

# Veterans Support Centre



## CONTACT FRONT

1st Edition March 2020

Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association (NSW)  
Hastings Manning Macleay Branch Inc.

### Australian Military Dogs Lost in Action



Merlin  
KIA 31/08/2007



Razz  
KIA 21/09/07



Andy  
KIA 23/11/07



Nova  
KIA 23/10/09



Herbie  
KIA 07/06/10



Quake  
KIA 25/06/2012



Devil  
KIA 02/08/2012



Fax  
KIA 06/01/2013

*I question not your commands  
I follow faithfully wherever you go  
I pledge my loyalty no matter what  
I share the danger of your domain  
and will readily lay down my life for yours...  
...for in this moment we are one*



Lucky  
MIA 06/07/11



Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant	pg 5	Photographic Memoires, John Noble	pgs 20, 21
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*There are NO COSTS to access the services such as Pensions, Welfare and advice provided by Veterans Support Centre, Port Macquarie*

*"The Commonwealth has not participated in the research, production or exercised editorial control over the Activity or its contents. The views expressed and conclusions reached herein do not necessarily represent those of the Commonwealth, which expressly disclaims any responsibility for the content or the accuracy of the Activity".*

## Mental health - Who do I contact if I, or someone I know, needs help now?

If you need immediate emergency assistance: Call 000

**For immediate counselling, advice and support**

**Open Arms** — Veterans & Families Counselling (24/7): 1800 011 046

**Lifeline** (24/7): 13 11 14

**Suicide Call Back Service** (24/7): 1300 659 467

**Open Arms** — Veterans & Families Counselling

All veterans with at least one day continuous full time service (CFTS) and their immediate family members are entitled to free confidential mental health support services for life through **Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling**

For help, information or to check eligibility for the Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling contact them on 1800 011 046 or visit Open Arms - Veterans and Families Counselling

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY .....	000
Port Macquarie Base Hospital.....	5524 2000
Wauchope District Hospital.....	6580 8000
Kempsey District Hospital.....	6561 2600
VVCS (Veteran's 24/7 crisis line).....	1800 011 046
Lifeline.....	13 11 14

Every veteran, ex-Service person who deploys or not, or is injured, deserves a lifestyle and better treatment than is currently available.

Every veteran should be able to successfully attain their rights to pensions with a simple expedient system through DVA. Yet we still have veterans unaware of their rights and entitlements about what they may be entitled to and where and how to apply or file a claim.

Through your will, you have the power to make a difference. Any gift you bequest to our Sub-Branch, HMMVPPAA, no matter how small, can and will assist a fellow veteran by assisting us to continue our services.

### DVA Media Releases and Ministerial Speeches

A large number of DVA Media Releases and other publications are available for your information.

A copy of the full text and other less topical releases may be obtained by visiting

<http://minister.dva.gov.au/media.releases.htm>

**You can also subscribe to receive all releases to your computer**

or Email a request to us at [hmmvppaa@bigpond.com](mailto:hmmvppaa@bigpond.com)

or Phone us on **6581 5230**

or visit our office at **Veterans Support Centre** if you require assistance

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## From the Editor's Desk

Hello,

I hope that you have had a peaceful start to the year and that you and your loved ones are safe from the recent disasters.

I was asked, after the Townsville floods, "Why doesn't the Army get stuck in to help?" I wonder how many times folk ask this question - it certainly made me prepare a better answer than I was able to give at the time and also enabled me to better answer the lack of knowledge of people as to what our Defence personnel actually quietly get done. Defence does not broadcast much of its work of course.

I have taken space in this Newsletter to print (with DoD permission) some of the Defence website images of their involvement in the fires of NSW and Victoria as a small tribute to them and to all of the emergency responders, volunteers and locals who just get on with what they need to do, sometimes to a tragic result and often at great personal loss to themselves. Of course, this event is just one (albeit a big one) of the many disasters and events that they support. (see pages 36, 37)

If you want to see what Defence is up to currently, go to the website at the bottom of the page. Click on the Service you want (Navy, Army or Air Force) and enjoy the pictures and stories. The History tab is full of interesting articles too and I have used some in this and previous Newsletters.

If anyone asks you about Defence roles in the current fire disasters, there is a long list of the logistical support given from 8th Nov 2019 and still on going, the personnel and equipment provided, the flights in and out of the firegrounds and bases, ships, food, accommodation and so much more on the site below. Of course early January saw thousands of Reserve members deployed, as well as many disaster response organisations, to deal with the huge task of clearing and restoring the damaged areas and doing some of the less pleasant work that needs to be done to allow folk to get on with rebuilding their lives.

Our beautiful country is so much better for the thousands of volunteers in every aspect of our lives. Thank you one and all.

'Til next time, Jill Opie, Editor

<https://www.defence.gov.au>



**Jill Opie, Editor**

Cover photo sources - LHS Vietnamroll website (J Quane) and RHS DoD Army website

## Vale Charles Edmondson 15th Nov 1926 - 11 Nov 2019

Charles Edmondson was a veteran of the Korean War. Charles was a member of the Veterans Support Centre for many years, as a volunteer and helper in many roles, also as a veteran supporting other veterans.

He most recently ran the front desk, welcoming veterans and visitors to the Centre and dealing with queries. He loved meeting people and would tell his war stories for as long as they were able to listen. He was also a support to the younger veterans (of Soldier On organisation) who attended our Thursday lunch get togethers. Charles passed away peacefully and was farewelled on 19th November 2019 by his family and friends and a representation from the Veterans Support Centre. He was also an active member of the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club and members of the Club were present. He was also farewelled by fellow members of the RSL, Marine Rescue and PROBUS, all organisations of which he was an active member.

Our condolences are offered to his family, veterans and friends and all who knew this special man.

Rest in peace mate, you will be missed by all of us.



### **In Memory of Charles Edmondson**

Charles Edmondson was born on 15 Nov 1926 in Leeton, NSW the only child of Vivian Edward and Kathleen Edmondson.

He was educated at Christian Brothers in Sydney. He later went on to study Communications and Engineering at University. He spent many happy years working for the Army and travelled widely to many countries including PNG, Japan and Korea. He worked at the Snowy Mountains Scheme in data communications.

Charles was married in 1959 until 1976 and together he and his wife had two sons, Peter and Craig.

Charles married Pat in 1980 and together they enjoyed 32 years of a happy and fulfilling marriage. There were four children from Pat's former marriage, Christopher, Anthony, Gregory and Evan.

Charles interests included Ham Radio, Boating, a Discussion Group and fishing. He joined the Masonic Lodge many years ago and earned three degrees in the Blue Lodge and 27 degrees in the Red Lodge. He also enjoyed singing in the Masonic Choir.

Charles and Pat contributed significantly to the National Servicemen's Association. Charles was a founding member of the National Servicemen's Association and proactive in forming the group.

Charles will be greatly missed by the National Servicemen's Association, the Vietnam Veterans, Probus, the Radio Club and all of us gathered today.

Taken from the Thanksgiving Service Order Sheet

### **The Korean War**

During 1951, the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), fighting as part of a British Commonwealth Brigade in Korea, was engaged in the two most significant and commemorated battles of the Australian Army's deployment to the three-year Korean War.

The battles of Kapyong (23–24 April 1951) and Maryang San (2–8 October 1951) were significant confrontations with a numerically superior enemy force, and saw 3 RAR win the first honours for the newly formed Royal Australian Regiment.

