



ESB-VIC



Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Victorian Branch Inc.

AUTUMN 2017 EDITION



“Victoria Remembers Vietnam – 50 Years On”.

A pictorial history of the Victorian Branch 2016 commemorative program to mark the 50th anniversary of the battle of Long Tan is now available through Sub-Branches.

See inside (P11) for details.

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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



Welcome to this edition of *FSB Vic*, I hope you find it informative and interesting.

I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Sue McQueen on her award of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), and Kingsley Munday - the Chairman of the Board of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum - on his

award of the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day Honours and Awards. Both awards referenced their work on behalf of Vietnam veterans and the wider veteran community.

Another Annual General Meeting has come and gone, with the State Congress assembling in historic Queenscliff in the lovely old style Queenscliff RSL. Thanks to the Geelong Sub-Branch and Queenscliff RSL for hosting the meeting. As previously agreed, State Council Meetings, one of which is convened on the same day as the Annual General Meeting, have been reduced from four to three as part of a reduction of administrative workload and cost savings.

There has been significant change within the State Executive with both Peter Bright and Ken Baker standing down and new members Brendan Kincade and George Skell coming on board as VP and Secretary respectively. State Life Memberships were awarded to Sue McQueen OAM and Martin Rudelbach in recognition of their service at state level and a Honorary State Life Membership was awarded to Kingsley Munday AM. The State Council addressed a range of issues around Branch management and administration as the Branch undergoes significant structural change and service priorities change. A number of internal procedures including widening nomination and election criteria for election of certain committee executive positions to include affiliate members were proposed. Constitutional amendments to allow the changes to be introduced will be addressed at a Special Council Meeting to be convened immediately before the next State Council Meeting in June.

The Council was briefed on future plans for the National Vietnam Veterans Museum by the Chairman of the Board and the General Manager who also discussed the Museum's involvement in providing badge week merchandise. The Council was briefed on the costs involved in providing the *FSB VIC* newsletter and arranging Vietnam Veterans Day at the Melbourne Shrine and asked to consider the future delivery and funding of both welfare related activities: State Executive funding from capitations alone falls far short of meeting the costs involved.

I have submitted the Victorian Branch 2016 report to the VVAA National Secretary for tabling at the National Congress in Canberra in May, along with a discussion paper on administrative change and constitutional amendment in a changing environment. The discussion paper was largely informed by discussion and deci-

sions flowing from the State Council Meeting in February. Both papers have been circulated to Sub-Branches.

I was delighted to travel to Albury to present a set of medals to Lorraine Boyd, the former wife of Pte Lindsay Brown who is buried in Benalla Cemetery. The medals, anonymously donated by a Noble Park member, along with a photo of Lindsay and his service history were mounted in a presentation case and handed to Lorraine in a small gathering at the Albury SS&A club. Lorraine had previously received an Australian Flag carried during the VV Day 2016 commemorations at the Shrine, and the cross bearing Lindsay's name.

Works funded from the Victorian Government Grant for 2016 are continuing at the Museum and are expected to be complete by mid-year. A report including acquittal of funds expended up to December 2016 was submitted to and accepted by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the final grant payment provided earlier in the year.

At the time of writing, the 2016 commemorative book is in the last editing stage and printing companies have been approached to provide quotes for printing of the book. It is expected that the book will be available for purchase through Sub-Branches in late May. Each book will be accompanied by a CD/DVD of 2016 commemorative material.

I represented the Branch at the TET Festival at the Melbourne Showgrounds in February where the E Team also mounted a display. The State VP Brendan Kincade represented the Branch at a Vietnamese Community Day in April at which he presented a VVAA Victorian Branch award to a Vietnamese Student.

Sadly, Murray-Border and Castlemaine Sub-Branches have closed, due mainly to the inability of the Sub-Branches to fill committee positions. All of the Sub-Branches contributed significantly to the activities of the State Branch and to the welfare of their members, and it is hoped that former members will maintain an association with the Branch.

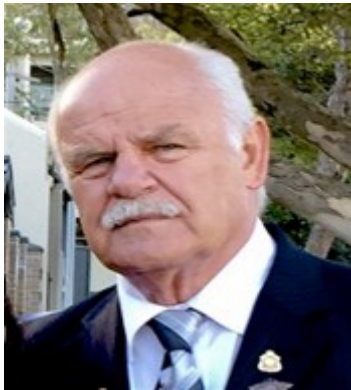
Hopefully the issues with obtaining permission for badge selling at stations will not occur this year. At the time of writing, Sub-Branches have already provided their requests for stations and letters to the relevant authorities will be sent in May.

I recently visited the US National Vietnam War Museum in Texas - a small article on the visit is included in the newsletter. While touring the only remaining Titan II ICBM site (there were 54 sites on alert during the cold war 1963-1987) outside Tucson Arizona, I was reminded of the presence of the "locals" in the area and to watch where you put your feet (see pic above)! The Titan missile and the underground silo in which it is housed were awe inspiring even if from a bygone era.



I close on a sad note. A personal friend and stalwart of the Victorian Branch, Lee Scully was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident on Route 66 in the US recently. Lee was heavily involved in all aspects of the RAAF VVAA Sub-Branch, from President down, and a regular and thoughtful contributor at State Council meetings. He also arranged for RAAF members to attend other Sub-Branch social functions in an attempt to overcome the widespread nature of the RAAF VVAA Sub-Branch membership base. Lee was in the US fulfilling one of his bucket list dreams at the time of his death and had previously spent a significant amount of time nursing his ill wife until her passing late last year. VALE Lee.

FROM THE SECRETARY



As the 'New Boy on the Block', and this being my first report to FSB-Vic I will start with a short Bio of myself.

My name is George Skell, I served with 3RAR first tour of Vietnam then with 1RAR in Malaysia/Singapore. After my discharge from the Army I worked for awhile in Tasmania

before transferring with Freighter Industries firstly to Melbourne then to the Papua New Guinea branch as Financial Controller. Upon the sale of the PNG operations I moved on to employment with other local companies continuing in the financial role then on to Senior Management. On completion of 27 years living and working in PNG I returned, with my family, back to Australia in 2003 and continued working in the financial area until my retirement in 2012.

