

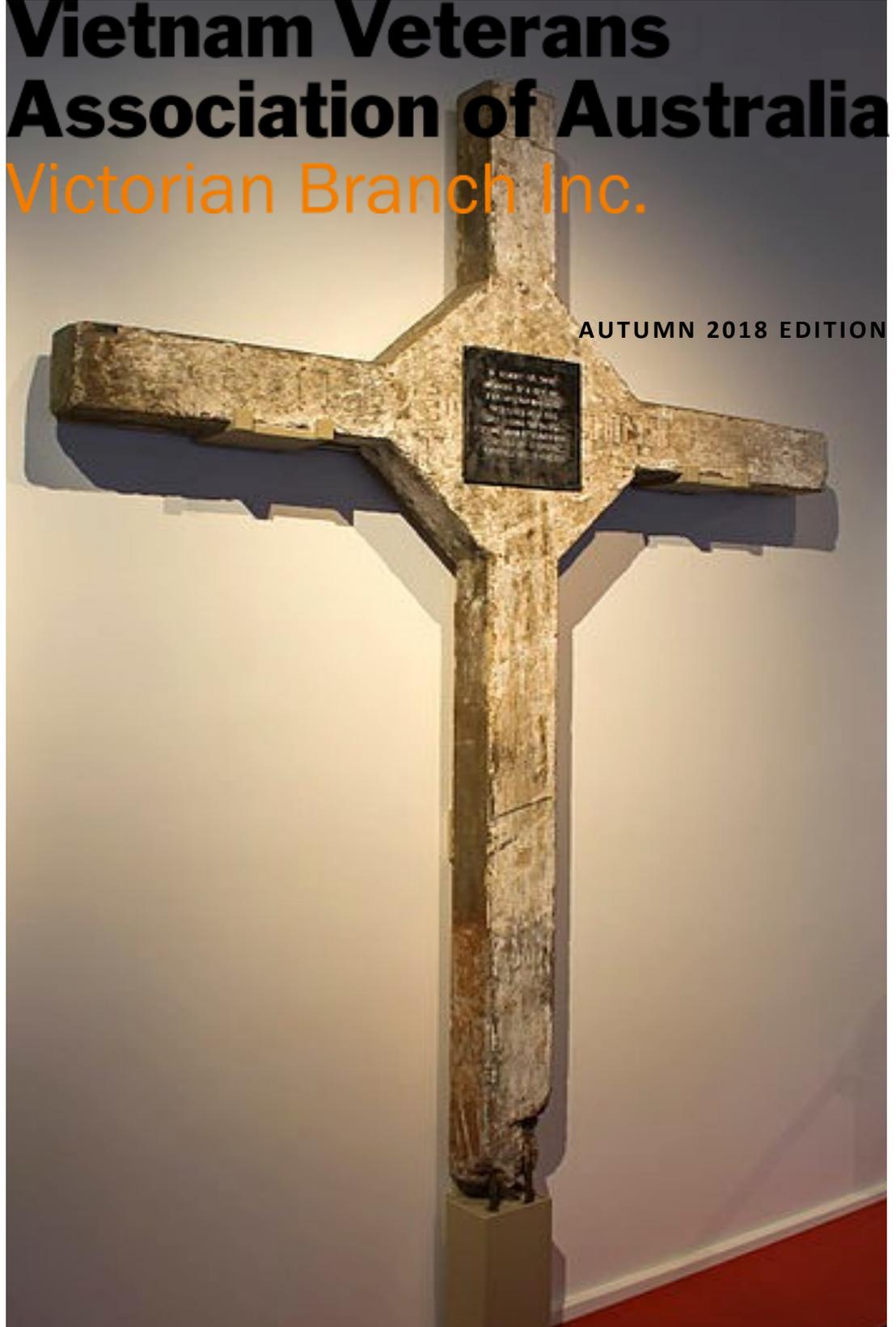


**ESB-VIC**



# Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Victorian Branch Inc.

AUTUMN 2018 EDITION



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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***



**VICTORIAN BRANCH 2017**  
**REPORT**  
**TO VVAA NATIONAL COUN-**  
**CIL**  
**CANBERRA MAY 2018**

**Steady As She Goes Year**

After the frenetic activities of 2016, it was always going to be a year of reduced activity across the

Branch as everyone took a collective sigh of relief. For some of our members 2016 was their “Last Hurrah” and some finished their membership of the Branch “on a high”.

**Membership**

The West Gippsland and Warrnambool Sub-Branched closed during the year, bringing Sub-Branch closures to date to 4. The latest closures reduce the Victorian Branch to 25 Sub-Branched. Despite the closures, and the anticipated drop off of members who had signed on just to be part of the 2016 activities, the Branch managed to again achieve a membership of over 2000 in 2017, a mighty effort. Some members from the closing Sub-Branched transferred their membership to the Headquarters Sub-Branch which is administered by the State Executive. The trend of only about 5% of members re-joining after the closure of their Sub-Branch continued.

It is interesting to note that while members who have been with the Branch for some time are now signing off, we are still attracting new members and receiving the odd new member from the Operation Re-Connect program run throughout 2015.

The membership level achievement was tempered by the loss of several members of the Branch, with none more keenly felt than the passing of VVAA giant John Printz OAM.

**Branch Executive**

At the 2017 AGM conducted in February, Brendan Kincade was elected as Vice President and George Skell was elected as Secretary of the Victorian Branch Executive. It is pleasing to report the election of these two new members, the first major change to the

makeup of the Victorian Branch Executive in a considerable time. The incumbents of the other executive positions were re-elected, with Bob Elworthy being re-elected to the position of State President for the twelfth time.

**Branch Members Honoured**

Six members of the Branch were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2017 for their service to veterans. Honourary Branch Life Member Peter Meehan – the MC voice of ANZAC Day, Vietnam Veterans Day and many other major events, was similarly honoured for his services to the community. Harold Heslop OAM, of the Swan Hill Sub-Branch was awarded the RSL Meritorious Service Award, the Victorian RSL Branch’s highest award.

**Administrative Change**

Following a significant review of administrative procedures towards the end of 2016, the following changes and initiatives were introduced or continued during 2017:

- ◆ The Branch magazine *FSB Vic* is no longer produced in hard copy.
- ◆ Constitution amendments were introduced to broaden eligibility for committee positions to allow associate members to fill certain positions and to provide the option for elected committee members to remain in the position for two years.
- ◆ The Branch to continue to provide sponsorship to the Veteran and community Story Writing and Arts Competition which will conclude after the 2018 competition.
- ◆ With the maturity of VetRide into a stand-alone organization, all administrative and financial management of VetRide was transferred from the State Executive to the VetRide committee. VetRide will continue to maintain a close relationship with the Branch.
- ◆ Introduction of a report by exception procedure at executive and branch meetings.
- ◆ Continuation of annual donation to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum from capitations.

- ◆ Continuation of the Leslie Farren Memorial Award
- ◆ Financial support to the Victorian Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club, which is not affiliated with VVAA.

### **Retirement of Victorian RSL State President.**

The Victorian Branch Council passed a motion of congratulations, acknowledgement of service to the Victorian RSL Branch and thanks for his personal support of the VVAA Victorian Branch on the occasion of the retirement of MAJGEN David McLachlan from the position of President of the Victorian RSL Branch. David has been a long-time supporter of our Branch: our office location within ANZAC House provides us with instant access to RSL Victoria and saves the Branch significant amounts of funds which would otherwise have to be used for rent and utilities payments.

### **Commemorative Membership Badge**

After the success and widespread interest in the 2016 Membership Badge which was struck to acknowledge the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, a decision was taken during the year to again strike a membership badge for Coral/Balmoral. Similar in design to the 2016 badge, the words “Coral” and “Balmoral” are coloured blue and green respectively, the colours of the lanyards worn by 1 and 3RAR at the time. The badges will be available only to 2018 Victorian Branch members.

