



# **Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia**

## **Victorian Branch Inc.**

WINTER 2021 EDITION

**26<sup>th</sup> July 1971**

# **AUSTRALIA COMMENCES WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM**

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

# **FSB-VIC**



# VVAA Victorian State Branch

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



## VICTORIAN STATE BRANCH 2020 REPORT TO VVAA NATIONAL COUNCIL

To borrow a few words from HM, it has been an “Annus Horribilus” for us all, and particularly here where we were subjected to the harshest and longest lock downs of any of the states.

Fortunately, we were able to conduct our February State Congress and State Council meetings at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and to conduct almost all Sub-branch AGM’s (each attended by one member of the State Executive) just before the state was thrown into lock down and we were all forced into an initial three month period of isolation in our homes. Under lock down protocols, only emergency or other “State Government Health Authority approved” reasons were allowed for leaving the premises, and no visitors permitted in the family home. As a result, state council meetings were conducted by ZOOM, quite an achievement given the number of Sub-Branches involved.

The lock down was immediately felt across the branch and the isolation brought back unwelcome memories of similar post-Vietnam tour feelings for some, and the potential for significant mental health issues for the members. As a result, the branch instigated a state wide welfare response which tasked every sub-branch committee to make telephone contact with every member as a matter of urgency and to report their progress to state. Follow up calls were initiated on at least a monthly basis, and welfare visits made to members who were unable to be contacted by phone. The program proved to be very successful and several complimentary responses were received.

What the lockdown did impress on us all here was the need to ensure that lines of communication to members are always open, and that the passage of information to members is even more critical in such circumstances to overcome feelings of social isolation and uncertainty.

Due to the state lock down, most of the projects which were underway-Refurbishment of an outdoor area at the Coral/Balmoral facility, Member Welfare Package, and Victorian Vietnam veteran survey were all placed on the back burner.

The state shutdown also impacted on the National Vietnam Veterans Museum which was closed for the majority of the year. Fortunately, Federal Job keeper allowances and other grants enabled the museum to weather the closure.

When circumstances allowed, the branch continued to meet with Vasey RSL Care management and conducted meetings with veterans occupying Independent Living Units at Vasey RSL Care villages. As a result, the branch has recently issued a letter (attached) supporting the on-going activities of Vasey RSL Care and acknowledging the development plans in the pipeline. Also, the branch provided donations to each of the community meeting halls at the villages to purchase BBQ’s and kitchen goods for use there.



Sub-Branches are also active within the Vasey RSL Care villages with Noble Park providing regular supplies of bread to residents and Mornington Peninsula conducting BBQs for residents when possible.

As COVID hampered branch activities, we were able to look externally for other worthy causes to support and the branch provided major sponsor funding to the Veterans Film Festival in Sydney in October-November 2020. The Branch also donated approximately \$7000 towards bush fire restoration in the Buchan area. The

# A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT... cont'd

Education team mounted a display at the 2021 Buchan races in March, and a number of state executive members attended.



In keeping with the practice of providing members with a commemorative badge to mark significant anniversaries, the branch executive decided to strike a badge to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of combat operations in Vietnam. The badge was

provided to all 2020 members.

As advised, the 2020 Vietnam Veterans Day commemorations at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance were not possible due to pandemic restrictions. With the cooperation of the Shrine Trustees and RSL Victoria, our commemorations team was able to present a very meaningful virtual commemorative service which was streamed on the Shrine and RSL Victoria websites: the service received more hits than the Remembrance Day virtual service. Funds allocated for VV Day 2020 have been carried forward to be used in 2021 when the branch intends to mount a traditional service at the Shrine with the focus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cessation of Australian combat operations in Vietnam.

The Branch was pleased to lend its voice to the association bringing pressure to bear on DVA to ensure acknowledgement of heritage of Open Arms and to address perceived Open Arms service delivery shortcomings and operational independence.

Similarly, we strongly support the national body in condemning the behaviour of the Federal Government and Defence for persecuting SASR members accused of battlefield crimes before proper legal processes. Despite a recent letter to the National President from the PM which seemed to address some of our issues, the recent application of the “Rule of Law” to claims of misconduct within its own ranks, the branch is firmly of the opinion that disgraceful double standards are at play within the Federal Government.

Harnessing the knowledge of senior branch members, the branch was pleased to lend support to the national

body representations to DVA concerning association perceived shortcomings with Open Arms service delivery, particularly in view of the new “veteran” terminology which increased the Open Arms potential client base. Also, the Branch was pleased to provide input to concerns relating to the independence of Open Arms.

When one of our larger Sub-Branches relocated to new premises, the existence of an up to date assets register proved invaluable in deciding what to take, what to dispose of, and management of loan items. One of the key planks of our branch closure plan is asset management, and the need for an assets register was reinforced through the experience of the sub-branch during relocation.

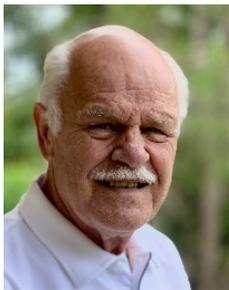
The future of the Regional Welfare Centres, co-managed by RSL Victoria and VVAA Victorian Branch, is under review given the move to create “one stop shop hubs” and to phase out volunteer advocates as has already occurred at Qld RSLs. The priority for the branch has been to clarify and protect the role of Vietnam veteran delegates who make up the vast majority of delegates across the Regional Welfare Centre network, their role in the future progression to hubs, and on-going ATDP training in view of the DVA plan to employ paid advocates.

It became clear, that plans for the progression to hubs relies heavily in the short to medium future on the retention of volunteers until enough paid advocates can be trained; should volunteers cease to work, the plan will founder. The location of the hubs and funding of the hubs by RSL Victoria and the continued inadequacy of BEST funding continue to be addressed.

Despite a reduction in membership during the year, and the passing of members, branch membership numbers remain strong with new members still coming on board, with some Sub-Branches exceeding their 2019 membership levels. Early membership renewals for 2021 are promising.

