



RAASC VIETNAM SUPPLY PLATOONS ASSOCIATION (VSPA) NEWSLETTER MAY 2013 EDITION

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Hi Everyone,

Looking back-Phillip Island Reunion We hope you are all well. We have recently finished our reunion at Phillip Island. Overall we had 53 members and wives attend which is testament to the enthusiasm of our members to meet periodically. We have two new teams working already on Woollongong and Perth-see below.

We thank Melbournites Tony and Liz Galea, and Snow and Anne Coughlan for all their hard work in putting this 2013 reunion together. Since our first member run reunion at Dorrigo, it is terrific to see our members step up to run our periodic reunions.

Most of us stayed at the Anchor Belle Caravan Park which afforded us the opportunity to mingle freely and get to our various destinations easily. Whilst the weather was kind for most of the time, we did experience Victoria's four seasons.

Thanks must go to the Cowes RSL for the use of their facilities. Highlights of the four days included the Meet and Greet, two visits to the National Vietnam Veterans Museum, one to look inside, and the other to commemorate the laying our Association Plaque.





Figure 1 Plaque laying Service PI 2013

Following our Thursday AGM, we all enjoyed our VSPA dinner which was superb and many took home raffle prizes- thanks especially to the generous donators for their contribution.

Special thanks to our RAASC Corps Brigadier (ret) Geoff and Leonie Christopherson for their wonderful and humorous contribution to the evening.

Figure 2 AGM PI Cowes RSL 2013 attendees



We got to see the delightful fairy penguins - after much ocean swimming and waddling to the homes on the hillsides, they still took time out to say hullo to us.

Our Wednesday evening BBQ on site at Anchor Belle proved popular and many joined in, sang some old favourites, and a great atmosphere surrounded our group. Pity about a few heads in the morning.

Of course you will want to know who joined us- see the Commemorative Reunion Menu Place Mat at the rear of the newsletter. It was great to catch up again with old mates, and some for the first time since Vietnam. We are now pushing our reunion message wider, having added the RSL, VVF and VVA around the country to our publicity list.

AGM-details are contained in the newsletter below, along with details of upcoming reunions, reports from the President, Membership Secretary and Treasurer, etc.



Reunions Planned-Dorrigo Plaque Laying 18th August 2013 We are returning to Dorrigo on the 18th August 2013 to lay our VSPA plaque on the anniversary of Vietnam Vets Day-all are invited to this event. We agreed at our Coolangatta reunion to lay a VSPA plaque at each reunion venue. Contact **Bob Denner direct on 02-6657 1145** if you plan to attend.

More details to follow but we will run the next two reunions as follows:

Late 2014 Wollongong - Barry Carroll and Barry Anderson

Late 2016 Perth WA after St Patricks Day March - likely run in conjunction with "Back to Bruce Rock" get together for the wider Veteran community in WA.

Paying for the VSPA Newsletter You already know that we now have to pay for the printing of our newsletter. To minimize our costs, we will offer an electronic copy of the newsletter. If you are happy to get an email with an attached newsletter, let Christina know. Thanks to those who have offered to also offset our costs by financial donation to lower our costs.

Family Three Year Membership In addition to the Annual \$20 membership, we will now also offer an three year family membership for \$60 - details are on our revised membership form enclosed for you to complete and return to us. Please indicate on the form if you want an annual or three year membership.

Election of Office Bearers The President explained the role of the Executive. All positions were declared vacant and nominations sought for the positions. This is the

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outcome of the annual AGM election:

Regional Executive members

North Queensland	Tony Simon (in absentia)
Brisbane and Environs	Don Noy
Gold Coast	(vacant but covered by Don as required)
NSW Country	Bob Denner
Sydney Metro	Barry Carroll
South Australia	Noel Schluter
Victoria	Tony Galea
Tasmania	Glen Breaden
Western Australia	Graeme Sherriff

Canberra-based Executive:

President	Bruce Manning
Vice President	Ray Brown
Secretary	Russ Morison
Treasurer	David Evans
Membership/Welfare Manager	Christina Luff
Public Officer	Tony Galea

Anecdotal history of Supply Platoons in South Vietnam

Your recollections needed! The Exec met recently with a retired veteran who is now a full time historian, with a specific interest in feeding the troops in Vung Tau, Nui Dat and out in the Area of Operations (AO).

He is interested in getting your recollections, as our specific Class 1 Foodstuffs supply activities are not well documented. Graham's Bio is shown below.

We are hoping that the Army History Unit will publish the results of the research on their website and possibly even have the document printed. To give you some idea of what he has discovered to date, see below. Please, let us have your feedback no matter how odd it may seem. Here are a few examples to job the memory box:

My recollections are the army food was so bad I survived on lots of milk, egg nog and fruit cake sent from home (my mother). I also purchased the perishable rations from Long Binh, where I was stationed, for the troops at Nui Dat and managed to get some myself as well as some American food - mainly hot dogs for breakfast. Also caught up with friends from Oz who were working in Saigon. After Vietnam I couldn't eat chicken for 2 years.

