



# Ba-Mi-Bar Newsletter

## RYDE CITY & DISTRICTS Sub-Branch "CENTER OF EXCELLENCE"

### FROM THE DESK



A lot has happened since the last newsletter (blame the editor). To start with we have received the grants from DVA, and have the new Marquee and wireless P.A. system. The diorama for the Education Team has also been completed and has been used at R.G.H.S. (photos elsewhere in newsletter), the Marquee & P.A. will be used by the State Branch on the 18th August Vietnam Veterans/Long Tan day at Sydney Cenotaph, would like to see as many as possible there on the day.

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We are trying something new

### Editor's Ramblings

What's going on in the National Capital? If you are to believe the e-mail traffic racing around the "Vet Net", not a hell of a lot. Pensions have been reviewed and single Service pension recipients will receive an approximate \$30 pw increase to give them a somewhat modest increase that recognises the fact one can't live as cheaply as half a couple (if that makes sense). Meanwhile, couples will get about \$10 pw. However, disability pensions will increase by the massive amount of \$0. Yes folks, that's right, 0%, zip, zilch, nothing. Still, to be reasonable, one must realistically

with this newsletter, if you are on the internet you can go to our website [www.rydevvaa.org](http://www.rydevvaa.org) then click on the News link and read the newsletter from there and if you are not connected we will send you a copy via Snail Mail. We are trying to get more of you to utilise the web site which is there for you to use and make comments.

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Also, in the near future, we will include a dot point summary of the minutes of our most recent General Meeting, this will become the norm in future issues.

At our A.G.M. in February 09 we passed a motion to honour four (4) of our members with Life Membership they being Ian and Donna Liccioni, Geoff and Rose Dearden (photos elsewhere) and finally we got around to presenting Wendy with her Life Membership this has taken 12mths. You know

how fast I work'

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The Education Team is going from strength to strength, we are having an insert made for the sub-branch trailer by Vietnam Veterans who are doing a welding courses at Ryde T.A.F.E.. This will be used to securely hold the diorama's and the other memorabilia that we have, this is being done for the cost of the material which we hope to cover with a grant from our local Federal Member for Bennelong, Maxine McKew. If you have any interesting stuff that you think we could use please ring the Secretary or bring it into the office.

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We are looking at holding Winter Afternoon B.B.Q. at the Schulz's in mid Sept. a flyer will be sent out a week or so before the date.

The Pres.

### Things to note General Meeting

**The next meeting of the Ryde City & Districts Sub-Branch of the VVAA will be held at the Ryde City & Districts R&SL at 11:00 hrs on Saturday 10 October, 2009.**

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take into account that there is not a lot of excess cash to spare as our government has had to waste money on dodgy home insulation and increase parliamentarians allowances to the tune of 7% or about 4 times the current inflation rate. But hey, their needs are greater. After all, if they are reduced to paying for their chocolates and novels from their electoral allowances, it should be obvious to any of the great unwashed (us) that MP's level of remuneration is so poor that our 'Dear Leaders' are reduced to raiding the public piggy bank for all those little necessities of life that

they would otherwise prefer to pay for themselves, if only they could.

In the meantime, ADF superannuation continues to be a VERY sore point among those relying on DFRDB and DFRB for their income stream. Both these funds, to which we all had to contribute 5.5% of our gross pay, continue to be tied to the CPI for any increases. This is in spite of any number of inquiries over the years that have recommended they should, as with other government pension payments, move with the CPI or MTAW, whichever is greater.....Ed.

## AUSTRALIAN VETERANS' CHILDREN ASSISTANCE TRUST

### Scholarships for Children of Veterans intending Tertiary Studies in 2010

In 2010 the Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (AVCAT) are expecting to give financial assistance for up to 65 students under many different scholarship schemes. All schemes help the selected children in need of the Australian veteran community with the costs of tertiary education. Applicants are considered for all schemes for which they are eligible.

Applications open on 18 August 2009. To apply you must be:

- a. Within the means test. That is eligible on assets and income grounds for Youth Allowance benefits for full-time education.
- b. Enrolled, or planning to enrol in a full-time course of tertiary education in Australia by attendance at a university, TAFE or college. The course must be of one or more academic years length and at undergraduate level.
- c. The child or grandchild of a person who has operational service with the Australian Navy, Army or Air Force, or if not has three or more year's continuous full-time service as a member of the Australian Defence Force.
- d. Under the age of 25 when ap-

plying, unless exceptional circumstance's related to veteran's service exist.

The largest scheme is the Long Tan Bursary funded by the Australian Government. There are 50 new bursaries each year. They are valued at \$9,000 each which paid at \$3,000 per year for three years. There are selection number targets for each State and Territory. To apply you must be the child of an Australian Vietnam Veteran, be resident in Australia, be entering any year of tertiary study, having not previously received a Long Tan Bursary.

The other national schemes are the AVCAT Bursary, the two RSL Scholarships, three Vietnam Veterans' Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Scholarship and the Defence Force Welfare Association Scholarship. George Quinsey Scholarships directly pay tuition fees for economics, commerce and accountancy studies. There are also regional scholarships. In NSW, there are three from Brisbane Water Legacy covering Gosford/Wyong NSW and one from the NSW TPI Association. Some private donors offer two scholarships to resident NSW applicants. In SA, the WVAA also offers a scholarship.

Schemes vary between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year each. Some are restricted to location of residence or studies Most

require veteran service in Vietnam but others are broader. Most schemes continue payments for later years of study. All scholarship schemes but one pays monthly instalments. That scheme helps with tuition costs for courses in commerce, economics and accountancy. One scheme is for indigenous students doing substance abuse or related studies. For this scheme there is no upper age limit nor a need to be related to a veteran. In addition to the above there is one grant per year to assist an handicapped eligible veteran's child or grandchild with special extra costs of transition to tertiary studies or employment

To receive an application form register interest on 1800 620 361. Children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans should do so now, as should any others who believe that they are eligible. If not sure, ask: Applications close on 31 October each year. AVCAT PO Box K978, Haymarket, NSW 1240

FAX: 02 9281 9164, Email: [vvt@accsoft.com.au](mailto:vvt@accsoft.com.au) Web: [www.accsoft.com.au/~vvt](http://www.accsoft.com.au/~vvt)

### Single claim form trial begins

DVA is trialling a new claim process in Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane to enable those seeking compensation and benefits available under more than one of the three Acts administered by DVA to lodge only one claim form, cutting down the unnecessary paperwork for veterans. This is one of several initiatives designed to lessen the burden on ex-serving members to access support and entitlements

### Grants – when and how to?

DVA's Grants Programs support the veteran and ex-service community in several ways. Building Excellence in Support and Training (BEST) Grants provide funding for ex-service organisations. Veteran and Community Grants support programs focused on veteran health and well-being with funding rounds held three times a year and applicants are encouraged to contact their state office before submitting an application. Saluting their Service Commemorative Grants

support ex-service and community organisations, local government authorities, museums and schools with a range of commemorative, educational and public awareness activities. Applications are considered year-round and announced approximately every two months. Finally, organisations can also access funding to restore and preserve unofficial military and battle memorials overseas, through the Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorial Restoration Program.