Kapyong was a defensive operation, while Maryang San was an offensive operation. Both however, demonstrated 3 RAR's ability to conduct close combat with great skill and courage under different tactical circumstances, great adversity, and against overwhelming numbers. Kapyong and Maryang San are Battle Honours proudly emblazoned on the Colours of the Royal Australian Regiment. **By Dr Andrew Richardson**

## Vale Graham John Waterton 19th March 1946 - 16th February 2020

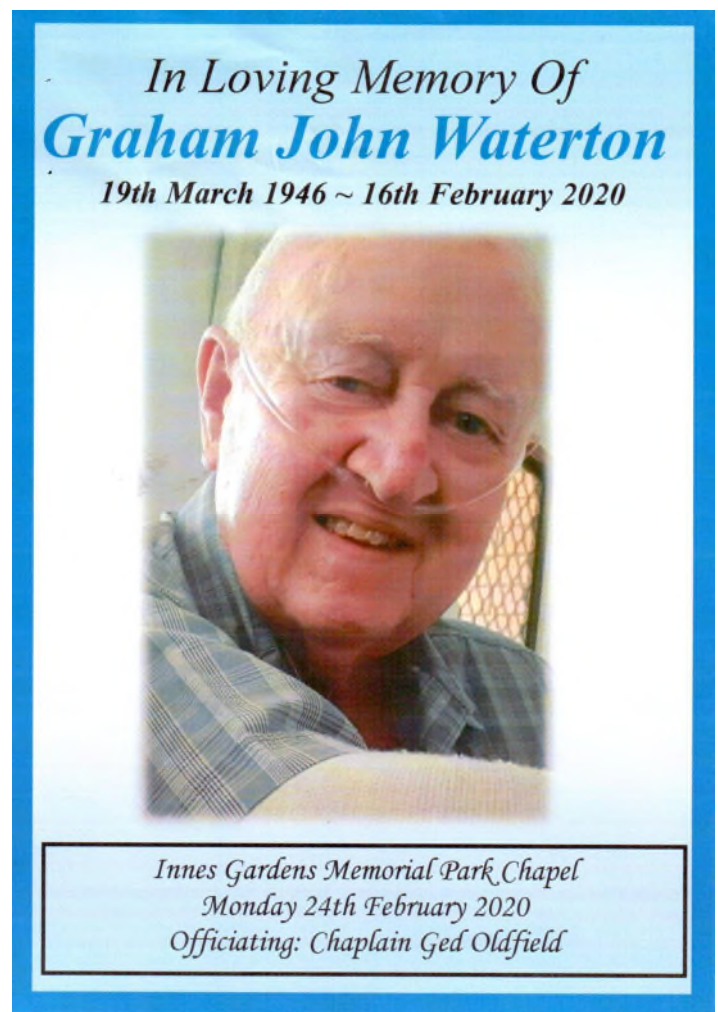
A number of members from the Veterans Support Centre attended a Memorial Service for Graham Waterton. Graham was remembered at the Memorial Service on 24th February as a loving family man, a dedicated hard working head of his family, a lover of armaments and collectables.

His son related many different sides of the his father and the resilience that he showed in making his life the best that he could, even through the struggles that ill health brought.

Graham was a member of the Civilian Militia for Australia (now known as the Reserves), and member of the RAAF. He was also a member of 1 Commando Regt.

We offer our condolences to his widow Sandra and to his family, veterans and friends.

The 1st Commando Regiment is an Australian Army Reserve special forces unit part of Special Operations Command with an integrated structure of regular soldiers and reserve soldiers, which together with the full-time Australian Army 2nd Commando Regiment, provides the Commando capability to Special Operations Command. Raised in 1955 it is the oldest unit within Special Operations Command and in 2008 deployed to Afghanistan to become the first Australian Army Reserve force element on combat operations since World War II.



Parliament has passed the Australian Veterans' Recognition (Putting Veterans and their Families First) Bill 2019.

For those who have applied for the Covenant, DVA have begun mailing out Covenant packs with the Oath and Pin. Arrangements are also being finalised to launch the Veteran Card business benefits component of the package soon.

If you have not already applied for the Covenant, you can do so online using MyService.

For more information, visit: <https://www.dva.gov.au/benefits-and-payments/australian-defence-veterans-covenant>

## Tracker Dogs - a profile of War Heroes



**Left** - Tracker Dog Marcus on duty, also shown is Caesar.

War heroes are often modest people. When questioned about their experiences many are reluctant to speak or say only that they were in the right (or wrong!) place at the right time, and anyone would have done the same.

Of course our canine heroes cannot speak but were courageous none the less. They were silent witnesses to war, who gave their all and were much loved by the troops they served with. As they cannot speak for themselves, then we must tell their stories for them. But what makes their tales even more remarkable is that these Aussie tracker dogs came from humble beginnings: the Sydney dog shelter no less.

### **Shelter Dogs Enlisted**

In 1966 the Australian Armed Services were looking for dogs to train for active service. They had specific requirements: the dogs had to be black, preferably Labradors or Lab crosses, and be good at following a scent.

In total 11 shelter dogs, at a cost of \$2 each, were obtained from the Sydney dog shelter and trained up to become tracker dogs. All of the dogs were named after Roman Emperors – Cassius, Tiber, Justin, Marcus, Janus, Julian, Caesar, Milo, Trajan, Juno, Marcian

### **Tracker Training**

Each dog received nine to ten months of training in Australia, before being shipped out to Vietnam. Each canine recruit was expected to serve a three year tour of duty, which according to the dog handlers who served with them, was a year too long. Indeed, of these canine recruits, ten of the eleven survived to retirement, but although physically intact some bore the mental scars of war.

### **Lance Corporal Ferguson & Marcus** (photo at top right)

From Melbourne, Australia, Lance Corporal Dennis 'Fergie' Ferguson, handled a dog called Marcus. Ferguson recounted how his dog experienced a particularly vicious night-time attack. Trapped by a barrage of mortar fire and machine gun flack, Marcus suffered the canine equivalent of shell-shock. Under fearsome fire the dog bolted and harmed himself on barbed wire. Thereafter the dog was mentally scarred by the assault and was never the same afterwards, and eventually retired ahead of schedule.

As with all the tracker dogs, Marcus' story has a bittersweet ending. The dog bravely completed two tours of duty before retirement. His handler, Ferguson, applied to the authorities adopt Marcus and take him back to Australia, and he even volunteered to pay the quarantine fees himself.

But Ferguson's application was denied. Despite further pleas and appeals, and with no adequate explanation given, the Army ordered that Marcus (and all other tracker dogs) remain in Vietnam. This traumatized Ferguson almost as deeply as the war he had endured with Marcus at his side. Marcus was adopted by Australian nationals in Saigon.

### **The Tracker Dog Team - So why were dogs taken to Vietnam?**

The dogs belonging to US and Allied forces are credited with saving 10,000 lives. They did this by leading teams to track down enemy insurgents in the jungle, and prevent them mounting ambushes.

Each dog unit was made up of a dog and his handler, a coverman (a personal bodyguard for the dog and handler), two visual trackers, a machine gunner, and a signalman. The team were airlifted into the jungle by helicopter. By all accounts the dogs loved these helicopter trips as the air was much cooler at altitude, in contrast to the sweltering heat at ground level.

Once in position, the dog tracked the enemy and when located, pointed with either his nose or a paw to alert the rest of the team. What then ensued was often an exchange of gunfire, as the allies attempted to 'neutralize' the enemy. With a dog's sensitive hearing one can only imagine how painful this fire must have been to them.

However, when talking generally it's easy to feel removed from the reality of war. To bring things back into focus let's look at some of these dogs as individuals.

### **Private Haran & Caesar**

At the Sydney shelter Private Haran chose Caesar, a black lab cross. They trained together in Australia for nine months, but as the date for their deployment to Vietnam drew closer, Haran held private doubts about whether his dog was ready.

Then came a call from the NSW Police. A young girl had gone missing from a playground and as a last resort the police asked Haran if Caesar could follow her trail. Much to Haran's delight, without hesitation Caesar picked up her scent and led the police through the city to find the missing girl.



This early bond between Haran and Caesar saw them perform many successful missions in the field of war. The pair became a firmly bonded team, so much so that Caesar saved Haran's life.

The team stumbled onto a clearing in the jungle, which Caesar immediately backed out of, and seeing his master about to step forward, the dog promptly sat on his feet to stop him. A short time later the team realized the clearing was booby trapped with mines, and to have progressed would have been devastating.

**Above** - Tracker dog Caesar, including taking a rest during the farewell parade at Enoggera in 1967

**Right** - Australian Tracker dog Justin on patrol in Vietnam



### Lance Corporal Brett Charlton & Justin

These two sound like a pair of characters. Charlton (from Northampton, Western Australia) seems rather impressed his dog's rations. Justin's food came in 20 L drums and was the consistency of hamburger patties. As well as working together, Charlton admitted to sharing rations as the dog food tasted better than combat rations.