Bob Elworthy AM





Half the year gone already and what a six (6) months we've had. Coming off an excellent State Congress & Council meeting back in February we've had it all. The ANZAC Day debacle, lingering COVID restrictions, lockdowns then the violent storm surge earlier this month that left much of Outer

Eastern Melbourne/Yarra Valley in darkness and without power. (some 220,000 homes)

Once the effect of the storm was known the OEM Sub-Branch swung into action with a postcode check to identify OEM members who resided in those areas and to what extent they were affected by the blackouts. The call around identified some 17 members of OEM some requiring urgent assistance. Several crews were sent to the affected areas to assist with the cleanup and supply any necessities needed to get them through, in some cases many weeks before power could be restored.

The Yarra Valley looked like a war zone with multiple trees down, houses crushed, roads blocked and the reconnection of power taking up to 4-5 weeks to restore, with some residences to be without power for several months.

At the same time there was flooding in the Gippsland region mainly around Traralgon courtesy of the same storm surge. The Gippsland Sub-Branch responded with a phone around to members residing in the worst of the flood affected areas. Luckily there were no veterans requiring assistance there so we dodged a bullet there.

Well done OEM and Gippsland on a job well done.

Our State Council meeting (26 June 2021) at Echuca/Moama has been cancelled due to the worsening of the COVID situation in NSW and the very real possibility of our

delegates being stranded and unable to return to Victoria from Moama which is in NSW, due to border lockdowns.

As delegates have always indicated their preference for a face to face meeting rather than by ZOOM, last minute arrangements have been made. At short notice and courtesy of the Ballarat Sub-Branch the meeting will be held at the Golf House Hotel on Saturday July 24, 2021 instead.

Work on upgrading our website is continuing and this will be further discussed with the delegates at our next State Council meeting in Ballarat.

Preparations for this year's (2021) Vietnam Veterans Day are continuing and it is expected these will be as close to a normal commemoration as possible. All Sub-Branches are encouraged to bring as many of their members to the Shrine and to celebrate what may very well be the last major event of the Vietnam war, the 'Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam.' All is dependent on this COVID thing behaving itself.

Although COVID will be with us for sometime yet, we look forward to a much brighter and less stressful second half of the year, something a little closer to normal than what we've had to endure in the last 18 months.

In many ways this year is a just a flow on of 2020 demonstrating once again our flexibility to respond to local disasters and the needs of our members in these times.

Welfare at it's best.

George Skell  
Secretary

"Alright, does everyone have sound?"



## Congratulations

**Paul PENNO OAM,  
President ,VVAA Bendigo.**



**Martin Stephen (Steve)  
LOWE OAM,  
VVAA Victorian Branch  
Education Team**



Well deserved awards and recognition for many years of dedicated work in Veteran Welfare and community involvements.

# VVAA VIC ETEAM HEADS TO THE BUCHAN RACES

In 2020 the VVAA Vic State Council agreed to donate \$7,000.00 to the Buchan Shire following the disastrous bush fires that ravaged the District - those funds will be directed to reforestation in the area.

As a follow up to that decision the VVAA Vic ETEAM recently headed to Buchan to identify an area appropriate to lay a Plaque, to “Fly the Flag” at the Race Meeting and promote some VVAA/Buchan goodwill.



Well, it was certainly a great time for all involved, especially after a staggered start to the Race Meeting due to rain.

There was much interest shown in the ETEAM display, not only from the children but also the grown ups and Race organisers certainly made the ETEAM welcome. .

Well done to Brendan Kincade OAM and his “Team”.



## MUSEUM BESTOWS LIFE MEMBERSHIP ON VVAA VIC STATE PRESIDENT

**BOB ELWORTHY AM.**

The National Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island has had a remarkable journey from a trailer behind John Methven’s car to what we see today.

Much of the heavy lifting has been done by volunteers who believed in the concept and made it happen.

At the May 2021 Museum AGM the Board Chair Mr Kingsley Munday AM recognised some of those who “put in” by bestowing them with Life Membership.



# VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION VICTORIAN BRANCH Inc.

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## *V i e t n a m V e t e r a n s D a y*

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance

- 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan.
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Cessation of Australian combat operations in Vietnam.

0930 Hrs

Gunfire Breakfast.

*Enquiries to VVAA Vic*

1030 Hrs

Marchers gather at Northern Forecourt for 1100 Hrs step off.

*Maurie Benson*

*Commemorations Manager*

1100 Hrs

March step off.

*Mob: 0417 588 886*

1215 Hrs

Formalities conclude.

*Email: [office@vvaavic.org.au](mailto:office@vvaavic.org.au)*

*ENTERTAINMENT*

*Honour the Dead but Fight Like Hell for the Living*

## VIETNAM VETERANS - COUNTRY OF BIRTH

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS	FRANCE	ISRAEL	SAMOA
ARGENTINA	GERMAN (BORN OF RUSSIAN PARENTS IN BAD ROTHENFELDE)	ITALY	SCOTLAND
AUSTRIA	GERMANY (BORN OF GERMAN PARENTS)	JAPAN	SEYCHELLES
AUSTRIA (IN USSR OCCUPIED ZONE)	GERMANY (BORN OF POLISH PARENTS IN GERMAN SLAVE LABOUR CAMP NEUSTADT)	KENYA	SINGAPORE
BELGIUM	GERMANY (BORN OF POLISH PARENTS IN PAPENBURG AND THEN SENT TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP NEAR BREMEN.)	LATVIA	SOLOMON ISLANDS
BERMUDA	GREECE	LEBANON	SOUTH AFRICA
BULGARIA	GUYANNA	LITHUANIA	SOUTH AMERICA
BURMA	HOLLAND/NETHERLANDS (NAME INTERCHANGEABLE UNTILL 2020)	MALAYSIA (BRITISH CROWN COLONY )	SPAIN
CANADA	HONG KONG	MALTA	SRI LANKA
CENTRAL PACIFIC	HUNGARY	MAURITIUS	SWEDEN
CHILE	INDIA (BORN OF BRITISH PARENTS)	MOROCCO	SWITZERLAND
CHINA	INDONESIA (BORN OF DUTCH PARENTS)	NETHERLANDS	TIMOR
CHINA (OF RUSSIAN PARENTS)	IRELAND	NEW HEBRIDES	TONGA
CRETE		NEW ZEALAND	TRINIDAD
CYPRUS		NORWAY	TURKEY
CZECHOSLOVAKIA		PAKISTAN	UGANDA
DENMARK		PALESTINE	UKRAINE
EGYPT		PAPUA NEW GUINEA	UNITED KINGDOM
ESTONIA		PERSIA	USA
EUROPE		PERU	USSR (RUSSIA, UKRAINE)
FALKLAND ISLANDS		PHILLIPINES	VENEZUELA
FIJI		POLAND	WEST INDIES
FINLAND		PORTUGAL	YUGOSLAVIA
		RHODESIA	
		ROMANIA	

