

'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/>

Our nation's finest now suffering in silence as suicide rates rise

Among other things, Townsville is a garrison town. If soldiers and their families are doing it tough in a city where unemployment is more than 11 percent, twice the national average, resources here are really stretched to try to give them support. Too many veterans are falling through the cracks here and in the rest of the country. In a city like this the result of the lousy effort we have made to look after those who have served their country in war zones from Korea to Malaya, to Vietnam, to Iraq and Afghanistan and Somalia and Timor is broken marriages, domestic violence, homelessness and, worst of all, high rates of suicide. In raw numbers, there are more than 10,000 army and air force personnel in Townsville and an even greater number of veterans and

their families. Soldiers have different reactions to post-traumatic stress disorder but few veterans are unaffected. It is difficult to track the number of suicides because while the Department of Veterans' Affairs has 300,000 on their books, there is twice that number not in the system. Veteran support groups have great difficulty in getting exact numbers of suicides. The number most widely used is 78 last year with 39 so far this year meaning little or no improvement this year. I took an interest in this problem and spoke to a number of veterans about two years ago. Sadly while I communicated with two veterans affairs ministers, I achieved little because I spent the last eight months in hospital after my cancer operation and then had a long recovery. I spoke to men who lived as hermits, abused drugs and alcohol, who had no real hope of being in a good enough mental state to be able to work.

All had one thing in common — they complained the DVA treated too many of them very poorly indeed. When I put some complaints to Stuart Robert during his short tenure as minister, there was some improvement in the way the Department treated its clients. But it wasn't long before their behaviour regressed and I wasn't around to push the envelope a bit further. Some 11 months ago, the Prime Minister announced a trial of methods to reduce the number of suicides. At the time it was deemed a "priority". It is only over the last month or so that any sign of the promised "priority" trial has been detected. The announcement came just days before a big article on soldier suicides was about

to appear. Therein lies the problem. Taking care of veterans is only important when the lack of

decent care has a light shone upon it. Politicians love to stand next to the troops when the cameras are rolling. They bask in the glory that always surrounds those courageous enough to fight for their country. When there are no lights or cameras though, the easiest Australians to forget are the very same ones the polities love to be seen to support. Australia is welshing on its debt to our veterans and it's about time we paid up. If there are real policies to be developed on this front, it would not be a bad idea to throw some of the money in the direction of Townsville, where soldiers, veterans and their families make up more than 20% of the publication.

Editors Note: Our current information suggests that over 800 Vietnam veterans have committed suicide since the end of that war and just this year alone, over 56 ADF veterans have taken their lives.

**'We have failed to look after those
who have served their country'.
GRAHAM RICHARDSON
(reproduced from 'The Australian')**

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September, 2017

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FINAL CALL

HOBART REUNION 11/11

It's now crunch time with only eight short weeks to go before we jet off once again to an exciting re-union in Hobart Tasmania. There's still room for any late starters and you're more than welcome to put in your last minute registration forms.

However, we need your forms in ASAP so we can complete our final arrangements with hire coaches, AGM venues, Corps dinner etc. Finally if anyone that is going or intends to go, and has any dietary requirements, please let me know well in advance so we can pre-plan your meals.

Sad News



It is with regret that we advise the passing of one of our members

Beverley Judith Anderson

late wife of
Ron Anderson,
Det 52 Sup Pl, RAASC

Bev passed away peacefully at Robina Public Hospital, from pancreatic cancer.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Ron and his five adult offspring at this difficult time.

Bev Anderson
1944—2017
Rest In Peace

Australia's Vietnam War website upgraded.

The *Australia's Vietnam War* website was created by the Military Operations Analysis Team (MOAT) at the University of New South Wales (Canberra). The site provides a unique way of exploring the Vietnam War in great detail, through the use of an interactive *Battle Map*. Visitors to this site may register for an account and contribute personal stories, photos and videos against combat events on the Battle Map. The aim of this is to enrich the history of the Vietnam War for future generations. New Features include:

- A good selection of contributed new articles. (See article below)
- Honour Roll: Photographs, biographical sketches and brief service histories of the 521 Australians who lost their lives during the campaign.
- Improved filtering by unit and sub-unit.
- Unit/sub-unit tracking. Follow a unit or sub-unit by jumping chronologically through their contacts with the enemy.
- Place a poppy against the name of Australians who lost their lives or remember your mates by writing a brief personal tribute against their name.