Charlton recognized that his dog, Justin, hated the noise of war but put up with it. Perhaps this accounts for why Justin was not always perfectly disciplined. Indeed, he was formally charged with military offences such as disorderly conduct (for attacking a fellow dog), and conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline (when he destroyed government property).

Harsh as it sounds the Commanding Officer found Justin guilty and the dog was confined to kennels for two weeks, on half rations. But on the plus side perhaps Justin appreciated the break and one can only hope that Charlton smuggled in extra food.

### A Last Goodbye

The bond between man and dog is a strong one at the best of times. Imagine trusting a dog with your life, living together, depending on each other – only to be told by the authorities that you couldn't keep that dog in happier times. This is what happened to those Aussie tracker dogs.

At the end of their tour of duty Private Haran recounts saying goodbye from Caesar for the last time. The dog was in his cage when Haran took his final farewell. Stealing himself, Haran stood up and walked away for the last time.

He stole a glance behind to see Caesar had picked up his bowl, expecting to be fed. As Haran continued walking the bowl dropped to the ground with a crash. As Haran put it, "I felt this ton of lead just fall straight through me from the top to the bottom."

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

Indeed, because the dogs were denied passage back to Australia, Haran talked of them being 'abandoned'.

In one case, the bereaved parents of a fatally injured servicemen, Garry Polglase, appealed to adopt his dog, Julian. Despite questions raised in Parliament and a public campaign to raise the money to cover quarantine costs for all tracker dogs, their request was steadfastly refused. The Army remained resolute.

However, in a slight softening of stance, they did ensure all dogs were adopted as pets by diplomatic or embassy staff in Saigon, so they ended their days by the hearth, albeit on a foreign shore.

**Tracker dogs of Australia, we salute your memory.**

Source - Australian War Memorial archives and photos, puppytales website

## GOLD CARD

The Gold Card - 'DVA Health Card – All Conditions within Australia' and 'DVA Health Card – Totally & Permanently Incapacitated' gives you access to a wide range of public and private health care services, for the treatment, at the department's expense, of all your health care conditions whether war or service related or not.

### Aged 70 + ?

You are entitled to a Gold Card even if you have never made a claim for your war or service related health condition if you have qualifying service.

Apply to DVA or talk to Compensation Advocate Mike or Welfare Officer Peter  
Ring for an appointment - 6581 5230



The DVA website has Fact Sheets about a huge range of benefits that may be available to you or your partner.

One recent fact sheet is **IS45 - Partner Service Pension** and tells of when a partner may be eligible for a pension income based on your qualifying service. It is income and asset tested for those on low income.

If you need help accessing DVA's website, call the VSC for help



The **VPPAA** is dedicated to the welfare of all Veterans, Peacekeepers and Peacemakers, ex-service and serving personnel and their families. If you, or someone you know, is ill and you suspect the illness may be a result of military service, please do not hesitate to consult one of our trained volunteers.

**We are here to help you and there is no cost associated with our services.**



**Serving and Supporting the Veteran Community on the Manning North Coast NSW**

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Store 119 Horton St Port Macquarie Super Store Phone:

**(02) 6583 2134**

Shop 8, 100 Ocean Drive, Lighthouse Plaza Port Macquarie

**(02) 6582 0914**

Shop 3-5, 88 Bold St Haven Plaza Corner of Bold St & Tunis St, Laurieton

**(02) 6559 9700**

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# General Business– Your Office



**Our office is open weekdays - phone or call in 10am - 2pm**

## **Committee Meetings:**

Second Thursday every month held at Unit 30, 35 Merrigal Road, Port Macquarie, immediately following the Luncheon Clean up. However the Committee may determine an alternative location and day from time to time.

Annual General Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements are available at the office.

## **Thank you:**

To all donors, supporters and advertisers: Your continued support helps us to keep our doors open for veterans, serving and ex-serving personnel who need our help. Members are encouraged to support businesses whose advertisements appear in this newsletter.

## **Contributions Welcome:**

Please send any letters, stories, questions, comments, poems, jokes, photos etc to The Editor, Contact Front, PO Box 5330, Port Macquarie NSW 2444. All such submissions are subject to copyright laws, may be edited and remain the property of VPPAA Sub-Branch unless otherwise agreed. All submissions received will be considered for publication, but will not necessarily be accepted. No correspondence regarding acceptance or otherwise will be entered into.

## **Take a break**



## **THURSDAYS**

Join us on Thursday mornings from about 10am for an informal get together. Find out what's happening with veteran's issues, catch up with old and new friends or just have a chat over a cup of coffee or tea.

These informal mornings are followed by **OUR FAMOUS \$5 LUNCH**

HELP SUPPORT US to keep a candle in the window burning, to help someone just like you, as we have helped so many in the past.

**PLEASE if you go into hospital, ring us** or have someone ring us and let us know.

Even though we do a ring around at least 3 times a year, we have members go into hospital and we don't know. Even if it is an out of town hospitalisation like Sydney we can organise a visit.



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Since July 2019, two of our Port Macquarie Soldier On veterans have been running the "Contact Front" radio show - Adrian Bucci - left and Paul Davey - right

## Tiber, the tracker dog who went missing from Coral

In May 1968, the 1st Australian Task Force in Vietnam fought off a series of fierce attacks near Bien Hoa city that were part of a “mini-Tet” offensive mounted by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the actions, Australian War Memorial Head of Military History Ashley Ekins has written a gripping account of the first attack on Fire Support Base (FSB) Coral for an issue of *Wartime*.

When the second assault on FSB Coral came just two nights later, the noise of bursting mortars, bright flashes from gun fire, and intense activity caused one Australian to flee: a tracker dog named Tiber broke loose from his handler and took off across the battlefield, into the dark.

Tiber was one of 11 tracker dogs who served with Australian forces in Vietnam between April 1967 and September 1971. The black Labradors were trained from the age of about 10 months. Upon their arrival in Vietnam two dogs were assigned to each of the Australian battalions.

The dogs, along with their handlers, two visual trackers, a machine-gunner, and a signaller, made up a tracker team. Tracker teams were called out to follow enemy trails or locate suspected enemy hideouts after contact with Australian soldiers. After being airlifted by helicopter into the area of operation, the dogs would be put on to the scent of the retreating enemy.

By and large the dogs performed well, and at least three were each credited with five or more enemy “kills”. Cassius, one of the first two trial tracker dogs to arrive in Vietnam, was the only dog to die on duty. Just six weeks into his deployment, Cassius died from heat exhaustion while on a training run in the sand dunes around Vung Tau, on 12 May 1967.

Tiber arrived in Vietnam later that month to replace Cassius. He was almost one year into his tour of duty with 1RAR when he went missing during the attack at Fire Support Base Coral on 15–16 May 1968.

Australian war correspondent Pat Burgess told Tiber’s story in the *Daily Telegraph* in October 1971 under the headline, “The day Tiber turned chicken in the face of the enemy”. Burgess wrote that during the first attack on Coral, Tiber’s handler Private Bryan Meehan had laid on top of the dog in a “narrow fighting pit” for hours:

*Together they felt the shock waves from the mortars. They saw the yellow flame from the tree-bursts. They heard and felt the passing of a fragment or a bullet.*

Tiber with his handler Lance Corporal Norm Cameron of 7RAR during Operation Paddington, July 1967. Tiber was later assigned to 1RAR and handler Private Bryan Meehan.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

COL/67/0552/VN

## Contd

When the enemy returned two nights later, Meehan chained up Tiber beside him — “but this time, he couldn’t hold him”, Burgess wrote:

*Tiber broke the chain and took off through the area where I Battalion soldiers were fighting hand-to-hand, through the mortars and rockets, to the perimeter, where our own shells were falling.*

The dog had apparently been frightened by the explosion of a rocket-propelled grenade, just metres away from him. Lex McAulay adds to the account of Tiber’s disappearance during the action in his book, *The Battle of Coral*:

*Frightened by the horrendous night, Tiber, one of the dogs from Les Tranter’s tracker teams, broke loose from its handler and fled across the battlefield, heading for Mick Bindley’s comms centre. Tranter radioed an urgent message, Bindley looked out, saw the dog, leaped out, chased it and made “one of my less successful rugby tackles at it and missed, then asked myself the very reasonable question: what the hell was I doing chasing a dog around at this time of night? And very smartly returned to the pit”.*

Burgess reported that Tiber “slunk back into the Australian lines” around 10 o’clock the next morning.