### **Victorian Branch Education Team**

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 2017, the team attended 39 schools, providing presentations to 3100 students and 207 teachers. The team supported community ANZAC Day services, school presentation nights, community groups and Cadet Units.

It is estimated that the team will have reached an audience in excess of 6000 when static displays at commu-

nity fairs, TET and other activities, including a presentation to history teacher students at Monash University and a display stand at the History Teachers Association of Victoria annual conference are included. Additionally, the Veterans Unit of the State Government Department of Premier and Cabinet reaches out to the E Team for assistance with mounting displays and guidance with Vietnam War and Vietnamese community matters.

One of the team’s major efforts was the mounting of an extensive display at the 2017 TET Festival event at the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds. This event draws thousands of attendees and provides significant exposure for the team and VVAA. The display was again visited by a number of state and federal politicians. As usual, the Vietnamese community made quite a fuss of the E Team and other Vietnam vets in attendance.



The Team is also working with National Vietnam Veterans Museum staff in order to enhance the learning experience for students visiting the museum.

### **Vietnam Veterans Day 2017**

The commemorations were always going to significantly smaller than 2016, however there was still a good contingent of Vietnam veterans on parade. The theme for the 2017 commemorations was the SEATO Medical and Surgical Teams in Vietnam. After the essential “gunfire breakfast” SEATO Medical and Surgical Team members took pride of place at the front of the parade, and Dr Dot. Angell OAM provided a stirring keynote address during which she provided some wonderful insights into the activities of the teams during the Vietnam deployments.

### **Campaign for the Gold Card for SEATO Civilians**

In November, all Victorian based Senators and Federal members of the House of Representatives were sent letters seeking their support for the provision of a

DVA Gold Card to the surviving SEATO civilians. Simultaneously, The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Minister for the Environment and Energy (Josh Frydenburg, who had previously made a speech in the House of Reqs calling for the government to grant the SEATO



civilians access to DVA compensation) were sent more detailed material which set out the arguments for the granting of a Gold Card.

### Regional Veteran Centre Project

The Victorian RVCP is co-sponsored by RSL Victorian and VVAA Victorian Branch. The project comprises 20 active centers and a management team of which Harold Heslop OAM is the Chairman. The centers are comprised of a mix of VVAA and RSL compensation and welfare advocates (formerly pensions and welfare officers) and support staff. All of the VVAA advocates are subject to an annual “authorization to practice process”, at the start of each calendar year. The 2017 authorizations are held by the VVAA Victorian Branch Membership Manager who also acts as the Branch Executive conduit into the RVCP.

During 2017, the RVCP had over 500 clients who had not been deployed nor had active service. This statistic was used to rebuff ill-advised criticism emanating from the Tasmanian TPI Branch President. No response has been received.

A review of the operation of the RVCP will be undertaken in cooperation with RSL Victoria. A recent initiative will see all RVCP financial reporting and auditing centralized with RSL Victoria in order to ensure compliance with tightened reporting requirements and scrutiny from the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission

### Other VVAA Practitioners

There are also a number of Vietnam veteran advocates working within Sub-Branched or RSL Sub-Branched. Where the advocates are sponsored by the Victorian Branch, they are also subject to the annual authorization process.

### Under our Own Control

The paper has undergone amendments to provide more detail on the state regulatory reporting responsibilities of the Branch Executive after a review of experiences from the recent closure of Sub-Branched.

### We Were Here – Putting Down Markers

The Branch is embarking on a program to put down markers across the state to ensure that the presence of the Branch, VVAA and Vietnam veterans in Victoria will not be lost. We are in discussions with the with the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Trustees to seek their approval to place a plaque and either plant a tree or use an existing tree within the Shrine Grounds. Also we are pursuing the placement of a plaque at the site of the 2 Recruit Training Battalion within the Puckapunyal Military area, a plaque at the former site of the Officer Cadet School (and also to preserve the name of OCS Portsea graduate Peter Badcoe VC within the old Portsea Quarantine Station area) and at other significant locations with an attachment to the Branch and Vietnam veterans. We will likely seek State Government grant assistance once the extent of the project is better defined. Sub-Branched are also being encouraged to consider leaving their mark within their local area.

### Badge Week

Badge week was again a successful money spinner for the Sub-Branched participating. The NVVM sourced a number of items which were then on-sold to Sub-Branched providing a financial win-win for all. The items were purchased from the same Chinese manufacturer who produced the Sydney Olympics memorabilia.

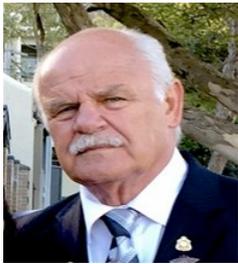
Bob Elworthy AM

State President

VICTORIAN



BRANCH



As you are aware this Autumn edition of FSB-Vic will be the first of our digital distribution. Maurie Benson is looking at ways of presenting this publication with newer and more informative content.

We have noticed a drop off in Sub-Branch participation for FSB-Vic and trust this will be not be the norm for future editions as your views and activities are of interest to us all, maybe some suggestions from you as to what you would like included may be a way to go.

There is a lot going on that will effect the way we move forward as an organisation. The mere fact that VVAA Victoria is the major player with around half of the National membership indicates we are a strong and healthy organization. Bob Elworthy and Brendan Kincade represented us at the National Council meeting in Canberra 11/13 May 2018 and represent us well they did. Some things coming from the meeting were; SEATO Nurses and Medical team members can now be accepted as full ordinary members of VVAA. Vita insurance and compliance matters are now the responsibility of the States giving certainty to Veteran centers and pensions officers. On the down side we are still not able to have capitations reduced.

As we are all getting older it is not unreasonable to expect membership dropping off in coming years; *however for this year, membership is increasing (to the levels of 2016), something the other states are unable to replicate. We have a strong hard working State Executive and a very active and enthusiastic Sub-Branch structure, all indicators of a strong future.*

This year 2018 looks like being the last of the major Commemorations with Coral/Balmoral being the theme for VV Day. Maurie Benson is working hard to ensure this is a memorable occasion for all those involved. We have received, thanks to Bob Elworthy, two Victorian State funding grants giving certainty moving forward and allowing

some contracts to be put in place. Once again we seek assistance from Sub-Branches to ensure the Gunfire Breakfast remains an integral part of the commemorations and thank you to all who have contributed so far. For those who have indicated their intention to support we would appreciate payment by no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June.

February was the Vietnamese TET New Year (*Year of the Dog*) at the Melbourne show grounds with, once again, a huge participation by the E-Team. Bob Elworthy presented awards with the main award for 'EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER' going to Lawrence Le.

This year doing my part at our Sub-Branch fundraisers I attended several fundraising sausage sizzles. The last one was quite memorable as it involved, for the first time, our very own VVAA Victoria E-Team. The afternoon involved a meet and greet by Michael Sukkar MP Federal Member for Deakin and the local member Hon Heidi Victoria MLA, Member for Bayswater, both who are passionate about veterans. The E- Team with their fully equipped van and memorabilia set up shop inside the Bunnings store entrance and together with our dignitaries mingled with Bunnings staff and customers alike making for an enjoyable day and some well deserved publicity for the Education team. Heidi Victoria also live streamed the activities to her Facebook community.

I had the pleasure of attending (*in lieu of Bob Elworthy*) the DVA Budget 2018-19 followed by the ESO Consultative Forum, found this very interesting and informative.

In the coming month we will again meet for our VVAA State Council meeting at Horsham RSL on the 29-30 June 2018. I look forward to seeing you all again there.

