

'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/>

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Association Banners available

RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoon Association banners up for grabs.

Association banners are available, one to each State, to march behind each ANZAC Day and Vietnam Veterans Day provided at least two members from each State manage them.

For further details email to

raascvva@efel.net.au

or phone 03 9720 3860

*Merry
Christmas*



**Postage going up
from 70 cents an
article to \$1.00
as from
1st Jan 2016.**



Presidents Christmas Message

Australia Post have put up their postage costs which impacts on the available funds the association has. Christina, our hard working secretary has advised that to save costs, only those members that don't have email, will be snail mailed a copy of Paludrine Parade. In future Paludrine Parade will be emailed out to everyone in PDF format.

Hi All. Well it's that time of the year again when we celebrate Christmas, not only the religious side, but what I think is the most important side and that is spending and enjoying time with families and friends. It's been a strange year for some, particularly me and that started with a heart attack and open heart surgery. All is good now. Some of our members have passed on and that is very sad for their family's at this time of the year. To all those that illness has affected a love one, I wish a speedy recovery. Next year should be much better and I am personally looking forward to the reunion in Perth and hope as many as possible can attend. Lastly, I would like to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and may your New Year be something to look forward to. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all. Kindest Regards, Ken & Marilyn Taylor (President)

2014/2016 Committee and State Representatives

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| | | | |
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2016 RAASCVSPA Reunion Perth

Dates: Mon 2nd May - Fri 6th May, 2016

Proposed Program

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Sat 30 th April | Free Day | Train Travelers Arrive In Perth. |
| Sun 1 st May | 0930-1430 | <u>Tour 1</u> Swan Valley with Sweet Treats. \$57.50pp. |
| Mon 2 nd May | 0900-1100 1100 1230-1500 1500 | Free Time. Commencement of Formal 2016 Reunion Events. Registration Lunch – Anzac House Free Time |
| Tue 3 rd May | 0900-1600 | <u>Tour 2</u> Mandurah/Cruise Estuary/Kings Park \$66.00pp. |
| Wed 4 th May | 0900-1600 | <u>Tour 3</u> Fremantle/Barrack St. Cruise. \$60.00pp. |
| Thu 5 th May | 0900-1400 1400-1430 1500-1730 1800 | Free Time Service (Yet To Be Determined) AGM Corps Formal Dinner - Anzac House |
| Fri 6 th May | 0900-1100 1200-1430 | Free Time Lunch – Anzac House Or Hillary's (Bus). Air travelers & those with Caravans Etc depart to do their own thing. |
| Sat 7 th May | Free Day | |
| Sun 8 th May | Train Travelers Depart For Adelaide. | |

Recommended Accommodation Venues

Riverview Hotel
(Highly recommended for single rooms)
Address: 42 Mount Street,
West Perth WA 6005.
Phone: (08) 9321 8963
Email: manager@riverviewperth.com.au
Website: www.riverviewperth.com.au

Mont Clare Boutique Apartments
(Recommended for two bedroom apartments).
Address: 190 Hay Street,
East Perth, WA 6004.
Phone: (08) 9224 4300
Email: info@montclareapartments.com
Website: www.montclareapartments.com

Central Caravan Park.
(For powered sites, 1 or 2 b/rm cabins).
Address: 34 Central Avenue,
Ascot WA 6104.
Phone: (08) 9277 1704
Freecall: 1300 760 060
Email: mailbox@perthcentral.com.au
Website: www.perthcentral.com.au

Pricing standards.

\$130.00 per night & deluxe \$150.00 per night. Standard rooms are fine. No two bedroom apartments are available here. Free & secure parking, Anzac House in St Georges Terrace is only a 21 minute walk away. (1.6 kms).

Pricing standards.

\$180.00 per night for a single bedroom apartment. Two bedroom apartments each with a Queen size bed, \$199.00 pn. Free, secure parking provided. Anzac House in St Georges Terrace is only a 14 minute walk away. (1.1 kms).

Pricing standards. Based on seven nights or more as at Jul 2015. Powered sites \$42.00 pn x 2A. One bedroom cabin from \$145.00. Two bedroom cabins from \$175.00 pn. Anzac House in St Georges Terrace is a 20 minute SE drive away (11.3 kms). Or you can take a bus. (30 minutes).