*Bryan said: “You look real ashamed, don’t you? So you reckon you’re going to get a hiding?” He lay down on Bryan’s boots, with his head turned away. Bryan Meehan, aged 21, just gave him a pat and a drink. “I don’t blame you for going over the hill, old boy,” he said. “I didn’t like it much either. If I had four legs and could move as fast, I might have taken off, too.”*

In August 1969, a report by Australian Associated Press war correspondent Robin Strathdee was published in Australian newspapers stating that Tiber was “shell-shocked and spends days wandering aimlessly”. The story led to a ministerial enquiry into the canine’s condition, and whether he was “currently employed”. The response came back:

*Three dogs held by 5RAR. All are fit. Two are working. Dog Tiber is not working. Tiber took part in operations with 1RAR at FSB Coral last year and since then has not been an efficient tracker.*

*Strathdee’s opinion is a personal one. Tiber is happy, friendly and shows no outward sign of neuroses. He is no more aimless than any domestic pet. Latest veterinary report is that Tiber is well adjusted but possibly lazy.*

Tiber was retired in June 1970 and transferred to a new home with staff at the Australian Embassy in Saigon. His canine comrades were similarly re-housed with civilian owners in Saigon following their service.



Tracker dogs Tiber (front) and Justin (rear) wait to carry out helicopter winching training with their handlers and soldiers from 7RAR in Nui Dat, 1967.



Tiber with his new owners, Gordon and Roslyn Selleck, who were working at the Australian Embassy in Saigon in 1970. Tiber has his Vietnam campaign ribbons on his collar.

Source - Military History Section, AWM, author Emma Campbell



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**PHONE: 6562 8999**

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P 02 6562 8999

F 02 6562 4999

Shop 7—14 Clyde Street

#### PORT MACQUARIE

P 02 6584 4584

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Port Macquarie GP Super Clinic  
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#### SOUTH WEST ROCKS

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F 02 6566 7040

289-293 Gregory Street

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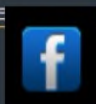
Physiotherapy | Exercise physiology | Clinical Pilates | Yoga  
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**Above left** - Barry Lynch and Bill Wagner get the table organised for the “**Mateship Munchies**”

**Above right** - and our first 2 veterans take the best seats in the house (near the nibbles)

Handouts were prepared with recipe booklets, health information, mental health leaflets (from **Lifeline** and **Beyond Blue**) wellness booklets, healthy snacks and a few little surprises for everyone attending.



**Hearing Australia representative Lucinda** came along to join us and talked to veterans about the ways that veterans with hearing difficulties could be helped starting with free testing and advice. She also told us all about headphones that can be used to enable radio and TV listening to be a more enjoyable experience and adjusted to the persons' needs. See their ad on page 31 for contact details



First Aid advice was given from veteran Mike on how to help a possible stroke or heart attack victim and how to stock a home first aid kit.

Work continued in the office that day, **Left** Bill Starrenberg renewing Greg Walsh's membership and **Right** Lyn Hancock and Peter Dorman work on the admin and the finances respectively.





President, Bill Wagner, welcomes veterans and their partners as well as our speakers and tells them about Veterans Health Week



**Peter Clark from Healthier You Dietetics, Port Macquarie** talks to veterans about how small changes can have big a big affect on your health. His suggestion of the 5 essential in a persons diet is reproduced over the page. He also handed out information leaflets and food samples to everyone.

See their ad on pg 12 for further contact details

## "Mateship Munchies"

### VSC event for Veterans Health Week 2019



How good is it to see younger veterans joining our Vietnam Veterans for a shared meal and mateship. Our tables, filled with veterans and our speakers, along with good food and some family members, made it a great event.



**Peter Clark of Healthier You Dietetics, Port Macquarie talked to veterans at the “Mateship Munchies” event about good foods to eat and how to look after yourself, this is his Fact Sheet printed below so that we can all have a go at putting the 5 foods regularly into our diet.**

We often hear the term “superfoods” in the media. From a nutritional perspective, the term is a misnomer as all food is super. But the term is becoming more widely used to describe some foods which are rich in a variety of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals which are good for our health. Rather than debating if we should use the term or not, let’s look at the health benefits of 5 foods to show how super they can be. In no particular order, some great foods to include as a regular part of your diet are:

**1. Blueberries:** The most antioxidant-rich fruit available, blueberries are great for boosting your immune system and preventing infections. They also contain compounds that aid in reducing LDL, or “bad cholesterol”, and their vitamin and mineral content (A, B, C, E, selenium, zinc, and phosphorus) can also help with vision and brain health

**2. Nuts,** particularly almonds, have a variety of health benefits. They are high in protein, calcium, fibre magnesium, and iron. They are a great muscle building food that also helps in maintaining bone density. Almonds are one of the highest fibre nuts which is great for bowel health and reducing cholesterol. Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the research found that eating just a handful of nuts a day—any kind of nuts!—decreased people’s risk of dying from any cause by 20 percent over the course of 30 years (1).

**3. Salmon:** It is an excellent source of high-quality protein, vitamins and minerals (including potassium, selenium and vitamin B12) but it is their content of omega-3 fatty acids that receives the most attention. Salmon is full of omega-3-fatty acids, which research can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, contribute to healthy brain function, joints and general wellbeing.

**4. Green leafy vegetables (GLV’s)** (e.g. spinach, broccoli, kale, bok choy etc): GLV’s are chock-full of antioxidants, fibre, calcium, iron, Vitamin K, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Vitamin E, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B3, copper, manganese, omega-3 fats, phosphorus, protein, folate, carotenoids, flavonoids, oxalates and isothiocyanates. These vitamins and minerals give us lot of energy with very few calories and can help protect from diseases like cancer. Try to incorporate a GLV into each main meal.

**5. Yoghurt:** Recent studies from Australia and Canada show about ½ people not at the recommended 2-3 serves of dairy/day. Yoghurt is made from milk and containing thousands of bacteria, it is chock full of goodness. Yoghurt contains protein for muscle growth and repair, calcium for bone health and bacteria which aids in digestion and good bowel health. Some studies also suggest the probiotics in yoghurt can also help protect from infection (2).

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend we should eat a wide variety of nutritious foods (3). People should look for a super diet rather than any one individual super food. My five favourites above come from different core foods groups and are great examples of foods we should be trying to eat most days. A balanced diet with a variety of different foods gives us energy and the best chance of preventing disease. Bon appetite!!!

**Peter Clark**

**Accredited Practising Dietitian and Nutritionist**

**Healthier You Dietetics, Port Macquarie**

**e-mail: [peter@healthieryou.net.au](mailto:peter@healthieryou.net.au)**

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## Catering report, Thursday Lunches

				
3 Oct	Steak, eggs, onions sandwich	Bill Starrenberg	7	
10 Oct	Chicken Kiev, potato bake, veg	Barry Lynch	5	
17 Oct	Chicken Korma, French bread	David Barnes	8	
24 Oct	Quiche, salad	Robyn & Lyn	8	
31 Oct	VSC closed due to fires		-	
7 Nov	Veterans Health Week meal		40	
14 Nov	Chicken Kiev	David	8	
21 Nov	Steak sandwiches	Bill	10	
28 Nov	Christmas lunch	Robyn & Lyn	7	
5 Dec	Steak sandwiches	Bill	10	
23 Jan 2020	Pork stir fry	Barry	12	
30 Jan	BBQ	David	11	

## 1st Bn RAR in Somalia 1993

Somalia is found in the horn of Africa and is bounded by the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean, Kenya (south), Ethiopia (west) and Djibouti (north). Control of the country in recent times has been by the Arabs, the Persians, the Italians and the British. In 1960 independence was granted by Britain and Italy through the United Nations and the Republic of Somalia was established.

