

'Paludrine Parade'

Official Newsletter of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps
Vietnam Supply Platoons Association



Patron: MAJGEN David McLachlan AO (Rtd). Web Site: <http://raascsupply.asn.au/>

EASIER ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR VETERANS!

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The Abbott Government has made it easier for veterans to access mental health support under new arrangements announced recently. Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson said tackling the mental health challenges for veterans and their families was a key priority in the Abbott Government's plan for improving services for Australia's service men and women.

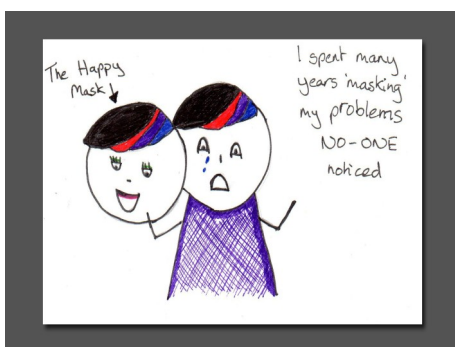
"Currently, veterans and eligible current and former members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are able to access treatment for psychiatrically-diagnosed

PTSD, depression and anxiety disorders, whatever the cause. Under these arrangements, known as non-liability health care, there does not have to be any link between the mental health condition and military service for the individual to access these services. I am pleased to announce that under the new arrangements, veterans and eligible current and former members of the ADF who are diagnosed with these conditions by vocationally registered general practitioners and clinical psychologists will also be able to

access these non-liability health care arrangements. By extending access to non-liability health care to those who are diagnosed by a GP or psychologist we can make sure people are given access to these services as quickly as possible. Early treatment is vitally important in addressing conditions such as these" Senator Ronaldson said. He also said the extension of the non-liability health care built on the Abbott Government's strong record in providing better services to Aus-

tralia's veterans. "The Government also previously expanded these services to include treatment for alcohol use disorder and substance use disorder and made changes to

allow a greater number of people with peacetime service to be eligible for these treatments. The key to good mental health is to take action early and I encourage all veterans and veterans' representatives to familiarise themselves with the revised arrangements and when required, to seek help that is available," Senator Ronaldson said. A psychiatrist's diagnosis is still required for compensation claims relating to mental-health conditions. For any further information on mental health support for veterans and their families, contact DVA or visit the *At Ease* website.



Scam Alert



DVA has been made aware of a scam where a veteran was contacted and told they are entitled to compensation for 'cost of living expenses'. The veteran was then asked for bank account details so the money could be deposited. After the veteran refused to provide the details, they were promised a cheque would be sent. No payments of this nature are being made and DVA will never ask for bank account details over the phone. If you receive a call of this type, do not provide any personal information. If you need to check on payments or make changes to bank account details, please contact DVA on 133 254.

2014/2016 Committee and State Representatives

Executive Office Bearers:

President	Ken Taylor
Vice President	Denny van Maanenber
Secretary	Russ Morison
Treasurer	David Evans
Membership	
Welfare Manager	Christina Luff
Newsletter Editor	Denny van Maanenber
Committee Member	Ray Brown
Public Officer	Ray Brown

Regional Executive Members:

North Queensland	Tony Simon (in absentia)
Brisbane and Environs	Don Noy
Gold Coast	Don Noy
NSW Country	Bob Denner
Sydney Metro	Barry Carroll
South Australia	Noel Schluter (in absentia)
Victoria	Tony Galea (in absentia)
Tasmania	Glen Breden
Western Australia	Graeme and Maria Sherriff

2016 Perth WA

Reunion Organiser

Graeme and Maria Sherriff

Last Post



2788982 Private Rex James Byrnes
Born in Sydney NSW on the
31st May, 1948.

Rex Byrnes served with 5 Company RAASC from 21st January 1970 to 10th November 1970. His passing was recorded in the December 2014 issue of the VVF newsletter. He was aged 66.

279709 T/Corporal
Ian Middleton RAASC
Born in Sydney NSW on the
12th January, 1948.

Ian Middleton served with Det 52 Supply Platoon RAASC from the 23rd April, 1970 to the 5th January 1971 when he was transferred to HQ 5 Company RAASC where he served from the 6th January, 1971 to the 18th March 1971. He passed away in October 2014 aged 66.