Research has uncovered some interesting facts relating to the country of birth of Vietnam Vets. Here is the list as compiled by the VVAA Vic Executive as at November 2020. There are some very interesting stories about the circumstances of some of the births, in particular those in Germany during WWII. Also, some Vietnam vets were enlisted without having Australian citizenship. The research continues.



## 547 SIG TP: KEEPING AUSTRALIAN GROUND FORCES SAFE DURING WITHDRAWAL FROM NUI DAT

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the cessation of combat operations by Australian Forces in Vietnam, with the last combat elements, apart from AATTV withdrawal from South Vietnam by March 1972.

In the months leading up to the closure of the Task Force base at Nui Dat and the withdrawal of most of our forces by December 1971, I was a member of 547 Sig Tp, a highly secretive electronic warfare unit, its task was to intercept enemy radio communications and report on enemy intentions and movement within Phuoc Tuy and neighbouring province border areas, particularly in response to the Australian withdrawal.

There was to be no break in the Tp's electronic surveillance and airborne radio direction finding operations against the enemy, such was the concern about the enemy taking advantage of the weakened task force during the withdrawal from Nui Dat. So while the Tp continued to operate from Nui Dat, another Tp facility was established at Vung Tau, which took over operations when the

Nui Dat facility closed. The Tp ACV, fitted with electronic gear, was the last vehicle to leave the Nui Dat base which had now been taken over by South Vietnamese forces.

Airborne missions were now flown from Vung Tau, adding significant flying time to each mission, with the occasional stop at Bien Hoa airbase to refuel. Heading to the northern parts of Phuoc Tuy province we often flew over Nui Dat, and I will never forget the site of the old base now abandoned, except for a newly fenced and defended South Vietnamese area surrounding the old quarry area and SAS Hill. I will also never forget the seemingly endless convoys of South Vietnamese military vehicles leaving the base loaded with everything that they could possibly salvage; they stripped the base bare! Flying back to Vung Tau from the Nui May Tao mountains just on dark was at times a hairy experience.

The Tp continued to intercept enemy radio communications and track enemy unit movements until the Tp closed its operations on or about 20 December 1971. I flew the last airborne radio direction finding mission out of Vung Tau in a 161 Independent recce flight Palatus Porter aircraft fitted with radio intercept equipment, targeting enemy unit radios within Phuoc Tuy Province.

Bob Elworthy AM



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PO3057.002



## 2 FIELD AMBULANCE VIETNAM



In May 1966 2 Field Ambulance deployed to South Vietnam augmented with a field surgical team and accompanied by 33 Dental. This was the first occasion an Australian Medical Unit had deployed on active service since World War 2. It left as a half strength Unit with the remainder staying at Puckapunyal and establishing as 8 Field Ambulance who would replace 2 Field Ambulance in Vietnam in 1967.

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Bill Rogers, the Unit deployed to sand dunes at Vung Tau where it established a 50 bed hospital capable of treating all cases from minor ailments to serious battle casualties. Despite being under strength, it established a capability that could receive and treat major surgical cases directly from the battlefield



by Medivac helicopter - DUSTOFF. The Unit also provided a forward detachment (RAP) to the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat.

Initially 2 canvas Marquees were erected as Wards and a separate tent erected to serve as the operating theatre. Pathology and Hygiene sections were established. ORs, Officers and Sergeants Lines, kitchen, administrative areas and Transport Section were set up. All very "MASH" in appearance but quite effective and welcome to those who were treated there.

Within 3 months the canvas Wards were replaced by Kingstrand aluminium huts on concrete floors and the Unit expertise had built to a stage where there was less reliance on the local US 36 Evacuation Hospital.

Officers and soldiers, when not on duty attending to the sick and wounded, were employed with infrastructure construction and development of the Unit site, sentry duty and all the "normal" tasks undertaken by an Army Unit on operation. During its tour in Vietnam no members of the RAANC served in the Unit.

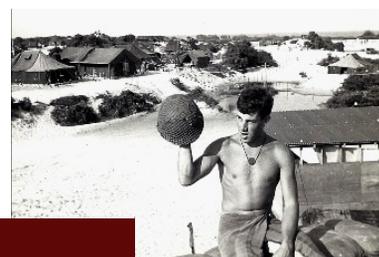
The Unit handled in excess of 2,000 admissions during the 1966/67 period and was tested on a number of occasions. Once was during the Battle of Long Tan and another in Feb 1967 when an APC hit a mine in the Long Hai Hills, resulting in numerous casualties.

Casualties also included Vietnamese civilians, NVA and VC Prisoners of War – some of whom were not all that happy to be in Australian hands, despite the fact they were well treated.

As an operational medic you quickly found that Basic Training was exactly that - "BASIC". But with expert guidance from the doctors our expertise rose quickly.

Thanks to the DUSTOFF choppers, battle casualties had excellent chances of survival with extraction times to hospital being approx 1 hour or so.

**Maurie Benson**  
2 Field Ambulance  
1966/67



## VIETNAM VETERANS HONOUR BOARD UNVEILED

16-May-2018

An Honour Board acknowledging **Parade College's Vietnam War veterans** has been unveiled by long-serving former Parade College teacher John Joss and Old Paradian Paul McCrohan OAM, at a reunion luncheon convened by the Old Paradians' Association.