George Skell

Secretary

## VOLUNTEERS

***A teenager brought home her new boyfriend to meet her parents, and they were appalled by his appearance: leather jacket, motorcycle boots, tattoos and a pierced nose. Later, the parents pulled their daughter aside and said "He doesn't seem very nice." "Mum," replied the daughter, "if he wasn't so nice, why would he be doing 5,000 hours of community service?"***

26 December 2017

**Hon. Julie Bishop MP**  
**Minister for Foreign Affairs**

Dear Minister,

I write in my capacity as the President of the Victorian Branch of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia to seek your support for extending the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Gold Card to the surviving members of the SEATO Civilian Surgical and Medical Teams who served in Vietnam between 1964 and 1972.

Approximately 450 SEATO civilians were deployed to South Vietnam by the Department of Foreign Affairs. They endured privations not experienced by many uniformed Australian Defence Force (ADF) and dealt with the harsh realities of life in a war zone without adequate protection at times. They tended to civilian and military sick and wounded in life threatening situations, sometimes at the end of a rifle barrel, learnt to handle US military weapons in order to protect themselves and were subjected to enemy mortar attacks. They have been denied access to any form of repatriation benefits by both Labor and Coalition governments who have clung to the argument that the SEATO team members were civilians, they were not attached to the ADF, and thus ineligible for benefits. Despite Justice Mohr finding in his 2002 report that "*civilians were integrated with the ADF*" and a call for an act of grace from General Cosgrove, governments have remained intransigent for decades.

The SEATO members have been awarded the Vietnam Logistic Support Medal and the Australian Active Service Medal. While the award of these medals does not automatically grant an entitlement to repatriation benefits, the award of these medals clearly shows that the Federal Government acknowledges that the SEATO members were engaged in dangerous warlike activities. These SEATO members are in my opinion, Vietnam veterans in every sense of the word: a study of the experiences of the SEATO members clearly shows that in many cases they suffered privations, hardships, the real threat of death and saw and experienced horrors that most Australian service personnel deployed to Vietnam never experienced.

They also present with the same range of physical and mental illnesses as those suffered by ADF Vietnam veterans.

After decades of fruitless effort we have abandoned trying to persuade federal governments to grant the SEATO members access to compensation and potential pension payments. Instead, we are calling now for the immediate granting of a DVA Gold Card to each surviving SEATO member in line with the 2017-18 budget measure which extended the Gold Card to civilians.

In the 2017-18 budget, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs announced that \$133.1M had been allocated over a four year period

to cover the cost of providing DVA Gold Cards to all participants of the British Nuclear Tests (BNT) program and to all British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF). The BNT eligibility for the Gold Card also includes pastoralists and indigenous persons who may have been impacted by the tests. On 23 June 2017, DVA issued a letter to the Ex Service Organisations Round Table (ESORT) confirming the budget measure and stated: "*The measure allows individuals who were not members of the ADF who were in a nuclear test area but not associated with the British nuclear tests to obtain a Gold Card*".

Minister, this extension of the Gold Card to **Civilians** who **were not attached to the ADF** and were not deployed to a war zone or engaged in warlike activities surely undermines and defeats any further attempts by the government to continue to deny SEATO members at least the same level of care they have now extended to other civilians.

Using the \$133.1M budget measure and the government estimation of the numbers who will be eligible for the Gold Card as a guide, the provision of a Gold Card to the surviving 200 or so SEATO members will cost in the order of \$9.1M over four years. Surely this is a small amount for the government to find to put right what Vietnam veterans regard as decades of mean spirited bureaucracy. Vietnam veterans regard with disgust the manner in which consecutive governments have treated the SEATO members, in much the same way as we railed against the intransigence of former Prime Minister Howard to move on the long overdue honours for the battle of Long Tan.

Minister I believe that providing the Gold Card to the remaining sick and frail SEATO members is the morally right and proper thing for the Turnbull Government to do. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and given the history of your Department's involvement in sending the SEATO teams to Vietnam, I believe that you have a unique opportunity to help right this wrong and provide the SEATO teams with long overdue recognition and some surety in their old age. I would be delighted to stand with all Vietnam veterans to applaud the government for its moral will and courage to provide the Gold Card to the remaining SEATO members.

I have written to your colleagues Minister Frydenberg-who stood in the House of Representatives on 15 May 2013 to call for SEATO teams to be given repatriation benefits-and to Minister McCormack on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

R W (Bob) Elworthy AM  
 Victorian Branch President  
 Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

*On Friday 18th May 2018 at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum Phillip Island the Federal Minister for Health, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, advised that the Turnbull government had approved a grant of \$5.0m towards the next phase of developing the NVVM into a modern facility going forward into the future.*

*The address below was delivered by NVVM Chairman Mr Kingsley Munday to a large group of veterans and NVVM Board Members and spells out the vision for the future.*

*Federal Minister for Health & our local Federal Member for Flinders, Greg Hunt MP*

*Our patron: AVM Alan Reed AO (Ret'd)*

*The mayor of Bass Coast Shire, Pamela Rothfield, CEO Paul Buckley, and Councillors*

*Vietnam Veterans*

*Volunteers and staff of the Museum*

*Distinguished guests, ladies & gentlemen*

The longest journey starts with the smallest step, and for this Museum, our journey started with John & Krishna Methven towing a trailer around Australia telling the story of the Vietnam War.

Throughout that journey and the years ahead the collection has grown from the contribution of artefacts and memorabilia from Veterans and their families

Almost 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam and any one of them could have had the passion, commitment and dedication to have established the National Vietnam Veterans Museum and it could have been anywhere in Australia. But it wasn't founded by just anyone and it wasn't founded just anywhere. We know the story but John & Krishna started this journey and supported by a large team over the years, have achieved this incredible Museum we have today.

People have asked me why it isn't in Melbourne. I had the good fortune in younger life of living in regional Australia and I would say to you that if you subscribe to everything being in the mainland capital cities we would have no regional towns, no regional farmlands, and no tourist trail beyond the outer suburbs of Sydney & Melbourne.

But it's more than that – it has taken passion, commitment and dedication to establish, develop and grow this Museum beyond all odds, and we could relocate it - but we could never replicate it !

In some ways our location reflects the isolation from mainstream society felt by many Vietnam Veterans, but the soul of this place could never be closer to the spirit of our veterans.

## **It's heart and soul is here and this is the spiritual home of Vietnam Veterans and it's here to stay !**

This Museum is a cathartic place for veterans to remember, talk, and reflect on a time and place that so significantly impacted their lives.

Let there be no doubt - Vietnam Veterans are different.

They were sent to Vietnam at the behest of their Federal Government and they served with distinction and pride only to return to an ungrateful nation.

Military personnel by nature rely upon each other to have their backs in the field of combat, and they rely upon their command structure to have their backs in general.

The command structure goes all the way to the Government of the Day and successive Governments turned their backs on our men and women and left them to have to defend themselves amongst a hostile society.

Vietnam Veterans did the only thing they could do – they turned to each other for support

The adage “*leave no man behind*” doesn't just mean in the field of battle, it means in life in general and so every day they live their motto: “*Honour the dead, but fight like hell for the Living*”.

The rest of us would find it hard to comprehend or understand the depth of friendship, comradery, and the sense of mutual responsibility that exists between Vietnam Veterans

The more they were put down the stronger they became.

The work we are doing at this Museum is becoming more urgent as every day passes and this is evidenced by the fact that this past year we have lost two of the five Vietnam Veterans serving on our Board.

I have never heard a Vietnam Veteran ask for a hand out – all they seek is “respect” and this timely contribution by the Turnbull Federal Government, from their ultimate commander in chief, is not only a mark of deep respect, but is also a tremendous contribution towards the legacy of Vietnam Veterans. It is also a very strong endorsement for regional Australia, for regional Victoria, for volunteers and for veterans at large.