The President was assassinated in a military coup in 1969 and the army seized control. War with Ethiopia, civil unrest and a military dictatorship destroyed all civil and administrative functions within the country. By 1990-1991 the country was in the hands of local warlords / bandit groups who dominated by terror. Murder, robbery, rape and the rule of the gun were the weapons used.

The United Nations Security Council resolution 775 proposed the intervention of armed forces to ensure the distribution of humanitarian aid to the population. On the 14th October 1992 the Australian Government committed a Movement Control Unit (MCU) to Mogadishu. The United States (US) committed a task force of 1800 to the Mogadishu area on the 29th November 1992. The United Nations passed another resolution (794) authorizing a multi-national force lead by the US to intervene in the war torn country and establish order. This was operation "RESTORE HOPE". The Australian media was running with the story of 1 RAR being sent overseas and this was beginning to worry some families. The soldiers however were jubilant, as all the years of training would now pay off. The government announced the deployment on the 15th December.



**Left - Map showing Somalia**

**Centre - loading the equipment and supplies**

**Right - HMAS Jervis Bay**

1 RAR was officially warned for duty in Somalia on the 17th December 1992. The timing created some disruption with the end of the school year, some soldier's families preparing to go on holidays and others on reposting. This was the beginning of the Christmas stand-down period for the defence services, which meant the supply system would be reduced and the Navy would also be on leave. This proved to be a major challenge, which was over come by long hours and hard work by some very dedicated people.

The HMAS Tobruk was undergoing repairs in Sydney and this had to be accelerated and her crew recalled. She sailed for Townsville on the 26th December with HMAS Jervis Bay sailing from Sydney for Townsville on the 19th December.

The battalion under command of Lt Col David Hurley, deployed to Somalia by air and the HMAS TOBRUK and JERVIS BAY with A Coy (the on line company) leaving on the 24th December. Operation Solace was part of a UN force to regain order in Somalia after a protracted period of tribal fighting which had left the country in a shambles. The Battalion group consisted of 653 from 1RAR including 56 soldiers from 2/4RAR, elements from 107Battery 4 Field Regiment, B Squadron 3 / 4 Cavalry Regiment, 17 Field Troop 3 Combat Engineer Regiment, 103 Signals Squadron, Public Relations, Battalion Support Group and Divisional Intelligence.

The advance party (CO, HQ staff) flew from Townsville on the 8th January 1993 with remainder due in country from the 15th onward. The HMAS Jervis Bay arrived on the 14th January and began unloading immediately. The first flight arrived from Australia on the 15th.

The battalion group of 900 established itself at the Baidoa Airfield in January 1993 and worked with the US 10th Mountain Division until March. The mission was to provide a safe environment for the distribution of humanitarian relief to the suffering population (Humanitarian Relief Sector, Baidoa, HRS). To achieve this 1RAR must have a secure base, make Baidoa safe, create a strong presence in the surrounding countryside and ensure the safety of the food convoys.

Aggressive patrolling and convoy protection during the next months ensured the safe passage of over 400 convoys of essential supplies to the starving population. Contact with the enemy (bandits – war lord forces) was usually fast with the response from the Australians being decisive and deadly.

During this time the battalion had contacts with Somali gunman (war lord teams) resulting in 7 enemies killed, 4 wounded and 70 taken prisoner and handed over to the Security Forces. This action also secured 935 weapons and ensured the safe delivery of over 8000 tons of aid supplies.

The experience of being exposed to the waste of human life, the murder of innocents, the lack of water and sewerage facilities and the total decay of human values was a shock to some. It was however an experience most will never forget and are wiser for it.

One member of the battalion died after being accidentally shot while on patrol.

1 RAR handed over responsibility to the French contingent of the UN Forces and returned to Townsville on the 22nd May 1993.



Photos of Vietnam - contribution by Mr John Noble



Above and right - inhospitable terrain makes patrolling very difficult



A bomb crater (above left and right)  
Right - John on patrol



Above - getting around by helicopter, Right - a smoko break  
Below - time to relax with mates



## Photos of Vietnam - contribution by Mr John Noble



Above and below - hides dug by the enemy, one man bunkers as well as complex tunnel systems underground



The picture theatre shows a hole made by an rpg hit



Below - dig a big hole, add camouflage and sandbags



These photographs of Vietnam during the war are shared with us by John Noble and I am very grateful to him for doing so.

John was an Assault Pioneer (Explosives) in the first wave sent to Vietnam (1967/68) and his unit was 2 Bn RAR. Thank you for your service John.

Below - accommodation lines



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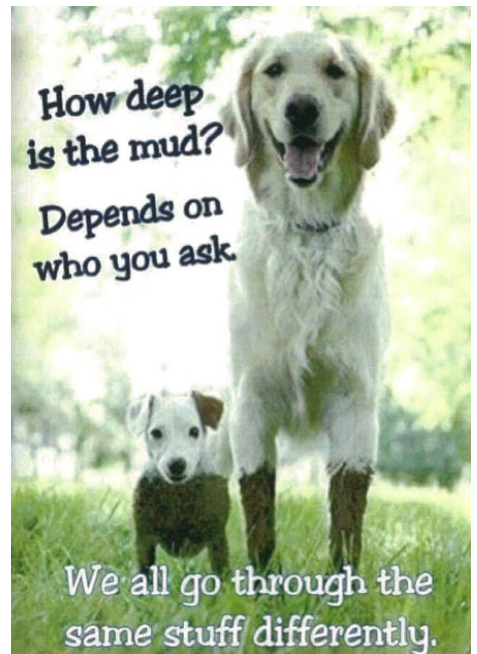
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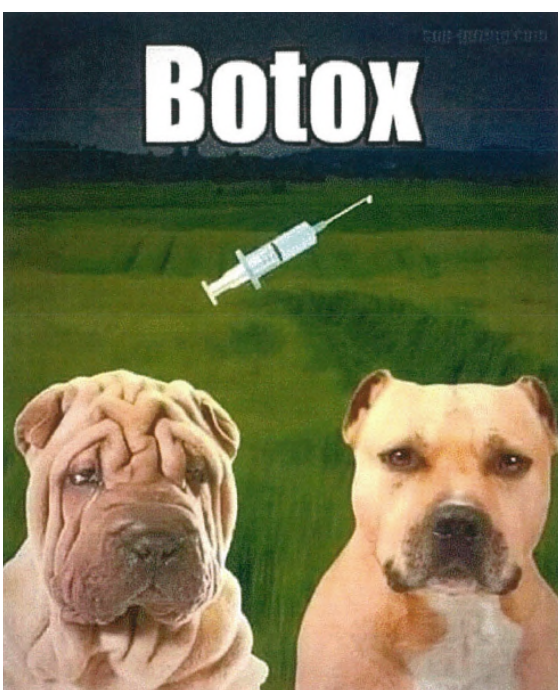
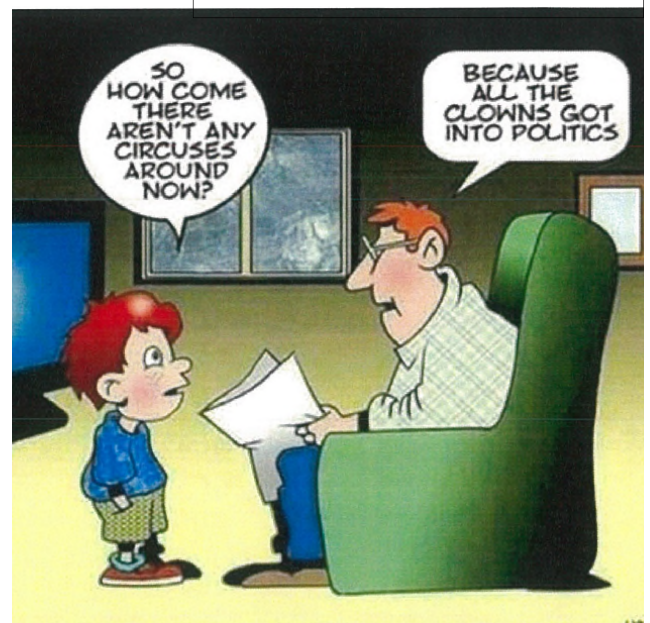
"I sometimes wonder if you hear one word I say!"