Ten of the College's 44 surviving veterans were in attendance for the unveiling in the Frank Mount Social Room.

Also present were 22 members of Parade's final-year class of 1968 who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion at the luncheon prior to Parade's 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII football match between Parade and St Joseph's Ferntree Gully handsomely won by the home team.

Amongst the Class of '68 in attendance was the College Captain of that year, Prof. David Kissane AC and Martin Kyne, who later presented the Phonse Kyne Award to Parade's most courageous player afield, Joel Randell.

Also in attendance was Parade College Principal Dr Denis Moore, Deputy Principal Staff Andy Kuppe and members of the College's Leadership team.

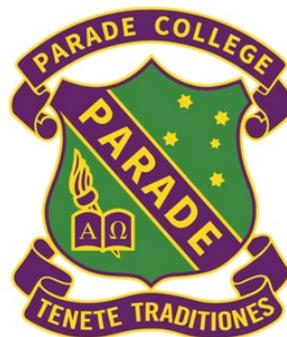
Old Paradians' Association President Lewis Derrico was also there, as was football club President Mike Jolley.

Members of the Executive and Management team from Northpark Private Hospital, with whom the College and the OPA have formed a recent strategic partnership, also joined the luncheon – Finance Manager Melinda Bouquet, Business Development Manager Lisa Aughsteen and Director of Nursing Liz Bognar.

The veterans featured in this team photograph are, standing from left to right, Peter Nihill, Paul McCrohan OAM, Paul Vaughan, Dan McCrohan, Mick Prendergast and Kevin Lane, and seated Ted Heffernan, John Joss, David Millie MBE and Paul Stock.



The names of fifty-five men, whether old Paradians or former teachers, appear on the Honour Board, which will now find a place alongside the World War I and World War II Honour Boards in the Hickey Foyer at the Bundoora campus.



## GEELONG

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

Early indications were that 2021 would be a better year than the previous one, however our hopes of a COVID free year have been tempered with many restrictions remaining in place for the time being.

The State Government's COVID Safe Framework for events makes it very difficult to run public events such as ANZAC Day. Current restrictions limit a public gathering to 1000, with the requirement to record the contact details of all participants, social distancing, single entry and exit points to name a few. In addition, the COVID Safe event plan had to be submitted to the State Government by 14<sup>th</sup> Feb.

At Sub Branch level the Vietnam Veterans Centre re-opened on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan and we held the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. at the Geelong RSL. I have the privilege to again be elected the President of the Geelong SB. This is my 9<sup>th</sup> year in this important public role. Life membership was presented to Dr. Mr. Ted Heffernan, our Patron for over 20 years. There were no nominations for the Tommy Simpson Award this year. Our Welfare team has organised Working Bees at the home of members unable to manage maintenance needs. These have been much appreciated.

We are hopeful of holding our "Pay Day" lunches at the Geelong RSL again this year. These have been an important way to keep in contact with members in the past. The

monthly Pako Sausage sizzles have now been re-instated and provide a welcome source of income for the SB.

Our first death was on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan. when WO Donald Booth, 35 Squadron RAAF (SVN 12/2/68 – 12/2/69), passed away. Don was a much loved member of our Association. ***Rest In Peace- Lest we Forget.*** We have a long list of members who are experiencing various kinds of minor and serious medical problems. Former Vice President, Bernie Clancy, has been operated on for the removal of a brain tumor. Another is having heart surgery. We wish him and all unwell members a speedy recovery.

We made donations of our former museum mannequins to the Camperdown RSL museum and the Cockatoo Rise Veterans Retreat/Museum. Other memorabilia are gradually being returned to those who donated them over the years. This has been a mammoth task. It is now clear the Association will not be returning to Osborne House.

Membership renewals are coming in and we are preparing copy for our first newsletter of the year.

We continue to monitor developments with the proposed sale of Vasey RSL Care, especially the Geelong Vasey Village. We support the resolution of the OEM Sub Branch and welcome an official response from the State VVAA.

Rieny Nieuwenhof

President



So good to finally have a face to face Meeting and Catch Up after a year of enforced isolation. Well done to all who travelled from across Victoria and contributed so well to the ongoing strength of the VVAA Victorian Branch.

Much achieved including robust discussion about issues like ANZAC Day 2021 and the Brereton Report.

Membership continues to be strong and at this time of the year is expected to continue at around 2,000.

# GEELONG (cont'd)

The main focus of our attention has been preparing for ANZAC Day in Geelong.

The Committee decided to support the following:

Dawn Services in Lara, Portarlington, Geelong, Torquay, Ocean Grove, Leopold, Inverleigh, Camperdown, Norlane, Queenscliff & Anglesea.

The Geelong ANZAC March to Johnstone Park.

Laying of wreaths at the North Geelong VV Memorial.

The ANZAC GFL St.Joseph's vs South Barwon Football & Netball games at McDonald Reserve.

The Association had a representative (s) at each of these events.

While ANZAC Day was significantly curtailed this year Geelong still managed to attract a big turn out of veterans, serving Defence personnel, families and supporters for the March down Malop St.



Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park prior to ANZAC Service.

Due to COVID restrictions many veteran members have kept to themselves and have not ventured too far from home.

It was really good to catch up with guys we haven't seen for awhile.



Sandra and John Pepperdene prepare for the March.



We thank Cr. Eddy Kontelj (Veteran Affairs CoGG), John Eren MP, Christine Couzens MP and Richard Marles Member for Corio who laid wreaths at the VV Memorial.



Vietnam veterans form up behind banner.

The Greater Geelong Councillors and local politicians also supported veterans in many services across the Geelong Region. We thank them for their support.



# SUB BRANCHES ~ WHAT'S ON

## GEELONG (cont'd)

Ron & Mary Brandy, Eddy Kontelj and Robyn & Ken Baker at Vietnam Veterans Memorial – ANZAC 2021.

Frank Cunningham represented the Association at the ANZAC GFL Match of the Day at McDonald Reserve.