VALE - 38710 T/CPL Paul James Curran, RAASC

Born in Caulfield Victoria on the 27th May, 1948. Paul was a Regular Army soldier in the Royal Australian Army Service Corps who served in SVN in a non-Corps posting with HQ AFV (Nui Dat) from 21st May, 1968 to 21st May, 1969. Paul was a well known and respected Pension Officer at both Noble Park and Ringwood RSL's. He was the Secretary of the RAASC Vietnam Veterans Association. Paul died suddenly on the 6th December, 2015. He was 67 years of age.

LEST WE FORGET

Flies, filth and bully beef: life at Gallipoli in 1915.

Reprinted with permission from the Author; Michelle Negus Cleary, Research Associate, Mediterranean Studies, La Trobe University

'Of all the bastards of places this is the greatest bastard in the world'. – Ion Idriess, 1932, The Desert Column

It has often been repeated that the lived existence of soldiers at Gallipoli in the 1915 campaign was extremely arduous. The soldiers' accounts and recent archaeological surveys of this best-preserved First World War battlefield illustrate just how inhumane and grueling the conditions were for both Allied and Turkish soldiers.

Conditions. Many factors contributed to making the Gallipoli battlefield an almost unendurable place for all soldiers. The constant noise, cramped unsanitary conditions, disease, stench, daily death of comrades, terrible food, lack of rest and thirst all contributed to the most grueling conditions.

The Anzacs were literally clinging onto the edge of a cliff with the sea at their backs and the Turks occupying the higher ground. They were forced to dig extensive trench and tunnels systems and to endure a semi-subterranean existence of cramped and filthy living and working conditions under constant shellfire.

Incessant noise from shelling, bombing, artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire caused psychological and physiological problems for the soldiers. These included shell shock, stress from unceasing exposure to loud mechanical noises, hearing impairment and lack of sleep.

The cramped conditions and steep terrain left few safe places for men to rest in the front line on Second Ridge above Anzac Cove. Severe exhaustion from lack of sleep caused by the constant noise in front-line positions such as Silt Spur, Quinn's Post and Tasmania Post meant that many men fell asleep at their posts.

Food. Food was a major concern to Anzac soldiers. Much has been written about the food rations provided for the Anzacs at Gallipoli, including the dark, humorous odes to bully beef and impenetrably hard army biscuits in *The Anzac Book*. There is no denying that the rations issued to the Anzacs provided very poor nutrition due to the unvarying diet of processed foods: canned meat (corned "bully" beef, bacon or

Maconochie's beef stew), hard tack biscuits and watery jam. The diet was varied sometimes by sugar, condensed milk, rice and cocoa, but there was a distinct lack of fresh fruit or vegetables for the Anzacs.

These rations were intended to be lived on for only short periods of time by British army divisions, not for extended months as was the case at Gallipoli. Living on these rations caused major health problems for the soldiers. So prevalent on the Anzac battlefields were the food cans in which these rations were issued that their remains can still be found around the sites of Anzac trenches and dugouts.

The Turkish forces were provided with a wider variety of food. This was centrally prepared by cooks and consisted of fresh

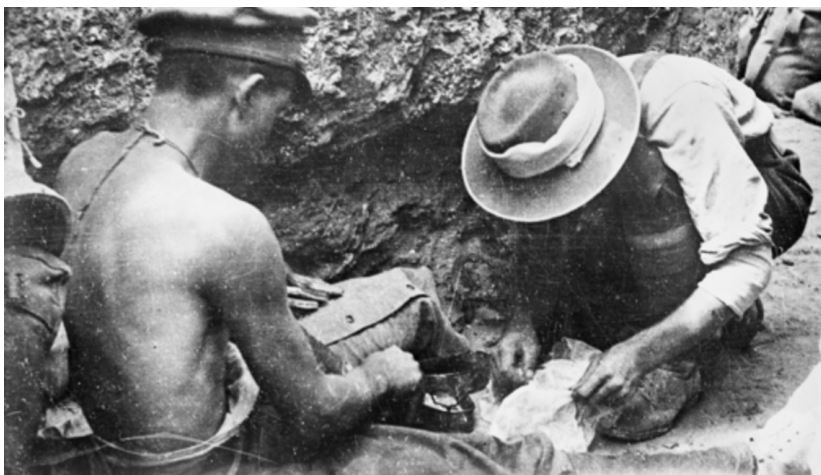
The unburied corpses in and around the front-line areas were the perfect breeding ground for flies. These were almost unbearable in the summer months. The flies were so thick that soldiers could not eat without their biscuits and jam being blackened with flies. Flies spread diseases rapidly through the troops living in cramped, over-crowded trenches and dugouts and unable even to wash their hands. Lice were also a major problem for soldiers during the summer months.