## F-111 DESEAL/RESEAL REPORT TABLED IN PARLIAMENT

The inquiry, carried out by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Defence Sub-Committee, was asked to investigate and review claims for compensation from former F-111 Deseal/Reseal workers and their families, as well as the Commonwealth's response to these claims.

The aim was to ascertain whether the Commonwealth's response was adequate and consistent with the findings of the 2004 Study of Health Outcomes in Aircraft Maintenance Personnel, and if the overall handling and administration of the program was sufficient.

More than 130 submissions were provided to the Committee and six public hearings were held.

"The report makes 18 recommendations to Government," he said.

"I thank the Committee members for the work they have done considering this very complex issue. The report raises a number of matters that the Government must now consider."

A copy of the report and the Government's official response to the Deseal/Reseal report is available at: [http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/deseal\\_reseal/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/deseal_reseal/report.htm)

Two elderly men from a retirement centre were sitting on a bench under a tree when one turns to the other and says: 'Dave, I'm 83 years old now and I'm just full of aches and pains. I know you're about my age. How do you feel?'

Dave says, 'I feel just like a newborn baby.'

'Really!? Like a newborn baby!'

'Yep. No hair, no teeth, and I think I just wet my pants.'

## AUSTRALIAN VICTORY AT BINH BA REMEMBERED

"Forty years ago, on 6 June 1969, a ready reaction force was deployed from Nui Dat to deal with rocket fire coming from Binh Ba village directed against an Australian tank. The force comprised D Company of the 5th Battalion mounted in armoured personnel carriers from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and supported by tanks from the 1st Armoured Regiment. The village was less than 10 kilometres from Nui Dat," Mr Griffin said.

"Within hours the force was engaged in fighting of an intensity rarely matched in Australia's experience of the Vietnam War. It was quickly apparent that the enemy force comprised both main force elements of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong guerrillas.

"The two-day battle involved several sweeps through the village and some vicious close quarter fighting. Additional troops from the 5th Battalion were called in as cut-off parties. Helicopter, artillery and engineer support was utilised in a powerful and disciplined combined arms attack to drive the enemy from the village. One Australian, Private Wayne Teeling, was killed and 11 were wounded. More than 100 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong perished in the battle, with many more wounded."

Battle honours were awarded to the Royal Australian Regiment, the 1st Armoured Regiment and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment for Binh Ba.

"Despite 40 years passing since the end of the Vietnam War, the Battle of Binh Ba is still not widely known by those outside military and historical circles, however it was considered a significant victory for Australian forces.

The Minister for Veteran's Affairs Mr Alan Griffin said;

"I am pleased the Australian Government was able to support the commemorations with \$50,000 in

funding to ensure the service and sacrifice of all those involved in the Battle of Binh Ba is appropriately honoured."

Some 60,000 Australians served in the Vietnam War. Of those, 520 were killed and more than 3000 wounded. Australia remembers and commemorates their service each year on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August.

A man and wife were having dinner at a top class restaurant when an absolutely stunning young woman walked across to their table, gave the husband a big kiss and said she'd see him later.

The wife glared at her husband and demanded : "Who was that" "Oh" replied the husband "She's my mistress" "Well" said the wife "that's the last straw. I want a divorce"

"I can understand that" said the husband "But remember, if we get divorced it will mean no more shopping trips to Paris . No more winter holidays in Barbados, no more summer holidays in Tuscany, no more swimming pool or Lexus in the garage and no more yacht club, but the decision is yours.

Just then a mutual friend walked in with a gorgeous female on his arm. "who's that woman with Jim" asked the wife "That's his mistress" said the husband.

"Ours is prettier" said the wife.

A man was telling his neighbour, 'I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me four thousand dollars, but it's state of the art. It's perfect.'

'Really,' answered the neighbour . 'What kind is it?'

'Twelve thirty.'

## BATTLE FOR BINH BA

### Prelude

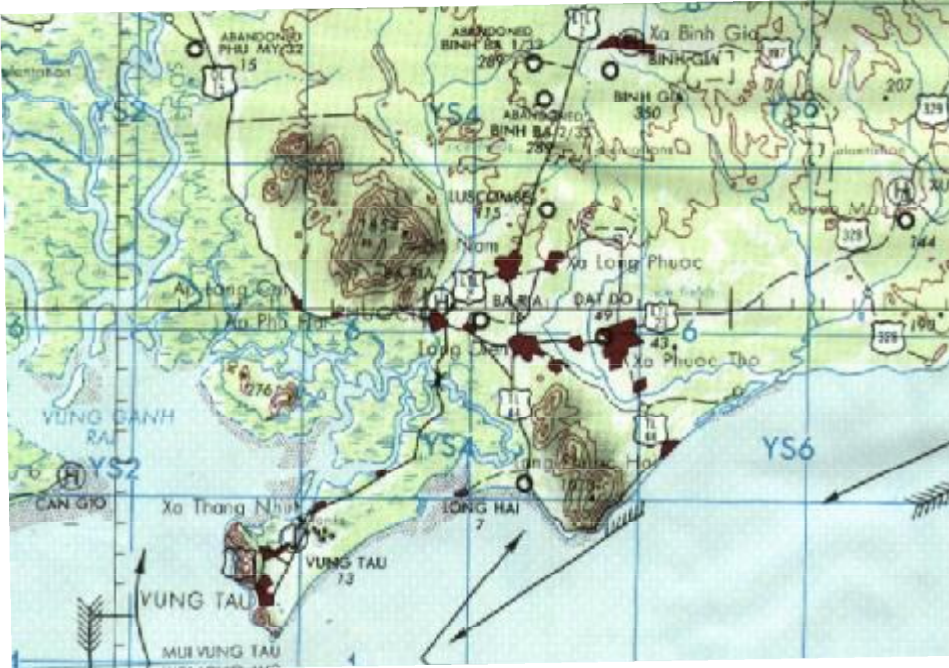
Situated north of the 1st Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat on the western side of Route 2, the village of Binh Ba had a population of around three thousand people—mainly farmers and rubber plantation workers. Tidy and rectangular in shape, and mainly constructed of solid brick and tile, Binh Ba was well known to the Australians. Indeed during 5RARs first tour in Vietnam a rifle company and a mortar section had been briefly stationed within the village itself. This strategy proved to be a deterrent to the Viet Cong tax collectors and assassination squads taking control of the village. The drain on the finite resources of the small Australian force proved to be too much however, and the village was later left to the protection of South Vietnamese Regional Forces.