Later in the day David Sikorski presented the ANZAC Medals to the players judged best on court and best on ground.



David Sikorski, Vice President, announces winners of the ANZAC Medals at the GFL Match of the Day.

Other members represented Vietnam Veterans at various services around our region.

Thank you to all for their contribution.

Camperdown member, Allan Fleming, was also busy in the Camperdown cenotaph.

Replica of the Light Horse parade down Camperdown street for ANZAC March.



### Geelong Veterans ANZAC Luncheon

Close to a hundred veterans and their families gathered at the City of Geelong Bowling Club for lunch.



Thanks to our Social Committee, under the leadership of Neil Smith, there were two Raffle draws with really substantial prizes. Many people walked away with something worthwhile.

The kids also had the opportunity to 'look in the bucket' and grab some great gifts. The meals were of good quality and at \$15 /head very reasonable.

A contingent of members attended the pre-ANZAC TPI Black Tie Dinner at the Geelong RSL Reports suggest it was a great night and enjoyed by all.



# SUB BRANCHES ~ WHAT'S ON

## DVIETS

Like all Sub Branches, we were glad to see the back of 2020 and are looking forward to growing again in 2021.

Our AGM was conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> February with all committee nominating for 2021 and we welcomed Terry Barnes back onto the committee after a couple of years break.

Our Friday Meetings have resumed from the start of 2021 and additionally, our day trips are off and running again. So far this year the busses have taken us to Shepparton, Mansfield, the ferry Queenscliff to Sorrento, and the Noojee Toolshed. Then some self-drives to a three dayer in Echuca, and, in anticipation, Kilmore Races later in May. That was followed by a trip to enjoy the facilities at the Magpie n Stump Hotel, Wandong in June and rounding off the first six months, the guys will enjoy our Whistlestop trip to Riddells Creek.

In the main, committee member Margie Van Poeteren seeks out, organises, and manages the day trips which prove to be very popular amongst the members.

Cheers

Peter Blackman

President DVIets.



DVIETS TRIP TO SHEPPARTON



DVIETS AT NOOJEE

## NORTH WEST MELBOURNE

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

Having got through 2020 without loss of any members I consider that a good year. We had the usual sickies but all is ok.

As we had no functions last year we decided to pay the 2021 membership fees for those who were financial in 2020 just to give a little back to our members.

We have already done one BBQ for Bunnings, Broadmeadows and if we can remain Covid free hope to get a few more.

We had our AGM on 2/2/2021 with only one change that is the addition of an Assistant Secretary Mrs Gail Sutton.

It was great to have Bob Elworthy AM at our AGM as he was able to answer a few questions and point out a few errors in the way we did things.

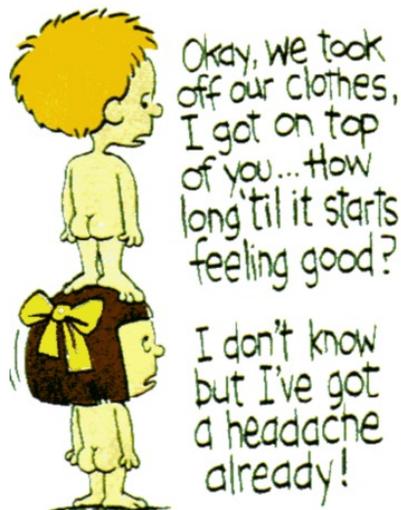
We received our copy of insurance which will enable us to do more Sausage Sizzles - now all we are waiting for now is our Sub-Branch Birthday.

Hope this report finds everyone in reasonable health.

Regards

Tom Clayton

President



## MELBOURNE WEST

Melbourne West Sub-Branch has slowly got back on its' collective feet and undertaken an attempt to resume what we did and enjoyed in 2019. Our weekly gathering place at the Community Centre Hoppers Crossing has re-opened and we thought things were on the improve, but with the extremely tight restrictions imposed by Wyndham Council, getting our members back is not so easy, as many are also concerned with the possibility of catching the virus. Wednesday just gone, 19 May saw 23 members and partners at the Drop In, so we are cautiously optimistic for the coming year.

Our local RSL Clubs are basically back to pre-Covid-19 so we are enjoying the end of month Services Luncheons. Werribee RSL puts on a Services Luncheon on the last Friday of each month, but for April it was brought forward to 23 April with a "Gallipoli" theme and veterans wore their large medals. About 45 enjoyed the luncheon and camaraderie.

Our Sub-Branch has finally started a luncheon at Altona RSL which saw the first being held on 12 March. About 45 members attended and overall the day was successful. The luncheon on Friday 14 May was again well attended and we intend to hold one bi-monthly throughout the year.

While we were hoping to have a full open ceremony for Anzac Day Dawn Service at Werribee Cenotaph, we were restricted again by the local council, however a crowd of between 1200-1500 turned up and no one was turned away. I had the privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of the Sub-Branch during a short service led by the Werribee RSL President and Vietnam Veteran, Daryl Ryan.

Our local schools that we have supported for 15 years or so both had Anzac Day services. The first was at The Grange College on Friday 23 April and our Secretary, Ray Matthew and Vice-President, Vic Pilch, represented us at the college's ceremony.

Our other school ceremony was at Thomas Chirnside Primary School on Monday 26 April where I was asked to address the students. With children from 4 to 12 sitting there attentively listening, it is an easy task and one I look forward to each year. Our wreath was laid by Mrs Di Reynolds, the



widow of a former Sub-Branch member who was responsible in part for the erecting of the school's memorial. The other picture shows the school children seated for the ceremony.

Melbourne West Sub-Branch had the honour of laying a wreath at The Shrine during the Last Post Ceremony on Sunday 9 May. As the theme was the "Battle of Coral" which started in the early hours of 13 May 1968, a Sub-Branch member, Raymond "Bruce" Hicks, who was with 102 Fd Bty, RAA during the first two attacks on the Fire Support Base, laid our wreath and recited the Ode. While we only had a few of the Sub-Branch present, it was an honour to be involved in this moving ceremony.