Visit the website at

<https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au>



The Pink French Citroën, a story submitted to the site by Noel Hains

In 1968-69, V & W Company, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment was attached to 4RAR creating 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC). While on Operation Capital II near the Courtenay Rubber Plantation in the north of Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam, a Victor Company forward scout saw something that looked out of place in the thick scrub in front of him. A section was deployed to move forward and investigate. They discovered an abandoned black French Citroën car. The vehicle was dragged clear of the undergrowth. The capture of the vehicle was duly reported to higher headquarters on 27 Nov 68. The car had been captured at Grid Reference YS521885 near the south east corner of the Courtenay Rubber Plantation. Operations Capital I and Capital II were highly successful. As well as the capture of the car, over 150 weapons were captured, 438 bunkers destroyed and four trucks destroyed.

The black French Citroën showed signs of battle damage. Its rear window carried several bullet holes and by remarkable coincidence, it bore the number plate NVA 601. Victor Company was instructed to get rid of the vehicle as it was not military issue. However the car was brought back to Nui Dat, refurbished by the RAEME tradesmen of 102 Field Workshops, who spent many months of off-duty work on the vehicle. They had it painted pink before being donated to Sister Pam Terry, a nurse of the Royal New Zealand Nursing Corps, to be used by Sister Pam and other nurses to drive around Vung Tau. The vehicle was passed on to each of the Australian and New Zealand nurses of 1st Australian Field Hospital, over the following years.

1917 Statistics. How they compare with 2017 100 years later!!

This will boggle your mind!
The year is 1917, 100 years ago. What a difference a century makes! Here are some statistics for the year 1917:

- The life expectancy for men was 47.
- Fuel was only sold in drug stores;
- Max speed in most cities was 10 mph.
- Only 14% of homes had a bathtub;
- Only 8% had a telephone.
- The average wage was 22¢ per hour.
- Workers averaged \$200 & \$400 pa.
- Accountants earned \$2000 per year;
- A dentist \$2500 per year;
- Veterinarian between \$1500—\$4000,
- A mechanical engineer, about \$5000,
- 95% of all births took place at home.
- 90% of all doctors attended so-called medical schools. Many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as 'substandard'.
- Sugar cost 4¢ a pound;
- Eggs were 14¢ a dozen;
- Coffee was 15¢ a pound;
- Most women only washed their hair monthly and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo;
- The leading causes of death were: Pneumonia, influenza; Tuberculosis; Diarrhoea; Heart disease & Stroke.
- The American flag had 45 stars.
- Las Vegas had only 30 people.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet. Neither was there a Mother's Day or a Father's Day.
- 2 out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write and only 6% had graduated from high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at local drugstores. Back then pharmacists said, "*Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health!*"
- 18% of households had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.
- There were about 230 reported murders in the ENTIRE United States!

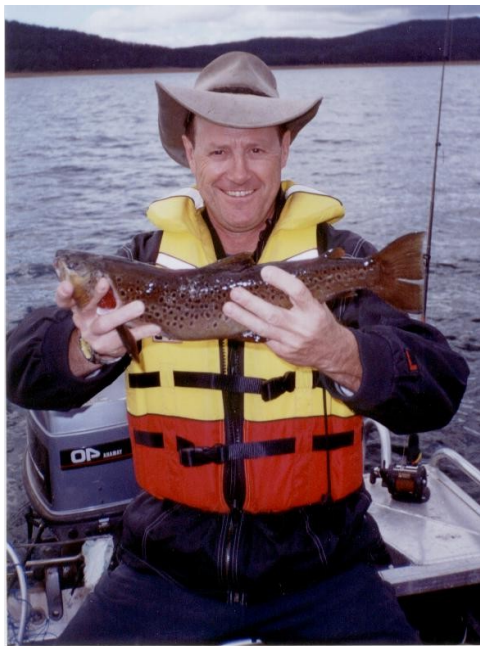
Now think about this: You can forward this to someone else today without typing it yourself. From there it can be sent to others all over the world in a matter of seconds! Can you imagine what it will be like in another 100 years? Bloody scary isn't it!!!

Graeme Sherriff, our association President, didn't let this fish get away. This was Graeme on one of his trips to the magnificent fishing spots on the planet – The Great Lakes of Tasmania. He didn't let this trout get away and nor should you let the 2017 Hobart Reunion get away either!

The Hobart reunion is now less than eight (8) weeks away. This is the last Newsletter to go out before the event.

Our next newsletter will be out in December showing highlights of the reunion together with dates and venues for our 2019 reunion etc.

So if you haven't already done so, now is the time to go hook, line and sinker and get those last minute registrations in.



Our Web Updated

David Evans, our Treasurer & Web Liaison officer, has now managed the update of our website with the latest and past details. For full details of our next reunion in Hobart and other details, go to;

www.raascsupply.asn.au

For those who are not on the Internet, the Hobart itinerary and registration forms are attached on pages 6 & 7.