In an attempt to demonstrate that they could move freely with in the province, a combined communist force including a company from the NVA 33 Regiment, elements of the VC D440 Local Force Battalion, the Binh Ba and Ngai Giao Guerrilla Squad and the Chau Duc District Company had occupied Binh Ba on the evening of 5–6 June 1969. In response South Vietnamese forces were sent from Duc Thanh the following morning. Initial intelligence suggested that a group of about platoon strength had infiltrated the village. Meanwhile during a separate operation 6 RAR had also been engaged in a heavy contact

several kilometres north of the task force base and at 0800 on 6 June, an Australian Centurion tank and an armoured recovery vehicle moving through Binh Ba to assist 6RAR were fired upon. A rocket propelled grenade struck the Centurion penetrating the turret, and causing damage to the tank and severe injuries to one of the crewman. The district

squadron RAAF, South Vietnamese Regional Force troops were deployed into blocking positions. Four tanks led the assault, with the infantry remaining mounted in the APCs following behind.

The Australians reached the edge of the village at 1120, coming under light fire. Initially the tanks were effective for close action, however by the time the marketplace had been reached in the centre of the town, concealed RPG 7's had caused external damage to two Centurions, whilst another was penetrated. Within an hour, three of the four tanks used in the initial assault were disabled through damage and crew casualties. It became clear that the initial assessments of communist strength had been



commander subsequently asked 1 ATF for assistance in clearing Binh Ba.

### The Battle

The 1ATF Ready Reaction Force consisting of D Company 5RAR, a troop of tanks from 1st Armoured Regiment and a troop of armoured personnel carriers from 3rd Cavalry Regiment – under the command of Major Murray Blake— subsequently reacted to the incident. Meanwhile elements of the 1st Battalion 33 NVA Regiment took up defensive positions within the village and prepared to fight to the death. By 1030 the Australians approached Binh Ba from the south, and were engaged by a volley of RPG fire from a row of houses. After clearing and evacuating much of the town's population, D Company assaulted the village from east to west following preparation from helicopter gunships of No 9

inaccurate, and was probably closer to a battalion than a platoon. In addition helicopters overhead reported another large enemy force of up to 60 moving to the south and west. Blake subsequently decided to swing his attack left, in order to clear the southern edge of the town before moving out to western side of Binh Ba. As the Australian armour moved through the rubber trees they clashed with a company forming up to counterattack, inflicting heavy casualties on the communists in the process.

By 1400hrs the Australians were bolstered by additional troops from B Company 5RAR, under Major Rein Haring, which took up blocking positions to south and east. The Commanding Officer of 5RAR, Lt. Colonel Colin Khan, now assumed command of the battle. With a fresh troop of tanks together with APC support, D Company conducted a second assault on the village, this time with the infantry leading. One tank and two armoured personnel

carriers accompanied each platoon in close support. The lead platoon made contact with the enemy immediately and the advance was slow due to the need to clear every house. Indeed the communist troops occupying the houses fired on the Australians from the windows and doorways before withdrawing into tunnels as the Australians passed. An Australian soldier—Private Wayne Teeling—was killed by a shot through the neck as his team approached the first line of houses. A tank fired one round of HE into the building occupied by the VC. The house exploded, and the clearing team assaulted immediately. Six dead were found in the ruins.



*pm. 6 June 1969*

This type of action was typical all along D Company's assault line and every time the Australians received fire from a building, tank rounds were used to breach the walls and a small team of infantry would conduct room clearance until all resistance was quelled. During the fighting some of the VC had discarded their uniforms and weapons and attempted to mingle with the pockets of civilians that were unable to escape. The continued presence of civilians in the village required the Australians to expose themselves to extreme danger while trying to usher these groups to the rear of the battle zone. Others tried to flee the village, or hide in the small air raid bunkers attached to every house. The fighting continued all afternoon and only ended at last light. With Binh Ba still insecure, D Company and their armoured support subsequently occupied a defensive harbour for the night, exhausted by the fighting. Overnight B Company killed two VC trying to break out to the south.<sup>1</sup>

At 0600 on 7 June B Company intercepted a VC/NVA company attempting to enter the town, and after blocking

the exit and entry routes—and again supported by armour—they forced them to withdraw. On the second day the clearing of the village continued. D Company, with a platoon from B Company attached,

meet sporadic resistance from a number of small groups still holed up in the village. To fully clear the village every bunker, house and any likely areas of concealment had to be searched. Later in the morning South Vietnamese forces in the northern hamlet of Duc Trung came under attack, and B Company and the Assault



*Aftermath, 8 June 1969*

Pioneer Platoon were deployed to provide assistance. Indeed most of the action now centred on Duc Trung, with a helicopter reporting a force of up to 80 communist troops moving between the buildings. With the pioneers blocking to the south a

Regional Force reaction company cleared the village, however the VC had already left. By 1300 heavy firing again broke out in Duc Trung, with the South Vietnamese rapidly over run by over a hundred communists. Accurate artillery fire was effective in stabilising the situation, however, and B Company with a troop of tanks sweep the hamlet. During the afternoon D Company continued to clear Binh Ba and further close-quarter fighting followed before the Australians withdrew to allow the South Vietnamese to complete the clearance. By the evening the village was secure, and B and D Companies adopted blocking positions overnight.