Other factors. The local water supply was very limited in the British- and Anzac-held areas of the peninsula. At Anzac Cove in particular, the water supply was a serious problem that contributed to the soldiers' ill-health and exacerbated the wretched sanitary conditions. Soldiers in front-line positions were issued only small amounts of water per day and the water quality was poor. Thirst and dehydration were common amongst the men. Often their only drink was extremely strong black tea. Other factors that characterised the life of soldiers during the 1915 conflict were psychological. These included homesickness, fear and anxiety,

the constant threat of death, killing and grief at the loss of mates, brothers and comrades on a daily basis.

Overall, these were appalling conditions, which indicate the wholly inadequate planning and response of the British and Allied military authorities to basic human needs and a failure in their duty of care to their soldiers. The Anzac soldiers earned the respect of others largely because of the projected image of their laconic good humour in the face of the most terrible circumstances.

However, some soldiers could not handle these conditions at all and understandably succumbed to mental, physical and emotional injuries, which continue to be marginalised or completely unacknowledged in the Anzac legend. The conditions took their toll on even the most stoic and fortunate of survivors, who felt the effects of their time at Gallipoli decades after the conflict.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Anzac soldiers making 'Biscuit Porridge' in a trench at Gallipoli

local foods, although it was often lacking in meat. French and Indian divisions had much better rations than Anzacs, with more vegetables and bread.

Disease. The poor nutritional content of the British rations contributed to the physical decline of the Anzac and British troops at Gallipoli. The unappetising and unvaried diet affected the soldiers' morale and psychological well-being. It also increased their susceptibility to disease, which spread rapidly during the summer months of the campaign. Disease swept through both Anzac and Turkish forces at Gallipoli. Dysentery, tetanus and septic wounds plagued the soldiers and necessitated the evacuation of thousands of men from the battlefield. The latrines were open and rudimentary.

There were no bathing facilities and few opportunities to wash bodies or clothes. The lack of sanitation in the Anzac areas caused the rapid spread of dysentery, known as the "Gallipoli Gallop".

On Christmas Eve 1914, soldiers of the British, French and German armies were hunkered down in trenches on the Western Front, their thoughts

number of ceasefires were declared, but they were not nearly as widespread as in 1914.

By the time Australians experienced Christmas on the Western Front, the

British command saw the date as an opportunity to wreak even more havoc on the enemy. Australian official historian Charles Bean, records that on 25 December 1916, *"at the hour when it was thought probable that the Germans would be sitting down to their midday feast, every gun of the British 4th and 5th Armies fired two rounds at the points where the enemy's troops and staffs might be foregathering"*. Bean notes that the order was considered "ruthless" and "repugnant" by many of the British troops, who were "by no means opposed to 'disgracing' Christmas by exhibitions of brotherliness and good humour".

Hundreds of thousands of Australians have spent Christmas at war: freezing in First World War trenches, as prisoners of war of the Japanese, or on reconnaissance and ambush operations in Vietnam. Even today Australian soldiers find themselves spending Christmas far from home, on operations in Afghanistan.

Soldiers are not forgotten at this time of year, and efforts have always been made to bring a little joy – and a decent meal – to those serving, or those recovering from wounds. For Christmas 1915, the Australian Comforts Fund Committee distributed



Staff and patients at No. 14 Australian General Hospital, Egypt, decorated for Christmas

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on their loved ones at home. As night fell, the sound of German soldiers singing carols drifted across no man's land, and small fir trees and lanterns appeared on the tops of their trenches. Messages were shouted between the two sides, and some soldiers ventured out to meet and exchange gifts. The momentum for goodwill gained pace and on Christmas Day more men met to talk, take photographs, and even play football.