Remembering our Malaya and Borneo veterans

(31 August 2017)



Minister for Veterans' Affairs Dan Tehan recently encouraged Australians to reflect on the service and sacrifice of those who served during the post-WW2 conflicts in Malaya and on Borneo.

"Today is Malaya and Borneo Veterans' Day when Australians honour our military personnel who served in the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), and the Indonesian Confrontation (1962–1966)," Mr Tehan said.

"The Malayan Emergency was declared when the Malayan Communist Party launched an insurgency against British colonial rule. Australia's military involvement commenced in 1950 and continued until the Emergency was declared over, however Australian forces continued to conduct anti-insurgency operations in Malaya until 1963.

"During our 13 years in Malaya, personnel from the Australian navy, army and air force played a key role in bringing the long-running insurgency to an end.

"In 1964, Australia became involved in the Indonesian Confrontation, a small undeclared war fought between Indonesia and the newly federated state of Malaysia.

"Today we should reflect on the 39 Australian servicemen who died and 27 who were wounded over the 13 years of the Malaya campaign, and the 21 Australians who died and eight who were wounded during the Indonesian Confrontation."



Just for a giggle!

The Army has a long, proud tradition of pranking recruits. Here are some of my favourites;

- Instructed a recruit in the mess hall to look for left-handed spatulas.
- Sent a recruit to the RAP in search of fallopian tubes.
- Had a new guy conduct a "boom test" on a howitzer by yelling "Boom!" down the tube in order to "calibrate" it.
- Ordered a recruit to bring back a five-gallon can of dehydrated water.!

A sailor and an Army guy were at a public toilet. The sailor finished first and washed his hands. The army guy just walked to the exit. The sailor was surprised to see the army guy walking like

this. So he asked to him, "Hey, in the Navy they teach us to wash our hands after taking a piss. The Army man said, "In the Army, we are taught not to piss on our hands,"

"If women ruled the world," said my wife, "there'd be no wars." "That's true," I replied. "Wars require strategy and logic."

My task was to inspect several lots of grenades. While everyone was concentrating on the task at hand, I held up a spare pin and asked, "Has anyone seen my grenade?"

The RSM growled at the young soldier, "I didn't see you at camouflage



training this morning." "Thank you very much, sir."

During training exercises, a lieutenant was driving down a muddy back road when he came across another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel. As the lieutenant pulled alongside he asked, "Is your jeep stuck, sir?" "No," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, "Yours is."

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Farewell Jim Hughes, Commanding Officer 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC)

An article by Robert Hall January, 2017

We buried Jim Hughes last month. Sunny Jim, a man welcome at any Diggers' booze up and the scourge of any flaky officer. The Colonel who took 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) to Vietnam in 1971 and who came within inches of losing an entire company of 120 men to the dreaded 33 Regiment of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). There are still people looking for this closure thing but Jim got all the closure anyone needs before God on that sunny Melbourne morning. And God would have been impressed. What a magnificent day it was. It took me nearly an hour to walk to the church from the hotel and I thought of no one else as I moved through the dappled sunlight of Melbourne's streets. In particular, I thought of the last time I spoke to him at his Battalion HQ on Courtenay Hill in Vietnam. I was an intelligence officer in 1 ATF and I was there to discuss a special agent report which had placed the entire 33 Regiment at the foot of the hill barely two hours earlier. I opened by asking if those reports were true, where was the 33 Regiment now? A couple of dozen HQ staff maybe but 1500 heavily armed men? After looking closely at the plantation bathed in warm sunlight he agreed that they weren't there: even for them, it would be impossible to conceal that many troops. Warming to my subject, I went on to remark that it was common for the NVA to hive off their HQ staff from the main body just before a major attack in order to deceive the enemy. He agreed with that too but neither of us went on to ask ourselves the most obvious question: if this was a deception party, where was the main body of the Regiment and where was it going to strike? Twenty four hours later, D Company had found the rear of 33 Regiment's position alright and was in a fight for its life. Jim Hughes and 120 of his soldiers had no further need of my insights.

The 33 Regiment had set a major ambush on Route 2 hoping to lure an Australian reaction force into a deadly trap but with no result. In fact, they were on the point of withdrawing when D Company stumbled upon their rear position and it was then game on, albeit a game that neither side had anticipated.

At this point, the reader needs to know a bit about 33 Regiment. This was the NVA unit that gave the Americans their first taste of real battle in the Ia Drang valley in 1966. As the US and ARVN would always have air and artillery superiority, the NVA concentrated on an area where they could achieve superiority; infantry field tactics. General Giap called this "seizing the enemy's belt" where the NVA closed in with the enemy so closely that they dared not use airstrikes or artillery for fear of killing their own troops. Thereafter, the Vietnamese believed that their superior infantry skills would do the job. And they were usually right.