I particularly want to thank the Minister, Greg Hunt – he has one of the busiest portfolios in cabinet, but he has always remained true to his local constituency despite his heavy workload. It was June 5, 2017 that I asked for his support to have the Federal Government become our cor-

nerstone stakeholder and contribute \$5m. I know firsthand that he has worked tirelessly and fought hard to get us these funds, and I want to thank him personally, and also his members of staff for their hard work.

These funds will be used for the purchase of further land, Museum design, preparation, and for infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, communications, and access.

On this occasion I also want to thank Mr. Rod Patch and his consortium who have donated 5 acres of land on the airport site to assist our expansion. I want to thank the Mayor, General Manager & staff of Bass Coast shire for their unwavering support.

Colin Grey and the Oceania team who source, conserve and maintain our fleet of aircraft and equipment, all our volunteers, our very able staff led by our GM Phil Dressing, and my fellow Board members, for their passion, commitment and dedication – thank you !

To our Vietnam Veterans for sticking with us and believing in us – this is your home, your place, and always will be !

Our task now is to deliver the dream, and present our Vietnam Veterans in a light, which does them and their future generations justice, and reinforces their pride in their service and sacrifice.

Our aim for this new Museum is to create a place that seeks to remember, interpret and relate the experience of the veterans of the Vietnam War and the enduring impact of the war on Australian society.

We are not a memorial of war, we are a custodian of their stories, this will be a place of commemoration, of undeniable truth, of implicit trust, of pilgrimage, a resting place for our dead and a spiritual home for our living Veterans.

The story of our men and women who served and who sacrificed, in and after Vietnam, must be told accurately, without bias, without politics, and upholding the finest traditions of our defence force

This will be the research centre of excellence & the national library on the Vietnam War

This will be the repository for the stories, the oral histories, artefacts, mementoes and writings of our veterans

This will be the ultimate place where we honour our Vietnam Veterans !

We are charged with an enormous responsibility to protect, preserve and to tell their stories.

What we are doing here is not about bricks and mortar, there is a higher meaning to it and we carry a responsibility and an obligation to get it right. This is holy work !

This \$5m provided today by the Turnbull Government is the cornerstone for our capital campaign. Our target is \$35m and without Federal Government support we could not be moving forward. This now enables us to talk to the States & Territories, to our allies, to industry stakeholders, to philanthropists and eventually to the Australian public, with confidence and with our Government’s endorsement for the future.

There are always people in society who tell you what can’t be done – but this museum today is filled with can-do people, people who get off their butts and get things done regardless of the challenges

Some people have said that we’ll never raise \$35m to complete this new Museum, that we’re simply dreamers. Well I can tell you that I am a dreamer and if I could speak on behalf of Vietnam Veterans I would simply say “Never underestimate our passion or our tenacity”.

Again Minister, to you and the Turnbull Federal Government, thank you for having a strong social conscience, thank you for having soul and for caring – we will use these funds wisely and well !

Minister, I have always judged people by the way I find them myself and your handshake is as strong as any I’ve had and your word is fair and true.

Thank You !

Kingsley Munday AM

Chairman NVVM

18<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**S U P P O R T Y O U R  
M U S E U M**



## FSPB ANDERSEN

24th January to 1st March 1968

### 1 Australian Task Force

2 RAR (ANZAC)  
 3 RAR  
 7 RAR  
 A Sqn 3 Cav Regt  
 4<sup>th</sup> Field Regt RAA  
 1<sup>st</sup> Field Sqn RAE

### Casualties

20 KIA  
 75 WIA

### Enemy Forces

273<sup>rd</sup> Regt  
 274<sup>th</sup> Regt

### Casualties

145 KIA  
 110 WIA  
 5 Captured

Operation Coburg was established by 1 ATF Task Force commander BRIG Ron Hughes to deliberately evoke an aggressive response from North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces who had established a heavily fortified bunker system and communication lines around the area of Trang Bom and, it was believed, were planning an attack on the US 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Base at Bien Hoa.

This area of operation was 55 kms from the Australian Base at Nui Dat, an area previously patrolled by 1 RAR in 1965 when they were attached to the US 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade.

FSB Andersen was set up astride the enemy communication line and bunker system.

Late in the evening of 17/18 February FSB Andersen was attacked with enemy heavy rocket and mortar fire followed by waves of infantry. The perimeter was breached but the attack repulsed by mortar, claymore mines, machine gun fire from the APCs and American gunners.

A 2<sup>nd</sup> attack was repelled before FSB Andersen was reinforced by C Coy 3 RAR and a further attack repelled.

A final attack on the 28<sup>th</sup> February began with a mortar attack which was also successfully repelled.

3 RAR's defence of FSB Andersen was the first occasion in the history of their operations in Vietnam that an Australian Fire Support Base had been subject to a ground assault.



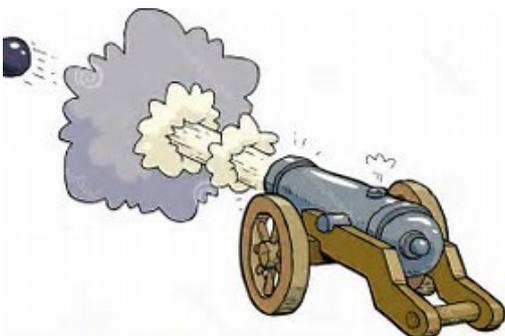
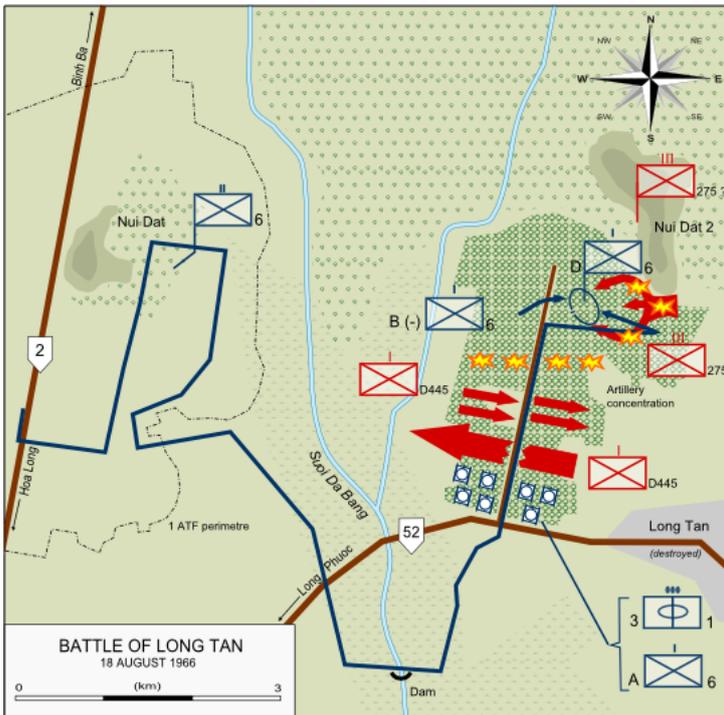
2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Battles of FSPB Coral and FSPB Balmoral—our largest and most costly engagement of the Vietnam War.

Vietnam Veterans Day 18th August 2018 at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance will include recognition of that anniversary.

- ◆0930 GUNFIRE BREAKFAST- IN SHRINE PRECINCT.
- ◆1030 MARCH FORM UP- OPPOSITE GUNFIRE BREAKFAST.
- ◆1100 MARCH UP SHRINE FORECOURT/SERVICE.