On 11 May 66 (quite early days) 1 COY RAASC at Vung Tau received 50 tons of fruit cake from Oz (based on the average weight of a fruit cake [1.5 lb] and the AFV ration strength at the time [3,800], that works out to 17½ fruit cakes per man!)

On 29 May 66 1 COY RAASC received an unexpected and un-requested "forced issue" of 67,000 eggs which had to be immediately issued out and used as quickly as possible as most unit messes did not have adequate refrigeration (extra eggs at breakfast and lots of custard tarts at dinner time? - the Oz Army's daily egg ration allowance at the time was 1⅓ eggs per

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man per day)

In 1966 bread received from Long Binh was unfit for consumption and 1 ALSG was forced to turn to bartering with local bakeries to get decent bread (I have no idea what they used for barter)



Graham lives in Canberra with his wife Sharon, a retired Chief Petty Officer of the Royal Australian Navy, and their Bichoodle "Ralph". Their favourite pastime is spoiling their grandchildren.

Graham Wilson served 26 years in the Australian Regular Army, retiring in 1996 as a Warrant Officer Intelligence Analyst. Following five years as a civilian intelligence officer in the Department of Defence, he transferred to the Defence Department's Directorate of Honours and Awards where he worked for 10 years in the support and policy areas; the latter as Staff Officer Historical Research.

Graham retired from the Public works as a full time historian. Service in February 2011 and now Graham is active in a number of historical and militaria societies and is a prolific author of historical articles; he has been published in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA and has received a number of awards for military history writing.

You can write to our usual address below and we will pass on your comments

PARTNERS OF VIETNAM VETS (PVA) <http://www.pva.org.au/>

Our Association is a not-for-profit charitable entity and non government organisation – run by volunteers. We are not funded by government (other than Grant applications) – our funding comes from membership fees, donations or fundraising by members.

The Partners of Veterans Association of Australia (P.V.A.) was the first association to acknowledge the needs of partners and families . PVA was formed in 1999 to represent, support and be there for Partners-contact PVA on 1300 553 835

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VALE

BERNICE KATHLEEN KNELLER

Born 14.1.57 Passed from this life 19.8.11
Late wife of David Kneller, Det 52 Sup PI Nui Dat
Was buried St Arnolds Victoria Lawn Cemetery 29 Aug 11

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Vietnam Commemorative Walk-Seymour- <http://www.vietnamvetwalk.org.au/>

If you haven't been to Seymour, it is very much well worth a visit!!

The Commemorative Walk commemorates the service of all who played their part in what turned out to be a tumultuous part of Australia's history. As an interpretive centre it gives an accurate history of the times prior to military commitment, the period of our involvement and the aftermath.

The Walk is a meandering red earth path set in native trees and grasses that resemble rubber trees and rice paddies and guarded by a Centurion tank. These two plants are synonymous with Vietnam.



Along the length of this Walk are walls made up of panels of DigiGlass with the name of every Serviceman and Servicewoman who served in Vietnam. The names are arranged by service and alphabetical order.

The plinths on which the panels stand have holes for Poppies; the effect is to have a field of Poppies under the names. Behind the names is the picture story of the Vietnam conflict.

There are areas of contemplation for people to use along the length of this walk.

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Keep in touch! We do advertise regularly in VETAFFAIRS but 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
RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association Executive

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ANNUAL REPORTS PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR AGM 2013

General

I wish to thank all of you who have been able to make it to this reunion. I find it great to see you here and pleasing that now, after the fledgling beginnings of our small organisation, there is still such interest in renewing old acquaintances. I think we have some 59 attendees at this reunion. These gatherings continue to grow.

There are many veteran organisations and they each go through ups and downs. For my part I seek to keep our organisation simple, principally in providing an organisation that enables us to get regularly get together. There are often concerns in veteran organisations that are personality based. I find these less than helpful. Each of us has our own personality and we need to accept each other and get on with life. Life is too short for any other strategy.

David McLachlan, our patron called me on Thursday 14 March to pass on his apologies as he has to attend an RSL National Executive meeting. David is a great friend of our organisation and I know he places great store in us veterans keeping in contact with other. David asked me to visit the recently opened Vietnam Veteran Memorial Walk in Seymour on my way to this gathering. He urges you all to visit it as he sees it as a considerable contribution to carrying on the legacy of our service. Apparently we are all named on the walk.

In his stead Geoff Christopherson has done us proud by attending this reunion and helping with our formalities. I wish to thank Geoff on your behalf. It disappoints me that too few of our former leaders engage with us. I live in hope. It always is a source of great support to see Bob Denner attend as he does and bring with him a confidence to our formal proceedings.