President of the Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu (left) presents a gift to the Commanding Officer of 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC), Lieutenant Colonel Jim Hughes, aboard HMAS Sydney in Vung Tau harbour on 8 December 1971, prior to the unit's departure from Vietnam for Australia. The battalion departed Vietnam a little over two months after the battle of Nui Le.

By late afternoon on 21 September 1971, they pretty well had D Company where they wanted them; almost totally pinned up against an impregnable bunker system with dozens of assault teams streaming into a creek bed behind them to close the nutcracker. One blast from the Battlefield Director's whistle would launch hundreds of NVA troops into the poorly defended rear of D Company and it would all be over in minutes.

But that didn't happen. Kept separated from his charts and radio by the zealous attentions of an NVA machine gunner, the artillery officer (FO) attached to D Company ended up lying face down in the mud in the rapidly gathering gloom of the forest doing the trigonometry for an artillery strike in his head (thank you Mrs Gibbs of the Maths class, Rockhampton High School) and then yelling the fire mission coordinates to the radio operator.

A minute later, the distant stuttering of guns far to the west told him the shells were on their way but where would they land and would they be in time?

Well, the shells were in time and right on target even if they frightened the bejesus out of the rear elements of D Company. While they might not have terrified the assault teams of 33 Regiment, they must have given the Regimental Commander cause to reconsider. Accurate artillery fire and the rapidly falling night were both new factors and the lives of his men were not worth the risk. Furthermore, the Australians might well have been trapped but they would not go down without a hell of a fight. The assault teams were glimpsed going back out of the creek bed soon thereafter and by morning, the 33 Regiment had disappeared.

So where was Colonel Jim, the modern armchair strategist might ask? Well, physically he was on top of Courtenay hill anguishing about the fate of D Company but he had already made his most telling contribution during the previous two years. His sunny confidence that their best WAS good enough must have steeled many diggers in D Company during that long afternoon. Even when defeat and death seemed almost certain, the icy courage and skill of a young artillery officer saved their lives at the last minute. What's not to like about being a member of 4RAR/NZ?

Obsessed with getting the Task Force out of Vietnam, Canberra's treatment of awards was almost flippant. Jim got a DSO, an award he neither wanted nor needed, and other medals were duly sprinkled throughout the Company.

And the FO, the man who summoned up the last-minute rescue from the guns? He got nothing. Nothing at all.

So Jim, may your soul rest in well-earned peace. And should you come across the Commander of 33 Regt, I hope you find his soul at rest too. You were both great leaders and It's just that we got lucky, very lucky actually, in having an extraordinary FO and a CO who so radiated confidence and discipline.

Henry IV once remarked cynically that Paris was probably worth a mass. Jim certainly was.

Hobart Reunion 6th to 13th November, 2017

REUNION ITINERARY

Mon 6th November. Members start arriving in Hobart

Tuesday 7th November.

1100 hrs onwards at the Hotel SOHO situated at 124 Davey Street, Hobart for REGISTRATION and MELBOURNE CUP DAY Celebration. We'll even run our very own Cup Sweeps!

Wednesday 8th November.

TOUR 1 – PORT ARTHUR

Port Arthur is a former convict settlement and is one of Australia's most significant heritage areas and open-air museum. Port Arthur now represents the best surviving example of large-scale convict transportation and is officially Tasmania's top tourist attraction.

Thursday 9th November

AM - FREE TIME – Hobart City, Derwent River Cruise. Maybe a visit to Cascade Brewery. All good options.

1800 hrs for 1830 hrs
Hotel SOHO FORMAL DINNER (Suit/medals)

Friday 10th November.

TOUR 2 – HUON VALLEY

Tassie is known as the 'Apple Isle' and the majority of apples are grown in and around the valley. The area is picturesque and has easy access to the wilderness rainforest. There's breath-taking views of the forest canopy at Tahune Airwalk, on the edge of 1.6 million hectares of World Heritage Listed forest.

Saturday 11th November.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

10.30 am – 11.30 am. Service at Cenotaph.
12.00 noon. Arrive Glenorchy RSL & lunch
2.00 pm. Plaque Dedication.
2.30 pm Annual General Meeting at the RSL.
3.30 pm -5 pm. Fellowship

Sunday 12th November

TOUR 3 – COAL RIVER.

