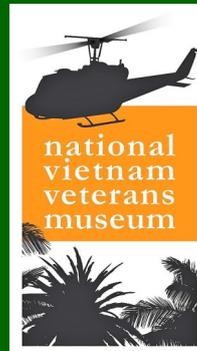


# Sit Rep

25 Veterans Drive  
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*Sit Rep is the official  
Newsletter of the  
National Vietnam  
Veterans Museum*

**Edition 20  
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*The Museum is an  
ACNC  
Registered Charity*

**E: [friendsofnvwm@vietnamvetmuseum.org](mailto:friendsofnvwm@vietnamvetmuseum.org) Sit Rep Editor Peter**



**GRUMMAN TRACKER**

**THE BOARD CHAIRMAN**

**JUNGLE TRAINING CANUNGRA**

**BATTLE MAPS**

# A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOB ELWORTHY AM



## THANKS ALAN

AVM Alan Reed AO, the patron of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum has stepped down from the position after providing wonderful support to the Museum. A young and fit Alan, pictured below on the right in his Vietnam War days, flew the

'Carolina Kangaroo' a USAF RF-4C Phantom Reconnaissance Aircraft in Vietnam.

Alan used his network of contacts to assist the Museum to obtain additional hangars and aircraft and was a constant presence at Board meetings. Alan has stepped aside for the next chapter of the Museum, and will be



sorely missed. Chairman of the Board, Kingsley Munday AM, thanked Alan for his time as patron, and presented Alan with a military figurine in appreciation. The new Museum patron will be advised in



due course.

Consumer Affairs Victoria has all but completed the cancellation of the Friends Incorporation, which I advised members about in a previous report. I wish to confirm again that this action WILL NOT IMPACT your rights and privileges as a Friend member of the Museum.

The 2019 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 20 February at the Museum and I encourage all members to exercise their right to vote on the resolutions at the AGM, either in person or by proxy vote. I encourage any member who believes that he or she has the right stuff to join the Board to submit a nomination and CV to the Board Secretary. More details on the AGM, including proxy voting forms and nomination forms will be sent to all members before the end of the year.

I recently accompanied a secondary school group on a visit to the Museum. Seeing their faces and their obvious interest was very satisfying. That is what our Museum, your Museum, is all about: telling the story of Vietnam from a digger's point of view, so that their service may never be forgotten.

This year was a big one for the Museum, and 2019 promises to be even bigger and better as we move into a new and exciting phase in the development of the world's best Vietnam War museum. Thank you for being a member, stay with us and bring your friends along for the ride, by encouraging them to join. Where else can you get such value for about 60 cents a week.

Finally, I wish you and yours a merry Christmas and hope that next year brings all your expectations to fruition.

*Cheers.....Bob*

# MEET KINGSLEY MUNDEY AM

## CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



*I have asked Kingsley to write us a few notes about himself, so that we get to know who he is and what he does. Here is what he has written, just brilliant. Thank you Ed.*

I was born in Ipswich LD in 1955 and as a youngster lived in Ipswich, Charleville and Warwick QLD, and then Maryborough and Bacchus Marsh Victoria, then Townsville, Mackay and Julia Creek QLD. I went to eleven schools in 12 years and got good at meeting people. Despite changing school so much I have school chums who have remained friends for over 55 years. After school



**You look good in an Akubra Kingsley**

University wasn't an economic consideration and so it was off to work.

I loved aircraft—the thrill of flight and the romance of aviation had captured my imagination at an early age and so my first job was the best job I have ever had to this day. I was initially an aircraft cleaner with Bush Pilots Airways in Townsville and quickly worked my way through the ranks to be their Manager in Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton before moving to Trans-Australia Airlines (now Qantas domestic) where I eventually became Commercial Manager. I was then head hunted by Ansett when it was bought by Rupert Murdoch (News Corp) and Sir Peter Abeles (TNT). I was a Deputy GM at Ansett and Managing Director of a Hong Kong based subsidiary Transcorp

Airways HKG Ltd, an international freight charter airline. My family and I lived in Hong Kong for a while and it feels like our second home when we go back. I moved across to TNT where I was Group GM until I resigned in January 1993 to own my own business. With a young family I figured if I was going to continue to work so hard I should do it for myself. Sir Peter was very gracious when I resigned and I found him a warm and wonderful mentor and a great leader.

I met my wife Robyn when she was fifteen and we've been together 46 years. She's my best friend, keeps me in check, picks up the pieces every now and again, and is the mother of our two sons Jeremy and Chris of whom we are equally proud. We are also now grandparents to three gorgeous grandkids Campbell 8yo, Annalise 5yo and Clara just 1. Our two daughter-in-laws Donna and Erin are wonderful women and fabulous mothers. On this long journey of life Robyn has been by my side through thick and thin and I'm so grateful to her. I could die without a penny and still feel the richest man in the world with the family I have.