Some of my interests are photography and I particularly enjoyed my role as Editor of the Ringwood RSL newsletter 'Down the Line' which I started as a brand new publication. My other involvements are with the Clock Tower Community Club which caters for the interests of Seniors, Lega-

tees, War Widows and Returned Servicemen and Women (Previously sponsored by DVA) and meeting every Friday of the month, I am member of OM-NI and with our Veteran Community a member of VVAA-OEM (Outer Eastern Melb).

As the position of Secretary was not filled at the last AGM and has remained vacant with nobody stepping up to assist, I decided (with encouragement of Aff Binoore OEM-VVAA) to apply. I have found my introduction to the job a little overwhelming to start but things are now beginning to fall into place, thanks to the assistance and advice of Peter Bright the previous Secretary, Maurie Benson and others.

I would like to offer a big thank you to Peter who has been working tirelessly in this position for the past 11 years and has been instrumental together with the President in formulating a Standardized Reporting and Filing System that makes access to information much easier. Peter's contribution over the years has certainly made the role of future Secretaries so much easier. Thank you Peter for your contribution and we hope to continue on where you left off; we will keep in touch.

In closing I wish to say I look forward to working with everyone involved and keeping the Veteran Community up to date with what is going on around us.

CHANGES TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN LEGISLATION

The rules have changed, check out the website at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>.

ALL members who are representing VVAA Victorian Branch in any capacity and have interaction with children **MUST** be in possession of a current card.

Amendments to the Working with Children Act 2005 come into effect from 1 August 2017.

Included in the amendments are:

Expansion of the definition of '**direct contact**'. **Direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication** as well as face-to-face and physical contact.

Removal of reference to '**supervision**'. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised, they still need to apply for a *Working with Children Check*.

It is mandatory that any member representing the Victorian Branch must be in possession of a valid working with Children Card **before having contact with children**.

Further information can be found at: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au



AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS AND LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Australia Day Honours and Awards

Sue McQueen, State Branch Membership Manager, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for work with veterans.



Mr. Kingsley Munday, Chair of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum was made a Member of the Order of Australia as part of the Australia Day Honours and Awards 2017. Both awards noted their contribution to veteran matters.

State Branch Life Memberships

At the State Council meeting in February, **Martin Rudelbach** and **Sue McQueen** were awarded State Branch Life Membership in recognition of their long and outstanding service to Victorian Vietnam veterans and **Kingsley Munday** was awarded an Honourary State Branch Life Membership in recognition of his leadership of the NVVM board of Directors.

Ken Baker (Ret'd Vice President) and Peter Bright (Ret'd Secretary) were awarded Branch Conspicuous Service awards for their work on the 2016 commemorations and Secretarial service respectively.



Who's Who in the Zoo? New VP.



Brendan KINCADE

VVAA VIC—VICE PRESIDENT

2017/18

Brendan served in Vietnam with 1ARU, 3 and 9 RAR.

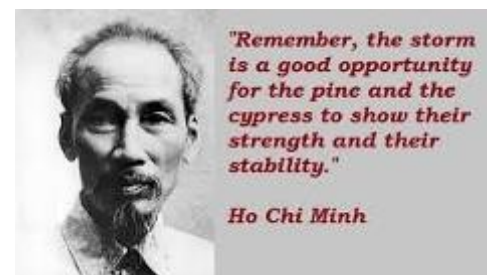
He was a Pensions Officer for 10 years and joined the E Team in the mid 1990's where he is still active.

He is a Life Member of the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club where he was Secretary for 15 years.

You have my
assurance that we will
respond with full force
should the settlement
be violated by North
Vietnam.

Richard M. Nixon

QuoteAddicts



"Remember, the storm
is a good opportunity
for the pine and the
cypress to show their
strength and their
stability."

Ho Chi Minh

TITAN 11 ICBM SITE

Just outside Tucson Arizona, the only remaining TITAN II ICBM cold war nuclear silo is now a major tourist attraction. The site, the only one remaining of 54 ICBM sites, allows visitors access to the underground command and control facilities and the opportunity to view the star of the show, the TITAN II ICBM.

The TITAN rocket, the same one used to blast astronauts into space during the Gemini program, was the largest and most powerful ICBM built. It could send its 9 megaton war-head 16,000 km in just 35 minutes at a top speed of 27,000 kph and devastate a 900 sq. km area. Instead of liquid oxygen which took up to 30 minutes to fuel the missile, the TITAN was fueled with a highly toxic and flammable hydrazine propellant, so the rocket could sit fully fueled in its silo and ready for immediate launch.

A major point of interest is that a glass dome has been built over part of the silo roof and a large piece has been removed from near the top the missile. Apart from providing a great view down into the silo, the roof and missing piece are apparently part of an agreement of the nuclear disarmament arrangements with the Russians so that a satellite can pass over and confirm that the rocket has not been re-commissioned. The silo roof retracting system has also been disabled.

A chilling reminder of the tense cold war years 1963-1987.



The silo roof, the only part of the installation visible above ground: note the glass viewing dome.



The star of the show, the TITAN II ICBM



Editor's note: VVAA Vic Branch President Bob Elworthy AM visited the site in April 2017.



..... from an American perspective.

A Vietnam veteran is someone who served in the armed forces of participating countries during the Vietnam War. The term has been used to describe veterans who were in the armed forces of South Vietnam, the United States armed forces, and countries allied to them, whether or not they were stationed in Vietnam during their service. However, the more common usage distinguishes between those who served "in country" and those who did not serve in Vietnam by referring to the "in country" veterans as "Vietnam veterans" and the others as "Vietnam-era veterans". The U.S. government officially refers to all as "Vietnam-era veterans".



The Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Vietnam Veterans Museum (NVVM) and the VVAA Vic State President recently made a trip to Texas to visit the US National Vietnam War Museum which has been established on land at Weatherford, about 60 kilometers from Dallas/Fort Worth.