Christmas and war are not compatible, but too often they are thrust together. The Christmas truce of 1914 – a series of unofficial ceasefires – was a statement of peace and humanity amid one of history's most brutal wars. These ceasefires were permitted by some officers to allow the men a chance to improve living conditions in the trenches. But not all troops took part: in some areas, time was given only to recover and bury the dead; in other sectors, there were casualties as fighting continued. The following year, strongly worded orders from the high commands of both sides were issued in the lead-up to Christmas warning against further fraternisation. A small

At War For Christmas

An article by Emma Campbell.
As published by the Australian War Memorial



Troops of the 9th Inf Bn enjoy a traditional Christmas lunch on the island of Bougainville, 1944.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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20,000 boxes containing handkerchiefs, cigars, cigarettes and matches to men in camp in Egypt. Many had just returned from Gallipoli. In a letter home in early January 1916, Sister Lettitia Moreton of the Australian Army Nursing Service described the efforts that had been made for wounded men recovering at the 2nd Australian General Hospital in Egypt:



We gave our patients out at Ma'adi Hospital a very nice little Xmas. A very nice dinner, roast turkey, chicken, ham,

plenty vegetables, plum pudding, claret cup, beer, soft drinks, sweets, etc. They did enjoy it, poor things. The Drs helped us with it too, one carved the turkey and ham while the other gave out the drinks. The place was rather nicely decorated and everyone enjoyed the day.

Sadly, that was Sister Moreton's last Christmas: the following year she was posted to India for service, and died there of enteric fever in November.

Christmas is often a marker of time for a soldier at war. They count their service by each one that comes and goes, and are optimistic that it will be the last spent away from home. In 1918, Private William Lewis of the 17th Battalion sent a pretty Christmas card from Belgium to his mother and younger brother Charlie, wishing all the best and "hoping to be with you all for the next, 1919". Fortunately, he was.

The freezing cold Christmases of the Western Front, gave way to tropical heat and humidity during WW2, as most Australian servicemen spent at least one festive season in the Pacific. But that did not necessarily mean an end to the traditional hot Christmas lunch: in his book *The hard slog*, Karl James writes that on Bougainville for Christmas 1944, the senior command of the Australian II Corps sat down to "turkey, ham, fresh potatoes peas and onions, followed by plum pudding and sauce". The 26th Battalion held a Christmas Eve concert party that included a jazz performance, and went swimming on Christmas Day; and the 27th Battalion ate fresh fish and roast pork from wild pigs.

Some prisoners of war even managed to rustle up a decent meal for Christmas.

Jock Mathieson was interred at a camp on Banka Island for Christmas 1943. On 24 December he wrote to a friend, CAPT Wilma Oram of the 2/13th Australian General Hospital, who was interred at the nearby women's camp: *'Great preparations are being made for tomorrow's food. I believe we will be eating throughout the day. Three pigs have been slaughtered – they are being prepared just now for the cooking pot. The local authorities have contributed a great deal towards tomorrow's food. There will be Church services and carol singing.'* Other prisoners of war were grateful to the Red Cross for providing food parcels that made Christmas a little bit special – but they would have much preferred their freedom. WJ Wood was a British pilot who was captured after the Fall of Singapore and was sent to Japan. In 1944, he wrote this poem:

***This is but a memory
Of a Christmas one of three
I'm trusting God I don't see four
As a Prisoner-of-War.
It was no doubt the best of three
Thanks to Red Cross Society
But let us hope in Him above
We spend the next with those we love.***