That first job I ever had lasted 4 years and the people I worked with way back 45 ears ago remain friends to this day and we have an annual reunion each year alternating between Brisbane and Cairns.

We have been involved in quite a number of businesses since before 1993 which have ranged from Diaries, Linotype type setting for gold foil stamping. Sewerage purification (not one I'd recommend for work experience), Zinc Air Fuel Cells, Data-casting, Olympic merchandise, Olympic retail stores, Satellite Communications, Security Alarms and TV Antennas (Mr Antenna) amongst others. Today our two primary business streams are Fine Art Logistics and Airline Pilot Training,

## MORE ABOUT KINGSLEY

Our Fine Art Logistic business employs some 450 people in Australia, Asia (Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai), Dusseldorf in Germany, and Seattle in the U.S. Our airline pilot training academy at the Gold Coast is rated one of the best, though not the biggest, in the country. We have a great management team and our employees are the only asset in the business, everything else are just tools of trade.



Kingsley with John Methven the Museum's founder.

My involvement in the National Vietnam Veterans Museum caps off a life I could never have dreamed of as a child. You've all heard me talk about the Vets and the Museum and I feel so strongly about both. We've set this big

hairy audacious goal and we have to work really hard to make it happen because failure is not an option. When I travel internationally which I do at least every 8 weeks you'd be surprised how much exposure we are getting around the world. Wherever I go I try to connect with Vietnam Veteran groups, Museums with an association, special interest groups and we are so advanced in our objectives that we have an opportunity to be "the" Vietnam Veterans Museum. Our goals and objectives are very specific and our allies in Vietnam will be amongst the highest numbers of visitors.

I am so proud to be the Chairman but with it comes enormous responsibility to deliver on our vision and to always present our Vietnam Veterans in the way they wish to be seen.

The Museum has so much soul, so much passion, and so much commitment from so many people—it's an honour every time I enter.

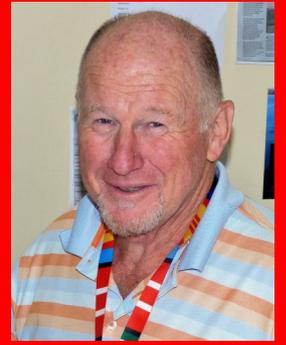
*Best wishes.....Kingsley*

## EVENTS 2019

Sat 23 Feb	Back to Nam Concert
26 Feb—3 March	Avalon Air Show
Sat 23 March	The Zipper
Sat 27 April	Dusted Off Show
May	Qantas Exhibition Opening
May	Rock Away in May
Sun 9 June	Antiques Fair
Sun 8 July	Locals Free Open Day
Sat 3 August	3 Birds One Cock
Sun 8 Sept	Big Boys Toys
Sat 5 Oct	Kutcha Edwards Hour



## PHIL DRESSING GM - SUMMER REPORT



**Finances:** Our Museum continues to trade well year to date. Our overall result is an improvement compared to the same time last year.

**Visitation numbers:** Visitor numbers for September and October 2018 broke previous records. We are on track to increase visitor numbers by about 8% for the year.

**Museum Accreditation Program:** We are continuing to pursue accreditation although the goal posts tend to change but we push on.

**New Potential Acquisitions:** We have been contacted by SO2 Sustainment- Disposals asking if our Museum was interested in obtaining Centurion and Scorpion Tank Turret Simulators. Procurement procedures have been initiated. We have recently received advice that we may be receiving a Sabre jet and a Hercules C130. Not sure where we'll put them but that's the least of our worries. Procurement of an F111 cockpit continues.

**New Museum Building Project:** The Board are pursuing the Federal Government for their \$5 million commitment. We are in dialogue with a number of landowners in regard to procuring land for our new home.

**Bellman Hangars:** It appears we have been offered three and half second hand Bellman aircraft hangars. We have accepted the offers from two separate organizations.

**Volunteer Program:** Volunteer Ernie Lopes has agreed to assist Deb Barber with the Volunteer Program Coordinating. Ernie is a multi-skilled volunteer having worked on the front desk and assisted in our finance administration. I'm sure he will value add to our Volunteer Program. We have purchased 'Better Impact' a volunteer management software program.

**Volunteer Training:** Training of volunteer has been problematic due to the difficulty of getting all our volunteers in the one place at the one time. One of the 'Better Impact' program components is an on-line-training capability, hopefully solving our volunteer training dilemma.

**Cultural Volunteer Manager's Network:** Volunteer Manager's from a variety of institutions, including the MCG, Zoo's Victoria, Sovereign Hill, National Wool Museum, met at Churchill Island recently and followed that up with a visit to our Museum. Needless to say they were very enthralled with our venue and what we are doing. Most said that they would be returning to get a better appreciation.