Very much a work in progress, the museum concept was started in 1999 by a group of US Vietnam veteran helicopter pilots and is based around a small visitors center- a building which was formerly located at the ranch of George W Bush when he was the US President- and outdoor features including a small version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, Garden of Reflection and various equipment displays.

The Chairman and President made a number of good will presentations to the museum including a Vietnam era Aussie digger, VVAA Flag and plaque, and attended a fund raising dinner. It is hoped that our museum and the US museum can forge a worthwhile and beneficial relationship moving forward.



At the fund raiser, a shotgun was knocked down at auction for \$200. The next item for auction was a large chocolate cake, and furious bidding followed with the cake being finally knocked down for \$350. When one of the local Texans was asked about the relative values of the gun and the cake, he responded, "Simple, everyone's got a gun, but not everyone's got a chocolate cake".

Only in America (and particularly Texas).

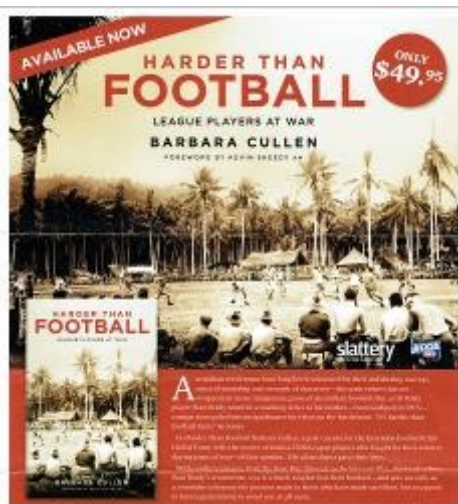


GEELONG & DISTRICT

The two St Kilda Rd Banners displayed by Vic Branch on VV Day 2016 are to 'fly' from our Flagpoles at the Vietnam Veterans Centre on special occasions, being ANZAC Day and Vietnam Veterans Days at least this year.



Recent Book. *"Harder Than Football"*. Includes about 15 Viet Vets that played VFL Football. Mostly includes WW1 & WW2 Ex Servicemen. No, I don't have shares in the Book's publication. Thought it might be of interest to some Members.

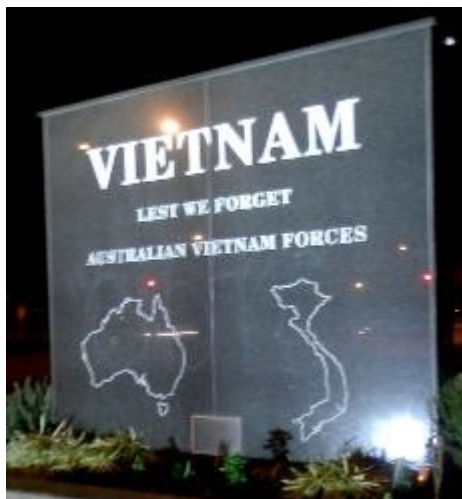


Geelong's proposed VV Avenue of Honour Upgrade is finally a reality with the site now officially protected by a heritage overlay. It's been a long process but the end result is that it is protected now for the future generations of Geelong citizens recognising

the service and sacrifice of Vietnam Veterans. Congratulations to all those at VVAA Geelong who have worked tirelessly for this result.



The following pics is our VV Memorial at night. And opposite our Honour Roll.



On a sadder note Geelong note the passing of ex Geelong's Ray McMurich - 2RAR (Cairns Area) and Peter Hanley - 1 Aust Fld Hospital (Colac).

Looking back to the Civic Reception held at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2016 the pic below shows Maurie Benson (VVAA Vic Branch), ex State Vice Pres, Ken Baker and Chaplain John Brownbill RFD, KCSJ.



This year Geelong & District SB will have its first own Dawn Service at a reasonable Hour, 6am at Eastern Beach. Traditionally Geelong R&SL has held a 4am Dawn Service, and as you may know, Torquay at 6am is also a very popular Commemoration. G&D VVAA President Rieny Nieuwenhof, with a small Committee, had privately taken the initiative for what they hope will be a continuing event.

The Service is not a G&D VVAA sponsored activity as such, however we fully endorse it.



BOX HILL

"Vietnam Veterans- Night of Nights"



The Box Hill Sub-Branch recently held their "Black Tie Dinner" in the Upton Room of the RSL. This dinner was the eleventh in as so many years, and is considered the most prestigious event on the Vietnam Veterans Calendar, which includes other sub-branches that also attended.

The evening is also a special night for the Box Hill management staff (who are pictured dressed in Black/White for the evening) and especially Kevin Weightman our chef who always prepares a special dinner, this year was no exception. Chantelle Chass, the RSL Functions Manager, was our "Hostess" and she and her staff carried out a memorable night.

Among the guests were the new President of RSL Victoria Dr Robert Web-



ster OAM and his wife, our State Member Mr Robert Clark MP, our federal member Ms Julia Banks, who attended her first Black Tie Dinner, and the RSL State Honour Treasurer John Cullen and his partner. Two of

the guests, Tony Bowden OAM President of Box Hill RSL and Ray McCarthy President of VVAA Noble Park and Senior Vice President of Noble Park RSL were introduced and applauded for their achievements of reaching "Legend" status of RSL Victoria.

The guest speaker for the night was COL Jan McCarthy (Rtd), who served in Vietnam in 1968-69. She spoke of the "Dust-Offs" and how efficient they acted under extreme conditions, along with the Doctors and nursing staff at the Hospital in 1 ALSG Vung Tau. As always our guest speakers arrive to the event in a car fitting for the occasion (pictured below), and our thanks to the John Elliott our member for arranging the transport, a Silver Shadow Rolls Royce convertible.

The next event will be the Vietnam Veterans Lunch at Box Hill RSL. This event proved so popular last year, we have decided to hold it once again, and this year's speaker will be The Honourable Tim Fischer AC. Again we will be having a three course gourmet meal with the liquor also supplied at a special price. A flyer will go out mid June early July. If it is anything like last year and no doubt it will you will have to book early.

Brian Tateson.



DIAMOND VALLEY

With the year 2016 Commemorations behind us and being an outstanding success the DVIets wish to thank all those involved in the tireless work they did putting it all together, I doubt we will ever see another day at the Shrine in August like last year.