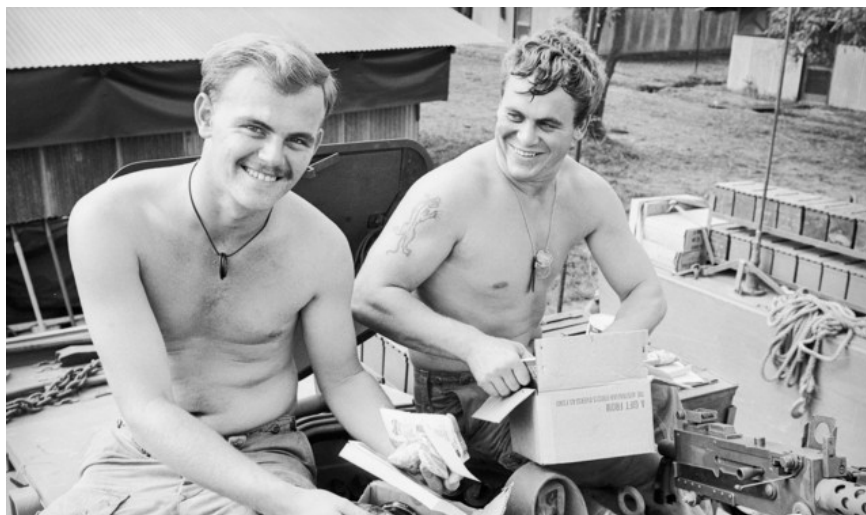
Christmas for those who served in the Vietnam War may have featured festive concerts by Australian entertainers, and parcels provided by the Australian Forces Overseas Fund. In *Fighting to the finish*, the final volume of the official history of the Vietnam war, Ashley Ekins records the diary entry of CAPT David Wilkins of C Company, 5 RAR, who wrote

that his company's officers and sergeants began Christmas Day 1969 by "serving coffee royale [coffee laced with rum] to the diggers IN BED. Later we continued our duties and served the diggers Christmas dinner, much to their delight. Will have to knock 'em back to size tomorrow." They had earned it, having spent the previous ten days on reconnaissance and ambush operations in rugged, jungle-covered territory west of Binh Ba. However, Ekins writes that the soldiers of 8 RAR were not so lucky, and found themselves continuing to fight in spite of a so-called Christmas Day truce. 2LT Neil Smith of 8 RAR, who was stationed at a remote fire support base, wrote: "Christmas Day was just another day to us. The battalion had four contacts on Christmas Day and killed two VC."

Across the world, and through the ages, diggers have always yearned to "be home by Christmas". And for those who can't be home? We wish you all a safe Christmas, a happy New Year and a safe return home.



**Remember
our troops
this
holiday
season!**



Troopers Ian Johnston (left) and Graham "Shorty" Maycock of B Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, open Christmas parcels from the Australian Forces Overseas Fund at Nui Dat, South Vietnam, 1969

A AFCANS, as it is currently known, is well remembered by Vietnam era troops as ASCO and who hasn't got a story to tell about it? I recall ASCO at Kapooka during my recruit training days in 1967 when I bought a Polaroid instamatic camera on hire purchase. Then it paid for itself as I took instant photos of my fellow recruits to send home to girlfriends, wives, mothers etc. Then whilst serving in Papua New Guinea. ASCO was there and I bought a magnificent AKAI reel to reel stereo system that became the focal point in our OR's barracks. Even at Nui Dat, ASCO was there – and sold everything in direct competition with American forces PX stores. So I've got fond memories of ASCO and it's appropriate we celebrate 100 years of this wonderful organisation. (Ed)

chits/tokens, c.1940's.). Inspired by the actions and achievements of an Australian mother Dame Alice Isabel Chisholm, whose son was serving as a light horseman in Gallipoli, she sailed for Egypt in mid-1915. Once in country Mrs Chisholm, together with Miss Rania MacPhillamy (an Australian Nurse who she met in Cairo, Egypt), set-up and operated canteens in three parts of Egypt to help Australian soldiers with basic amenities and a few home comforts whilst doing their duty so far from home. We believe it was on this basis in 1915 the structure of the new canteen service (A.I.F canteen) was formed. During WW1, the AIF Canteen, provided a centralised canteen service which operated Australia-wide on ADF bases, on troopships, in internment (P.O.W) camps, and also deployed overseas with our troops to the United Kingdom, France and right throughout the Middle East in places such as The Western Desert in Egypt, Ottoman Empire, Lebanon,

1969). ASCO provided services such as canteens, bulk stores, snack bars, news agencies and bank agencies. The military unit was disbanded in 1979 and the name changed to Army and Air Force Canteen Service (AAFCANS) and provided services such as canteens, mobile food vans, snack bars, wholesale supply of alcohol to Messes and Clubs, vending, dry cleaning services, postal services, grocery stores, photography services, adventure wear stores and fuel. In the period between 1996 and 2006, \$6.2 million was provided in the form of disbursements to units and welfare trusts (this figure is 80% of the organisations profit in that time). In 2012 the Canteen Service reverted to its earlier trading name AAFCANS. AAFCANS expanded its operations providing services to an additional 14 bases in NSW & VIC. AAFCANS now provides services to 33 Army