**Flying Huey:** At this stage we were not successful in procuring a 'flying Huey'. We were being lead to believe we had the front running on the procurement only to be let down at the end. But all is not lost. We will continue to explore the possibility.

## MORE FROM PHIL

**Friends of the Museum:** continues to grow.

**Kiowa:** The Kiowa helicopter received a new coat of paint. Further restorative work is required but we are getting there.

**Canberra Bomber:** Restoration continues:

**Web site:** Our web site is currently under review.

**Vung Tau Room Amenities:** Approval has been given to construct a toilet facility adjacent to the Vung Tau Room consisting of a disabled toilet and shower and uni-sex toilets. No date for completion has been determined.

**Disaster Preparedness:** With the recent fire in Brazil's National Museum destroying an as yet unquantified proportion of its 20 million specimens, it was felt that disaster training in Disaster Preparedness was warranted. The very welcomed workshop was conducted at Coal Creek Historical Village. The burned Brazil Museum building was the largest natural-history museum in Latin America, but it had never been completely renovated in its 200 year history. It had long suffered from obvious infrastructure problems including, leaks, termite infestation and, crucially, no working sprinkler system. Recognizing these problems in the 1990's, museum staff began planning to move the collection to a different site, but without stable funding, those plans proceeded in fits and starts. The losses are 'incalculable to Brazil', said Michel Temer, the country's president, on Twitter. 'Two hundred

years of work, research and knowledge have been lost'. Maria Silva, a candidate in Brazil's upcoming elections, described the fire as 'a lobotomy in Brazilian memory'.

**Phillip Island 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade:**

We put the APC on a low loader and trucked it down Thompson Avenue in Cowes, to commemorate the anniversary. Manned by some of our volunteers during the day, it still created a logistic challenge, but such a challenge was well met by all of us that attended.



You can see our volunteers here all dressed up for the occasion in military uniform.

**Christmas and 2019:** Lastly I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and look forward to an exciting and rewarding 2019.

Best wishes.....Phil



## RAN GRUMMAN S-2E/G TRACKER #855

You may have noticed outside the Museum an aircraft towards the eastern end of the entrance. This is a Grumman Tracker that was used by the Royal Australian Navy to find submerged submarines that could be tracking our aircraft carriers.



The Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation, later Grumman Aerospace Corporation, was a leading 20th century U.S. producer of military and civilian aircraft. Founded on December 6 1929, by Leroy Grumman and partners, it merged in 1994 with Northcorp Corporation to form Northcorp Grumman. The Corporate office is in Falls Church, Virginia, USA, however the company employs over 500 people in Australia, and although they operate in many locations here, they are heavily involved in a Satellite Ground Station at Kapooka, near Wagga Wagga, NSW.

Whilst the U.S. Navy took delivery of their first one on 1953, they never really saw much in the way of warfare, however during the Argentine/British battle in the South Atlantic over the Falklands, some were used against British ships. No. 855, the one we have, finished its work with the RAN and was withdrawn from service 12 August 1984. Initially sold to Hookway Aviation, who had it

for 10 years before it was sold again to Melbourne/Kangan TAFE in February 1994 before being 'acquired' by NVVM in November 2013.

### Specifications:

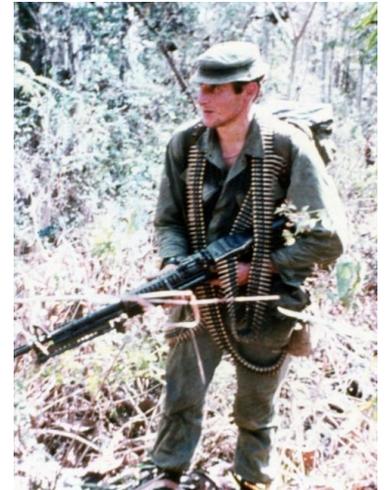
<b>Type</b>	Carrier-borne anti-submarine patrol aircraft
<b>Number ordered by RAN</b>	32
<b>First Delivered</b>	9 November 1966
<b>Last delivered</b>	16 March 1977
<b>Length</b>	43'6"
<b>Height</b>	16'7"
<b>Weight</b>	18,750lbs
<b>Wing span</b>	72'7"
<b>Speed</b>	265 mph
<b>Range</b>	9 hours
<b>Crew</b>	4
<b>Engines</b>	Two Wright Cyclone, each 1520 hp
<b>Ceiling</b>	21,000 ft
<b>Armament</b>	2x anti-submarine torpedoes or 4 depth charges, 6x underwing racks for rockets, torpedoes or 250 lb bombs, Sonobuoys active or passive.