## Aftermath

The battle concluded by 0900 on 8 June with one final sweep carried out that morning to ensure that Binh Ba was clear. By this time a large communist force had been

defeated by the Australians, and the village practically destroyed. Indeed so badly damaged was Binh Ba that the villagers were subsequently resettled by the Australians. During the fighting one Australian had been killed and 10 wounded, whilst VC/NVA losses included at least 107 killed, 6 wounded and 8 captured. As a result of these heavy losses the North Vietnamese were temporarily forced to move out of Phuoc Tuy and into the adjoining province of Long Khanh. To be sure the battle was one of the major

victories of the Australians in Vietnam and although they would occasionally encounter communist main force units in the future, the battle effectively marked the end of such large scale clashes.

## REDUNDANT PILOTS

ALAD AIR BASE, Iraq (AP) The airplane is the size of a jet fighter, powered by a turboprop engine, able to fly at 300 mph and reach 50,000 feet. It is outfitted with infrared, laser and radar targeting, and with a ton and a half of guided bombs and missiles.

The Reaper is loaded, but there is no one on board. Its pilot as it bombs targets in Iraq, will sit at a video console 7,000 miles away in Nevada.

The arrival of these outsized U.S. "hunter-killer" drones, in aviation his-

about 36,000 flying hours in 2005, the Predators are expected to log 66,000 hours this year over Iraq and Afghanistan.

The MQ-9 Reaper, when compared with the 1995-vintage Predator, represents a major evolution of the unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV. At five tons gross weight, the Reaper is four times heavier than the Predator. Its size, 36 feet long with a 66-foot wingspan, is comparable to the profile of the Air Force's workhorse A-10 attack plane. It can fly twice as fast and

at Nevada's Creech Air Force Base, linked to the aircraft via satellite, take over for the long hours of overflying the Iraqi landscape.

American ground troops, equipped with laptops that can download real-time video from UAVs overhead, "want more and more of it," said Maj. Chris Snodgrass, the Predator squadron commander here. The Reaper's speed will help. "Our problem is speed," Snodgrass said of the 140-mph Predator. "If there are troops in contact, we may not get there fast enough. The Reaper will be faster and fly farther."

The new robot plane is expected to be able to stay aloft for 14 hours fully armed, watching an area and waiting for targets to emerge. "It's going to bring us flexibility, range, speed and persistence," said regional commander North, "such that I will be able to work lots of areas for a long, long time."



tory's first robot attack squadron, will be a watershed moment even in an Iraq that has seen too many innovative ways to hunt and kill. That moment, one the Air Force will likely low-key, is expected "soon," says the regional U.S. air commander. How soon? "We're still working on that," Lt. Gen. Gary North said in an interview.

The Reaper's first combat deployment is expected in Afghanistan, and senior Air Force officers estimate it will land in Iraq sometime between this fall and next spring. They look forward to it.

"With more Reapers, I could send manned airplanes home," North said.

The estimated two dozen or more unmanned MQ-1 Predators now doing surveillance over Iraq, as the 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, have become mainstays of the U.S. war effort, offering round-the-clock airborne "eyes" watching over road convoys, tracking night time insurgent movements via infrared sensors, and occasionally unleashing one of their two Hellfire missiles on a target. From

twice as high as the Predator. Most significantly, it carries many more weapons.

While the Predator is armed with two Hellfire missiles, the Reaper can carry 14 of the air-to-ground weapons or four Hellfires and two 500-pound bombs.

While the Predator is armed with two Hellfire missiles, the Reaper can carry 14 of the air-to-ground weapons or four Hellfires and two 500-pound bombs.

General Atomics of San Diego has built at least nine of the MQ-9s thus far, at a cost of \$69 million per set of four aircraft, with ground equipment.

The Air Force's 432nd Wing, a UAV unit formally established on May 1, is to eventually fly 60 Reapers and 160 Predators. The numbers to be assigned to Iraq and Afghanistan will be classified. The Reaper is expected to be flown as the Predator is by a two-member team of pilot and sensor operator who work at computer control stations and video screens that display what the UAV "sees." Teams at Alad, housed in a hangar beside the runways, perform the takeoffs and landings, and similar teams

Couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things.

During a checkup, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. "Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?" he asks.

'Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?'

'Sure.'

'Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?' she asks.

'No, I can remember it.'

'Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so's not to forget it?'

He says, 'I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.'

'I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down' she asks.

Irritated, he says, 'I don't need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!'

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment.

'Where's my toast?'

## F111 DESEAL RESEAL OUTCOME

June 25, 2009 12:25pm A PALIAMENTARY committee has recommended compensation to an extra 2000 defence staff whose health may have been harmed by repairing F-111 fuel tanks. Labor inquiry chairman Arch Bevis said the committee's recommendations, if adopted, would rectify the shortcomings of the previous Howard government's 2005 scheme which sparked widespread condemnation from those denied compensation. That earlier scheme was born of fuzzy logic, shrouded in misleading spin and then administered in confusion. "Without explanation, the 2005 scheme provided assistance to workers who did pick and patch in the formal Deseal-Reseal programs, but not to about 2,000 other defence personnel in three other squadrons who undertook the same duties," he said. "The recent inquiry recommends that those 2,000 forgotten F-111 defence

personnel receive the appropriate ex-gratia payments and other assistance." The F-111 deseal-reseal program operated from 1973 to 2000 at the RAAF Base at Amberley, Queensland. It involved workers using various chemicals and working in the confined spaces of the F-111 fuel tanks to remove and replace sealants. Many worked with no or inadequate protective clothing. An inquiry conducted over 2002-04 found many now suffered from a range of health problems including lung disease, erectile dysfunction, depression, anxiety and memory impairment allegedly stemming from exposure to chemicals. The federal government has already paid out more than \$21 million in compensation but rejected many claims for lump sum payments because of what it says is a lack of scientific evidence linking chemical exposure to health problems. The inquiry report, tabled in federal parliament today, concluded that there was a lack

of clear evidence to prove certain chemicals used in the program were the cause of widespread health problems in the F-111 fuel tank repair community. But it still recommended that compensation be available to those previously denied access to ex-gratia payments and health services. That will be based on actual work undertaken in the fuel tanks, not the unit nor the year in which the work was undertaken. As a result, about 2000 more personnel will qualify for the scheme, the report said. The report also recommends there be increased counselling support for families and an urgent increase in the number of occupational medicine specialists in the Australian Defence Force. Presently, defence has just one full-time person in this role. "My hope is that the reports release brings some closure to those affected by working in the F-111 fuel tanks, some of whom have waited many years for recognition," he said.