Regards,

Glen Smith

President



## FRANKSTON

Like most other clubs and associations VVAA Frankston Sub branch has had an interesting start to 2021

Due to Covid restrictions we had our first couple of meetings for the year at the Frankston Naval Club, we combined the meeting with a BBQ to make it a social activity at the same time.

Again, due to restrictions and the uncertainty of things we had a bet each way and had an Anzac Day service at both the Frankston Cenotaph and the Naval Club (see picture). Considering we had only 3 days to plan for the service at the Naval Club we had over 100 people in attendance

Socially we have been having a monthly lunch for our members at various locations around the peninsula and we

are getting a good turnout to these functions. In April we managed to have a sausage sizzle at our local Bunnings.

At our last meeting it was brought up about changing the time for our winter meetings and so we did a survey of all our members and so for the next few months we will be meeting at 1pm

Any Veteran or partner is more than welcome to come along to a meeting, we meet on the first Monday of the month at the Frankston RSL.

For any information please contact President Kelvin on 0432473039 or the Secretary Cheryl on 0409962545

## DIAMOND VALLEY ~ (DVIETS)

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

Like all Sub Branches, we are glad to see the back of 2020 and look forward to growing again in 2021.

Our AGM will be on 7th February and at the time of writing our only applicants are the current Committee and I don't think that it will change.

We managed to resume our Friday get togethers in December and we are now back regularly on a Friday afternoon at our normal venues.

I have been in many places in my life but I've never been in Cahoots. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognises you there.

I have, however been in Sane.

They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends and family. I live close so it's a short drive.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

The Sub Branch has managed to survive COVID without a case of the dreaded disease and we hope that this will continue.

Our activities through 2021 are being sorted out and planning is in progress including a possible trip to Tasmania sometime in September/October.

Looking forward to seeing the faces of the Sub Branches in person and not by Zoom, of which I am now heartily sick of.

Anyway, lets make 2021 a great year.

Cheers

Peter Blackman

President DViets

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense! It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

And, sometimes I think I am in Vincible but life shows me I am not.

People keep telling me I'm in Denial but I'm positive I've never been there before!

I have been in Deepshit many times; the older I get, the easier it is to get there. I actually kind of enjoy it there.

So far, I haven't been in Continent, but my travel agent says it is on the list...

## GIPPSLAND

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

Hi all hope everyone has got through last year OK.

Things are still up in the air after the fires and very little has happened. A lot are still waiting for permits to rebuild but not much of the funds raised have been given out.

On behalf of the Buchan locals I would like to thank the State Branch for the \$7,000 donation. This will be put to good use knowing the locals up there.

COVID 19 - we have been very lucky but not much travel with border lock downs and the ring of steel - the only good thing was the M1 you could leave the City to Stud Road with only having to touch the brake pedal once.

We have had the fires, COVID and now have Ross River Virus so those that wish to come to the Canni Creek Races make sure you bring the mossy repellent with you.

The strain on mental health has taken a bit out of the members but we are bracing ourselves for a good year ahead -we hope.

On the local scene lunches at the Bairnsdale RSL are back in full swing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. All welcome if you are in the area.

The trips away planned for 2020 now have approval to go ahead in 2021 once travel is safe without the fear of lock downs.

Keep Well

Geoff Hopkins (Hoppy)

President

## SWAN HILL

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

A very quiet period of time for our Sub-Branch. Our Vice-President Barney has been regularly contacting our members to check on their health & well being - he's done a mighty job. Secretary "Sailor Pete" has been forwarding all info that comes via Internet, so the members have been kept well informed of the fantastic time we have all been having during COVID-19.

**Fundraising:** Our Friday night raffles at the RSL Club start on Friday 5th. February so we look forward in anticipation of things getting back to normal.

**SOCIAL:** We had our Christmas breakup at Bray's place on 29th. November, a scrumptious feast was had by all of the 28 members in attendance, it was very pleasing to be able to socialise once again, "of course we adhered to social distancing, we had an acre each.

**AGM:** Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 16th. March 2021 at the Swan Hill RSL, all being well Susan McQueen will be in attendance.

Our Sub-Branch wishes all other Sub-Branches a healthy and stress-free year.

Harold Heslop OAM JP.

President.

## BALLARAT

### REPORT TO VVAA STATE COUNCIL

– Feb. 2021.

Our last formal Sub Branch meeting was held in February of 2020. Our fortnightly Sausage sizzles continued on and off through the year, subject to Covid. Unfortunately, Ballarat was forced to pull out from the BVAC setup due to continual disagreement with the representatives of the MBMMC and TPI.

During the last three months, we entered negotiations with the Committee of the Ballarat East Community Men's

Shed to relocate after leaving BVAC. BECS have eagerly welcomed us and have gone out of their way to make us feel at home. The new year shows definite promise in our new home!

Our first Monthly meeting and our AGM for 2021 will be held at our new Location on the 27th January.

Eric Duggan

President

## GOULBURN VALLEY

### LAST DAYS OF THE BINH BA BAZAAR

As the fund raising effort conducted at the Numurkah Market was recently wound-up, we looked back at how it began and the fun and success we have had selling “heaps of stuff” at the “Binh Ba Bazaar”.

Over ten years ago, when looking for a way to raise funds, one of our members (*the Late Joy Tremellen – pictured*) suggested the sub-branch put together a second-hand goods stall at the Bush Market, which was held in Shepparton each year. This idea evolved into us taking a site at the Lions Club market held in Numurkah every second month. Typical of markets, the Numurkah one opens early so our workday started at 7:00 am when we unpacked the goods and displayed them on tables. We certainly noticed the Goulburn Valley frosts in the winter months and discovered how many people you can fit in the caravan, huddled together during a rainstorm. Hot days found us under a portable gazebo or clustered under a tree and keen to pack up before the afternoon heat really got going.

Some of our stock came from members’ donations but a lot was donated left-overs at the conclusion of Garage Sales. You could say the goods over the years varied richly but were sold cheaply. There were children’s toys including a collection of Monster High and Barbie

Dolls complete with accessories, hand tools, camping equipment, kitchen utensils and china (lots of china – and it’s heavy!), books (also heavy), sewing fabric, small furniture, bikes, trikes and even children’s potties. One of our members delivered home grown plants by the trailer load and these were snapped up enthusiastically.