The DVIets closed the year with our Annual Christmas Lunch and once again a great day for members and partners. We are a lucky Sub Branch with many ladies participating in our activities.



The AGM in February saw a return of the Executive Committee with the only change in Committee being John Vincent replacing Terry Barnes.

Membership continues to be strong at 200+ and our regular Friday afternoon sessions are well attended - once again the presence of the ladies makes it a very enjoyable afternoon.

Our trip to Watgardens for lunch early Feb kicked our social calendar off followed by our Annual Bowls Day in March at Greensborough Bowls Club with the Regs versus the Nashos; it was a remarkable win by the Nashos and only the President of the DVIets, acting as an "independent" scorer, knows how the result was arrived at.



In April a busload of DVIets enjoyed travelling to Sorrento via Arthurs Seat, then on the Ferry to Queenscliff and back home by Coach via Geelong; whilst in May we will enjoy the Kilmore Races.



As usual the DVIets will be out in force supporting Anzac Day, and especially the service at the Austin Repat on April 21st, which has grown into a magnificent annual event.

I hope all Sub Branches continue to fully involve themselves again this year as it is important not to lose any more Sub Branches remember, strength is in the numbers.

Peter Blackman
President

Victoria Remembers Vietnam - 50 Years On



A Pictorial History of 2016 Out soon, secure your copy Now!



A magnificent 50+ page Hard Cover Book covering all of
VVAA Victorian Branch Commemorative activities for 2016

Place your order through your Sub-Branch

Special 2016 member price of **\$30**

Non-member price **\$50**

Members may order multiple copies and each book comes with a
DVD containing additional photos, tributes,
2016 membership list, "Echoes of Conflict" and more.

**Limited print run, sure to sell out fast.
Avoid disappointment, order and pay now!
Payment required with order.**

RAAF

The past few months since our AGM seemed to have passed in a blur: your committee has been busy assisting where possible with the recent Air Show, attending briefings for ANZAC Day and those who watched the ANZAC Day march would have heard the dulcet tones of our own leader commentating on the ABC on the Air Force groups along the way.

We recommenced our luncheons at the Mail Exchange Hotel in March, enjoying a lovely meal and great camaraderie: it would be nice to see a few more come along on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 12.30 for a 13.00 sit down. If possible letting the secretary know by the Monday of that week of your attendance.

It was great to see a good roll up on ANZAC Day for the march, unfortunately a little damp around the edges. One of our members took advantage of free transportation offered by the RACV and was picked up from home and did the march route in comfort and

style, watching from undercover: he has already put his hand up for a ride next year. Maybe he will have some company in 2018!!

It was a pleasure to see the numbers that marched under our banner, and then adjourned for lunch, where judging by the noise everyone had a good time.

As most of you will be aware by now, there was someone missing from our group on ANZAC Day, and that was our Past President Lee Scully who had been on the trip of a lifetime, riding a motor bike down Route 66 in the USA, where he sadly had an accident and died at the scene. He will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his family and friends at this time. "LEST WE FORGET"

Gill Coughlan

Secretary



MELBOURNE WEST



Melbourne West AGM on 5 February saw a change at the Executive level with James Coughlan taking over as Treasurer and Glen Smith as Secretary. We remain under the capable leadership of our President, Charlie Peterson, who was recognised for his service to the Sub-Branch with a Life Membership.

Also receiving awards for service to the Sub-Branch were Ray Matthew, "Bogie" Knight, Arthur Richardson and Rhonda Richardson.

Our new Secretary, Glen Smith, represented us at the State AGM and Council Meeting. May and we take this opportunity to congratulate all elected State Office Bearers for 2017, especially the new State Secretary, George Skell.

The Sub-Branch has had a quiet start to 2017, with the only activity to date being our annual representation at the Darwin Defenders Association service on 16 Feb at the Shrine. We have been assisting them for a number of years and 2017 saw the 75th Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin.



Our representatives on the day were, from left to right, Ray Matthew, Vic Pilch, Glen Smith and Bruce Hicks.

The Sub-Branch Autumn Newsletter was sent out in March, mainly electronically, to our members and has been well received. Our new Editor, John Curbishley, has picked up the reins and has done a very good job of both our Christmas and Autumn editions.

Our membership as at 12 April was 125 with 57 Ordinary Members, 3 State Life Members and 5 Sub-Branch Life Members, under the capable hands of our new Membership Officer, Peter Bright.

Anzac Day will see us taking part in three events, the Pre-Anzac March through Werribee on Sunday 23rd April, followed on the Monday by an Anzac Day service at Thomas Chirnside Public School, Werribee. The Werribee Cenotaph Dawn Service on Anzac Day will start off the 25th, and for those members up to it, the march through Melbourne.

Editor note:

Since this Report was received sadly Charlie Peterson has passed away. We offer our condolences to Charlie's family and know that he will be sadly missed by friends and veteran colleagues.

Vale Charlie.

OUTER EASTERN MELBOURNE

A very busy 2016 Commemorative Year concluded with large numbers of our members having supported all the activities throughout the year. Our Sub-branch activities calendar finished the year with our "Gypsy Caravanners" joining their counterparts from the West Gippsland, Mornington Peninsular and Frankston Sub-branches at the annual "Glen Cromie" weekend. Our very successful Christmas lunch was again well attended..

This year our various activity groups are all once again back in full swing with various events, outings etc. planned for the year. The Gypsies have three trips planned, the first being to Paynesville which took place in March.

Our "Bunnings Sausage Sizzles" are also off to a good start this year with three sizzles already "under our belt". We find these to be a valuable activity in that, not only do they raise much needed funds, but are a great opportunity for members to get together and catch up.

Our AGM held in February ran smoothly with most positions continuing unchanged. Tony Zammit joined the Committee as Social Events Co-ordinator taking over from Howard Ferguson who didn't stand this year.

Rob Huggan also did not stand this

year and we thank Rob for the many years he served as our Welfare Team Leader.



The OEM Committee and Executive has set itself a busy agenda this year in its plan to review all aspects of our operations and procedures to ensure the workload is kept to a minimum, and that we are well positioned in meeting member's needs going into the future.