How deep is the mud?  
Depends on who you ask.

We all go through the same stuff differently.

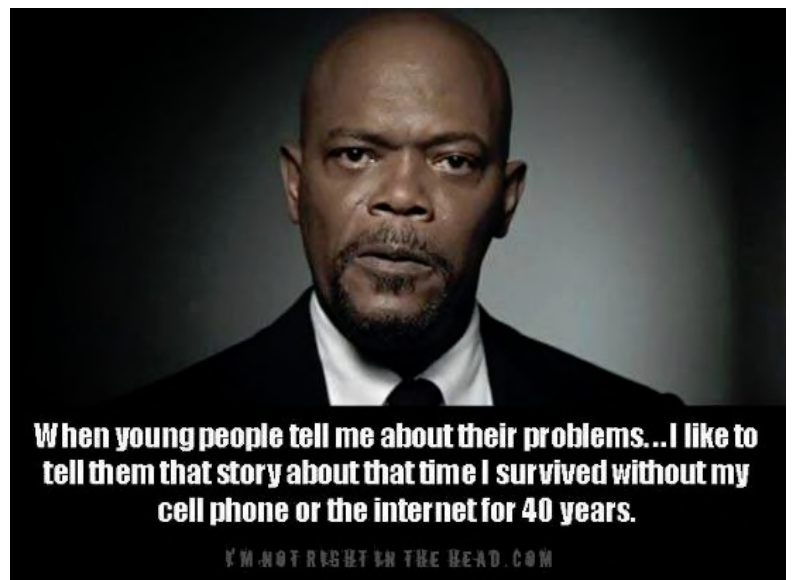
All jokes donated,  
source unknown





**CHUCKLE TIME**  
And we all know the feeling - just need a sit down and a rest for a few moments  
Contribution from David J Barnes, thank you

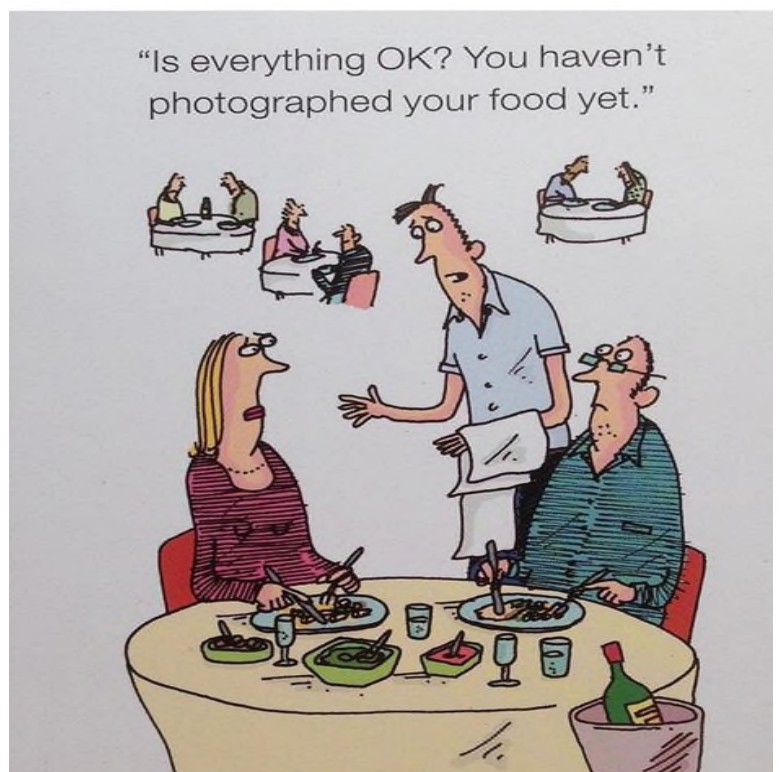




**Pretty busy today. Was only able to check my phone 1400 times.**



**PEOPLE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW IPHONE BUT NO ONE HAS CAUGHT UP WITH THE AWESOME TECHNOLOGY OF USING YOUR BLINKER WHEN YOU DRIVE.**



Shared from "I'm not right in the head.com" and all sourced for the Newsletter by Peter Dorman, thank you Peter

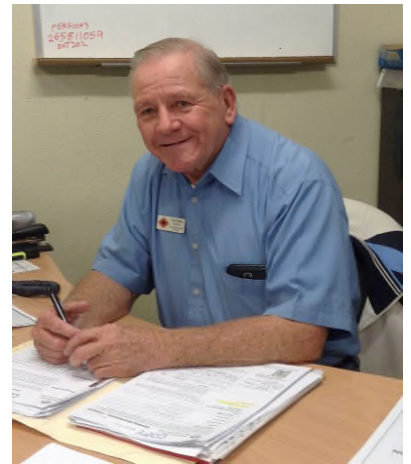


**Compensation Advocate  
Mike Opie**

## Compensation Officer and Welfare Officer report

There have been reports that current and former serving members of the ADF have raised concerns about their past use of Mefloquine and Tafenoquine anti-malarial medications and possible long term health effects. If anyone believes they have been prescribed either of these medications during their service, please contact us.

PETER MILLEN, WELFARE OFFICER

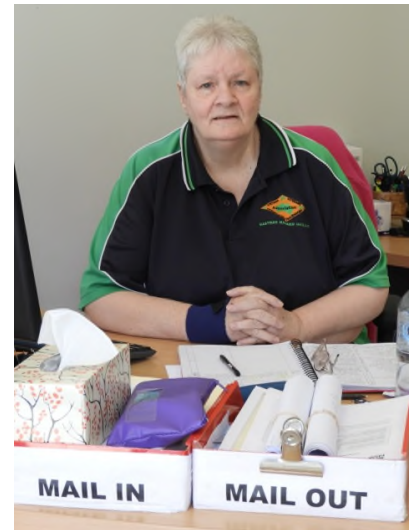


**Welfare Officer  
Peter Millen**



**Left - Tim Easton,**  
volunteer who  
mans the office

**Far left - Barry  
Lynch, NAMBUS  
coordinator and  
chef some weeks  
for the Thursday  
lunch gathering**



**Lyn Hancock  
Assistant Secretary**

Below - I'll bet no one goes over and shakes him to awaken him . Picture of a soldier sleeping during an airport layover with his canine partner. There is no measure of loyalty greater than that shown here. Sleep soundly soldier. A worthy goal in life is to be as good a person as your dog thinks you are..



Source - umknown

## Presidents Report

Our position in looking for new premises is still ongoing. At the moment we are in discussion with an organisation in Port Macquarie to relocate our office. The office area is smaller than present but I am sure it can be made to work. The main aim is to set up the Pensions and Welfare Team for the continuing support to the Veteran Community. There is also a large area for the social side to get together for their Thursday activities.

I hope this works out for us. I will keep all the members informed.

The Pension and Welfare Team at the moment have quite a bit of work on their books which keeps them more than busy. It would be a shame to see this discontinue. Also at present we have a very good strong membership base.

Rotary has asked us for assistance with their upcoming book sale on Thursday March 26th, to assist setting up tables. Please advise the office if you can assist for a couple of hours on the day. Rotary do support us for our assistance on the day.

On a sadder note, two of our long term members, Charles Edmondson and Graham Waterton have passed away. Members from the office attended both funerals. Our condolences and sympathy to their family and friends and veterans. May they Rest In Peace.

I will be attending the Conference in March to catch up on all the latest news from Branches. If you have any queries please let the office know so we can help work them out or have them presented to be dealt with.



**President - Bill Wagner**

## **Treasurer's Report**

While we have sufficient funds to keep operating, we are finding the overheads at this location to be excessive and so we need to find alternate accommodation.