## NORTH FORT SAFE *Jesse Phillips*

North Fort Artillery Museum will not be relocated to country Victoria now. COMMONSENSE has prevailed with former Federal defence minister Joel Fitzgibbon confirming the North Fort Artillery Museum will not be relocated to country Victoria now or any time in the future. The former minister's belated response to a question on notice from Warringah Liberal MP Tony Abbott is at odds with previous statements from the Defence Department that stated moving the museum to Puckapunyal was a long-term plan, when finance was available. The plan came to light when the museum's volunteers were told the move would happen in the future. The volunteers were reluctant to comment yesterday until they had been officially advised the move was no longer on the agenda. But Mr Fitzgibbon, who resigned as defence minister in June, categorically ruled out a relocation in a response he gave to questions from Mr Abbott.

Mr Abbott asked whether there was a plan to relocate the museum, and if so, in what time frame. The former defence minister's response was suc-



cinct: "No". A spokesman for the current Defence Minister, John Faulkner, confirmed Mr Fitzgibbon's stated position was policy. Mr Fitzgibbon also revealed the Federal Government last year spent \$400,000 on improvements to army housing at the museum. Mr Abbott said he suspected

the fact the government had spent so much money on the museum recently meant it knew it would look silly if it then tried to move the museum. "It's terrific news. There's a sense that you always have to be vigilant here because I suspect that the defence planners are always eyeing off a far-flung outpost", Mr Abbott said. He said the seemingly contradictory response from Mr Fitzgibbon to that previously given by the Defence Department was not surprising given the nature of the defence bureaucracy. "Defence is one of these organisations where the left hand does not always know what the right hand is doing. There are all sorts of things that are taken for granted inside Defence that if opened up to public scrutiny would not stand up, and I suspect this is one of those cases". Manly Liberal MP Mike Baird said the decision was the only logical one to make.

## REVIEW OF MILITARY COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has announced that the Review of Military Compensation Arrangements' steering committee has been appointed, and met last month to commence its consideration of almost 50 submissions from the service and ex-service communities.

"The appointment of this steering committee is the next step toward delivering the Government's commitment to review the current military rehabilitation and compensation arrangements," he said.

"The steering committee members combine an extensive knowledge of veterans' entitlements, rehabilitation, safety and compensation law and policy."

The review's steering committee is chaired by Ian Campbell, Chair of the Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission. Its members are: Major General Craig Orme, Department of Defence; Ms Peta Furnell,

The Treasury; Ms Joan Ross, Department of Finance and Deregulation; Ms Michelle Baxter, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and Peter Sutherland, an independent expert in military rehabilitation and compensation law and a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University College of Law.

"We need to ensure that the experiences of those who have been through the military rehabilitation and compensation system are considered as part of the Review, and I am grateful to those organisations and individuals who have made submissions," Mr Griffin said.

The next stage of investigations and consultations will include visits to Defence Force facilities and consultations with current and former members of the Australian Defence Force, ex-service organisations, key agencies and other stakeholders. The Prime Ministerial Advisory Council on

Ex-service matters and the Ex-Service Roundtable will also be consulted for their views during the Review process.

"The Review is critical in identifying solutions for wider concerns relating to military rehabilitation and compensation. It is a significant step towards addressing concerns regarding military rehabilitation and compensation legislation and the administration of the schemes."

The Review will examine the adequacy and suitability of military rehabilitation and compensation arrangements including perceived disparities and inequities between legislative schemes. Its terms of reference and further information about committee members can be found on the review web page from links at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au). The Review is expected to report to Government in the first half of 2010, subject to the complexity of the matters raised.

## NEXT STEP FOR REVIEW OF MILITARY SUPERANNUATION ARRANGEMENTS

*Bob Baldwin MP*

Still no word on the review into military superannuation The Shadow Minister for Defense Science, Personnel and Assisting Shadow Minister for Defense, the Hon. Bob Baldwin MP, has again called on the Labor Government to release its findings into the review of military superannuation. Since the findings of the review were made public on the 24 December 2007 we haven't heard anything from the Government, Mr. Baldwin said. All Australian Defense Force members, both past and present, deserve to know what the government is going to do with their superannuation. Mr. Baldwin went on to say that the longer the Rudd Labor Government withheld its findings into the review, the less likely they were to act on its recommendations. When the present Government was in opposition,

they were highly critical of a three month period during which the Howard Government was reviewing the report, Mr. Baldwin said. They have now been reviewing the report for 18 months, six times as long as the former government and yet they have remained totally silent regarding its recommendations. He said that when the current Minister for Veterans Affairs, Alan Griffin, was in opposition, he stated that; the Government should clarify the [military superannuation] situation immediately as the morale of current members is being severely affected. "Once again, the Rudd Government has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to spin when it should have committed itself to fixing the military superannuation system". "Furthermore, they have failed to capitalise on the opportunity that a

new, less complex military superannuation system would have on the ability of the ADF to attract new personnel and retain its existing skilled workforce. I urge Mr. Griffin and Mr. Combet, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science, to release their government's findings into the report in order to provide certainty and security for those who have contributed so much to our nation".

### RAN BACKFLIP

The navy has been forced to back-down on its previous decision to rely on a British based submarine rescue vehicle. This move contradicts its earlier assertion that in an emergency it could fly the vehicle out to a stricken boat and still rescue the crew before they ran out of air.

The RAN will now rely on a ageing RN rescue vehicle the LR5 as it's own has been out of service since 2006

## AUSTRALIAN AND KOREAN VETERANS' MINISTERS MARK KOREAN VETERANS' DAY

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Alan Griffin welcomed Korean Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs Mr Yang Kim to Canberra last month to discuss plans to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War next year, before attending a service to mark Korean Veterans' Day.

Mr. Griffin and Mr. Kim attended the service at the Australian National Korean War Memorial on Anzac Parade to mark Korean Veterans' Day and to lay a wreath to commemorate those lost.

"As we gather here today, we pay tribute to all those who lost their lives in the Korean War including 340 Australian servicemen and women. We are proud of their efforts in helping to ensure the freedom of the South Ko-

rean people and we will continue to honour their memory," Mr Griffin said.