15438 Sergeant
Paul DONNELLY RAASC/RAAOC
Born in Sth Grafton NSW on the
8th August 1940.

Paul Donnelly served with HQ 1 ALSG from 27th March, 1967 to 16th June, 1967. He returned to Vietnam for a second tour and served with 25 Supply Platoon RAASC from the 28th January 1969 to the 29th January, 1970. Paul passed away on the 20th April, 2012 after a short battle with cancer aged 74.

Lest We Forget

Editorial

It is always a challenge to produce a newsletter. It's a never ending job to ensure that content is correct, concise and valid. In this issue, there's a bit of diversity with a variety of articles that hopefully will please everyone. With Perth reunion coming up in May 2016, only about 23 people have indicated that they will attend and that number includes spouses! Our Perth hosts need to know roughly how many are coming so that best prices can be negotiated for tours, accommodation and formal dinners. Even though the Perth AGM is still some 14 months away, it would help enormously if you let Christina know if you're coming. And the choice of getting there is quite open. Road, air, rail or by sea. The choices are plentiful. Speaking of Christina, She has had a pretty rough year. In and out of hospital with illness. She's on the improve and we do thank her sincerely for her continuing work. She is an extremely valuable team member and we all hope that her health improves this year. Our President, Ken Taylor hasn't been well either and we wish him and Marilyn all the best in the coming months. To all of you out there who have suffered recently through illnesses, we hope you get well soon. This Anzac Day marks the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings and I had hoped to put something into this edition on the supply chain. I have read some of the research being undertaken by Graham Wilson and Neville Lindsay on the logistical nightmare those supply chains had. There's too much to put in a single edition, but I hope to précis the papers and publish some of the stories in instalments in coming editions. I would imagine that Anzac services throughout Australia will be huge and where ever you go, I hope that the experience is a rewarding one. For Jennifer and I? Well, we're on the road in mid March and heading to Cairns. We'll be doing the dawn service and the parade with the local lads up there. So be good and be careful. I'd welcome any contributions you might have. Always nice to get input from a variety of sources. Best wishes to everyone. DVM Editor.

Cruise to the reunion on the 'Explorer of the Seas'

Leaving Sydney on the 12th April 2016, this is a 16 night cruise of the South Pacific visiting enchanting destinations like Sydney, Melbourne, Wellington, Christchurch, Tasmania and more before arriving in Fremantle on the 28th April, 2016. If you've ever dreamed of an exotic cruise to the South Pacific, your dreams have just come true by exploring Australia and New Zealand on the 'Explorer of the Seas'. Costs of the 16 night cruise varies from interior cabins starting at \$2,254 PP to a deluxe suite with a balcony starting at \$3,371 PP. Included in the price is accommodation, most meals, some beverages and most onboard enter-



tainment. The MS 'Explorer of the Seas' is a Voyager-class cruise ship owned and operated by Royal Caribbean International and was built in 1999. She can accommodate over 3,000 guests, including scientists making use of an oceanographic laboratory operated by the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. Over the past few years, she has been cruising the Bahamas, Bermuda, Eastern Caribbean, New England and she sailed 5 to 9 day Caribbean cruises out of Port Canaveral, Florida. In 2015, the Explorer of the Seas is scheduled to receive major upgrades, including the replacement of the inline skating rink with a Flowrider surfing simulator before

she sails to Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, and Madeira, Azores and the Canary Islands. From November 2015 to August 2016, the Explorer of the Seas will be based in Sydney, Australia, for the summer cruise season. So for the once in a lifetime cruise aboard a magnificent vessel, book your dream cruise ASAP. Bookings can be made by going to their website at: <http://www.royalcaribbean.com.au> and look for the cruise details under: "16N Round Australia - Bottom End Cruise". Bon Voyage!



Did you know??

The history of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps (RAASC) began in Australia in 1886 when Victoria raised an Ordnance and the Commissariat and Transport Corps of Victoria was formed. This Corps was made up of militia and continued until 1889 when the ordnance functions of the corps were dropped and it was redesignated as the Commissariat and Transport Corps of Victoria. New South Wales (NSW) followed suit and on 01 January 1891 the Commissariat and Transport Corps of NSW was formed. The Army Service Corps was formed in England in 1888 and in NSW on 23 November 1893.



Shortly after Victoria followed and late in 1895 retitled their corps to the Victorian Army Service Corps. Shortly after Federation (01 January 1901) the Australian Army Service Corps (MSC) was formed. However the official birth date of the Corps is the 1st July, 1903 (See Equal to the Task page 23 line 6 and 22). The Corps used to have corps dinners, parades etc around that date. The successor to the RAASC is the RACT which has its birthday on the 1st June, 1973. Perhaps—some of our members might like to revitalise the birthday dinners and celebrate the RAASC birthday this coming 1st July. There you go State reps—what can you organise? Perhaps a birthday luncheon in Melbourne or a trip to the Bendigo RSL??