**Any queries to Maurie Benson, Event Coordinator**

**MOB: 0417 588 886 Em: office@vvaavic.org.au**



***Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living***

## UNIT CITATION FOR GALLANTRY—CORAL/BALMORAL

### **1<sup>ST</sup> AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE (FORWARD)**

**Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force (Forward)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment**

**A Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry Regiment**

**C Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment**

**12<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery**

**1<sup>st</sup> Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers**

**Detachments in direct support of and located with 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Task Force (Forward)**

On 12th May 1968, the 1st Australian Task Force (Forward) (1 ATF (Fwd)) deployed into Area of Operations (AO) SURFERS on the border of the Dinh Duong/Bien Hoa Provinces of South Vietnam. Their task was to establish two Fire Support Patrol Bases (FSPB) from which to mount patrols to interdict enemy infiltration and supply routes between War Zone D and Saigon. Intelligence had informed the Task Force that at least five enemy regiments were known to be operating in vicinity of AO SURFERS and preparing to mount attacks against Saigon and the United States military base at Bien Hoa. It was believed that the forces the Australians would operate against were disorganised and withdrawing from Saigon after protracted combat in the Saigon area.

FSPB Coral was occupied late on 12 May by the headquarters and guns from the 12th Field Regiment, mortars and anti-tank crews from the 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR), and personnel deployed to set up the Task Force headquarters. Unknown to the commanders, the area chosen for the insertion was the forward staging area of two regiments from the 7th Division of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) which was preparing to advance on Saigon. The Australians had only enough time to prepare basic fighting positions when the PAVN forces launched human wave attacks against the hastily-prepared defences.

At around 1.45am on the morning of 13 May, the enemy launched their first attack with rocket propelled grenades and heavy, accurate mortar fire, followed by a ground assault against the 1 RAR mortar position. With support from the guns of 102 Battery of 12th Field Regiment firing over open sights, the mortar crews held their ground, but elsewhere enemy forces penetrated the position and threatened to capture the guns. In the darkness, gun crews, men from the divisional locating battery and anti-tank platoon, and headquarters personnel on their own initiative mounted repeated counter-attacks to clear the enemy from the position. With the arrival of United States helicopters and 'Spooky' gunships, the defences were held and

shortly after first light the enemy withdrew.

The next day the defences were strengthened by troops from 1 RAR and Armoured Personnel Carriers of A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment. The arrival of the United States' M109 self-propelled artillery from Battery A of the 2nd/25th Artillery Regiment and the M42A1 'Duster' tracked anti-aircraft vehicles from 5th/2nd Air Defence Battery, gave the defenders much needed additional firepower. Engineers from the 1st Field Squadron worked around the clock to harden the defensive position and help establish a Task Force Maintenance Area to provide continuous logistical support to the deployed Task Force.

Over the next two weeks further attacks were mounted against the FSPB, but the arrival of Centurion tanks from C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment and direct support from helicopters from 9th Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force and 161 Reconnaissance Flight, added to the defenders ability to repulse repeated regimental size assaults.

FSPB Coogee had been initially established by 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), with tanks from C Squadron, however the greater threat identified in the north of AO SURFERS saw them redeployed to occupy FSPB Balmoral on 24 May. Two days later FSPB Balmoral was attacked by a suspected regimental sized enemy force. This attack was defeated by the combined firepower of the tanks and infantry fighting from well prepared positions. A further attack mounted on 28 May was also defeated by supporting fire from the tanks, infantry and accurate mortar fire.

For two more weeks the Australian forces, supported by United States and New Zealand artillery, continuously mounted fighting patrols against the enemy entrenched in bunker systems within AO SURFERS. Operating out of FSPBs Coral and Balmoral, the Australians aggressively sought out and defeated well prepared, highly motivated and well supplied enemy forces in fierce, close-quarter fighting. The aggression shown by the Australian forces and the combat support troops deployed forward working long hours over a long period and under arduous conditions, supported by United States' and New Zealand air assets and artillery, significantly contributed to the failure of the North Vietnamese forces to mount coordinated attacks against Saigon and Bien Hoa.

With limited experience at fighting high intensity combined armour/infantry engagements, the Australians demonstrated extraordinary gallantry in the defence of FSPBs Coral and Balmoral. The exceptional leadership and soldiering skills of all members of 1 ATF (Fwd) and their sustained outstanding performance in the face of overwhelming odds during the largest and most hazardous battle of the Vietnam War were in the finest tradition of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Forces.

# CANBERRA REJECTS CORAL/BALMORAL FUNDING.

3 April 2018

**Hon Darren Chester MP**

**Minister for Veterans' Affairs**

**PO Box 6022**

**House of Representatives, Parliament of Australia**

**Canberra ACT 2600**

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Victorian Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, to express their disappointment that our application for funding to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral was rejected.

Advice from Ms. Amanda Gilmartin, Director of your Domestic Commemorations and Grants Division, is that our application was rejected solely because we intend to commemorate Coral/Balmoral on 18 August 2018 rather than a date in May 2018. This rejection is keenly felt by Victorian Vietnam veterans given the lack of meaningful Federal Government support for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Long Tan outside of Canberra and Townsville. The overly complicated Long Tan anniversary grant application process contained expenditure criteria so restrictive as to render it all but useless for anything other than small local gatherings.

The Victorian Vietnam veterans are the largest and most active Vietnam veteran group in Australia, with a proud history of commemorating significant Vietnam War anniversaries and milestones which would have passed largely un-

noticed and unacknowledged. Importantly, Victorian Vietnam veterans decided that these commemorations, including Coral/Balmoral, would all be conducted at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance on 18 August, Vietnam Veterans Day. I have attached a summary which provides more detail on the reasoning behind this decision.

I reject any suggestion that the Coral/Balmoral commemorations would be "tacked on" to other activities on 18 August. The full focus of the day will be Coral/Balmoral: unit associations with a connection to the battles will lead the march behind National flags carried by school children - one for each of the fallen from the battles- the names of the fallen will be read accompanied by the tolling of a bell and followed by firing party volleys, the keynote address- by a Coral/Balmoral veteran- will focus entirely on the battles.

In absorbing the umpire's reasons for the decision to reject our grant bid, I feel very sad that the wishes of the Victorian Vietnam Veteran Branch, on how and when they as Vietnam veterans want to acknowledge the service and sacrifice of their Vietnam Veteran mates who fought during the battles of Coral/Balmoral have not resonated with the decision makers.

Yours sincerely,

*R W Elworthy*

R W (Bob) Elworthy AM

President

Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia

Victorian Branch

## FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR VETERANS

**The Hon John Eren MP Minister for Veterans-May 2018**

In Victoria we know that commemoration is not only critical for the wellbeing of veterans, it is the best way to demonstrate the community's gratitude for and recognition of their service. To ensure more people can participate in commemoration, the Victorian Government is extending current free travel arrangements on ANZAC Day to also apply to Remembrance Day and Vietnam Veterans Day. This applies to veterans, war widows, school students, Australian Defence Force (ADF) cadets, Scouts and Girl Guides. In addition, veterans will have access to free public transport during Veterans Health Week.

- ◆ *" \$2.676 million over four years to expand current free public transport travel arrangements for ANZAC Day for Veterans, war widows, school students, ADF cadets, Scouts and Girl Guides and serving ADF personnel to also apply on Remembrance Day and Vietnam Veterans Day. This encourages participation in commemoration and raises awareness of Victoria's servicemen and women. Veterans will also receive free travel on public transport during Veterans Health Week. "*

This is Victoria wide.

***Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living***

**VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**  
**VICTORIAN BRANCH INCORPORATED**

VVAA Registered Charity  
ABN 34-750-672-219



# Education TEAM



## VIETNAMESE TET 2018 - YEAR OF THE DOG

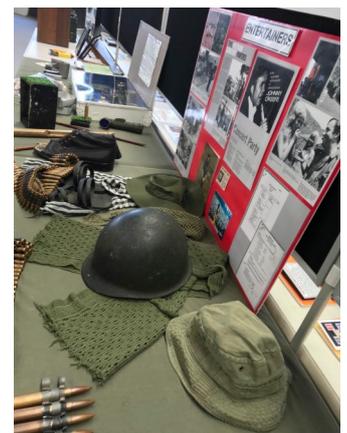
*Chúc Mừng Năm Mới*



Well done to the Vietnamese Community who once again conducted a magnificent TET Festival in February at the Melbourne Showgrounds celebrating the Year of the Dog. Large crowds attended over the 2 days and were spoiled for choice with dragon dance, stalls, food aplenty. And excellent entertainment both during the day and at night.