More than 17,000 Australians served during the Korean War, helping to defend and protect the South Korean people.

When the Chinese launched their spring offensive on 22 April 1951, some 700,000 Chinese troops began advancing across the breadth of South Korea from the Yellow Sea to the Sea of Japan. Near Kapyong, around 2000 Commonwealth and US forces – including men from the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment – successfully held off the advance; demonstrating again the bravery and ingenuity of Australians in battle.

The Ministers also discussed coop-

eration on upcoming plans to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War in 2010.

"I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk with Minister Kim about commemorating this important anniversary for both the South Korean and Australian people," Mr Griffin said.

"Korea is often referred to as the 'forgotten war' – overshadowed in history by the scale of the Second World War which preceded it. But the contribution of the Australian men and women who served in Korea was important, and this anniversary will be a chance for us to appropriately honour their service and sacrifice and commemorate all those lost."

## EASIER CLAIM PROCESS BEING TRIALLED

An easier process for veterans and ex-service personnel to claim compensation and benefits is a step closer with a new trial scheduled to commence.

A new single claim process will make accessing compensation more straightforward for those veterans and ex-service personnel who may have entitlements under more than one Act administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Depending on their service, veterans and ex-service personnel may be entitled to benefits under three different Acts – the *Veterans Entitlements Act 1986*, the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* and the *Military Rehabilitation*

*and Compensation Act 2004*.

To date, veterans wanting to claim under more than one Act needed to submit a separate claim form for each Act.

The new process being trialled will see veterans lodge a single claim form for compensation and benefits available under any of these three Acts, cutting down the unnecessary paperwork for claimants.

The introduction of a single claim form will help reduce confusion and is an important step forward in improving the overall claim process for veterans.

The new process will be trialled over the next two months in Perth, Mel-

bourne and Brisbane, working with specific veteran advocacy centres located in these states.

DVA will be working closely with ex-service organisations and members of the veteran community to ensure the new process is effective in helping veterans access their rightful entitlements and, hopefully, smoothing out the claims process. If successful, the single claim process will be expanded as soon as possible.

This trial complements other initiatives designed to improve the transition for members leaving the services, particularly those who have to deal with multiple agencies.

## ROBOTIC ASSISTED PROSTATECTOMY

The DVA have received a number of requests for robotic assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy. In 2006, the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC – the body which advises the Government about items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule) evaluated the use of robotic assisted surgery compared to open radical prostatectomy in terms of safety, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.

The MSAC review concluded that there was uncertainty about the comparative cost-effectiveness of robotic laparoscopic surgery as a shorter period of hospitalisation does not offset the additional costs involved. MSAC also noted that there was insufficient evidence on long-term outcomes compared to an open radical prostatectomy, that is the remission rates associated with incomplete removal of

the cancerous tissue. Open radical prostatectomy is still considered the "gold standard" for this type of procedure.

Consequently, DVA will not accept financial responsibility for robotic assisted surgery, whether requested by a doctor or hospital - except in rare cases where significant clinical

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evidence has been provided to support its use as the only viable treatment option. Any request for exceptional circumstances to support the funding of robotic surgery is considered on a case-by-case basis and should be submitted to DVA for approval prior to the surgery taking place.

This request must be made by the treating doctor. DVA will not fund robotic laparoscopic prostatectomy on the basis of veteran's or surgeon's personal preference for this procedure. If the robotic assisted surgery is provided without DVA approval - either not obtaining it or proceeding having been rejected by DVA - then DVA will only fund the surgery at the equivalent DVA fee for the open radical prostatectomy.

In terms of requests from hospitals, DVA will not fund requests for the same reasons outlined above.

DVA's decision in this matter reflects a Departmental position to fund the requested treatment. It is not a direction to the treating doctor on whether to undertake the surgery, which is clearly a medical judgement.

## INTENDING TO TRAVEL?

### Vietnam Veterans- Roper Retreat (NT)

The Traditional Owners and Management of Elsey Station welcome Australia's veterans to ROPER RETREAT

Open: 1–31 August annually, Vets are invited to rest by 60 km of the magnificent Roper River. Camping is free, there is fresh water in the river, with lots of peace for regeneration.

Protocol: The same as for Pandanus Park i.e. take only photos, leave only footprints, you are totally responsible for yourself and there is absolutely no liability on Elsey Station or its residents. Ensure that you have medical clearance, and that you bring everything you might need. Phone 07 5445 0280 with your names, dates and numbers.

Where is it? 31km east along the Roper Highway, Northern Territory. Turn north at the Elsey Station sign. 3km later you will pass the Manager's house, and just 5km later you reach the Roper. How much dirt getting in? Only eight km. Yep, you read it right. You don't even need a fourby. How's the fishing? There are plenty of barra, seratoga and black bream .... all great eating; and even catfish, if that's your fancy.

Nearest facilities: 3km to the community clinic, 35km to Mataranka for groceries, fuel, doctor and hospital 140km to Katherine for the dentist [www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/elseystation.htm](http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/elseystation.htm)

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening but this Wasn't it." - Groucho Marx

## SUB – BRANCH DOINGS

### DUE RECOGNITION



Wendy Schulz receiving her Life Membership from Sub – Branch President Len Schulz



Donna Liccioni receiving her Life Membership from President Len



Ian Liccioni being congratulated on his Life Membership by Pres Len



Geoff Dearden accepting his and wife Rose's Life Memberships from Len Schulz

At the Sub-Branch general meeting held on June 13 five life memberships were presented to most deserving long standing members by President Len. These memberships were granted in long overdue recognition of valuable and tireless service to the sub-branch and to the veteran community as a whole.

## NEW VIET DIORAMA

Veteran's Affairs Minister, Allan Griffin, on Friday 17 July, officially unveiled a diorama depicting a Vietnamese landscape and village with a tunnel network beneath it. The diorama was built by L.



Schulz Jnr to a very high standard of workmanship and will be utilised in the "visiting schools program". The first school visit using the new aid will be to Riverside Girls High School in early August where it will be displayed to more effectively demonstrate to the pupils the difficulties faced by our troops and the ingenuity of the Vietnamese enemy.

## GUNFIRE AT LONG TAN– THE FO's STORY

Maj M.D. (Morrie) Stanley, M.B.E.

