



**RAASC VIETNAM SUPPLY PLATOONS ASSOCIATION (VSPA)
NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY-MARCH 2011 EDITION**

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Appreciation Letter from Sue Hazel

Dear RAASC Veteran,

We hope this finds you well and enjoying the Autumn weather. Here's our latest news:

NEXT REUNION - PHILLIP ISLAND VIC – MARCH 2013 (TENTATIVE DATE)

Folks - this one ought to appeal to all the WA, SA, TAS and others as well as the regulars
- why not join us. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND COME ALONG.

GOT PHOTOS OF YOUR RAASC VSPA MATES?

Perhaps you have managed to catch up with your mates recently but some of them were
not able to join you-did you take some photos of the event?

Why not share it with those members who were not able to make it. While not a Facebook
page, we have our own RAASC VSPA Picasa album.

If you know how to do it, go ahead and upload to the site - instructions for uploading to
our website are at: <http://raascsupply.asn.au/photographs.html>. Let the committee
know you have put them up there and we will let everyone know via newsletter and email.
Otherwise, send it to the committee and we will do it for you. We accept email
attachments and hard copy.

Lieutenant-colonel John Milton Gillespie



John Gillespie in 1975

John Gillespie was born in the Queensland city of Maryborough on 6 June 1935. He attended a number of schools, including Brisbane State High School. He enlisted in the Australian Regular Army (ARA) in May 1953 and entered the Officer Cadet School (OCS) at Portsea in July 1953, from where he graduated on 19 December 1953 as a second-lieutenant in the Royal Australian Army Service Corps (RAASC).

The *Army List* (commonly known as the “*Stud Book*”) shows that he was on the strength of the RAASC School for all of 1954, so must have been posted into an establishment position after completing the Corps introductory course in May. Over the course of the year he would have met many of the Corps characters as they filtered through the various training Wings. Such exposure would have imbued in him a greater awareness of the very nature of the Corps.

From December 1954 he served in the 20th National Service Training Battalion, during which time he qualified as a parachutist. In August 1955 he was posted as the Cadre Officer in Headquarters Southern Command Troops RAASC.

In August 1956, his Air Dispatch (AD) career started with an attachment to the Far East Land Force (FARELFF) as a platoon commander in the 55th Company RASC (AD) in Kuala Lumpur. (The *Stud Book* shows the posting as the Australian Visitors and Observers Unit, Malaya.) That job involved flying duties in Malaya and Borneo. In April 1957 he returned to Australia and a few jobs in Southern Command and Tasmania..

In August 1965 he started a two-year posting in the UK, where he formed an Air Dispatch Training Wing, manned by a small team of experienced Royal Corps of Transport (RCT) warrant and non-commissioned officers, to train RCT air dispatchers and all arms air loaders. He returned to Australia in September 1967.

From 12 November 1968, he was the Officer Commanding 5 Coy RAASC in South Viet Nam (SVN) where, apart from other sub-units, Detachment 176 AD Coy was under command. Exactly a year later he returned to Australia, to attend Staff College, Queenscliff, in 1970.

After Staff College and a staff appointment at HQ Eastern Command, and having become a foundation member of the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT) in June 1973, he was posted as OC 176 AD Coy from October 1973 to August 1974, replacing Major David Hannell. During that time the unit moved from Wallgrove to Penrith.

In August 1974 John was promoted to lieutenant-colonel to command what was to become, a few months later, the 2nd Transport and Movements Group.

In October 1978, he resigned after 25 years of dedicated service, and took up a position as the NSW Manager for AAT Coaches. About three years later, he opened his own business as a migration consultant, where he established a reputation for successful, ethical and compassionate dealings with his clients and the migration bureaucracy.

John was a passenger on a bus in early November when the bus stopped abruptly, throwing him to the floor and breaking his collar-bone. On presenting himself for treatment, the medical staff advised him, after some tests, that he had a serious heart condition, of which, apparently, he had been unaware. They decided, however, that he was well enough to go home, and he was waiting to do so while some home care was being arranged. Sadly, he collapsed and died, while still in the hospital, on 14 November.

John was something of an enigma. Few people were close enough to him to know anything of his personal life story. He seemed to want to hide his real nature by presenting one of several personae he carried with him at all times, like clubs in a golf bag, from which he could select to confuse deliberately anyone with whom he was in contact at the time. One persona, for example, was that of an avowed agnostic, and yet he frequently introduced moral and spiritual subjects into his conversations. Curiously, one of his closest friends is a Catholic priest, Father Paul Stenhouse MSC PhD, whom John had

selected to conduct his funeral. He had also appointed Tony Fairbrother as his executor. Between them, they gave John a memorable send off.

The very special service was held at the West Chapel, Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park at Matraville on 18 November. Afterwards, the Matraville RSL provided an excellent venue for the wake.