Whilst the U.S. Navy used this type of aircraft during the early part of the Vietnam conflict it was really not employed by the RAN for that war. However the opportunity came to us that we could obtain this Tracker to display it outside the Museum. Thus we did not refuse the offer. Colin Greys crew have completed many hours of work on this plane and have re-made some parts in fibreglass to complete it. You will note the hook at the tail end that was used to catch the arresting cables as they land on aircraft carriers.

# THE M60 MACHINE GUN

The M60 is a gas-operated, air-cooled, belt-fed, automatic machine gun that fires from the open-bolt position and is chambered for the 7.62 mm NATO cartridge. Ammunition is usually fed into the weapon from a 100-round bandolier containing a disintegrating split-link belt. The standard combat ammunition mix for the M60 consists of four ball cartridges and one tracer in belts of 100 rounds. The four to one ratio theoretically allows the gunner to accurately “walk” the fire into the enemy. Tracer rounds do not fly quite the same trajectory as ball and weapons sights must be used for accurate fire—particularly at ranges in excess of 800 metres, where 7.62 X 51mm

mount assembly has either an ammunition box or can assembly to store and supply ammunition rapidly to the feed side of the machine gun. An ejection control bag attaches to the machine gun to catch expended cartridges and links.



Aussie soldier in with an M60 In Vietnam



M60 infantry model

NATO tracer rounds usually burn out and are no longer visible.

The gas system is driven by a short stroke, spring loaded piston housed above the barrel and the locking mechanism is what is known as a tilting breach block. To lock, it drops down into a solid shoulder of metal in the heavy receiver. The gas system is fitted with a gas regulator behind the front sight base, allowing adjustment of the gas system in response to environmental conditions, and can be closed completely to allow for the firing of rifle grenades. The weapon’s magazine capacity used by Australian and New Zealand soldiers in Vietnam was 20 rounds. The recoil spring is housed in the stock.

Using special mounts attached to the fuselage of the UH-1 Huey helicopter to provide a stable mount for the M60D machine gun. Each mount incorporates a pintle allowing elevating, depressing and traversing the muzzle for aiming and firing. Each armament

## Specifications:

<b>Cartridge</b>	7.62 X 51mm NATO
<b>Action</b>	Gas operated, tilting breach block
<b>Rate of fire</b>	650 rounds per minute
<b>Muzzle velocity</b>	823 mt per second
<b>Effective range</b>	600 metres
<b>Feed system</b>	20 or 30 round detachable magazine or 100 round bandolier
<b>Sights</b>	Aperture rear sight, hooded post front sight
<b>Weight</b>	3.7 kilograms
<b>Manufacturer</b>	Saco Defence, US Ordnance, a division of GM.



M60D in a Huey



## REMEMBRANCE PAGE



**Bryan T. Cullen**, 20, Sydney, NSW. The eldest of three children, Cullen attended St. Leo's College Wahroonga. After working as a clerk in the public service, he enlisted in the Army in February 1967. He joined 7RAR in Vietnam in July 1967 and was assigned to Headquarters Coy. On his first patrol outside the wire with 12 Platoon D Company, Private Cullen was fatally wounded and died on November 27

1967.

**Ronald A Harris**, 26, Meekatharra, WA. A full blooded Aborigine, Harris enlisted on September 5 1960 and was posted to artillery. The popular soldier saw active service during the Borneo confrontation with A Field Battery, RAA, where he met and later married his Malaysian wife.

In October 1966, he transferred to the SAS and went to Vietnam with 2 SAS Squadron, on June 6 1968. Exactly seven months later on January 17 1969, he was accidentally killed by his own platoon commander as he tried to locate the position of his patrol, in Bien Hoa.

Information provided by SAS headquarters,



Swanbourne Barracks, WA, explains that Corporal Harris, a member of a two man observation group from 11 patrol, was on a reconnaissance mission when they spotted two VC troops 30m away.

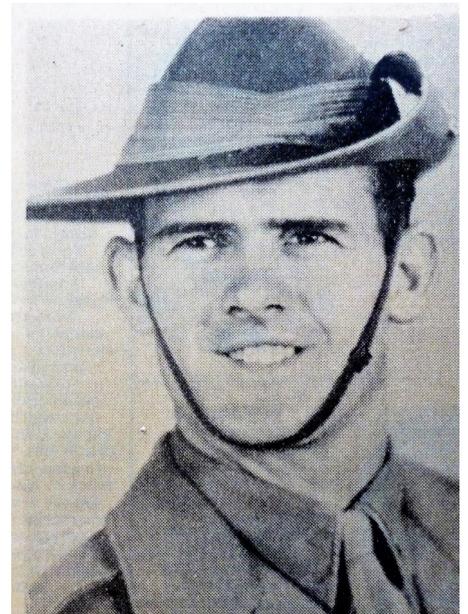
The corporal decided to return to patrol position to brief his patrol commander, but took a wrong entry path and died from frag wounds and a gunshot wound to the head, from his own unit.