On two occasions all profits were donated to specific projects : the construction of a memorial in Tatura to Robert Mactier VC and towards a Boer War memorial in Canberra. Generally, the profit from the day would be between \$200-\$300 which represents many, many small sales.

As well as the band of workers having fun and making money on our Market Days, the stall was a contact point for new or renewing members and anyone who wanted to talk about the Vietnam War or anything else on their minds for that matter.

### *The workers gather to de-brief the success of the day*



## FRANKSTON

Frankston is like most of the metropolitan Sub Branches, due to the COVID-19 virus we haven't been able to do much at all this year.

I think most members and their families have found 2020 to be a difficult year.

In between to lockdown our coffee group managed to hold the group gatherings in member's garages, and now that it is over but the rules are still slowing things down the guys are meeting at the Frankston Naval club, usually having a cuppa and a sausage in bread. They are so happy to be back together again.

The committee has tried to keep in touch with most of the members either by email with jokes and what's happening details or via phone calls

Remembrance Day was a quiet affair; I have included a photo of one of our members laying a wreath at the Cenotaph.

On the brighter side we are holding our first get together on the 10<sup>th</sup> December at the Frankston Naval Club - this will be just a fun day with a BBQ and some raffles

Let's hope that 2021 will be a better year and we can enjoy some activities

At this time Frankston would like to wish all of you a safe and happy Christmas and a great new year



## Veterans Wellness Programs

## DVA Pays

for the clinically necessary treatment

Entitled Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients may be referred for clinically necessary Exercise Physiology treatment by their General Practitioner on a valid D904 referral form.

**Gold Card Holders** are entitled to clinically necessary treatment covered by DVA's health care arrangements for all health conditions.

**White Card Holders** are entitled to clinically necessary treatment for an accepted disability ie: an injury or disease accepted by DVA as caused by war.

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[njfwellness.com.au](http://njfwellness.com.au)

## Historic 1967 Australian LIFE Magazine found:

Some 47 years after the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, a 1967 March edition of LIFE magazine has been uncovered in the Geelong suburb of Belmont.

Brothers, James and Robin Ellis (former Army National Servicemen) found the publication when sorting their parent's home effects after their 100 year old widowed mother; Mrs. Nell Ellis, was admitted to a Whittington nursing home.

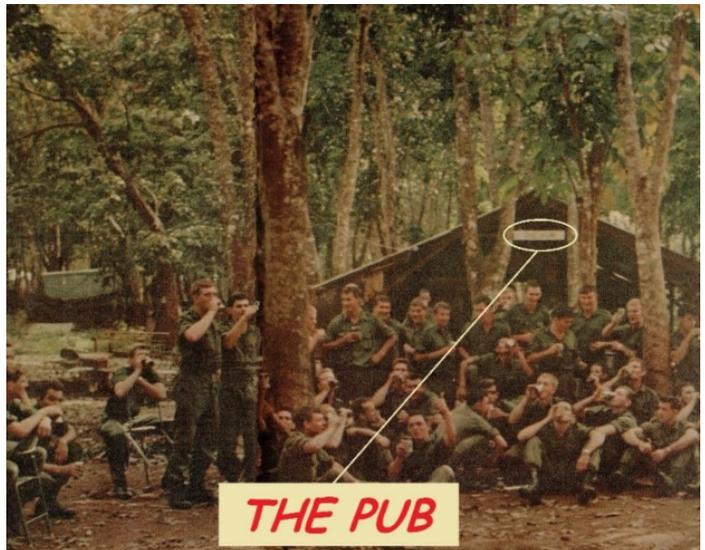
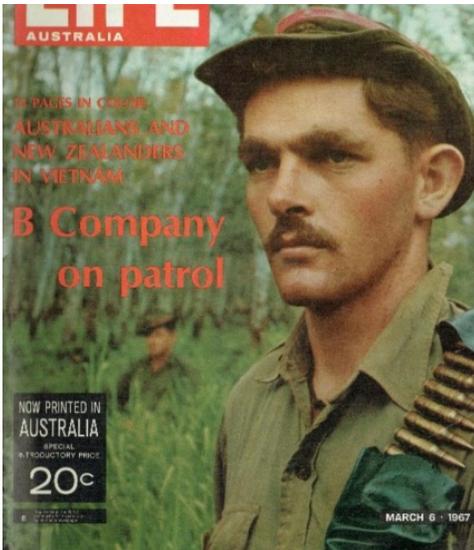
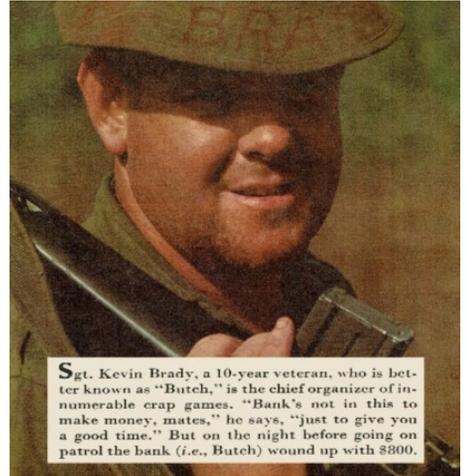
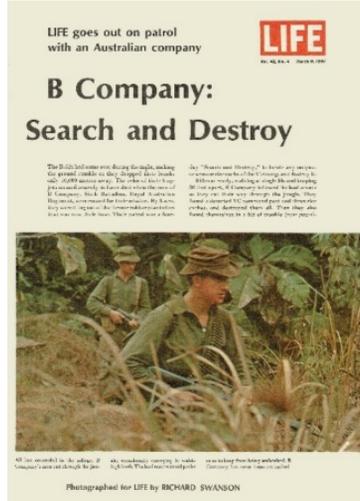
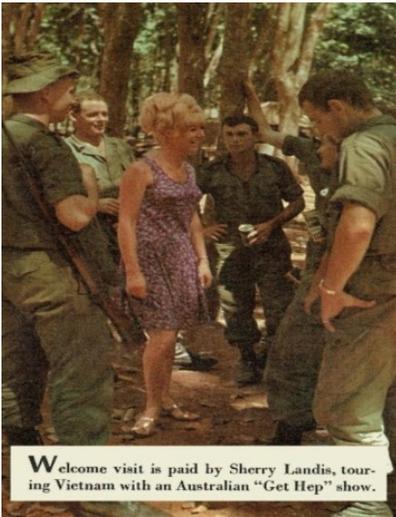
The magazine contains 2 nostalgic articles and 15 photos of B Company 6 Battalion - Royal Australian Regiment (infantry) as well as 161 Battery - Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery during their 1966/67 tours in the Vietnam war. 5 of the 15 photos are depicted below.