Beans, POL and Bullets – Combat Supplies to an Australian Task Force on Operations in SVN

(Reference: Historical Record of Maintenance and Usage Rates in support of operations by 1 ATF in South Vietnam).

A paper presented by Brigadier Geoffrey Christopherson (Retired) AM, KSJ, jssc, psc, D Ed, M Bus. at the Commemorative Service Vietnam Veterans Day Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club—Gippsland Chapter, Longwarry North, Sunday 22 August, 2014.

Thank you for inviting me to join you in commemorating Vietnam Veterans' Day. Today, in particular, we recognise the role that RAASC personnel, as so many of you here were a part of that conflict. I hope that this presentation will show the vital importance of your role in logistics in war. Logistic support to 1 ATF is a very large topic and today I will focus on one aspect, the resupply of the task force units deployed on a major operation in 1968. The title, today, is an adaptation of a rather old USN term for fighting stores – beans, bullets and black oil. So the definition of combat supplies, in today's context covers, rations, POL and ammunition needed for a unit to be able to fight and the defence stores (wire, sandbags, pickets etc), needed for protection to survive. There was only a short time between the first deployment of a battalion group to Bien Hoa by June 1966, and the build-up of the Task Force at Nui Dat by January 1968. The rapidity of the build-up, and the restricted distribution of planning documents, resulted in problems, especially in the pre-deployment and mounting stages. Planning was rushed and did not include all the necessary people, especially the logistic and movement planners. Before I move on to the main theme – the logistic supply of 1ATF on operations, I want to discuss briefly the overall supply arrangements that were in place for the Australian forces in SVN. An Australian/United States Arrangement was set up and this included a Logistic and Administration Supplement.

The United States were to be responsible for providing (on a repayment basis) all logistic and administrative support for the Australian force on the same basis as that provided for US forces. The provision and maintenance of items unique to Australian forces (such vehicles and weapons) were to remain an Australian responsibility. That is why you found yourselves eating American fresh and C rations in SVN. This



arrangement seemed to work well and, apart from some minor anomalies, the national taste issue did not cause many problems although I don't think anyone was too keen on the etherised eggs!

We were fortunate in the TFMA in having a very good Catering Corps sergeant cook to run the messing arrangements. For the other categories of supply, ammunition, POL, and defence stores, the US supply system worked hard to meet Australian requirements even at times like TET 68 when their own forces had urgent needs for the same type of stores.

Turning now to the main theme of this presentation, the resupply of 1ATF on a major operation, first I will give you a picture of how the resupply to the Task Force worked on a day to day basis. Supply of the various commodities came from US sources to the big Aus-

tralian Logistics Support Group base at Vung Tau. From there task force requirements were transported by road over the 30 km gap between Vung Tau and Nui Dat. Once the supplies reached Nui Dat they were distributed to the Task Force units by TFMA logistic units. The TFMA was quite a diverse grouping – as well as HQ 26 Transport Company and 85 Tpt Pl, it also had detachments from 25 and 52 Supply Platoons, 9 Pet Pl, 176 AD Company and 1 Div ST Workshop. The TFMA also included an Ordnance detachment, a Cash Office, an Army Field Post Office and an ASCO detachment.

When units were operating in the field, resupply was usually by air and this meant the AD detachment often had to provide crews to operate the LZs, especially when artillery loads were involved, and to backload produce. On major operations when substantial Task Force units were deployed, the Fire Support Base was large, and the

operation was of longer duration, a Forward Task Force Maintenance Area was established to control the logistic operations. Which brings us to the next part of our talk – the support of 1ATF from FSB Coral in May/June 1968.