SAS historian Mr Steven Danaher said: "Corporal Harris was highly thought of by his mates. He is commemorated on 'The Rock' at Special Air Services Regiment, Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne WA.

**Thomas Simpson**, 27 Geelong Victoria. The first soldier from Geelong to die in Vietnam on December 12 1965. Tommy, as he was known to family and his mates in 105 Field Battery, worked on the railways until he enlisted on October 5 1957, and became a gunner with the Battery. After service in

Malaya and Borneo, where his father, Corporal Henry John Simpson had died as a POW in 1944. Simpson lived in Brisbane, where he was a patient in 1963, met and later married Sandy, an Army nurse in 1 Camp Army Hospital. Popular with his

unit, he arrived in Vietnam in September 1965 and died of cerebral malaria in 93 Evac Hospital, Bien Hoa on December 9 1965. After his death Battery Commander P N O Tedder, wrote to Sandy and asked if they could rename the Gunners Club after Tommy in recognition of Tommy's service to the Battery.



# JUNGLE TRAINING CANUNGRA QLD

The Combat Training Centre, (CTC) can trace its origins back to 3 November 1942, Army HQ ordered the formation of a Land HQ Training Centre for Jungle Warfare, Kokoda Barracks at Canungra QLD. The training there is tough and realistic in the extreme. The CTC is Army's only advanced collective training organisation and supports Army's strategic objectives.



The training is assigned to forces that are preparing to deploy or readying themselves as part of the Army's commitment to Defence Force contingency operations. The

motto for the CTC is: **"Know yourself, know your enemy, know your environment"**. Accordingly, the CTC has a diverse focus and is therefore comprised of three unique organisations under HQ CTC for the delivery of training and support to Army's strategic priorities.

Combat Training Centre—Battle Command (CTC-BC), is a command and control focussed unit. Battle Command targets Brigade headquarter elements as their training audience and delivers training through a series of scalable command post exercises. The training caters for individual skill development right through to collective headquarters training where the focus is complex formation level planning and execution.



The Jungle Training wing, is the final direct command unit belonging to the CTC. Now, located at Tully, QLD, Jungle Training Wing are the Australian Army's experts in jungle warfare. Their primary role is to deliver basic and advanced jungle warfare training to dismounted Combat Team sized organisations. Jungle Training Wing are also heavily engaged in international exercises, often providing training to regional allies as their level of expertise is highly regarded in the international military community.



The CTC is committed to the delivery of challenging and realistic training for Australian Army force elements preparing for operations. To succeed in its mission, the CTC constantly refreshes the problems given to the training audience. By doing so they are individually challenged and are collectively developed. As the contemporary operating environment evolves, so too will the training delivered at the CTC to ensure the Australian Army is ready for operations.

Vietnam Vets who were either regulars or part of the conscription when they served would have 'endured' training at this facility. Canungra is situated about 30 minutes drive from the Gold Coast, thus when recruits were off duty it was not very far to go to enjoy this civilised part of Queensland.



KOKODA BARRACKS CANUNGRA  
UNIT COLOUR PATCH

## MEET VOLUNTEER MARIAN BRENNAN



Life takes twists and turns and the best laid plans can come asunder. All was well, semi-retire to San Remo, caravanning, clubs, garden, dogs, how sweet it was until my husband became ill and after a protracted illness, died.

It became obvious that I needed to immerse myself in something and the Museum was the winner and I consider my saviour.

My husband had been involved with the services for 30 odd years so at least I had a head start, but there is always more to learn.



Commander John Goss AM RANR  
Opening one of Marian's displays

I was married young, children followed, when the three were at school I started to wonder if I could work again, I joined a large company and was able to work to become the senior executive secretary. I had always actually wanted to be a nurse and wondered if it was possible, all things are possible apparently. The hardest time was the 18 months before I went into nursing. I went to night school and did my VCE, having left school after intermediate year when I was 14. I graduated in 1986 and spent three years as an operating

room nurse. Applied and graduated as a Psychiatric nurse, then went on to become a Midwife, working in both disciplines. Appalled with what I felt was the standard of nurse training, I went to University and obtained a Bachelor of Education and went on to work for the Universities of Melbourne and La Trobe.

Out of the blue I was asked to the Kimberley and work in the town of Wyndham for 7 months, an amazing and worthwhile experience. Presently I am developing a new set of skills in the presentation of exhibitions and displays, never too old to learn. There are many here at the Museum to learn from and they are always willing to share their knowledge or assist you in any way, to my colleagues.

