations.

Open Daily 10:00 am to 5:00pm
Closed Good Friday and Christmas Day

25 Veterans Drive
(Next to the airfield)
Newhaven Victoria
Australia 3925

Ph +61 3 5956 6400
Fax +61 3 5956 6406

Melway 632 F8



secretary@vietnamvetmuseum.org
www.vietnamvetmuseum.org

Entry Fees

Adults	\$9.00
Children U/15	\$5.00
Senior Citizens/Veterans	\$6.00
Families (2Ad + 2Ch)	\$20.00

Bus Groups

Organised Groups	\$5.00 per person
All School Groups	\$4.00 per person

Tour groups are welcome. Prior arrangement is desirable for groups over 10 to ensure sufficient qualified guides are available.



The Light and Sound Show
This attraction presents the story of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war. It will educate and entertain children of all ages, from 18 months to 85 years. An emotional ride through time.

Authentic Equipment and Weaponry

Includes helicopters, a Bell Sioux and a fully-armed Cobra Gunship. Platoon weapons, a Centurion Tank, 105mm Howitzer and a range of vehicles.



Displays

The museum has over 25,000 items of memorabilia, photographs and artefacts to complement major exhibits. An armoury of weapons used and a Research Library of books, newspaper articles and clippings are displayed.

Nui Dat Café and Merchandise Shop

A place to relax with a coffee or tea and a snack. While here take some time to browse through the merchandise for something to take home or for a friend.



Visit our Garden of Reflection - an area of hallowed ground dedicated to those fallen and afflicted from the Vietnam Campaign. A serene area which reinforces the Museum as being the spiritual home of Vietnam Veterans.

COUNCIL APPROVES FUNDS FOR MUSEUM

The National Vietnam Veterans' Museum was unsuccessful in a bid for funding for a commercial grade dishwasher for the Museum kitchen. As a result of the unsuccessful bid, David Weeks, the State Treasurer advised that a \$5,000 grant could be made available from the state general fund.

State council has approved the grant.

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

Notice Board

The *Notice Board* is intended to be similar to those you see in other Veteran publications and can include personal notices such as *Wanted to find, Reunions, get togethers, hobby related matters etc.*

The VVAA Victoria Branch President retains the right to refuse acceptance of any notice that does not accord with the aims and objectives of the VVAA.

Please forward your notices to the State Office or Email to: editor@vvaavic.org.au

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

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

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

Submitter: Mrs Meredith G Bell, 25 Tinks Road, Narre Warren Vic 3805 Ph: 03 9703 1390

Email: mgbell@mysoul.com.au

Looking for 37501 **Ronald Albert CROSBY**

Born 12 November 1939 in WA. He was a Military Provost and served in Vietnam 3/74 > 2/72.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Ron please contact John Leworthy Tel 03 9848 2705 or

Email j137502@bigpond.com

Received via VVAA Bendigo Sub Branch

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Bryan Ryan

54373022

email glenalvi@aapt.net.au

The Veteran Community

Story Writing & Art Competition (SWAC)



Patron: Maj Gen David J McLachlan AO

(1300 132 515)

The prize presentation ceremony for the 2009 competition was conducted at the Heidelberg Repat. on 26 November.

VVAA Victoria is a proud Gold Sponsor of the competition.

Information concerning the 2010 competition will be contained in the Autumn 2010 FSB VIC.

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

Veterans' MATES ~ Medical Advice & Therapeutics Education Services

"Factors such as the increased use of medicines and advancing age can lead to adverse drug events and hospitalisation through confusion and misadventure with medicines. Being aware of these factors and of the high usage of medicines within the veteran community, the Department has developed a new quality use of medicines program, the Veterans' Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Services (Veterans' MATES) to improve the use of medicines in the veteran community.

Veterans' MATES uses data from prescription claims to identify members of the veteran community who may be at risk of medication misadventure and provides information which may assist in improving the management of their medicines. The program puts veterans' general practitioners at the centre of the program and aims to build a team approach to veterans' medicines

use by including veterans, their carers, their community pharmacists, other medical specialists and health practitioners. An important facet of the program is to inform and raise awareness of a veteran's chronic medical conditions and to encourage improved communication between veterans and members of their healthcare team.

The Veterans' MATES program is delivered in the form of clinical modules every three to four months. Each module focuses on a particular aspect of medicines management."

All members should be actively encouraged to view the full list of MATES topics on the website at www.veteransmates.net.au as there may be a health/medicine issue they have that can be resolved through the MATES system.

VVCS TO PROVIDE MORE SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING



About one in five Australians experience a mental health problem at least once in their lives. And it's no different for the veteran and defence force communities.