We were saddened by the passing of our member "Big Fred" McLeod-Dryden late last year. Fred was a very staunch member and more widely known as the President of the Navy-Vietnam Sub-section of the Naval Association of Australia. Fred was also the founding father and first President of the HMAS Sydney and VLSVA. Around 400 people attended the funeral.

Over 130 of our members attended the "Middle Pub" in February to farewell Bill and Liz Cane who are moving to Queensland. Both will be sadly

missed but promised they would be remaining members of our Sub-branch and staying in touch.



Liz is a much loved member of our Sub-branch and has been a prodigious worker. On our 20th Anniversary Night Liz was presented an award for "Exceptional service to the Sub Branch for over 20 years and to the Eastern Melbourne Wives Group".

President Aff Binnoore noted that Bill is our most "highly decorated" member in that he is a VVAA (Vic) State Life Member, an OEM Life Member, former OEM President and one of the original members, when the Sub-branch was set up 21 years ago. Aff also mentioned Bill's, TAOR Editor, Badge Week co-ordinating role, and Welfare Team activities, as stand out contributions.



FRANKSTON

December saw the Frankston District Vietnam Veterans Association finish off the year with a meeting and Christmas Dinner, which was very well attended. An enjoyable night was had by all ending a very successful year of social activities and welfare work.

Our first meeting for 2017 was on 6th February with our AGM, which saw a few changes to the committee with Kelvin Park now being our President and Campbell Johns & Bill Westhead also stepping up onto committee, this was then followed by a short general meeting.

At the meeting we presented Julie McHugh with the Peter McLellan award (see photo). Ray Weston & Mark Kinder have both stood down from Committee after several years of hard work and we thank them for their efforts.

The year started off with a few days away at Toora, staying at the



Caravan Park, and an enjoyable lunch at a local Chinese restaurant - more outings are planned for the upcoming months. This year we are trying to focus on social aspects for our members and make things more relaxed.

Throughout the year we had small raffles, and at the end of 2016 we raised \$1000 to go towards the Bushfire awareness project. Barry Thomas came and give a talk on

how Marysville is surviving and rebuilding after the fires in 2009.

He spoke about how he is trying to raise awareness with the aftermath of a Bushfire by setting a museum in Marysville; this holds 2 purposes, one by giving tourists the information they need and want without hassling residents or shopkeepers, who are still struggling to get on with life, and secondly as educating school children with knowledge about the magnitude of a bushfire and the consequences / trauma that follow.



DFRB/DFRDB Inequity Fight Goes On

Sub-Branches were recently sent updated information on continuing battle with the Government to have the inequities of the DFRB/DFRDB schemes rectified. The latest update provided information on progress-or lack of it-coming out of the Minister's office and a call to arms for all DFRB/DFRDB recipients to write to their local federal members and senators.

Here is one example from a summary taken from an Executive Summary titled "The Gross Reduction of DFRDB Benefits written by Herb Hellerbrock, a systems and IT analyst, retired Warrant Officer with 20 years' service, which shows how inequitable, out of date and downright lousy the scheme is:

The Commutation Arrangement:

When members opt to receive a lump sum advance, their retirement pay is reduced proportionately by an amount based on their life expectancy (i.e. the lump sum is divided by the life expectancy) Outdated 1960-62 life expectancy tables are used which predict a much lower than current life expectancies and thereby produce much higher retirement pay reductions. The DFRB/DFRDB legislation does not restore retired pay to its full value after the lump sum has been fully repaid.....

Example:

An Army Warrant Officer who retired in 1976 aged 45 years, received a lump sum payment of \$18,493. His life expectancy using 1962 life expectancy tables was

deemed to be 27.37 years, resulting in a \$675 (\$18,493 divided by 27.37) reduction in his annual retired pay. By the end of May 2003, the Warrant Officer had fully repaid his advance. Now aged 85 he has already repaid more than \$105,800, over 5 times the amount of the lump sum he was advanced.

And there are more issues: Notional Retired Pay, Indexation, lovely! And remember, the member had NO OPTION other than to have fortnightly amounts deducted and paid into the scheme, and from there the funds were raided and spent by government. So the government cries poor because the scheme is UNFUNDED!

Herb Hellerbrock, Warrant Officer (Rtd) with 20 years service.

MELBOURNE CHAPTER VVMC RIDE TO SA—WELFARE ON WHEELS

In March, four chapter members linked up at Rockbank, picked up fellow riders at Bacchus Marsh, Ararat and at Bordertown. With a nod to the age of the riders, the ride to SA was split over two days, with a night in the Bordertown pub.

At Tailem Bend, they linked up with other riders for a scenic ride through the Adelaide Hills and then on to Christies Beach Motel for three nights. BBQ's, and a ride to Victor Harbour followed before turning towards home. Some went the scenic route, the rest to Ararat for an overnight stay. Despite a wet ride home, fog thick enough to cut with a knife outside Ballarat and the ring road traffic, a great time was had by all.

To quote one rider *"I like to be on my own, and find it hard to relate and talk to people. I had a good time on the run to Adelaide, the guys were great and made me feel welcome and relaxed"*.

Editor's note: Article from Graeme Furmston — thanks Furmo.



The Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club Melbourne chapter is not formally affiliated with the VVAA. Many of the riders are members of Victorian Sub-Branches and the Chapter often provides support to Branch and Sub-Branch activities. VVAA Victorian Branch is pleased to support the riders.

Vietnam Reunion and Tour 2017



Noble Park Vietnam Veteran Stan Middleton & his wife Sinh organised a 50 year (1967-2017) Anniversary Reunion in Vung Tau followed by a tour of Vietnam. Most Veterans on the tour arrived at 2 Composite Ordnance Depot (2AOD from 1968) in 1967. Many from other years & units joined in as well, including partners, children & friends.



The reunion/tour was held in Vung Tau from 25th February through to 2nd March and ended on 26th March covering most of Vietnam from South to North, including 2 days at Siem Reap in Cambodia. Some attended the full tour whilst others only did part of the tour, leaving at various points. The tour started with 70 and by the end there was 18. The reunion & tour was a huge success.



Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living

The veteran and ESO communities have lost a giant of a man with the passing of John Printz OAM. John served in Vietnam in 1965-66, and spent 20 years with the ARES. A VVAA life member he was a founding member of the association, National and State President and Secretary. Founder, Victorian and National Chairman Training and Information Program and Secretary Gippsland Veterans Welfare Centre. Sale RSL Sub-Branch President and

life member, appointed to RSL State Executive in 1989, elected Country VP in 1996. Member of RSL State Council and State Advisory Council. Involved with Legacy and the RAR Association. Awarded RSL Life Membership with gold badge in 2007. Awarded the OAM in 1992 for his service to the veteran community.

John dedicated a large part of his life to advocating for veterans and their rights.

Anzac Day 2017 speech, Horsham - Georgia Perris

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I, together with 9 other Victorian students and 5 chaperones, were lucky enough to travel to Vietnam in Sept 2016, as part of an 8 day study tour. This was hosted by the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, in partnership with the Victorian State Government. This Study Tour was one of several events throughout 2016, by the Victorian Vietnam Veterans Association, marking the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.

To enter this History Competition, I chose to write an essay, addressing the Selection criteria, of *'The Controversial Vietnam War'*. With the assistance of Mr. Barry McLure, I submitted my entry, and was lucky enough to be selected to take part on the tour.

The essay writing process gave me only a very small glimpse into the horrors of the war, and the experiences of the soldiers who fought throughout the Vietnam Campaign.

Arriving in Ho Chi Minh City, we were about to embark on a trip of a lifetime to see 'first hand' and learn a great deal more on what is regarded as one of the most controversial wars.

Our tour guide was Vietnam Veteran, Lieutenant Colonel Gary McKay, MC, (retired). Gary accompanied us throughout the tour, sharing with us his personal accounts of the war he was involved in.

Visiting sites of Nui Dat and Nhi Le, as we, a group of 10 eager to learn students, sat riveted to the seats of the air conditioned bus, listening intently to Gary's graphic description of the battle he fought in, his multiple gunshot injuries, and his will to survive, not only himself, but also to protect his mates as well.

We sat in silence, completely moved by his sharing of his war experience.

Of the many historical sites we visited were the Cu Chi tun-

nels. This 'underground tunnel' system built by the Viet Cong was certainly a highlight to experience first hand. Another most memorable experience was our visit to the Long Tan Battle site. In the middle of a rubber plantation, under an intense searing heat, a white lone cross marks where this infamous battle took place.

Each member of the tour team took a small part in the memorial service. Wreath laying, reading verses of scripture and prayers. We observed a moments silence in honour of the brave young men who served in this bloody conflict.

Not a dry eye was to be seen.

(pause, look up to audience)

A truly amazing and unforgettable experience.

Thank you.

Georgia Perris



It was, It is and It will be the Anzac Spirit.

By Shashira Wijesuriya, Year 9, Glen Waverley Secondary College

It was dissolving into their blood as men enlisted.
It was pumping through their veins as they were training.
It was shining brighter than our closest star as they landed.
It brought a country together as one, united for one cause.

It was the Anzac Spirit.

It nurtured soldiers for the test of fear and death.
It brightened the otherwise lackadaisical soldiers.
It propelled the soldiers forward into the battle.
It glowed in individuals who chose to save their friends in dire circumstances.

It was the Anzac Spirit.

It constructs the action of eternal gratitude for the fallen.
It etches itself onto whoever calls Australia and New Zealand home.
It inspires individuals to contribute in any shape or form.
It yearns to save others despite the obstacles that lie in front of them.

It is the Anzac Spirit.

It is unique in that it is our motivation to do better than great.
It leads us to help end oppressiveness miles and miles away.
It drives a soldier's mentality not just to fight, but to fight with dignity and honour.

It brings communities to stand to remember

It is the Anzac Spirit.

It will be reflected in our pledge to help those around us.
It will continue to inspire to think and help beyond our means.
It will continue to educate and change the views of future Australians.
It will show prowess as we lead the way to contribute globally.

It will continue to be the Anzac Spirit.

It will endeavor for action for years to come.
It will be admired for being the foundation of our nation's history.

It will be remembered for how it was created.

It will be showcased every year on the 25th of April.

It will continue to be the Anzac Spirit.



POEM –THE SOLDIERS

Written and recited by Casey Poussard

When the last sound comes from the horn,
The soldiers will come marching home.
For they fought in the past, for a future that's free,
Facing battles in the dark, in the light, in the air on land and sea.

With nightmares that plague their minds,
Battered and broken, husbands return to wives.
Sons and brothers return from a war,
A war that is remembered as something that was more.

For the sacrifice that they made, for a country that they came,
Australia and New Zealand made ANZAC their name.
Remembering the soldiers on the 11th of November and the 25th of April,
Our silence portraying how we are forever grateful.

In the blood stained battlefields only the flowers grow,
Poppies they were called, coloured from the blood of friend and foe.
Used to remember the ones who have fallen, risen and endured,
Red fades to black, as blood was shed and sight was blurred.

For generations to learn, remember and respect,
Through the lessons taught by soldiers, we all connect.
As the sun rises and falls, we remember their shadows,
We remember the lives lost, through the blood that still flows.

As the final horn sounds, at the rising of the sun,
We will remember the soldiers, for all generations to come.

Editor's Note: VVAA Vic Vice President Brendan Kincade attended an ANZAC Day service for Tullinan Primary School & Alkira Secondary School during which the poem above was read out by its composer, student Casey Poussard.



\$11.3B allocated to Veterans' Affairs in 2017-18 to support 293,000 clients down from 306,000 clients last year. This amount is \$400M less than last year.

\$6.2B for income support and compensation, \$5B for health services and \$105.5M for commemorations.

Veteran Centric Reform: \$166.6M to provide improved services through reform of business practices and culture, targeted ICT development and implementation of Government endorsed best practice service options.

Mental Health: \$33.5M to extend non-liability health care to all current and former permanent members of the ADF for treatment for all mental health conditions. DVA White card and access to VVCS counselling.