Thank you, *Marian*

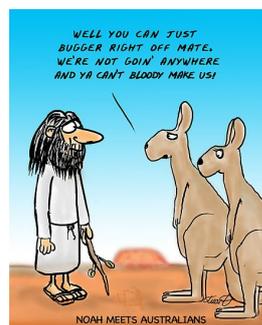
*Marian almost arranges the 6 monthly exhibitions single handed, yes some others help her with the lifting and hanging of displays, but she repeatedly researches, searches and finds the items that add an ever changing dimension to the Museum. You fit in so well with everyone and your calm ability to overcome problems adds to the Museum's strength. Well done Marian. Ed*



**\$3000**

Camouflaged jeep for sale.

Very good tyres and can be used for Private Detective work.  
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## VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE



On 26 April 1976, the first boatload of refugees fleeing from Vietnam sailed into Darwin Harbour, heralding a series of arrivals over the next few years.

The vast majority of refugees from Vietnam, however, arrived in Australia by plane after selection officials in refugee camps established throughout South East Asia. Since 1976, Australia has become home to a thriving Vietnamese community. In 2011, the national census showed



LAM BINH'S BOAT IN DARWIN HARBOUR

that 185,000 people in Australia were born in Vietnam. By early 1975, it was apparent that the North Vietnamese forces would soon overrun the south. Just before the fall of Saigon, the U.S. and other foreign forces evacuated the first wave of people seeking to escape. The second wave of refugees emerged as the Communist government began to dismantle the old regime. Those associated with the former government were sent for re-education, others lost their jobs or were moved to work on rural reconstruction projects.

The very first Vietnamese refugees to reach Australia were orphan infants evacuated by Operation Babylift in the weeks before Saigon fell

in April 1975. Amid fears for their safety, more than 3000 infants were flown out of Vietnam, mostly to the U.S. but also UK, Canada and Australia. The Australian public was supportive of Operation Babylift, for example, the Women's Weekly ran a two page article that emphasised the impact of the war on Vietnamese children.

The first adult refugees arrived in the 20m Kien Giang, which sailed into Darwin Harbour on 26 April 1976. The 20 year old captain, Lam Binh, with his younger brother and three friends, made the 3500 kl journey to find refuge. Lam was not a sailor by trade, but taught himself navigation as part of his escape plan. His original map was nothing more than a page torn from a school atlas, and while getting better charts later, it extended no further than Timor. The rest of the journey was done by dead reckoning.

The exodus of refugees from South Vietnam continued in 1977, boats carrying 21,267 people arrived in neighbouring Asian countries including Hong Kong. In 1978, 106,489 arrived, and before June in 1979 another 166,604. These people encountered dangerous sea, overcrowded vessels and attacks by pirates and we only know about the ones that survived, countless others were probably lost at sea.

Australia has benefitted by the arrival of these people and with their hard work ethic, they have proved to be an asset to Australia. Very often when we get Vietnamese visitors at the Museum, we sometimes give them a little badge of the crossed flags of Australia and South Vietnam.



# OPERATION BRIBIE

**Operation Bribie**, 17-18 February 1967, also known as the Battle of Ap My An, was fought in Phuoc Tuy province between 6 RAR and two companies of Viet Cong from D445 Battalion with reinforcements from North Vietnamese regulars. After attacking a South Vietnamese force on the night of the 16th they withdrew the following morning, two hours later they were reported to have formed a tight perimeter in the rainforest 2 kilometres to the north near an abandoned village. 1st Australian Task Force were inserted to block a likely withdrawal route with the hope of intercepting and destroying them.

On the afternoon of 17 February, U.S. Huey's and M113 armoured personnel carriers deployed 6 RAR into the area, where they were surprised by a strong, well-sited and dug in Viet Cong force, which had remained in the area. The Australians were soon receiving heavy small arms fire, with a third of the leading platoon falling wounded in the initial contact. 6 RAR subsequently launched a quick attack by two companies. However the Viet Cong had been reinforced and the Australians were faced with a battalion sized force in well prepared positions.

At 15.35, supported by airstrikes, armour and fire from A Company, B Company assaulted the position. From the outset, lead elements came



5 PLATOON OPERATION BRIBIE

under constant sniper fire from the trees, and from undetected machine-guns. The assault soon faltered, with increasing casualties as the Viet Cong withstood simple frontal assaults, including bayonet charges by two separate platoons. Surrounded and receiving fire on all sides, the lead Australian troops from B Company could no longer advance against the determined dug-in force. Initially, the Australians used their APC's to secure the landing zone at the jungle's edge, but when the infantry was in trouble they were dispatched as a relief

force. Fighting their way forward, the M113's finally arrived at 18.15 and began loading the most



seriously wounded as darkness approached. The Viet Cong subsequently launched successive counter-attacks, both repulsed by the Australians. During the fighting, one of the APC's was disabled by recoilless rifle fire at close range, killing the driver.