bases, Air Forces bases and joint ADF facilities throughout Australia. The organisation directly operates facilities such as: canteens, bistros, taverns, kiosks, mobile food vans, transportable canteens, post offices, fuels stops, convenience stores and even a supermarket. Additional convenience services such as: hair

dressers, barbers, financial institutions, dry cleaning services, post offices, mechanical services, photographers and adventure wear stores are provided by our Licensees. AAFCANS provides our ADF members, with both a competitive & diverse range of products and conveniences services. Through continuous improvement AAFCANS offers the best quality available and strives to provide a contemporary food, beverage and convenience offering across its facilities. (Congratulations to AAFCANS on their centenary. Ed).



We know just what you like and stock all of your favourite snacks and popular branded products!



AAFCANS
Celebrating 100 years! ★ EST. AIF 1915 to 2015

AAFCANS has operated in a support role to Defence providing amenities, convenience products and services for our troops both domestically and in overseas deployments including WW1, WW2, Korea, Vietnam and in more recent years East Timor. Over the years the canteen organisation has provided; Wet and Dry Canteens, Mobile Canteens, Milk bars, Snack bars, Canteens onboard Troopships & P.O.W Camps, Service Clubs and Hostels, Grocery - General Stores, Adventure wear / Disposal stores, Postal services, Financial Institutions, Barbers, Mechanical Services, Dry Cleaning, Fuel Stops, Photographic Services, News Agencies and much, much more. The organisation has constructed and operated a number of Aerated Water/ Cordial Factories which provided professionally-made carbonated beverages for AACs canteens both domestically & overseas and canteen premises often incorporated recreational equipment and facilities, reading rooms, letter writing rooms and even a full library (Melbourne c.1943). In the 1940's, it minted its own currency by way of Canteen ADFC 'Money Orders' and 'Token Coins'. (The Money Orders was used as gift vouchers and marketed to the general public and the coins used as

Suez Canal, Palestine and Tel Aviv. The A.I.F Canteen ran a network of canteens, mobile outlets, issuing points and bulk stores with surplus funds provided to AIF Canteen Trust. A total of £1,156,150 of grants were provided to 49,826 war widows, dependents and seriously injured soldiers. By the time WW2 broke, the canteen service provided all types of services which included canteens, mobile canteens, clubs, grocery stores, barber shops and also operated canteens on board troopships such as HMAS Duntroon for troops returning from duty in the Middle East. ADFC also minted its own currency. The 'Coins' were used as tokens or chits and 'Canteen Orders' acted like money orders or store vouchers. With surplus funds the organisation made, school scholarships were established for children of ex-servicemen to pay for schooling all the way through to university. During this time the canteen service also operated a number of Aerated Water/Cordial Factories. It appears at least 9 factories were in operation both within Australia and overseas. In 1959 AACs changed names to Australian Service Canteen Organisation (ASCO). ASCO was an integration of AACs and RAAF canteens and served troops throughout Australia, Papua New Guinea (1959 – 1981) and Vietnam (1966 –



PTE Les Sherd of 3 RAR doing some Christmas shopping in the Nui Dat ASCO canteen 1968.



Membership Application/Renewal Form

New Application or Renewal (circle which ones) 2016/17 or 3 years 2016/2019

Surname:

Given Names:

Address:

State: Postcode: Date of Birth:

Phone No. (Home) (Mobile)

Email Address:

Vietnam Service Details:

Dates: From To

Spouse/Partner's Name:

Membership: 1-year membership (Vietnam Veterans and Associate/non-Vets) \$20
3-year membership (Vietnam Veterans and Associate/non-Vets) \$60
Association Badge \$10 – Free badge to new members

Payment details: (Any one of the following):

- By cheque payable to: RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association, PO BOX 207 Mitchell ACT 2911. (And include this form).
- Electronically by direct credit to: Defence Credit Union, BSB 803 205 Account 20726970. (And send this form by post or email)
- Or cash deposit at any National Bank, BSB 083 422 Account 207269708. (And send this form by post or email).

Office Use Only: Member Number/Receipt:.....

Membership Card issued/date.....Database.....Banked.....

Scan/send to Area Reps.....Membership Mgr Notified.....