As President Bill has mentioned, we will be downsizing so that we will be able to maintain the work of the Pensions and Welfare team. They are providing valuable work supporting veterans and their families and need our full support.

We have received donations from many members and are grateful for their generosity.



**Treasurer - Peter Dorman**



**Assistant Treasurer  
Jan Hawkins**

## **Membership Officer's Report**

Welcome to the New Year.

This is just a short report to bring you up to date regarding membership matters, so far, for 2020.

As at the end of January 2020 we have 65 financial members.

Please note that membership is based on the **CALENDAR YEAR**, not the financial year. The new membership cards for 2020 have arrived so renewals for this year can now be made. A membership Renewal application form is in this Newsletter (see back of your address label).

**Note** that for every membership payment of \$30 made here at your local sub-branch, **\$12.50 is retained by your sub-branch for local use.**

To those who have renewed their membership for this year,  
Thank You



**Membership Officer  
Trevor Morrow**

## Vietnam War - 5 RAR



**Left** 1ATF tanks and infantry assault through the hamlet of Binh Ba

**Right** Soldiers of the 1st Armoured Regiment are briefed while sitting in front of their Centurion tanks at Vung Tau in South Vietnam during 1968

During 1964–65 the regiment provided most of the men for 1 Troop, A Squadron, 4th/19th Prince of Wales Light Horse, which was subsequently equipped with the new M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carrier and was deployed on active service to South Vietnam in May 1965. In October 1967 the Australian government announced it would increase the size of the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province from two to three infantry battalions, while additional supporting arms, including a tank squadron would also be added to the force. As such in February 1968, C Squadron was sent to Vietnam, with a total strength of 20 Centurion tanks which would work closely with the M113s of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment. However, two of the four tank troops were initially held back until the Centurions had proved themselves capable of operating in the conditions. The tank squadron reached full strength on 5 September 1968. Meanwhile, in May the regiment had again reached full strength, with A Squadron re-raised in order to meet the ongoing operational commitment.

Over the next four years all three of the regiment's operational squadrons eventually served in Vietnam, providing invaluable close support to the infantry, particularly during the clearance of Viet Cong bunker systems. Although their value in Vietnam was originally questioned by some, they proved a powerful weapon in both offence and defence, and were responsible for limiting infantry casualties. The Centurions were able to move through the countryside more easily than expected and although they were vulnerable to anti-tank weapons and mines, their firepower and shock action had a decisive effect on the battlefield. In late-May 1968 the tanks played a significant role in the Battle of Coral–Balmoral. Occupying blocking positions in an attempt to thwart an impending communist offensive aimed at influencing the peace-talks, 1ATF deployed two battalions away from its base in Phuoc Tuy, subsequently developing Fire Support Base Coral north-east of Saigon, just east of Lai Khe on 12 May.

Following several regimental-sized assaults on Coral which were successfully repelled by the Australians with heavy casualties on both sides, 1ATF moved to establish Fire Support Base Balmoral on 24–25 May, 6 kilometres (3.7 mi) north of Coral. The infantry were this time supported by Centurion tanks which had been called forward by road from Nui Dat and had arrived just hours before Balmoral was subjected to a two battalion attack. Following a very accurate rocket and mortar barrage at 03:45 hours on 26 May, the base was assaulted by North Vietnamese infantry. The attack was repelled with heavy casualties by the combined firepower of the tanks and infantry. The next day the Australians at Coral assaulted a number of bunkers located just outside the base, with a troop of Centurions supported by infantry destroying the bunkers and their occupants without loss. A second attack, again of regimental strength, was made against Balmoral at 02:30 hours on 28 May but was called off after only 30 minutes. The North Vietnamese were soundly defeated—again by the supporting fires of tanks, artillery and mortars—leaving 55 dead and resulted in six prisoners. Australian losses were one killed and six wounded. This performance demonstrated the advantage of using armour in Vietnam, and whereas before the battle some infantry had doubted the usefulness or necessity of the Centurions, after the battle the infantry did not like working without them.

In February 1969, C Squadron was relieved by B Squadron. On 6–7 June, B Squadron was involved in a fierce action during the Battle of Binh Ba, a village 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) north of Nui Dat. The attack began on the morning of 6 June when Australian tanks and APCs advanced with infantry from D Company, 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR) towards the village which was being occupied by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. As the battle continued, B Company, 5 RAR took up a blocking position to prevent them from escaping. During fierce urban fighting the infantry were forced to clear each house, while the Communist troops occupying the houses fired on them from the windows and doorways before retreating into tunnels as the Australians passed. Each time the infantry were fired on, the tanks would blast a hole in the wall of the building, through which small teams could then enter and clear the structure of any opposition. The fighting continued throughout the afternoon, and resumed the next day before the Australians successfully cleared the village, the bulk of which was destroyed. One Australian was killed and 10 wounded, while communist losses included at least 107 killed, six wounded and eight captured.

In December 1969 B Squadron was re-designated A Squadron, while in December 1970 A Squadron was in turn re-designated C Squadron. By late-1970 Australia was beginning to reduce its commitment to the war and the size of 1ATF was again reduced from three infantry battalions to two. The tanks, however, continued operations and were involved in heavy fighting at Long Khanh on 6–7 June 1971, as well as numerous smaller actions. The last elements of the regiment were subsequently withdrawn from Vietnam in September 1971. A total of 58 Centurions had served in Vietnam; 42 had suffered battle damage, of which six were beyond repair, while two crewmen had been killed in action.

## Bangka Island massacre - 16th Feb 1942 contributor C. Purches, nurse

On 12 February 1942 the royal yacht of Sarawak *Vyner Brooke* left Singapore just before the city fell to the Imperial Japanese Army. The ship carried many injured service personnel and 65 nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service from the 2/13th Australian General Hospital, as well as civilian men, women and children. The ship was bombed by Japanese aircraft and sank. Two nurses were killed in the bombing; the rest were scattered among the rescue boats to wash up on different parts of Bangka Island. About 100 survivors reunited near Radji Beach at Bangka Island, in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), including 22 of the original 65 nurses. Once it was discovered the Japanese held the island, an officer of the *Vyner Brooke* went to surrender the group to the authorities in Muntok. While he was away army matron Irene Melville Drummond, the most senior of the nurses, suggested the civilian women and children should leave for Muntok, which they did. The nurses stayed to care for the wounded. They set up a shelter with a large Red Cross sign on it.

At mid-morning the ship's officer returned with about 20 Japanese soldiers. They ordered all the wounded men capable of walking to travel around a headland. The nurses heard a quick succession of shots before the Japanese soldiers came back, sat down in front of the women and cleaned their bayonets and rifles. A Japanese officer ordered the remaining 22 nurses and one civilian woman to walk into the surf. A machine gun was set up on the beach and when the women were waist deep, they were machine-gunned. All but Bullwinkel were killed. Wounded soldiers left on stretchers were then bayoneted and killed.

Shot in the diaphragm, Bullwinkel lay motionless in the water until the sound of troops had disappeared. She crawled into the bush and lay unconscious for several days. When she awoke, she encountered Private Patrick Kingsley, a wounded British soldier from the ship who had survived being bayoneted by the Japanese soldiers. She dressed his wounds and her own, then 12 days later they surrendered to the Japanese. Kingsley died before reaching a POW camp, but Bullwinkel spent three years in one.

Bullwinkel survived the war and gave evidence of the massacre at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal) in 1947.

Wikipedia



Group photo of nursing staff from 2/13th Australian General Hospital



Sister Lt Vivian Bullwinkel,  
sole survivor

The **Bangka Island massacre** (also spelt **Banka Island massacre**) was committed during World War II in the Pacific, on Bangka Island, east of Sumatra in the Indonesian archipelago. On 16 February 1942, Imperial Japanese soldiers machine-gunned 22 Australian Army nurses and 60 Australian and British soldiers and crew members who had survived the sinking of *Vyner Brooke* by Japanese bombers. South Australian nurse, Sister Lt Vivian Bullwinkel was the sole surviving nurse; two soldiers also survived.