Until March 1966 1RAR, 105 Bty RAA and my unit 161 Bty, RNZA were attached to the U.S. 173D Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa. In May/June 1966 5RAR and 6RAR arrived in the theatre to establish the 1 Australian Task Force Area at NUI DAT in Phouc Tuy Province.

As 161 Bty was to be in direct support of 6RAR, I was assigned as FO to D Coy from the time 6RAR assembled on the beach at Vung Tau. The sojourn on the beach ended when we occupied the base at Nui Dat. From then on my two radio operators and I, the three Kiwi gunners, shared the heat and mud with D Coy. We had D Coy laundry numbers and were involved in all of their activities.

By August 1966 our party was virtually part of the establishment.

The circumstances preceding the battle of Long Tan, the course of it, and the outcome, are now fairly well known. Indeed, many of us know more about the battle now than we did at the time. This, then, is my recollection of experiences as D Coy's FO at Long Tan.

I can recall on the morning of the 18th of August, getting ready to go on a patrol with D Coy. We assembled near the perimeter of the Task Force and walked out into the tactical area. The mission was to relieve a much smaller patrol from B Coy which had been out for some time searching for a VC mortar base plate position from which an attack had been launched on the Task Force base. The movement to the rendezvous with the B Coy patrol was uneventful and simply done, as was the hand over of information between the two patrols.

When we arrived at the rendezvous I spoke with the FO who was with the B Coy patrol, Captain Pat Murphy, another New Zealander. He briefed

me on the situation as he understood it, he explained where we were, about the track system and the understanding of the next line of movement that might be followed and then we had a very comfortable lunch.

After that Maj Harry Smith, the Company Commander, decided on the method of advance with his platoons. It was my role to stay with the Company Commander all the time, no matter where he went I was to stay with him, so that I could provide any advice or support that he wanted. I needed to know how he was ma-



noeuving his platoons. I also needed to know our location, what direction the platoons were and how far away they were from me.

The initial contact began with the chatter of small arms fire. It was quite exciting and was regarded as something to be expected, although not something which D Coy had often come across. At that time Company Headquarters was not directly involved in the contact at the front from where the sound of rifle and machine gun fire was coming. I was keen and enthusiastic to apply gun fire into the area where I knew that it would be useful. However, at that time we received VC mortar fire from the south generally and into the area where Company Headquarters was waiting. Harry Smith decided that we would move away from that place

very quickly. He did not need to emphasise any orders on that occasion; we simply moved. It was obvious to us that the enemy was not observing that fire because it became ineffective. After that, Harry Smith appreciated that 11 Platoon, which was in contact, was getting into trouble. I could hear the voices on the company command net and knew that Harry Smith was trying to have 10 Platoon assist 11 Platoon. That was not totally successful.

There came a time when neither Harry Smith nor I could perform our role while we were moving and, if we could not perform our functions, then the platoons would be in greater trouble. So it was decided to stop and establish some firm ground with one of the platoons. It was in that place where the wounded and members of the other platoons were gathered to establish a company defended area. My most intense recollections are of that final position.

Soon after initial contact, Harry Smith and I agreed on the grid reference of our location and he requested fire support. Battery Fire Missions were fired at some distance from the known position of 11 Platoon. Later, I upgraded the fire to Regimental Fire Missions when the situation had deteriorated and there were obviously large numbers of VC confronting us. At the time my response was instinctive and not based on firm information about the size or location of the enemy force.

The rain started late in the day as usual, but soon developed into a tremendous storm. This deluge and the fact that our final position was on a slight reverse slope were two factors in our favour. Rain and the intense gunfire caused this area to be shrouded in smoke, steam and fog.

This helped me because my judgement of distance was assisted by the

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observation (or lack of it) of flash against this screen and the enemy were silhouetted, as were our own troops.

I realised how important it was that my communications remained effective and that the guns were able to maintain the constant and accurate fire that they were called upon to produce. I needed the comfort of knowing that my Battery Commander (Harry Honor), an experienced gunner, was on the end of a radio, and could provide constant support for me. On one occasion I actually reported on that net that the situation was too confused to use the guns and it was Harry who suggested I engage another grid reference and adjust the fire from that position. That stabilised me at the time.

Fortunately my radio communications on the artillery net remained effective. Although we could not hear all messages, all our transmissions were heard at Nui Dat. My operator, Willie Walker, was able to keep the set operational under the most trying conditions until the battery collapsed at the end of the battle. He seemed to be concerned only with the radio and I with my map.

I wondered whether the fire which was called down was an over-violent reaction to the situation because there was no way of knowing the total size of the enemy force at the time. I had seen several groups 20 to 50 strong moving about between the rubber trees. I have since found out and now believe that the fire was justified. 108 men of D Coy had engaged about 1500 VC.

I have been asked how I was able to direct the fire. It was essential that I knew my location, and that I knew the direction of the platoons and roughly how far away they were. I tried to have my map oriented with the north point on the map facing north, then looked towards the noise of contact and small arm fire. That was the only way I had at that time of determining the grid reference at which to open fire. It was difficult to tell the distance the leading troops were from me, so the safety factor was that fire was opened some considerable distance, even up to 1,000 metres, away from where we

were. Adjustments were made to move the gun fire closer. On one occasion I was told on the company net that it was too close. I actually screamed a number of times over the radio net the word "stop". This was because I could not hear many of the acknowledgements from the gun area when transmitting fire orders. Normally the artillery observers will give fire orders and will receive the acknowledgement. When I screamed "stop", the guns had to stop and they did. Another occasion when the guns had to stop and they were stopped for me, was when a helicopter was despatched to resupply small arms ammunition into the company area.

Sergeant Bob Buick took command of 11 Platoon after his platoon commander was killed. When he requested artillery fire on his own position I spoke with him directly on the company radio net. He had apparently assessed that with about 10 men left out of 28, they could not survive more than another 10-15 minutes.

Even though he insisted, I declined. He advised me later that the fall on shot continued to be 50-100 metres from him and amongst the VC.

Everyone in the company was running short of small arms ammunition. I had some for the Armalite and Willie had some, but we did not have a particular use for it. We were too busy. Jack Kirby, a very fine Company Sergeant-Major, came to me and said, "Excuse me, Sir, have you any spare ammunition?" I could not understand why he should act in such a polite way. I told him to help himself from my pack and he did that. He said, "I am leaving you one magazine". He also left Willie Walker with one.