VVCS \$8.5M to increase VVCS eligibility to any partner or immediate family members who will have access to VVCS services and support, and access for former partners of ADF personnel up to five years after a couple separates, or while co-parenting a child under 18 years of age.

Suicide Prevention Pilots: \$9.8M to pilot new approaches to suicide prevention and improve care and support available to veterans: the Mental Health Clinical Management Pilot for veterans with severe and complex needs, and expansion of the successful Coordinated Veterans Care Program supporting veterans with long term physical and mental health comorbidities.

Improved Health Care for BCOF and BNT Participants: \$133.1M to provide Gold Card to veterans and civilians involved in the British Nuclear Tests and to BCOF veterans. Approx. 1800 surviving participants of BNT and approximately 1100 surviving BCOF veterans. Pastoralists and Indigenous people in proximity to the nuclear tests will also be eligible for the Gold Card.

Veteran Employment Participation: \$9.1M for initiatives to improve rehab outcomes with accelerated access to rehabilitation pilot, streamlined access to incapacity pay-

ments and amendment of the 10 year work restrictions (VEA) to 10 continuous years employment in any position.

Supporting Veterans' Employment Opportunities: \$2.7M

Improved Claims Processing: \$13.5M to address internal department financial pressures.

ANZAC Centenary Program – Additional Funding: \$19.6M to support domestic and international commemorations to ensure that the 100th anniversary of Armistice is appropriately funded to ensure a fitting finale to the ANZAC Commemorations. Local and electorate grant programs.

Improved Health Care Arrangements: \$171M saving over forward estimates for the purchase of private hospital services. Of the \$1.4B provided for hospital services, \$800M is currently spent on the purchase of Private Hospital services.

RPBS New Listings and Price Amendments: \$5.5M of additional expenditure to update the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits to cover the introduction of five generic brand medicines and price variations of a range of existing items.

Income Support Bonus-Continuation: \$1.2M to retain ISB for DVA clients. Eligible children may be paid ISB if they receive an educational allowance under either the Veterans' Children Education Scheme or MRCA Education and Training Scheme.

Department of Social Services Energy Assistance Payment: One off payment for recipients of DVA Income Support and compensation payments of \$75 (single) or \$62.50 (partnered).

Department of Health: Reinvesting in the PBS Scheme Co-payments and Safety Net thresholds (reversing 2014 budget measure) New PBS listings and a range of other initiatives,

250 veterans in the public sector

\$4.1M over two years to protect Victoria's war heritage and provide opportunities for the community to connect with the military legacy through the ANZAC Centenary Program.

The budget will also support current ADF personnel with a special exemption from the First Home Owners Grant (\$10,000) criteria and the new Regional First Home Owners Grant (\$20,000) criteria which requires applicants to live in their new home within a year of settlement for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

Victorian State Budget 2017-18

Commitment of \$7.8M over the next four years including:

Additional \$2.8M over four years to help the Shrine of Remembrance deliver educational programs and support the on-going development of the Galleries of Remembrance and running of commemorative and ceremonial activities for the community.

\$900,000 to deliver the Public Sector Veterans Employment Strategy-the Government has committed to employ

Public Sector Veterans Employment Strategy

Here in Victoria we believe that the skills and experience gained in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are second-to-none. To support their career path after the ADF, the Victorian Government has set a target to employ 250 veterans into the public sector. The Public Sector Veterans Employment Strategy – a key component of the Government's response to the Victorian Veterans Sector Study Report 2015 – will develop materials to help veterans understand opportunities in the Victorian Public Sector and translate their ADF experience to the public sector, as well as monitor and address any barriers for veterans in securing employment.

Support for the Shrine of Remembrance

More than 1 million people visited this iconic landmark last year. We are giving the Shrine the support it needs to attract even more visitors and educate more Victorians than ever before. An additional \$2.8 million over four years will help deliver programs that teach our students about Victoria's proud wartime history and the sacrifices made by our veterans. The funding will also support the ongoing development of the Galleries of Remembrance and the running of commemorative and ceremonial activities for the wider community.

War heritage, education and commemoration

Protecting Victoria's precious war heritage is a Government priority and new funding will assist communities to safeguard and protect that heritage. Additional funds will also ensure that all Victorians have the opportunity to connect with our military legacy through the Anzac Centenary Pro-

gram (2014-2018) which will continue until the Centenary of the Armistice in November 2018.

Online Service Platform

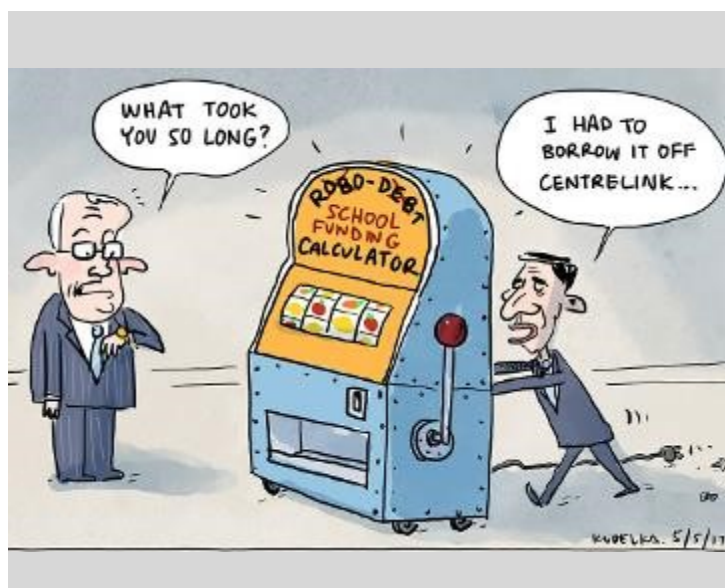
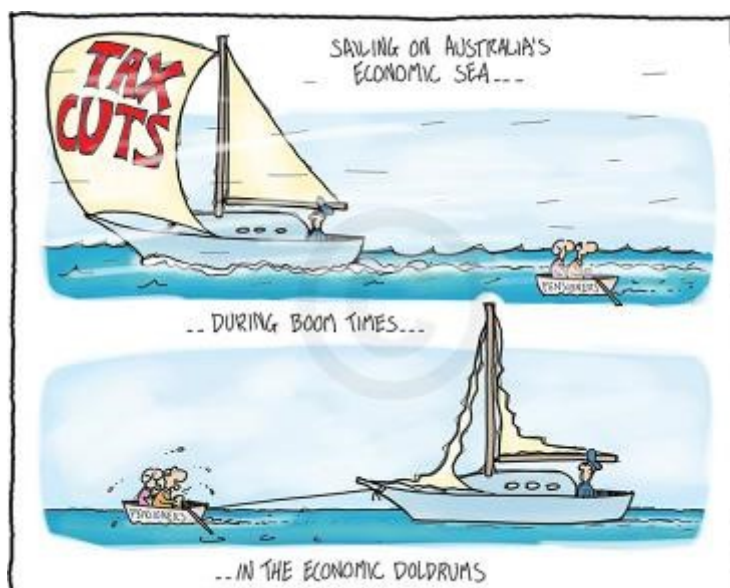
The Victorian Veterans Sector Study Report 2015 highlighted the importance of getting the right information about support services, so options will be explored for a Victorian specific online platform that will assist veterans to access the services they need.