As they do so well the *VVAA Victorian Branch Education Team* was there in force with an excellent and informative display of Vietnam era

items and were ready to field the numerous questions posed by an appreciative audience.



***Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living***

## 2018 EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARD

Congratulations to Mr Lawrence Le who has been awarded the **Vietnam Veterans Branch 2018 Education and Community Volunteer Award**.

The award recognizes excellence in educational pursuits and voluntary work within the community, and in particular within the Australian Vietnamese community.

Lawrence's ATAR score of 99.45 and study for a Bachelor of Biomedicine at Monash University are testament to his pursuit of educational excellence. He successfully graduated from the Dual Identity Leadership Program during which he prepared a mental health workshop for young university students, his involvement with the TET Lunar New Year planning team and membership of the DILP Alumni Committee are all testament to Lawrence's commitment to voluntary community work and helping others.

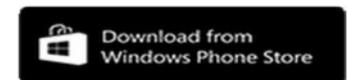


## Save the App that could save your life.

[emergencyapp.triplezero.gov.au/](http://emergencyapp.triplezero.gov.au/)

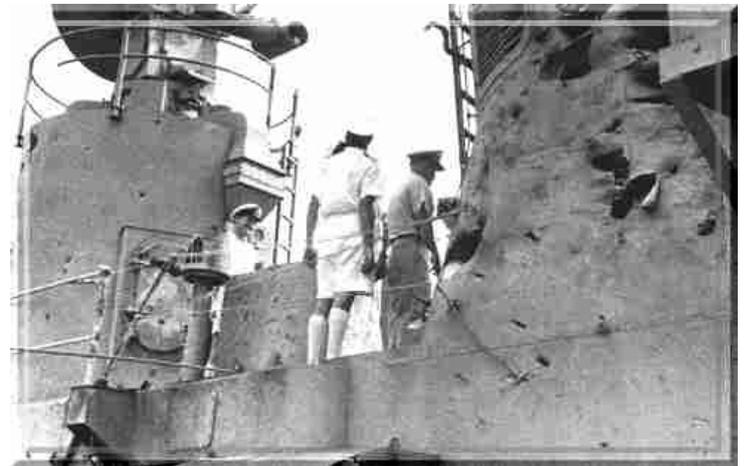
The **Emergency+** app is a free app developed by Australia's emergency services and their Government and industry partners.

The app uses GPS functionality built into smart phones to help a Triple Zero (000) caller provide critical location details required to Mobilise emergency services. Help our kids learn about Triple Zero ...





**50<sup>th</sup> Commemorative Year. Missile attack on HMAS Hobart.  
The largest combined land, air and sea battle of Vietnam War.  
17<sup>th</sup> June, 1968. 2 killed 7 injured, major damage to Ship.**



**HMAS Hobart (D 39)** was a *Perth* class guided missile destroyer of the Royal Australian Navy attached to the US Seventh Fleet during Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Hobart was deployed on The Gunline on 3 occasions—March 1967, 1968 and 1970 and was awarded Battle Honour “Vietnam 67/70”. For actions during Vietnam deployment various crew members received DSO,DSM, BEM, MID awards and Naval Board commendations.

On her 2nd deployment in 1968 Hobart was fired on by US F-4 Phantom aircraft which were unable to distinguish between the radar signature of surface ships and airborne helicopters. Two sailors on Hobart were killed and 7 others wounded. The ship sustained considerable damage. Later enquiry confirmed the Hobart and other US vessels were hit by “friendly fire”.

It was also during her 2nd deployment that Hobart provided gunfire support for Australia's 1ATF (Australian Task Force Vietnam) - the 1st time the Australian Navy had provided gunfire support to Australian soldiers in Vietnam.



GEELONG & DISTRICT

Opening of the new Geelong Vietnam Veterans Centre

After having to move out of their former premises at Osborne House, the Geelong SB has been able to find a new home. Located in the leafy suburb of Belmont. The new Centre provides office space, meeting room, a kitchenette and storage space. There is also a large lawn area outside with large Moreton Bay Fig trees and palm trees providing shade and a pleasant outlook. There is disabled access and ample parking. The Centre is currently open three days a week and is a drop-in centre and meeting place for members.

The AGM was held in February and the Executive remained about the same with Rieny Nieuwenhof returned as President for his eighth year, with Ken baker and Bryan O'Hara as Vice Presidents. Treasurer Mick Hoare has held his position, becoming the longest serving Treasurer in the SB's history. Gary Ryan stepped up to the role of Secretary just before nominations closed. We thank all for their generosity and commitment to the membership.

Our 'Pay Day' lunches continue each fortnight at the North Geelong Football Club rooms, and are well attended.

Work is progressing in the removal of artifacts from our Museum. This is a very slow process as each of the 2000 items needs to be cleaned of mould spores and packaged for future storage. Eventually they will be stored in a climate controlled facility until such time as the City Council allows us to return to Osborne House.

Rieny Nieuwenhof  
President



L>R - Michael Hoare (Treasurer), Bernard Clancy, Rieny Nieuwenhof (G&D VVAA President), Ken Baker (G&D VVAA Vice President & Chair AoH Sub Committee), Graeme (Ferret) Unmack and Nigel Wilson.

KEN BAKER — VVAA VIC STATE LIFE MEMBER

At the Geelong State Council Meeting of the VVAA Victorian Branch Geelong Sub Branch Member and formerly State President was awarded State Life Member status for not only his dedicated work for the State Branch but in particular the excellent work he did in Chairing the 2016 Commemo-

rative Events Program; a demanding job well done

Ken's award was presented by Sarah Henderson, Member for Corangamite. Sarah is a Geelong lady, formerly an Australian journalist for ABC's 7:30 Report and might be encouraged to be heard shouting "Go Cats".



MELBOURNE WEST

Our AGM on 4 February 2018 saw James Coghlan (President/Treasurer), Glen Smith (Secretary), Vic Pilch (Snr Vice-President), John Curbishley (Jnr Vice-President/Newsletter Editor), Peter Bright (Asst Treasurer/Membership) elected as the Executive of Melbourne West Sub-Branch. They will be well supported by the Committee, Arthur Richardson, Rhonda Richardson, Ray Matthew, 'Bogie' Knight, Phil Ireland, Alan Curtis, Heather Curtis, Graham Otte and Michael Johnston.

At the AGM several awards were made to Committee members for their dedication and work throughout 2017, however the main award for the day was a Sub-Branch Life Membership bestowed on Phillip (Phil) Ireland.

We are well placed for the coming year, both financially and administratively and confident that we will remain a viable Sub-Branch into the near future.

Our membership, as per previous years, has seen a slow decrease, how-



ever we believe that as subscriptions trickle in we will have around 130 members.

Our Social Calendar for 2018 has been approved and sent to State Branch for Insurance purposes, and it seems we might have a busy year, fund raising and enjoying some social events which will kick off on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

The Drop-in Centre continues to operate every Wednesday at Central Park, Hoppers Crossing and attendance so far is welcoming, albeit mainly the

same faces each week. We may have to revert to twisting some arms. Last year culminated with our Christmas Luncheon on 14<sup>th</sup> Dec which was a full catered sit down Spit Roast meal, accompanied by some liquid refreshments. Attended by 50 members and guests, it was a very enjoyable day to round out the year.

The Werribee RSL puts on an Ex-Service luncheon on the last Friday of each month and our members and wives/partners enjoy this little get-together. The Club will undergo major renovations to its kitchen area in May, which will cause it to also close the dining room area for about six weeks, hopefully back up and running for our June luncheon.