FSB Coral was established during Operation Toan Thang 1. The operation was designed to finish off the VC/NVA formations that had carried out the first TET offensive. During the first part of the operations the Task Force was operating in the northern part of Phuoc Tuy and so a forward TFMA was established at the large American Base at Bear Cat. ASLG had also established a forward base at Long Binh, the enormous US logistic complex south of Bien Hoa. When the VC/NVA commenced the second TET offensive, 1 ATF units were moved out of Phuoc Tuy into Bien Hoa Province to block the infiltration routes north of Saigon and Bien Hoa. This required a further move of the forward TFMA to a new FSB – Coral. On the afternoon of 12 May, a Fwd TFMA advance party moved with the HQ 1ATF advance party to Coral. At 3.30 am on 13 May, a NVA unit attacked the gun battery and mortar platoon on the eastern side of the LZ. This attack was beaten off after several hours of intense fighting. On 13 May, two road convoys arrived, carrying Fwd TFMA stock and personnel and the Fwd TFMA was established. On 16 May at 2.30 am the NVA mounted a regimental size attack on the FSB. This was preceded by a heavy mortar and RPG barrage, which, as the Offi-

cial History points out, was concentrated on A Coy 1RAR, and on the Task Force headquarters and maintenance area. This attack was also repulsed. There was a further mortar attack on 28 May in conjunction with the attack on FSB Balmoral.

Because of the threat situation for road transport, only air resupply from Long Binh to Coral was possible. However, CH47 support was in great demand and there were some delays. Urgent and priority demands were always met. Defence stores presented another problem. The average Australian unit consumed about twice the amount of defence stores than an equivalent sized American unit did, and Coral was a large area, roughly two kilometres wide. It was the largest FSB established by 1ATF in SVN. However, adequate defensive stores were delivered to provide the necessary security for the base.

So what are the lessons we can learn from the logistic support of FSB Coral? Were we equal to the task?

The average daily supply requirement at the FSB was 81 tonnes delivered by 20 CH347 sorties. This rose to 132 tonnes on one occasion. Ammunition did present some problems. On 16 May, the ammunition stock level at Coral reached a dangerously low level and the Forward TFMA reserve stock was exhausted. The main reason for the shortfall was an under-



estimation of the usage rates. Water remained a problem for most of the deployment to Coral as 14,000 litres had to be delivered daily. At first, the delivery was by water Jerrican, but then the rubber fuel drums were used as CH47 underslung loads.

The major lesson from Coral was, of course, the need for RAASC personnel to be competent. Not only in technical skills but also in general military skills – particularly the construction of field defences and individual weapons pits.

Finally the Official History on the offensive, *'The Australian Task Force in the Vietnam War 1967-1968 (p 398)'* says this: *'After expressing some criticism of minor administrative matters, the final remarks on logistic support for Operation Toan Thang made by HQ AFV were:*

'Despite the preceding comments, it is felt that both 1 ALSG and 1 ATF have come far since the initial deployment for Operation Coburg [January 1968]. They have performed most creditably. While there is a need for some further refinement in both procedures and organisation, nothing in the present practices is working to the detriment of the ultimate aim – service to the combat soldier.'

You were all EQUAL TO THE TASK, and can be justly proud of the fact. Thank you and thank you to your partners and families that supported you – and continue to support you. Brigadier Geoff Christopherson (Retired) AM, KSJ, jssc, psc, D Ed, M Bus. Former OC HQ 26 Tpt Coy, RAASC, Task Force Maintenance Area, Nui Dat, South Vietnam 1967/1968.



The eat of battle –How the armies of the world are being fed.

An army marches on its stomach, but what do different countries feed their troops? Who gets smoked sprats or tinned cheddar or vegemite?

This article appeared in the Australian on-line edition of The Guardian dated 14th February 2015 and was written by Emma Graham Harrison. It has been slightly edited.



Italy. The Italian ration pack contains a breakfast shot of 40% alcohol *cordiale*, a powdered cappuccino, lots of biscotti, and a disposable camping stove for heating parts of the meal, including a pasta and bean soup, canned turkey and a rice salad. Dessert is a power sport bar, canned fruit salad or a muesli chocolate bar.



Germany. The German ration pack contains several sachets of grapefruit and exotic juice powder to add to water, and Italian biscotti, but also more familiar treats such as liver-sausage spread and rye bread, goulash with potatoes, and for breakfast sour cherry and apricot jams.



France. A streamlined but sophisticated French ration pack offers soldiers deer pâté, cassoulet with duck confit, creole-style pork and a crème chocolate pudding. There is also a disposable heater, some coffee and flavoured drink powder, muesli for breakfast and a little Dupont d'Isigny caramel.



United Kingdom. The British pack is dotted with familiar brands from Kenco coffee and Typhoo tea to a mini bottle of Tabasco. The main courses include the British favourite, chicken tikka masala, and a vegetarian pasta. There's also pork and beans for breakfast, and lots of sweets and snacks from trail mix to an apple "fruit pocket" that looks like it might not be out of place in a school lunchbox. Plus packets of Polos and, of course, plenty of teabags.