Not reported to the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal in 1947 nor included in subsequent re-tellings, was the sexual assault suffered by the nurses before the massacre, uncovered in research in 2019.

Women Veterans Network Australia

16th February is the 78th anniversary of the Bangka Island massacre where Japanese forces mercilessly killed survivors of the *Vyner Brooke* sinking. Lest We Forget. RSL SA

# VETERANS

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## PARTNERS OF VETERANS ASSOCIATION Port Macquarie HASTINGS GROUP

The Partners of Veterans PMQ Hastings Group meet for Lunch at 12.30pm onwards on the Third Wednesday of each month

Partners of Veterans from all conflicts are always welcome.

For any further information contact  
Tineke Dalton on 6586 3461

## Member's Purchase



## Order Form for Merchandise with Logo GCIrMar12

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The Treasurer, VVPAA Inc

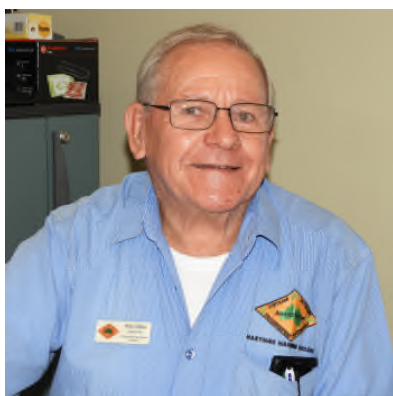
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NAME[please print]:		Signature:	
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Phone:		Email:	
Date:			
Qty	Item/Product (size*)	Unit Price (\$)	Total (\$)
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		Receipt Number	Date

Various Vietnam caps  
Bucket hats and other  
merchandise available



Mid blue shirt \$35  
Poly cotton short sleeve  
Model—Peter Millen



Navy Polo \$35  
Navy Polo with pocket \$40  
Navy Cap \$17.50  
One size fits all  
Model: Barry Lynch



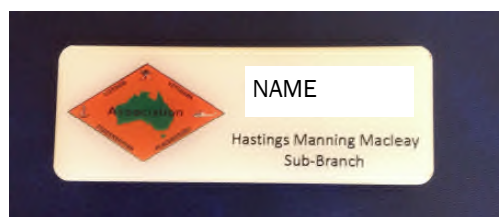
Mid Blue Shirt \$35  
Poly Cotton / Long Sleeve  
Model: Graeme Cox

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## Remembrance Day National Ceremony

On Remembrance Day the Australian War Memorial will host the nation's key commemoration. The ceremony includes a formal wreathlaying and will be attended by many high-level dignitaries, diplomats, school students, as well as thousands of members of the general public. Australia's Federation Guard and the Band of the Royal Military College, Duntroon will be on parade.

The Commemorative address was delivered by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd).



Laying a wreath at Canberra AWM Remembrance Day Service 2019

Photo credit AWM

## Australia's Involvement

Australia was a small nation with a population of fewer than five million. From this small population base, no less than 416,809 men enlisted of which 302,000 served overseas. Of these, 62,000 were killed and 155,000 wounded.

At least a further 8,000 died of war-related injuries after the war. These figures do not include the neurological trauma inflicted on so many soldiers, which negatively affected their lives and those of their families for many years afterwards.



**Above** - A crowd in Martin Place, central Sydney, celebrate the news of the signing of the Armistice. Photo credit AWM

**Right** - Sydney, NSW, 11 November 1919. The view from Castlereagh Street looking down towards George Street, of a large crowd which has gathered in Martin Place to celebrate Armistice Day.

Photo credit AWM



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P04370.001

## Remembrance Day 2019, Port Macquarie



**Remembrance Day 2019 at Port Macquarie**

**Above** -Chaplain Carl Moses, Pr Greg Laird RSL  
and new Chaplain Ged Oldfield



**Right - Barry Lynch (left)**

**Photo credit Port Maquarie Express ( both photos )**

### The use of the term Remembrance Day

Charles Bean landed with the Australian troops on Gallipoli on April 25, 1915. He stayed with them at the front through the entire war, refusing evacuation when he was wounded. At Pozieres the following year he was witness to 23,000 Australian casualties in just six weeks. A dying Australian asked him, "Will they remember me in Australia?".

Australians remember them by observing one minute's silence at 11 am on the 11th of November for Remembrance Day. On the first anniversary of the armistice in 1919 two minutes' silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony at the new Cenotaph in London. The silence was proposed by Australian journalist Edward Honey, who was working in Fleet Street. At about the same time, a South African statesman made a similar proposal to the British Cabinet, which endorsed it. King George V personally requested all the people of the British Empire to suspend normal activities for two minutes on the hour of the armistice "which stayed the worldwide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of Right and Freedom". The two minutes' silence was popularly adopted and it became a central feature of commemorations on Armistice Day.

By observing one minute's silence we pay tribute to the men and women who have served and are still serving in our defence forces and remember those who have died or suffered in conflicts, wars and peacekeeping operations.

On 11 November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after four years of continuous warfare. With their armies retreating and close to collapse, German leaders signed an Armistice, bringing to an end the First World War. From the summer of 1918, the five divisions of the Australian Corps had been at the forefront of the allied advance to victory. Beginning with their stunning success at the battle of Hamel in July, they helped to turn the tide of the war at Amiens in August, followed by the capture of Mont St Quentin and Pèronne, and the breaching of German defences at the Hindenburg Line in September. By early October the exhausted Australians were withdrawn from battle. They had achieved a fighting reputation out of proportion to their numbers, but victory had come at a heavy cost. They suffered almost 48,000 casualties during 1918, including more than 12,000 dead.

In the four years of the war more than 330,000 Australians had served overseas, and more than 60,000 of them had died. The social effects of these losses cast a long shadow over the postwar decades.

Each year on this day Australians observe one minute's silence at 11am, in memory of those who died or suffered in all wars and armed conflicts. After the end of the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day. Armistice Day was no longer an appropriate title for a day which would commemorate all war dead.

**Sources - Port Macquarie Express website, AWM website and RSL NSW website**



Australian Army Sappers from No. 5 Engineer Regiment, pack vital equipment prior to deploying on OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST 19-20.

Photo - SGT Bill Solomou



An ADF prime mover and low-loader carrying a frontend loader is stationed at Holsworthy Barracks in preparation for OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST 19-20.

Photo - SGT Bill Solomou

## OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST 2019 - 2020 - NSW & VIC



Australian Defence Force personnel unload evacuees belongings from Mallacoota, Victoria at RAAF Base East Sale, during support of Operation Bushfire Assist 19-20.

Photo - Corporal Nicole Dorrett



HMAS Adelaide prepares to sail from Fleet Base East, Sydney to support bushfire relief efforts as part of Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-20.

Photo - ABIS Benjamin Ricketts

Royal Australian Navy Aircrewman Leading Seaman Ben Nixon of 808 Squadron, assesses the Tianjara Fire in the Moreton and Jerrawangala National Parks out of an MRH90 Taipan Military Support Helicopter.

Photo - Corporal Nicole Dorrett

(l-r) Rural Fire Service employee Dwyane Graham and Royal Australian Navy Aircrewman Leading Seaman Brendan Menz view the Tianjara bushfire to the west of HMAS Albatross on an 808 Squadron MRH90 Taipan Military Support Helicopter.

Photo - Corporal Nicole Dorrett



## OP BUSHFIRE ASSIST 2019 - 2020 - NSW & VIC



Evacuees board one of HMAS Choules' landing craft at Mallacoota to be ferried out the the ship.

A MRH90 Taipan Military Support Helicopter on the 808 Squadron Flight line at HMAS Albatross, Nowra

Photos - POIS Helen Frank above and below



### 2019/2020 Bushfires NSW & VIC

Images all souced from Dept of Defence news and media image gallery with permission

No 22 Squadron refuelling the New South Wales Rural Fire Service DC-10 Very Large Air Tanker aircraft at RAAF Base Richmond.

Photo - Cpl Casey Forster



HMAS Choules sails from Sydney Harbour to provide support to people affected by bushfires in the Mallacoota area.

Photo: Petty Officer Helen Frank



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Source - DoD Army website