The "West Side Story", our Newsletter, improves with each issue. Our Editor, John Curbishley, puts together a very good coverage of what's going on with our Sub-Branch, plus important news filtering down from State and National Branches. The Autumn edition was sent out in early March.

RAAF

Since our last publication, there have been quite a few events in our midst; in December after our last committee meeting for the year, our dedicated members, and in some cases partners, gathered for lunch at the corner watering hole across the road from the office, commonly called "The Tower Hotel" (I've yet to see the tower). It was a most enjoyable occasion, with many a laugh and Christmas spirit.

The end of January 2018 was upon us before we had time to turn around. 2 nominations were received for the joint

bursary awards to be presented at our AGM which was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> February.

As you will see, we have had a "changing of the guard", with Gareth relinquishing the chair after guiding the "joystick" very aptly for the past 12 months. He has handed over to an equally capable Chris Hudnott who was his VP. I have been elected to the position of secretary, and I will do my best to keep you informed and up to date with what is happening, I am very grateful to have such an accom-

plished team to fall back on for help.

The "Air Show" will have come and gone by the time you read this, hopefully some of you will have been able to attend and would have met up with the volunteers manning the displays over that period.

Kind regards

Gill Coughlan

Secretary.



FRANKSTON

This year the Frankston District Sub Branch of the VVAA has had a significant increase in membership, we believe that this is due not only to our active social activities but to our partners being full members of our group.

Our programmed social gatherings are varied and Sub Branch members headed off to Lakes Entrance during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April (heaven help the local townspeople). We are trying to localise some of our social outings a bit by going to nearby restaurants. These social outings have been a great success which can be seen by the increase of numbers attending these activities.

Coming up soon is a Sausage siz-

zle at Frankston Bunning's on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and a Long morning tea for at the naval club on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, also in May we are doing a tour of the Repat Hospital in Heidelberg; this could bring back some interesting memories for the men

We are hoping for a good turn up for the Anzac Day march and it will be good for the Veterans to be able to catch up with friends back at the RSL after the service,

I would also like to congratulate Vern Bechaz on his presentation with an OAM on the 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Any Veteran or partner is more than welcome to come along to a meeting which is the first Monday of the month at the Frankston RSL starting at 7.30.



MARYBOROUGH

X-mas was once again a busy period for the Sub-Branch. Preparing gift bags for the residents of the Maryborough nursing home, Havilah, the hostel for the homeless and our local hospital.

Santa (V.P Lee Turton) and his helper then visited the above over a two day period to spread a bit of cheer.

Members and their families enjoyed a great X-mas dinner at the Olive & Lavender café in Avoca at the end of 2017.

The Sub-Branch made welcome a representative from N.J.F. Exercise Physiologists who provided us with a presentation explaining the benefits of a DVA approved clinic for our members, which could be conducted here in Maryborough. I am happy to report that several members and their spouses have taken up this opportunity and started up a couple of weeks ago. Corey Chapman can be contacted on Mob 0400 692 916 should any Sub-Branches wish to get more information and organise a clinic also.

Maryborough's Anzac Day services had a youth focus this year. Members of the younger generation which included school students played a major part on the day. Crowd numbers were up on last year's commemoration and it was the first time in five years that it did not rain during the service. The Sub-Branch once again provided the Gun Fire breakfast which was well attended. Our next major activity will be our annual Magic Golf Day which will be held on the Talbot Golf Course on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2018.

**Tips for Staying Healthy in Your 70s, 80s, 90s...**

- *Make healthful lifestyle choices—don't smoke, eat right, practice good hygiene, and reduce stress in your life.*
- *Have a positive outlook.*
- *Stay as active as possible—mentally and physically.*
- *Take safety precautions. See your health care provider regularly and follow his or her recommendations for screening and preventative measures.*

# THE REPLICA LONG TAN CROSS

The original Long Tan Cross was erected by members of the 6RAR—NZ (ANZAC Battalion) on the 18th August 1969.

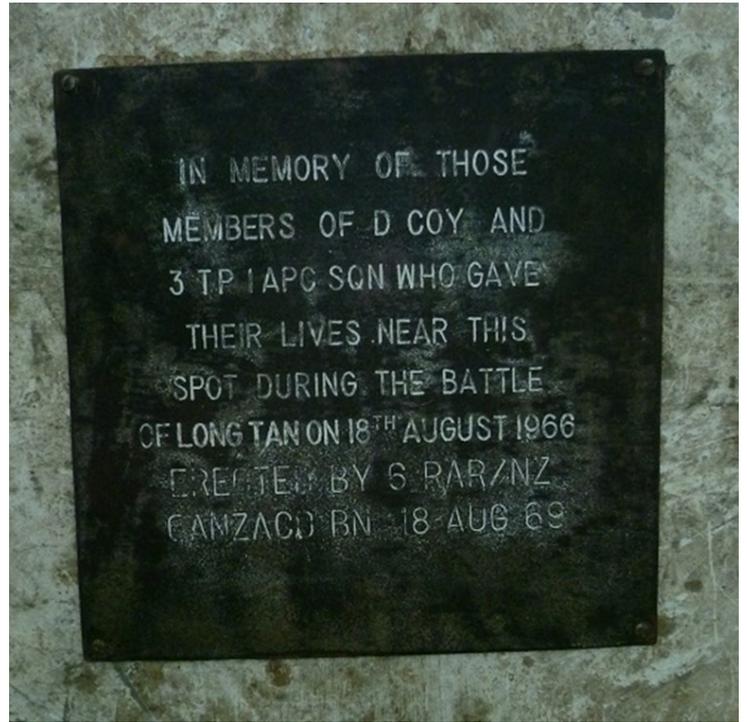
It remained in place till 1975 when it was removed (believed to be by a catholic farmer for his father's grave).

In 1984 the Cross was located and recovered by the Dong Nai Province Museum where it was placed on display.

In 1980 a replica Cross was erected on the Long Tan site by people from around the Xa Long Tan area.

In 2017, following years of negotiation, the Cross was eventually gifted to the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra where it is now on display.

See image on front cover this edition FSB-Vic.



## SKYBUS ..... GOLD CARD HOLDERS

**SkyBus** will provide complimentary transfers to passengers who can provide a War Veteran Free Travel Pass. This pass is available to Victorian war veterans who:

- have documentary evidence of their overseas war or/peacemaking service, and
- provide one of the following:
  - a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Gold or White Card, or
  - evidence of ongoing compensation from DVA for an injury/illness related to this service, or
  - evidence of lump sum compensation from DVA for an injury/illness related to this service, and
- have their treating doctor sign the application form confirming the illness/injury is due to service and that mobility is significantly limited, and
- are a Victorian resident.

### Apply for the pass

For an application to be posted or emailed to you, please contact the PTV call centre on 1800 800 007 or visit a PTV Hub if you require assistance.

If you already have a **War Veteran Free Travel Pass**, this pass will need to be shown at our ticket booth to receive a complimentary ticket.

I hope this information helps.

Kind regards,

**Emma Calis**  
Office Administrator

ph: +61 3 9335 2811 Ext. 0  
[info@skybus.com.au](mailto:info@skybus.com.au)  
[www.skybus.com.au](http://www.skybus.com.au)

*Editor's note: I have used the service from Southern Cross Station to Melbourne airport and all you need to do is front up to the Sky-Bus ticket office, present your Gold Card, receive your ticket, get on the bus and you are on your way - easy and hassle free.*



# Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS)

*A service founded by Vietnam Veterans*

## VVCS GROUP PROGRAMS

**Doing Anger  
Differently**

**Mastering Anxiety**

**Beating  
The Blues**

**Sleeping Better**

**Building Better  
Relationships**

**Changing The  
Mix**

**Partners  
Program**

**Residential  
Lifestyle**

**To REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM**

Call **VVCS** Melbourne

**Ph: 1800 011 046**

**Email: [vvcs@dva.gov.au](mailto:vvcs@dva.gov.au)**

### 5 THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO A VETERAN WITH PTSD

1. Thank you for your service.
2. How are you going today?
3. I'm sorry that you are suffering.
4. I am here to listen if you ever want to talk about it.
5. Can I do anything to help make things a little easier for you?