Deployment, coming home from a war or peacekeeping zone or returning to civilian life may have an effect on mental health and wellbeing. Some have not experienced mental health problems, others have sought help and

recovered. But there are some who continue to experience difficulties. These problems can be identified early, managed and treated.

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

Operation Life is a strategy to prevent suicide and promote good mental health and resilience across the veteran community. Welfare, pension officers and others from ex-service organisations and the veteran community are encouraged to attend.

“**Operation Life** workshops are not treatment programs but are designed to help members of the vet-

eran community to recognise someone who might be having thoughts of suicide and to link them in with appropriate help.”

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

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1800 011 046**.

See Page 21 for further details.



OPERATION *Life*

PUT YOUR MIND AT EASE

RECOGNISE > ACT > MAINTAIN

MAKE IT YOUR MISSION TO SUPPORT LIFE

FREE SUICIDE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS FOR VETERANS, FAMILIES AND MATES

**RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING
ABOUT THE RISK OF SUICIDE**



The VVCS Legacy

The Vietnam War was a difficult chapter in our nation’s history. But for those who served, the experience forged a bond that remains undiminished with the passage of time. Vietnam veterans’ are committed to looking out for each other. They successfully lobbied the Australian Government for counselling and support services for veterans and their families. In 1982 the Australian Government established the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service.

Over the years, the Australian Government extended the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service to provide support to veterans of all conflicts, their families, and members of the Australian Defence Force. Twenty-five years after the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service was founded, the service was renamed VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service.

The name VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service, acknowledges the heritage of the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service and the efforts of the Vietnam veteran community in establishing the service. It also promotes the availability of this important service to the wider veteran community and their families.

Contact VVCS on 1800 011 046*

During business hours—connects you to the nearest VVCS Centre.

There are 15 VVCS centres located across Australia.

After business hours—connects you with Veterans Line, the after-hours telephone crisis counselling service.

Veterans, peacekeepers and their families can refer themselves to VVCS.

Other current serving members can request a referral from the ADF.

* Free local call.
Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur charges.

Operation *Life* workshops

safeTALK: suicide alertness for everyone

—a half day presentation

ASIST: applied suicide intervention skills training

—two-day skills training

ASIST Tune UP

—a half day refresher workshop

To Register call VVCS on 1800 011 046



Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

VVCS GROUP PROGRAMS

Anger Management

The aim of this program is to improve the quality of life of participants by assisting them to take control of their anger and to learn positive stress management and coping strategies. Topics covered in the program include:

- ★ understanding anger and aggression
- ★ understanding, monitoring and learning strategies to reduce physiological arousal
- ★ identifying triggers and learning when to use appropriate strategies
- ★ the impact of aggressive behaviours on quality of life, including relationships

Relationships

Loving relationships can at times be taken for granted leaving a feeling of something missing. This program is designed for emotionally committed couples who want that something back. The program aims to improve the quality of relationships through development of skills to strengthen emotional ties; develop greater mutual appreciation; communicate more effectively and share goals for the future.

Recommended for: Veterans, peace-

Outreach Heart Health

Veterans and peacekeepers living in rural, remote and outer metropolitan areas can access the Heart health Program via a correspondence version. It has similar support to the group program. Participants are supported by their general practitioner and a coach who guide participants through the program. The support team conduct fortnightly

Lifestyle Management

This residential course is designed for veterans and the program covers strategies to improve your lifestyle and to assist you to manage stress. It may include relaxation and stress management, practical advice on health, strategies to identify and manage anger, problem solving and communication skills.

Take time out and spend some quality time together. A great opportunity to expand support and friendship networks.

Recommended for: Veterans, peacekeepers, eligible current serving ADF members and their partners

Depression and Anxiety

DEPRESSION: This program is available for veterans and their partners who have been diagnosed with depression and experience some anxiety symptoms. Topics include managing negative thinking, developing self-awareness, lowering physiological arousal and stress and maintaining motivation.

ANXIETY: Stress is a normal part of life but some people experience excessive worry, irritability, apprehension, restlessness, feel on edge or find that it impacts on their ability to get to sleep. This program will explore various relaxation methods and helps to develop more effective coping strategies.

NOTE: These programs may be combined into one at some locations.

Changing the Mix

The *Changing the Mix - Alcohol Correspondence Program* is a self-paced program that will give you the skills to change your drinking patterns from the comfort and privacy of your own home, anywhere in Australia.

The program is delivered via correspondence with the modules sent to participants. Participants complete the modules, monitor their drinking and assess their progress with the support of the CTM team.

To find out more information or to register for this health program call the CIM team on 1800 1808 68.