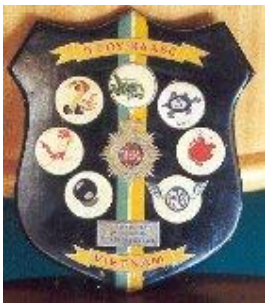
Attending from the Corps: our Representative Colonel Commandant, Brigadier Jeff Wilkinson, Captain Ben Aldridge and WO2 Darren Rubie of 176 AD Sqn, Vic Smith, Ken and Dawn Duncan, Ian Henderson, Allan Bewley, Phil Cameron, Bob Leedow, John Neenan, Ian Brooks, and Jeff and Tony Fairbrother and their wives, Judy and Roslyn. It was good have the two 176 blokes in uniform as a fitting tribute to someone who had been a stalwart of the Air Dispatch sector of our Corps.

Acknowledgement: Much of the detail in the foregoing item came from the "Stud Book" and an unidentified Air Dispatch author who was writing, apparently, around 2008.

John Neenan

December 2011

Did you know.....



A Brief History 5 Company RAASC Served , South Vietnam from Apr 67 to 1972



History of the unit emblem

The unit had an advance party of troops heading to Barra Winga as a shake down prior to going to South Vietnam when Maj McVilly, OC of the unit nearly ran over a tortoise, so he stopped, picked it up and took it with them to the Raspberry Plains Training Area.

From this incident the tortoise emblem was born.

The SAIF Story

The first OC was MAJ N.W.J McVilly who started the slogan (Stay Alive in Five) SAIF and of course the unit emblem. MAJ McVilly was replaced by the late MAJ P. Douglas.

The 5th Transport Squadron was formed on 30th May 1966, then known as 5th Transport Company RAASC. The Company was raised at Frasers Paddock, (currently Gallipoli Barracks) from a Citizens Military Forces unit. Immediately after formation, the unit was

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transferred to Ingleburn, NSW to prepare for duty in South Vietnam.

Within three months of being raised, the unit was away on Exercise "Barra Winga" developing skills required to operate in an operational theatre.

In April 1967, the Company relieved the 1st Transport Company and was stationed at Vung Tau for the next five years.

The operational task of the company was to support the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) located at Nui Dat.

For more information on 5 Coy, go to:

<http://www.raasc.org.au/content/5%20Coy.html>

NOTICE BOARD

DVA - AVAILABLE SERVICES –

DVA-Clean Energy Future Household Assistance Package

- [Amounts payable under the Household Assistance Scheme](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)

The Government has a comprehensive plan to move to a clean energy future. This includes:

- introducing a carbon price
- promoting innovation and investment in renewable energy
- encouraging energy efficiency
- creating opportunities in the land sector to cut pollution.

The price on carbon takes effect on 1 July 2012.

From mid-June 2012, around 350,000 members of the veteran community will be eligible to receive assistance through the Household Assistance Package to help with the cost of living impact of the carbon price.

This assistance package includes:

- the **Clean Energy Advance** - an up-front lump sum payment of between \$110 and \$380 to be automatically paid to eligible recipients in mid-June 2012. Recipients of payments under children's education schemes will receive an additional lump sum payment of between \$60 and \$100 in July 2013.

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- the **Clean Energy Supplement** – an ongoing payment, paid fortnightly or quarterly to eligible recipients from March 2013 for most payments. Ongoing payments for *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) permanent impairment payments will commence in July 2013 while ongoing payments under the children's education schemes commence in January 2014.

The Clean Energy Advance and Supplement will be paid to eligible service pensioners, seniors supplement recipients, war widows and widowers, disability pensioners, permanent impairment recipients and wholly dependent partners under MRCA, and recipients under the Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) and Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS).

There's more-call your local DVA or VAN office for more details.

HOME FRONT 1800 801 945

HOMEFRONT is a prevention program designed to prevent falls and accidents at home, and is available to White and Gold card members.

Retractable hose reels, door mats, cordless telephones are some of the many services available to a value of \$211 pa. (We have just enquired and been assessed).

This service is provided annually -call the free call number above, or if you live Sydney south, Woolongong, Campbelltown, Merimbula, Goulburn, Yass and Canberra-call Ceri on 0434 006441 for an assessment. Pretty straight forward really!

Chronically ill – then the COORDINATED VETERANS CARE (CVC) PROGRAM may be what you are looking for...

Commencing on 1 May 2011, the Coordinated Veterans' Care (CVC) Program provided through the Veterans' Home Care (VHC) program became available for Gold Card holders who are living in the community (that is, not in a residential aged care facility) and have been diagnosed with one or more chronic diseases or conditions such as congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes or if have complex care needs and are at risk of being admitted or re-admitted to hospital.