The periodical is available for viewing (with an optional hot brew & chat) at the Vietnam Veterans Centre (VVC) 31 Mount Pleasant Road Belmont, Mon - Wed - Fri, 10am > 2pm.

(Craftsman) James Francis Ellis (Jim) born in Ballarat, currently resides in Grovedale. He served with 17 Construction Squadron Engineers (RAEME) from 12th Dec 66 until 27th Sept 1967. His brother Robin (Rob) Royal Australian Army Dental Corp, was home posted to 35 Dental Unit at Holsworthy. Ph.VVC (03) 5243 3700 on above days/times prior to visiting.

Rob and Jim co-ordinate a social badminton exercise group for Vietnam veterans and others in Belmont.

Contact Rob on 0491 704 380 for more information. Andy Treffry - RAEME - 5RAR 1969



# Taking care of business starts with taking care of yourself.

The Partners in Wellbeing Helpline is there to help small business owners and their employees manage feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

These have been challenging times for all Victorians, but if you're a small business owner you've probably been hit harder than most.

Not only have you battled to keep your business going through distressing events like the COVID-19 pandemic, you've also felt responsible for your family and employees.

So it's only natural that you might sometimes feel stressed, worried or overwhelmed.

As a small business owner, you're probably used to always handling problems on your own. But you don't have to. And when it comes to your mental wellbeing, you really shouldn't.

**Because your mental health is crucial to the health of your business.**



## The Partners in Wellbeing Helpline.

As part of the Victorian Government's \$26 million Wellbeing and Mental Health Support program for small businesses, the Partners in Wellbeing Helpline is there to support you and your employees.

The Helpline offers free and confidential one-on-one access to highly experienced wellbeing and mental health counsellors who understand exactly what you're going through.

They have the skills and insights to improve your sense of wellbeing, help you develop coping strategies, and provide the advice and support you need to get through this difficult time.

## Free financial counselling and advice.

Since much of the stress you are experiencing may involve financial issues, the Partners in Wellbeing Helpline can also connect you to specialist financial counsellors.

This service is also free, providing access to financial experts who can provide business and personal advice, along with information and support on how to manage debt and other financial concerns.

## Three leading wellbeing agencies working together.

Partners in Wellbeing is a partnership of three community-based counselling organisations that have brought together their individual skills to deliver a stronger, more comprehensive wellbeing support service.

With many years experience between them, you can rely on their counsellors to provide the very best in mental wellbeing support.

## There for you seven days a week.

Small business owners can call the Partners in Wellbeing Helpline on 1300 375 330 seven days a week. Our wellbeing counsellors are available from 9am to 10pm on weekdays and from 9am to 5pm on weekends.

## More support for small business.

The Partners in Wellbeing Helpline is just one of a number of Victorian Government programs and resources available to help small businesses like yours. For the full range of services, please visit [www.business.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-business-information](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-business-information)

## Call 1300 375 330

It's important to remember that the emotions you're experiencing don't necessarily mean anything is wrong. They're usually perfectly normal.

However, if the feelings of distress and anxiety continue over a period of weeks, we strongly recommend you call the Partners in Wellbeing Helpline.

Because taking care of business starts with taking care of your own wellbeing. Call 1300 375 330.

**PARTNERS IN  
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**1300 375 330**

9am-10pm Mon-Fri  
9am-5pm Sat/Sun

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.



## DVA - Saying goodbye to MyAccount

Services that veterans and their families currently use in MyAccount are being moved into MyService.

19 February 2021

The need for better online services has never been more important. Over the next six months, we will increase the services you can access on MyService. We will also be moving to a single, modern online platform for veterans to manage their business with DVA. To do this, MyAccount services are being moved to MyService over the coming months and we will say goodbye to MyAccount later this year.

In addition to managing your income support needs, you can already use MyService to book transport and claim for travel reimbursements for approved medical treatment.

From March, you will be able to use MyService to access official letters that confirm your DVA payments

and concession entitlements. If you use MyAccount, the same letters will be available to you in MyService.

When the new services become available in MyService you will notice that we ask some questions differently. That's because we have taken on board feedback and not only simplified the way we ask for information, but reduced the amount we ask for.

‘The questions MyService asks are simpler because MyService makes better use of information that you have already told us,’ said Glen Yeomans, DVA’s Director for MyService. ‘This means that you don’t need to tell us your story every time you want to make a claim.’

‘MyService will be the place for all your DVA online needs when MyAccount is no longer available. Of course, if you prefer to call us or submit a paper form you will still be able to do that. We are excited to be providing you with simpler ways to transact with us online.’

For more information and to register for a MyService account, visit [dva.gov.au/myservice](http://dva.gov.au/myservice).





# national vietnam veterans museum

At a recent presentation to VVAA National an architect depiction of what YOUR MUSEUM will look like after relocation to their new site on Phillip Island was tabled and discussed.

The final design and other details may not yet be complete but the “Museum Story” is moving ahead.

An exciting development for the NVVM and a testimony to the tireless dedicated work put in by so many volunteers, and more recently, the NVVM Board.

A big step forward from days when John Methven OAM hauled his trailer around Australia collecting various Vietnam related items - the birth of the Museum.





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