Recommended For: All Australian veterans, peacekeepers, their partners, adult sons & daughters of Vietnam veterans, eligible members of the AUF and DVA gold card holders.

Programs for Partners and Sons & Daughters

WCS offers programs designed specifically for veterans' partners and sons and daughters.

Partners' programs include:

- ★ Partners' Self-Care Workshops including sessions on understanding PTSD, anger management, self care strategies, self esteem
- ★ Caring for the carer
- ★ Partners of veterans residential program (only at selected centres)

Sons & daughters of Vietnam veterans programs include:

- ★ Workshops on topics including stress and anger management, self esteem, communication & conflict resolution
- ★ Anger Management
- ★ Discovering Resilience

Other Programmes include:

- ★ **HEART HEALTH**
Increase your physical health & wellbeing
- ★ **SLEEP & RELAXATION**
Tips on how to better your sleep patterns & improve relaxation
- ★ **STEPPING OUT**
Two day programme to help improve your transition from ADF to civilian life.

Register your interest by calling VVCS on 1800 011 046 or visit www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

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Administrator Ron McMullen
 Details – see Assistant State Treasurer Page 2.

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living

CLOSE THE BRACELETS ~ ALL MIAs HOME

After all Australian combat forces were withdrawn from South Vietnam in 1972, six, four Army and two RAAF, remained behind officially listed as "Missing in Action" (MIA).

I believe most Vietnam Veterans and the families of the MIAs thought our missing comrades would never be found and returned home. While the task seemed so daunting and almost hopeless we hadn't counted on the enthusiasm and dedication of LTCOL Jim Burke and his team of "Operation Aussie Home" (OAH). As recounted in an address by Bob Elworthy, Victorian State President of the Vietnam Veterans Association, Jim's team, initially without any major support, painstakingly but steadfastly pushed ahead in their

quest to find our six colleagues. Later, supplemented by Government funded specialists and support personnel. In April 2007, with the assistance of the Vietnam Government and local villagers the OAH team had its first success when the remains of LCPL Richard Parker and PVT Peter Gillson, former members of 1RAR, were located on the battlefield where they had lost their lives on 8th November 1965. Brought home in June 2007 they were each accorded a ceremonial "Welcome Home" and burial with military honours. Unknown to most, on the arrival of the aircraft bearing their caskets; the first pair of Bracelets at the Museum were closed.

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On a chilly August 31st 2009 morning, Gary Parker, the Presi-

dent of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum at Phillip Island explained to a gathering of some 150 the symbolism of the two beautifully carved bracelets, each nestling in a small open silk lined box, centrally placed between four other identical, but closed, boxes. The boxes, one for each of the six Australians MIA, were intended to be both a visible yet spiritual symbol that even though the six were missing, they were not forgotten.

By the end of 2008, only the crew of Canberra bomber Magpie 91, FLGOFF Mike Herbert (Pilot) and PLTOFF Bob Carver (Navigator), remained unaccounted for. Only two bracelets remained open!

My mobile phone signalled an incoming SMS. Opening it I saw

Mike Herbert and Bob Carver were finally home.

Following the recital of "The Ode", Padre Laurie Dawson, himself a Vietnam Veteran, noted, in an eloquent and most appropriate address, "...The immediate sharp grief that we may have felt on the loss of our Missing in Action personnel is long gone, to be replaced with a sad acceptance of reality....."



dent of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum at Phillip Island explained to a gathering of some 150 other RAAF and Army Veterans, guests and friends, gathered at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, were waiting for:

"Nick, the boys are home! Close the Bracelets!" Dave Gardner (Director RAAF Museum)".

Gary Parker gave the command! WGCDR Warren Madsen, from the RAAF Museum and SGNLDR Graham Henry (Retd), the Victorian State President of No 2 Squadron RAAF Association, stepped forward in unison and gently closed the last two bracelet boxes.

Thanks to the initial efforts of Jim Burke and all of those who later supported his endeavour and despite almost overwhelming odds, the mortal remains of

We Did Remember Them and

Will Not Forget Them

On behalf of the RAAF Vietnam Veterans Association (Vic), we salute LTCOL Jim Bourke, as instigator and leader, and all those who have worked so hard and with such dedication and diligence to bring all our colleagues home; and extend to Gary Parker and his team at the Vietnam Veterans Museum our sincere appreciation for the manner in which they conducted the final "Closing of The Bracelets" ceremony. You did all of us who wore RAAF Blue proud!!!!

Nick LeRay-Meyer AM
President RAAFVVA Vietnam address and many photos, is available for viewing on the RAAF Vietnam Veterans (Vic) website – www.raafvva.org.au

Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living