If you wish to take part in this program, your GP, along with a practice, or DVA contracted community nurse will work closely with you to understand your health needs, assist you in managing your conditions and coordinate your care. If you are eligible, once you have agreed to join the program a comprehensive, individualised Care Plan will be implemented.

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Your Care Plan will be designed by your GP to cover your individual health needs, preferences and priorities and is intended to improve your health and reduce the need to go to hospital. For further information it is advised you discuss with your local doctor (LMO) as to your needs.

http://www.dva.gov.au/health_and_wellbeing/health_programs/cvc/Pages/default.aspx

DVA - Repatriation Transport Booked Car Scheme (BCS).

The following is an abbreviated advice from DVA for your information.

"This e-mail is to inform you that the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has now finalised the tender process for the delivery of transport services through the Repatriation Transport Booked Car Scheme (BCS).

As you may know, the BCS is an important and essential service provided by DVA to assist with transporting entitled veterans, war widows and their dependents to their medical appointments.

The tender process was conducted to ensure veterans, war widows and their dependents receive both a reliable on-time service and a quality service by trained drivers who are attuned to the needs of the veteran community with increased access to a greater number of contracted transport providers, especially in metropolitan cities and larger regional areas.

While some of the drivers and vehicles may be different, be assured that the quality of service carried out by these drivers is of the utmost importance to DVA and that the service provided will be the same level that is currently received or better.

DVA will be working very closely with transport providers to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements and the quality and performance of their services will be carefully monitored.

If you have any enquiries in NSW/ACT about the Booked Car services and the potential impact on veterans and war widows, please contact Mr Brent Morgan, Director Veterans' Transport Services on (02) 9213-7918 (02) 9213-7918.

The Grocers and Gunners Vietnam tour - 06 – 28 November 2012

This five star, 23 days – no tents or huts this time – all inclusive tour will retrace your service in Saigon, Vung Tau and Nui Dat and take you as far north as the Chinese border.

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Contact Phil Brookes: 0418 719 166
 Email: brookes1@bigpond.net.au
 Imperial China Tours: 1300 303 101 or 02 9221 0266 Email:
tony@imperialchinatours.com

VALE - REST IN PEACE

41538 Kevin Edward Gallasch

Born 15 May 1930
 Died early Jan 2012 after a very long and debilitating illness - he was 81.
 Funeral 19 Jan 2012 in Adelaide
 OCS Class of Jun 53
 Ex OC 5 Coy RAASC 1969-70

6410248 Gordon Meers

Born 20 Mar 1948
 Died 13 Jan 2012 in Tasmania
 25 Sup PI Vietnam 5 Feb 1968 - 21 Feb 1969

216575 Michael "Mick" Hartas

Born 12 Apr 1946
 Died 7 Feb 2012 Gwandalan, NSW
 Served 25 Sup PI RAASC 21 May 1968 - 28 May 1969

29704 LTCOL Colin T. Swinfield

Born 24 Jan 1937
 Died 22 Mar 2012
 Headquarters Australian Forces Vietnam (Army Component) 67-68
 120th Supply Depot Platoon, 118th Supply Depot Platoon, 1st Supply Platoon

Vale – Mick Hartas – Author: Bruce Manning

Mick Passed away recently and a number of us were able to get to his funeral and the honour of taking some part in bidding Mick a fond farewell. Les Allen delivered a eulogy and Bob Denner admirably led part of the ceremony.



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This brings me to Mick. Bob recalled Mick's reply to an order he gave him, "What Sir, you want me to do that!" Then he proceeded to do just as asked. I could have said the same words as that is a memory I have of Mick, a look of incredulity when first asked to do something and then a wholehearted effort in response.

I remember Mick's craggy face. I remember it in our storehouses in Vung Tau, I remember it when I attended a reunion for 25 Supply Platoon organised by Mick and Sue at their Sydney home. Mick was a champion of our Association and a stalwart supporter. Mick and Sue opened their heart to us all those many years ago and I guess for me that was Mick, a friend to us all even with our very structured Army life.

After the funeral service I had the opportunity to invite Sue to come to our next reunion. Our Association needs the widows of our comrades. We need Christina Luff, Sue Hartas, and Sue Hazel. They bring their own strength and the memories of their great husbands.

Mick's passing brings to our executive a need to ensure that we help commemorate the passing of our own. Bob Denner and Les Allen showed to me the comfort members of Association can and should bring at difficult times.

Rest in peace Mick, there will come regular occasions in my life and I hope your lives when we will remember our craggy faced larrikin who was and remains our friend.

LETTER FROM MRS SUE HAZEL

To President, Committee and members of RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association.

We acknowledge with grateful appreciation your kind expression of sympathy. Sue Hazel and the family of (Tony) Anthony John Hazel

And finally:

Keep in touch! If you know someone who might like to join us, let us know and we'll send them a free Association badge when they take up membership.

**Bruce, Christina, Ray, Russ and Dave
VSPA Association Executive**