First Home Owners Grant exemption for ADF members

The *Victorian Budget 2017/18* will also support ADF current serving members in a way that recognises the special nature of their job. ADF personnel don't live at home while they serve abroad or live on base. The 2017/18 Budget includes a special exemption for service personnel from the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG) criteria that requires applicants to live in their new home as their principal place of residence within a year of settlement, for a continuous period of at least 12 months. The exemption to the \$10,000 FHOG will make it easier for ADF personnel to buy their first home. The same exemption will apply to the new regional FHOG, which provides \$20,000 for first home buyers buying newly built homes in regional Victoria.

Funding announced in the *Victorian Budget 2017/18* is in addition to the ongoing funding which supports the Veterans grant programs. Information about the *Victorian Budget 2017/18* is available at www.veterans.vic.gov.au/budget.

The Hon John Eren MP Minister for Veterans



Getting Active To Provide More Support For Our Veterans.

Minister for Veterans

13 May 2017

The Andrews Labor Government has partnered with the RSL to deliver a new program to provide more support for veterans doing it tough.

Minister for Veterans John Eren joined RSL Victoria State President Dr Robert Webster and local veterans during a learn-to-surf event in Torquay to officially launch RSL Active.

RSL Active is a specialised program tailored to meet the needs of young veterans affected by social isolation.

The program will bring veterans together by running outdoor events across the state, including sport, music, art, and other social activities.

RSL sub-branches and activity organisers will work closely with their community to promote and encourage local veterans to get involved.

We know social isolation can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life and wellbeing, which is why we're taking action.

RSL Active is a key part of the Labor Government's response to the Victorian Veterans Council Veterans Sector

Study Report, which aims to help us better understand the needs of our ex-servicemen and women.

We have provided \$400,000 to get this program off the ground, and we'll continue to support the RSL to help address social isolation among young veterans.

To get involved or learn more about RSL Active visit www.rslvic.com.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans John Eren

"We're proud to have partnered up with the RSL to make this life changing program happen."

"We hope younger veterans who are facing their own challenges can use RSL Active to make new friendships, connect with their community, and get back on their feet."

Quote attributable to RSL Victoria State President Dr Robert Webster OAM

"RSL Active will provide a well-rounded program which encompasses the overall health and wellbeing of those that have served our nation."

AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPERS MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTION ON SCHEDULE

The construction of the Peacekeepers Memorial on ANZAC Avenue Canberra is proceeding on schedule.

VVAA Victorian Branch is recorded as a "Mate" of the project having donated towards the cost of construction. Fund raising continues for phase two of the memorial which will feature two monoliths





Advocacy Training & Development Program



<http://www.atdp.org.au/atdpMain.php>

The *Advocacy Training and Development Program* provides training for members of Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) which offer advocacy services to serving and ex-serving members of the armed forces. The program is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The training program is a Competency Based Training (CBT) program and places a heavy reliance on experiences gained in a working environment. ATDP offers a single course in Veteran Advocacy. The course contains six elective Units of Competency; some units have pre-requisite Units of Competency. The units are nationally accredited. Completing one or more Units of Competency leads to a Statement of Attainment.

Trainees are to be selected by their ESO using the Guidelines for the Selection of Advocacy Trainees. Ideally new entrants will have been exposed to the role in the workplace prior to enrolment to ensure their ability and willingness to carry out the role. The ESO must then nominate the person using the online nomination form. Once that has been done, the nominee must then complete an online application form to finalise the enrolment.

Preference to training places is based on the best possible return to the ex-service community, so workload of an ESO, Veteran Centre or Community of Practice is taken into account.

Training is conducted primarily in the workplace and guided by a mentor appointed by the ESO. The workplace experiences are supplemented by formal training which included online study units and face-to-face consolidation training.

If a trainee has started under the Training & Information Program (TIP) and wishes to undertake higher level or enhancement courses, these are available from the TIP website. All TIP courses will cease on 30th June 2017.

Pension and welfare officers trained under the TIP system will be able to undertake a process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in order to transition to the ATDP system.

The RPL process will only recognise existing practitioners to level 2. When RPL for level 3 & 4 in the compensation stream becomes available, this will only be offered to those advocates who have met ATDP level 2 standard.

Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony

Friday 18th August 2017

Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance

Gunfire Breakfast

- ◆ 0930 - 1030 hrs Within Shrine Precinct.
- ◆ 1030 hrs Marchers Form up opposite Gunfire Breakfast.
- ◆ 1100 hrs March Step Off followed by Official Commemoration Service. Guest Speaker Dot Angell, SEATO Nurses.
- ◆ 1215 hrs Formalities conclude .

Enquiries to VVAA Vic State Office

VV Day Coordinator

Maurie Benson

Telephone 0417 588 886

Email: office@vvaavic.org.au

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Honour the dead but fight like hell for the living

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