By 19:00, after a five hour battle, B Company broke contact and withdrew into the night harbour near the landing zone with the remainder of the battalion. Mortars, artillery fire and airstrikes covered their withdrawal, then pounded the battlefield into the evening.

After a tense night, the Australians returned in the morning to find the Viet Cong had left the area, dragging most of their dead and wounded with them while avoiding a large blocking force. A hard-fought affair at close range, the disciplined Viet Cong force matched the Australians as both sides stood their ground, inflicting heavy casualties on each other, before each fell back. Although 6 RAR ultimately prevailed, the vicious fighting at Ap My An was probably the closest the Australian Army came to a major defeat during the war.

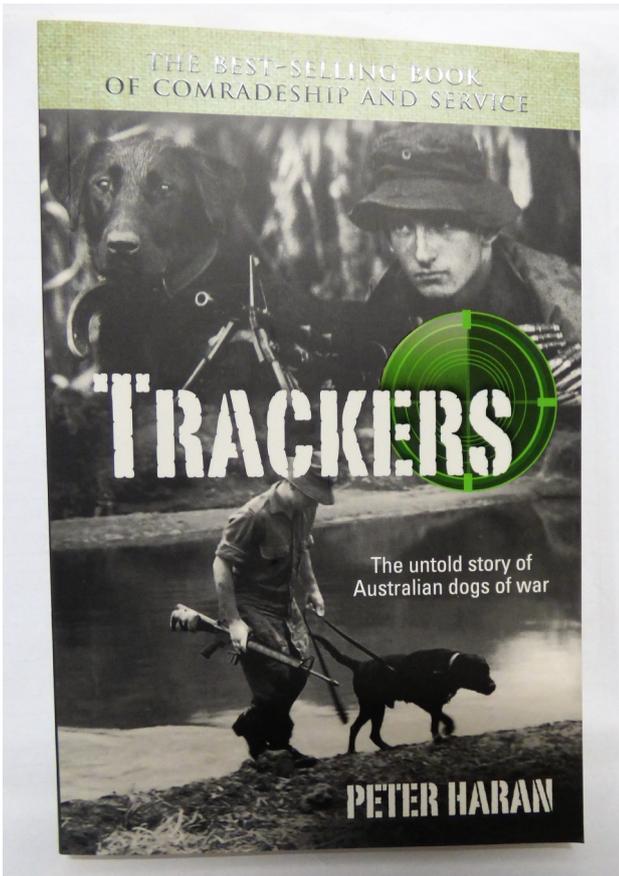
## CASUALTIES AND LOSSES

Australians:	8 killed
	27 wounded
	1 APC destroyed
Viet Cong:	8 bodies recovered
	70-80 believed killed



## BOOK REVIEW "TRACKERS"

**The compelling real-life story of a combat tracking team in the Vietnam War.**

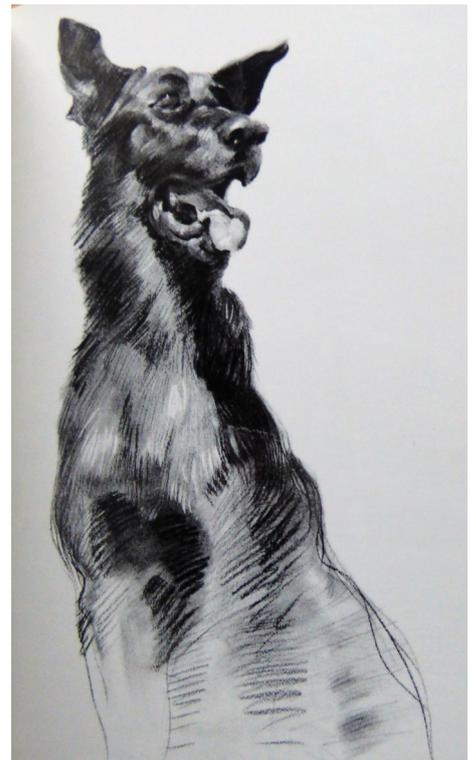


"Trackers" is a gritty and moving account that reveals the Australian Army's little known use of combat tracker dogs during the Vietnam War. A war veteran tells his story with vivid and compelling immediacy, blending the terror of hunting the elusive Viet Cong with the tender relationship between him and his larrikin Labrador-kelpie-cross, Caesar.