VETERANS & VETERANS FAMILIES COUNSELLING SERVICE (VVCS)

**CALL 1800 011 046 (24/7)**

*Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living*

# VVAA Victoria Sub Branches (State Directory current at March 2018)

<b>BALLARAT</b> President: Sandy McCann Secretary: Peter Starr PO Box 180 SEBASTOPOL VIC 3356 secretary.ballarat@vvaavic.org.au	5466 7351 0437 764 668 0401 515 085		<b>MELBOURNE WEST</b> President: James Coghlan Secretary: Ray Matthew PO Box 2055 MELTON STH VIC 3338 secretary.melbournwest@vvaavic.org.au	9743 5756 0409 293 902 0400 107 130
<b>BENDIGO</b> President: Paul Penno Secretary: Graham Flanders PO Box 89 BENDIGO VIC 3552 secretary.bendigo@vvaavic.org.au	5446 8769 5445 2954	0418 468 768 0438 467 089	<b>MELTON</b> President: Gary Patterson Secretary: Jim Fitzgerald PO Box 981 MELTON VIC 3337 secretary.melton@vvaavic.org.au	0438 313 344 0415 679 677
<b>BOX HILL</b> President: John Haward Secretary: Rod Burgess PO Box 280 DINGLEY VILLAGE VIC 3172 secretary.boxhill@vvaavic.org.au	9803 3301 9551 4408	0412 053 912 0439 378 989	<b>MITCHELL</b> President: Ross Stewart Secretary: Ross Gregson PO Box 812 SEYMOUR VIC 3660 secretary.mitchell@vvaavic.org.au	5792 2666 5792 3227 0407 646 988 0417 973 573
<b>CENTRAL HIGHLANDS</b> President: Ken Bryce Secretary: Deidre Knell PO Box 132 GISBORNE VIC 3437 secretary.centralhighlands@vvaavic.org.au	5428 3290 5429 1051	0407 737 386 0427 744 190	<b>MORNINGTON PENINSULA</b> President: Kevin Mawdsley Secretary: Peter Howard PO Box 4012 ROSEBUD VIC 3939 secretary.morningtonpeninsula@vvaavic.org.au	5982 0817 5986 2510 0429 633 081
<b>DIAMOND VALLEY</b> President: Peter Blackman Secretary: Alan Comben PO Box 542 GREENSBOROUGH VIC 3088 secretary.diamondvalleyanddistrict@vvaavic.org.au	9459 5117 9435 9213	0400 363 143 0432 631 413	<b>MUSEUM</b> President: John Methven OAM Secretary: Bill Noble PO Box 318 SAN REMO VIC 3925 secretary.museum@vvaavic.org.au	5678 5728 5678 5215 0417 347 551 0414 385 750
<b>ECHUCA</b> President: Ken Jones Secretary: Bob Johnson PO Box 743 MOAMA NSW 2731 secretary.echuca@vvaavic.org.au		0408 384 670 0409 971 726	<b>NOBLE PARK</b> President: Ray McCarthy Secretary: John Pilkington PO Box 295 NOBLE PARK VIC 3174 secretary.noblepark@vvaavic.org.au	9798 5379 9749 2672 0418 552 804 0413 163 749
<b>FRANKSTON</b> President: Kelvin Park Secretary: Cheryl Myers PO Box 1429 FRANKSTON VIC 3199 secretary.frankston@vvaavic.org.au	9776 6600	0432 473 039 0409 962 545	<b>NORTH-WEST</b> President: Tom Clayton Secretary: Basil Tiligadis PO Box 211 GLENROY VIC 3046 secretary.northwest@vvaavic.org.au	9306 7474 9337 7226 0438 306 709 0419 890 340
<b>GEELONG &amp; DISTRICTS</b> President: Rieny (Reny) Nieuwenhof Secretary: Gary Ryan PO Box 484 GEELONG VIC 3220 secretary.geelong@vvaavic.org.au		0407 378 808 0400 862 727	<b>OUTER EASTERN</b> President: Amat (Aff) Binnoore Secretary: Maree Ferguson PO Box 763 BORONIA VIC 3155 secretary.outereasternmelbourne@vvaavic.org.au	9801 5537 9722 9787 0409 365 210 0414 369 213
<b>GIPPSLAND</b> President: Geoffrey Hopkins Secretary: Mick Hawryluk PO Box 902 SALE VIC 3850 secretary.gippsland@vvaavic.org.au		0477 771 907 0417 285 457	<b>RAAF</b> President: Chris Hudnott Secretary: Mrs Gillian Coughlan PO Box 281 HAMPTON PARK VIC 3976 secretary.raaf@vvaavic.org.au	9830 4665 8774 0646 0438 331 215 0408 503 986
<b>GOULBURN VALLEY</b> President: Peter Dealy Secretary: Jeff Stanyer 139 Fuzzards Road, NUMURKAH VIC 3636 secretary.goulburnvalley@vvaavic.org.au	5862 3969	0419 135 909	<b>SWAN HILL</b> President: Laurie Toppinen Secretary: Maralyn Toppinen PO Box 1650 SWAN HILL VIC 3585 secretary.swanhill@vvaavic.org.au	5033 2614 5033 2614
<b>HEADQUARTERS/ INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS</b> State Branch Asst. Secretary: Sue McQueen C/- CVVSC PO Box 820 BENDIGO CENTRAL VIC 3552 <a href="mailto:asstsecretary@vvaavic.org.au">asstsecretary@vvaavic.org.au</a>	5444 1871	0400 821 457	<b>WIMMERA</b> President: Ken Taylor Secretary: Barry McClure 24 Grant Drive DOOEN VIC 3401 secretary.wimmera@vvaavic.org.au	5385 2719 0428 852 719 0402 112 715
<b>MARYBOROUGH</b> President: Ben Holscher Secretary: Daniel McIver OAM PO Box 274 MARYBOROUGH VIC 3465 secretary.maryborough@vvaavic.org.au	5460 5033 5464 1219	0410 627 965		



**Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service**  
A service founded by Vietnam veterans

### About WVCS

WVCS provides free, confidential counselling and group program services to support the mental health and wellbeing of the Australian veteran and ex-service community and their families.

WVCS counsellors and staff have an understanding of veteran and military culture that assists them to deliver specialised support and care to members of this community.

### The WVCS Legacy

The Vietnam War was a difficult chapter in Australia's history. For those who served, the experience forged strong bonds and a commitment to look out for each other. This deep sense of mateship, led Vietnam veterans to lobby for a specialised counselling and support service for veterans and their families.

In 1982, the Australian Government established the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (WVCS). Access to WVCS has since been extended to veterans of all conflicts, their families, and other members of the ADF and ex-service community. Reflecting this, the service was renamed, WVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service in 2007.

WVCS is the legacy of Australia's Vietnam veterans. They have ensured that future generations of serving men and women will have access to specialised mental health and wellbeing support.

Contact WVCS by calling

**1800 011 046\***

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

During business hours – connects to the nearest WVCS Centre.  
After business hours – connects with Veterans Line, the WVCS after-hours telephone crisis counselling service.

[www.wvcs.gov.au](http://www.wvcs.gov.au)

### 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



**SUICIDE PREVENTION WORKSHOPS FOR VETERANS, FAMILIES AND MATES**

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



**Australian Government**  
Veterans and Veterans Families  
Counselling Service

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