I wish to thank the members of our executive as they work hard to keep things going. Christina Luff has a difficult job which she does willingly. David Evans keeps our accounts in order, a task not many would relish. Russ Morison keeps us on the

straight and narrow and Ray Brown asks great questions that ensure attention to your concerns. My thanks go to Tony "Perc" Galea and his helpers for their work in getting this reunion together.

Membership

Our Secretary has prepared a membership proposal for us to adopt at our AGM. In general it is sound and warrants your support. I never get to hung

up on the membership question as it consumes time and energy which in small body such as ours diverts us from our real goal of keeping in touch. It also tends to divide

as there are those of us who pay our dues yet there are others of our friends who are not so interested. I recognise that membership is necessary to meet our constitution.

What I urge upon you is to be a member and pay the small membership fee recognising that some of our number will not. We need some fees to keep going, and we need our "non" members because we also served with them. Please recognise that keeping our organisation financially afloat is a sound objective and contribute where you can. Additionally let us not argue over something that go on fruitlessly for hours when we all have other things to do.

Notifications

Christina does good work for us in recognising illnesses and the loss of our number. She needs your advice of any illnesses or deaths so that we can pass on feelings to family members. In light of this I urge you to please notify Christina of any matter that we should and would want to recognise.

On such event occurred in the last year. Unbeknown to the Executive Gordon Meares passed away last year. For me this was particularly sad and difficult as I remember giving Gordon such a hard time in Vung Tau. I would have felt particularly happy to meet Gordon at least once more and chat with him.

Executive

I understand that all members of the Executive are happy to stand again for office in 2013-2014. We do not wish to be an exclusive club and would willingly let anyone that wants to stand take our places. As I see things our Executive has kept things rolling along, hopefully with minimal concern to the members and here we are again meeting in considerable numbers.

Next Reunion

I propose to prevail upon our NSW fellows to organise the next reunion. We have had some respite through Bob Denner's great work in Dorrigo and Perc's work here.

My proposal is that we meet again on 4/5/6 November 2014 in Wollongong, centring on the Wollongong Surf Leisure Resort and taking in the sights of the Illawarra.

I have chosen the November 2014 as it is about 18 months out from this reunion.

Conclusion I trust that you have all enjoyed yourself here at Philip Island and I look forward to seeing you again in 18 months, if not earlier.

Bruce Manning
President

TREASURERS REPORT

RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association Account Summary 2012-13

Balance at 1 July 2012 \$1,109.86

Deposits

Membership	\$950.00
Donations	\$4.60
Phillip Is Reunion '13	\$4,243.50

Total Deposits	\$5,198.10
Deposits less Expenses	\$147.30

Expenses

Web Site	\$195.00
Petty cash	\$100.00
RAASC Vic Assocn	\$15.00
Plaque for Phillip Is	\$359.70
Reunion expenses notional	\$4,381.10

Total Expenses	\$5,050.80
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Balance at 15 Mar 2013 \$1,257.16

Term Deposit \$4,053.77 \$4,053.77

TOTAL Funds at 15 March 2013 \$5,310.93

We have budgeted between \$2.98 (\$149/3 editions) and \$3.94 (\$197/4 editions) to print and post our newsletter based on 50 members.

If you are happy to get your copy by email, let us know as this will help us save member funds.

In the past, we had access to no-cost printing for our newsletters but now have to pay for printing. However, for the foreseeable future we have access to a laser printer which will incur a cost of approximately \$15 per newsletter issue. This is a new cost to the Association but with careful monitoring we should be able to accommodate this in our budget.

We are also introducing a 3 year membership of \$60 which we hope, with careful budgeting, will enable us to meet our commitments over the next 3 years. We will monitor this and keep you informed. Members will still be able to pay annually, however, and this will remain at \$20.

Looking forward to being of service to you all. Regards,

David Evans
Treasurer, RAASC VSPA

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MEMBERSHIP-WELFARE REPORT 2012-13

I am sorry I cannot attend the reunion as my daughter is very sick and I need to be in Canberra to help her. I hope you all enjoy the reunion.

From the survey in the last newsletter, there were 15 responses – 10 from snail mail and 5 from email.

As at the end of February, membership for 2012/13 stands at 53. There are three widows to whom we send newsletters, as well as three honorary memberships.

I would like to say a big thank you to all who are attending the Reunion at Phillip Island. Thank you for returning your forms early. This made my job much easier.

I would like to remind members that when paying through the National Bank (NAB), you need to send me your completed membership form, as well as notification of the date the payment was made. This is because our Defence Bank isn't able to record any name details with any payment from the NAB.

Christina Luff
Membership-Welfare Officer
March 2013

PS: Apologies have been received from Bob Matthewman

Enclosures:

2013 Reunion Memorial Dinner placemat
Revised Membership Form for renewal