Australia. The Australian ration pack has more small treats than any of the others. Most of it is packaged by the military, from a serving of love-it-or-hate-it Vegemite to jam sandwich biscuits and a tube of sweetened condensed milk. The bag includes a can-opener-cum-spoon for getting at the Fonterra processed cheddar cheese, and main meals of meatballs and chilli tuna pasta. There are lots of sweets and soft drinks, and two unappetising-looking bars labelled "chocolate ration".



Spain. The Spanish lunch pack has cans of green beans with ham, squid in vegetable oil, and pate. There is also a sachet of powdered vegetable soup, peach in syrup for dessert and crackers handed out to go with the meal in place of bread (not shown). There is a disposable heater with matches and fuel tabs, as well as lots of tablets: Vitamin C, glucose, water purification, and rehydration.

USA. (Picture top right hand column). Almond poppy seed pound cake, cranberries, spiced apple cider (the hot US non-alcoholic drink) and peanut butter and crackers make up this very American meal package. The main – pasta with vegetable "crumbles" in spicy tomato sauce – is less traditional, but the "flameless heater" shows off American tech skills – just add water to the powder in a plastic bag and it heats up enough to warm the plastic meal pouch.



Canada. (Below) While there are Bear Paws snacks in the Canadian ration pack, there's the shocking omission of maple syrup. You have the choice of salmon fillet with Tuscan sauce or vegetarian couscous for the main meal. There is also the makings of a peanut butter and jelly (raspberry jam) sandwich for breakfast.



Norway. (Below). The Norwegian pack has American technology (the flameless heater) but British tastes. There is Earl Grey tea, beans and bacon in tomato sauce, a golden oatie biscuit and Rowntree's Tooty Frooties



Editors Notes: Going through all these diverse and varied culinary delights brings up images of the ration packs we all enjoyed in Vietnam. Having looked at some of the contents of these modern day samples, I think we did pretty well out of it. I do wonder however, if the modern soldier suffered the same sorts of constipation after a week on the packs and then, when back on fresh tucker—well let's not go there! More next issue.

RAASC VSPA 2016 REUNION PERTH

Proposed Dates: Mon 2nd May, to Fri 6th May, 2016

ACCOMMODATION: Suggested venue is the Travelodge Hotel. 8 nights @ \$120.00 per night.		
SAT 30th April	FREE DAY	Train travelers arrive in Perth -
SUN 1st MAY	0930-1430	OPTIONAL: Tour 1 – Swan Valley with Sweet Treats. \$57.50 PP.
MON 2ND MAY	0900-1100 1100 1230-1500 1500	FREE TIME Commencement of formal 2016 Reunion events. Registration Lunch – Anzac House Free Time
TUE 3RD MAY	0900-1600	Tour 2 – Mandurah/Cruise estuary/Kings Park \$66 PP.
WED 4TH MAY	0900-1600	Tour 3 – Fremantle/Barrack St. Cruise. \$60 PP.
THU 5TH MAY	0900-1400 1400-1430 1500-1730 1800	FREE TIME Service (yet to be determined) AGM Dinner – Anzac House
FRI 6TH MAY	0900-1100 1200-1430	FREE TIME Lunch – Anzac House or Hillarys (Bus) Air travelers and those with caravans etc depart to do their own thing.
SAT 7TH MAY	FREE DAY	
SUN 8TH MAY	Train travelers depart for Adelaide.	

We need to know what members intentions are for 2016. Whilst it is early days – we would like an idea of how many members may be attending the 2016 reunion. There is a tentative submission form below. Please let Christina know ASAP.

Preliminary Notice of Intention to attend the 2016 Reunion in Perth WA from Sat 30th April, 2016 to Sunday 8th May, 2016

Please Note:

The dates shown above are for those travelling from Adelaide to Perth by the Indian Pacific. Train arrives Perth on a Saturday and departs for Adelaide on the Sunday. The actual reunion dates run from Mon 2nd May to Fri 6th May.

This is not a commitment to attend, rather it provides the RAASC VSPA Committee with some feedback as to approximate numbers attending, to allow for some forward planning by the WA Reunion organisers.

Name : Partners Name:

I/We will be attending the 2016 WA Reunion

I/We will **NOT** be attending the 2016 WA Reunion

(Please circle your desired response and email, phone or post your response to Christina)