At the Sydney shelter Private Haran chose Caesar. They trained together in Australia for nine months, but as the date for their deployment drew closer, Haran held private doubts about whether his dog was ready. Then came a call from the NSW Police. A young girl had gone missing from a playground and as a last resort the cops asked Haran if Caesar could follow her trail. Much to

Haran's delight, without hesitation Caesar picked up her scent and led the police through the city to find the missing girl.

Peter Haran was first posted to Vietnam in 1967, aged just 19, as a dog handler with one of the Army's first Combat Tracking Teams. He returned after a year to become a war dog trainer in Sydney, and was re-assigned to Vietnam in 1970 as an Infantry section commander.



CAESAR

As we all know, these dogs could not be returned to Australia at the end of the war, however, many of them were given to people working in embassies in Saigon, where the dogs could see out their lives with people who loved dogs.

Years later, in the 1980's Haran hadn't forgotten Caesar and tracked down his 'dog' tag. Haran bought it, to honour the memory of his beloved companion



## INTERNATIONAL MARK V 6X6 TRUCK

These trucks were built by International Harvester Co, at their Dandenong plant in Victoria. In its heyday two assembly lines worked in tandem, with Army vehicles occupying one line, and trucks for commercial use were produced on the other line. These vehicles, both 4X4 and 6X6 were designed by ADE and put through their paces at the Army Engineering testing ground at Monegeetta. The engines in these vehicles was available in the commercial trucks, but only with a single



carburettor. Also, the army design with approval, led the company to develop their first cab-over truck in Australia, which was known as the AACO (Australian A Line Cab Over) series of vehicles, which was followed later by a slight modification to become ACCO. From humble beginnings in 1952 and a small run of 100 vehicles delivered in 1959, the ACCO served with distinction until well after the 2370 vehicles had been built and delivered to the Australian Army. They were big tough and simple trucks that would keep going and were popular with their drivers. The trucks 'baptism by fire' was to be the Vietnam War where they were the backbone of Australia's transport network. Even the Americans, who didn't have anything quite like them, saw them to be an excellent vehicle.

Powered by a six cylinder petrol engine with

twin carburettors these vehicles returned between 5 and 6 miles to the gallon of fuel. The commercial trucks were only fitted with one carburettor.

The one we have on display at the Museum was totally re-built recently by the West Gippsland Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Sub Branch, and you can see a video of the rebuilding process near the truck.

There was a report some time ago that during the war a driver managed to steer an Mk 5 over into a ravine. Luckily the truck didn't roll over and no one was hurt, but the problem was how to get the thing out of the ravine. The story goes that the driver thought that it would be impossible to drive it out because of the steepness of the sides of the ravine. However when the engineers arrived, all they did was to deflate the 6 tyres and managed to back the truck all the way to the top and onto the track.



We notice that on the internet that there are two of these trucks for sale, one with an asking price of \$11,000 and the ad says to call John. Gee we hope that nobody from the Museum has any ideas about making a quick dollar!



## BATTLE MAP DISPLAY

A few months ago the Museum decided to display an active battle map which can be looked at just next to the sound and light show. The way it works, via the internet, allows visitors to sit at a computer screen and locate the many battles and skirmishes that we encountered during the Vietnam War. All



**Volunteer Steve looking at Battle Map**

you need to do is to move the cursor to one of the red dots on the map and by left clicking it shows the when how why etc of that battle. It also shows the companies and platoons involved with details of casualties both for us and the enemy. Just another click away are photos relating to the incident plus at the bottom of the sub screen are comments entered by some soldiers. Below are comments written by Neville Rodney Bryant, after Operation Renmark 21 February 1967.

“I was sitting on top of the APC on the open hatch door and feet on the front of the hatch. We did hear a Possum (161 Recce) pilot take ground fire, so we were switched on looking for enemy. About a click further up I felt myself getting very light and things were going black. I do not remember any noise, just an overwhelming sense of being very light. I next remember sitting on the ground

with my pack still on supporting my back and no clothes at all, with the exception of my webbing belt and GP's. I remember everyone running past me to the mine site, then an explosion that was very sharp and close. One person that was running past me had large chunks of flesh flying off him. I felt shrapnel enter my body. Some minutes later the Possum landed and Doc White jumped out and headed to the wounded. I remember someone shouting that there were M16 mines around so no one was to move or they would be shot. Doc White was challenged and he said he could not stand around and watch people die. As he walked past me from the chopper, I figured that I could walk back to the chopper without triggering more mines, so I did. The chopper pilot ordered me into the chopper, which I initially refused as there were some badly wounded there. He would not have it and said, “you are here, they are not, get in” so I did.

The force of the explosion through my body set in some hours later and I could not move my eyelids without pain. This incident caused all three remaining originals of 3 section and all but one of section 2 to return to Australia”

The Battle Map screen with sub window on the RHS.



**The Battle Map screen with sub window on the RHS.**

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