(Includes Mt. Wellington and historic Richmond)

Crowned by alpine vegetation and winter snow, Mt Wellington provides a glimpse of the unfolding panorama of river, fields and the aquatic setting of Hobart. Historic Richmond is in the heart of the Coal River Valley wine region that tells the story of an early Tasmanian colonial village. It has more than 50 Georgian buildings, beautifully restored and now operating as cafes, restaurants, galleries and accommodation. Also famous for the Richmond Bridge on the Coal River and built in the 1820s, it's the oldest bridge in Australia. Richmond also houses the oldest gaol in Australia. Then there's the model village highlighting life of settlers in Hobart in the 1820s. There's plenty of good food and wine from traditional bakeries and pubs in town serving up the best Tasmanian produce.

Monday 13th November.

Members depart

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION VENUES



Woolmers Apartments. (4.5 Star venue)
Christine or Jeanette, (03) 6221 6999
123 – 127 Sandy Bay Road, Sandy Bay
Email: info@woolmersapartments.com.au

7 double studio apartment @ \$120 per night – (Double bed)
5 double executive studio apartment @ \$140 per night (Queen bed)
4 x 2 bedroom single level apartments. \$165 per night.
(Queen bed plus 2 singles)



St. Ives Motel. (4.4 Star venue) Kathryn: (03) 6221 5555
67 St. Georges Terrace, Battery Point.
(8 – 10 min walk to waterfront/city)

43 apartments/rooms. Internal kiosk & coin op laundry
Deluxe studio Double. 31 m2 @ \$168 per night.
One nights deposit on booking and balance on arrival).
FREE Parking & Wi-Fi. Kitchen, cable TV, lift,



Mayfair Plaza Motel. (4 Star Venue). (03) 6220 9900.
236 Sandy Bay Road, Sandy Bay.
Standard Queen, laundry room, no kitchenette,
free WIFI, 40 m2 @ \$133 per night.

Travelodge. (3.8 Star Venue). (03) 62207100
167 Macquarie Street. Standard Queen. Small kitchen
with m/wave, free WIFI, 22 m2 @ \$158 per night.

**Please note that when making a booking,
mention that Graeme Sherriff has organised
the cost for our 2017 Hobart Reunion at
the discounted rates shown above.**

2017 Hobart Reunion of the RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association

REGISTRATION FORM Monday 6th November to Monday 13th November, 2017

_____ Veteran's Surname	_____ First Name	_____ Preferred Name
_____ Partner's Surname	_____ First Name	_____ Preferred Name

Vietnam Unit / Year _____

Postal Address: _____

City _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email _____

Expected Arrival Date: _____ Departure Date: _____

I /We are staying at _____

Special dietary or other requirements (eg. Wheelchair access)? _____

I will have a vehicle with me. **YES** **NO** I have..... spare seats for others.

PAYMENT DETAILS

Please return the completed Registration Form and Monies to
PO Box 207 Mitchell ACT 2911 NLT 30th April, 2017

There is only ONE fee for the reunion. The one off payment is for ALL tours and the Formal Dinner. We've had to book buses for the will of the majority. If you only wish to go on one or two tours—the registration fee is still only \$200 which is a significant deal less than your registration fees for Perth. Your registration costs cover the three (3) tours, bus transport to Glenorchy RSL and the Formal Dinner. You can pay by personal cheque, cash or by electronically (EFT) by direct credit. Please make cheques payable to: RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association and post with the registration form.

If paying by EFT (include your name as the reference), our account details are:

Account Name: **RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association**
Bank Name: **Westpac Bank BSB NO: 032 713**
Account Number: **434593**

If paying by Cash, deposit at any Westpac Bank BSB 032 713 083 Account 434 593

Please include your NAME as the Reference to assist in account reconciliation. Whichever payment is applicable, please provide Christina with the deposit details (**important**)

Yes, we're definitely going. Attached is my Registration Form together with the following means of payment being \$200.00 per person—a total of \$..... (Please tick box).

- ☐ Paid by Cheque (accompanying this form and sent by snail mail)
- ☐ Paid by EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer).
- ☐ Paid by Direct Deposit into a Westpac bank.



Membership Application/Renewal Form

New Application or Renewal (circle which ones) 2017/18 or 3 years

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:

- By **cheque** payable to: RAASC Vietnam Supply Platoons Association, PO BOX 207 Mitchell ACT 2911.
(include this form).
- Or **Electronically** by direct credit to:
Westpac Bank, BSB 032 713 Account 434593.
(Provide name etc as reference and send this form by post or email)
- Or **Cash Deposit** at any Westpac Bank, BSB 032 713, Account 434 593.
(Provide 6 digit DOB as ddmmyy as reference 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.....