In the later stages of the battle when we were all in this base of ours with the wounded, members of the platoons had joined us, and there were far more people around in the Company Headquarters area. But it was at that time there were two incidents, one which impressed, and one which worried me. Most of the men were young, of the age 20 or so. One man I heard saying "steady, aim, fire". I think that was an example of what makes a soldier tick. After thorough training and even under stress he knew what was required and that is how he did it. It

was just at that time, in fact just after Jack Kirby had collected ammunition, that I was very concerned because the VC had started attacking from a different direction. I ordered the removal on one battery from the Regimental Fire Mission and applied it in that area. Jack Kirby saw it as well and we were very worried that we were going to be done. It did not deter Jack, he just went around collecting ammunition and distributing it.

The arrival of the relief force seemed to signal the end of the battle and, later Harry Honor suggested that harassing fire in depth continue throughout the night.

When the battlefield was cleared the next morning an eerie silence pervaded a scene of utmost devastation. The men may have been mentally and physically exhausted after their ordeal but they continued their duties at Long Tan until it was time to return to the Task Force base at Nui Dat.

A Digger from D Coy later recalled:

"It got to the stage where we all thought that there was no way we could get out of there. The only help we seemed to get was from the artillery. Every time the enemy troops got close to us it seemed that a salvo of artillery would land amongst them, just in time. We didn't have all that much ammunition anyway, and we were using our fire properly and not wasting it. When they did build up and move in quickly it was always the artillery that kept them out of our way."

I am proud to have been with D Company 6RAR on that day.

## SEEKING SAILORS

*But then weren't we all?*

If you are able to assist with the following please contact:

Robert (Spud) Murphy, (03) 8734 2399, [murfjune@yahoo.com.au](mailto:murfjune@yahoo.com.au)

<mailto:murfjune@yahoo.com.au> direct  
Seeking any sailors serving on the HMAS Voyager in April 1960.

Ten sailors were part of an Army/Navy exchange. They went from Singapore to an Australian Army camp in Ipoh Malaya and then on to patrol the jungles of the Thai border. I would like to contact any sailors involved.

## MILITARY HISTORY 101 – Railroad tracks

**B**e sure to read the final paragraph; your understanding of it will depend on the earlier part of the content.

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spac-

ing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder 'What horse's ass came up with it?', you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses. (Two horse's asses.) Now, the twist to the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's. The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRB's had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's ass. And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important? Ancient horse's asses control almost everything... and CURRENT Horses Asses are controlling everything else.

## THE ARMY SYSTEM OF RANK IS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE

**Y**ou see, all people in the Army are soldiers, all privates are soldiers, but not all soldiers are privates. Some are officers who are commissioned, but some are officers who are not commissioned. Obviously if every private was called private it would be confusing, so some privates are called things like trooper, gunner, craftsmen, sapper or signaller. Gunners as I am sure you know are the guys that fire guns, unless of course they are drivers or signallers in which case we call them gunners rather than privates or signallers just to make it clearer. All gunners belong to the artillery, except that in the infantry they have gunners who are called privates because they fire a different sort of gun, for the same reason they call their drivers and signallers private as well.

A Lance Corporal is called Corporal; unless he is a Lance Bombardier, then we call him Bombardier to dis-

tinguish him from a full Bombardier who is just like a Corporal. All other ranks are called by their rank for the sake of simplicity, except that Staff Sergeants are called Staff but they are not on the staff. Some Warrant Officers, who are not officers, are called Sergeant Major although they are neither Sergeants nor Majors. Some Warrant Officers are called Mister or Sir which is the same thing that we call some officers, but they are not Warrant Officers. A Lieutenant may also be called Mister because they are subalterns, but we always write their rank as Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and second comes before first.

When we talk about groups of soldiers there obviously has to be a clear distinction. We call them Officers and Soldiers although we know that officers are soldiers too, sometimes we talk about officers and "other ranks" which is the same as

calling them soldiers. I guess it is easiest when we talk about rank and file which is all the troops on parade except the officers and some of the NCOs; and a few of the privates; and the term is used whether everyone is on parade or not. A large unit may be called a battalion, unless it is a regiment but sometimes a regiment is much bigger than a battalion and then it has nothing to do with the other sort of regiment. Sub units are called companies unless they are squadrons, or troops or batteries. That is not to be confused with radio batteries and don't confuse this type of troop with the type who are soldiers but not officers.

Mostly the Army is divided into Corps as well as units, not the sort of Corps which is a couple of divisions but the sort which tells you straight away what trade each man

*(Continued on page 14)*

(Continued from page 13)

performs, whether he is a tradesman or not.

For example, the Infantry Corps has all the infantrymen and the Artillery Corps has all the gunners. Both these Corps also have signallers and drivers except those who are in the Signals or Transport Corps. Both these Corps provide a special service and that is why the Transport Corps provides postal clerks. In fact the Signals Corps is not a service at all because it is an Arm Corps. Arms do all the fighting, although Signals do not have to fight too much, rather like the Engineers who are also an Arm Corps but they do not fight too much either.

So, you see, it really is quite simple.

## DEFENCE HONOURS AND AWARDS TRIBUNAL REPORT - INQUIRY INTO RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE WITH 4TH BATTALION, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY IN MALAYSIA 1966-67

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, the Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, announced today that he has accepted the recommendations of the Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal report of the inquiry into recognition for service by Australian military personnel who served with 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (4RAR), in Malaysia in 1966-67.

"I am very pleased to announce the Government has accepted the Tribunal's findings and asked Defence to implement the recommendation for change," said Dr Kelly.

The Tribunal has recommended that the end date for the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) 1945-75 with Clasp 'MALAYSIA' be extended to

14 September 1966 inclusive for service in Borneo.

In particular, the Tribunal has recommended that members of 4RAR who served at Terendak from May 1967 to September 1967 are not eligible for the AASM with Clasp 'MALAYSIA', the

(Continued on page 16)

## Vietnam vets warned of defoliant risk

**July 26, 2009**

WASHINGTON: MEDICAL researchers say there may be a link between exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War and an increased chance of developing serious heart problems and Parkinson's disease.

A study from the Institute of Medicine released yesterday suggests there is a stronger connection than previously thought about the health risks to Vietnam veterans.

The research was sponsored by the US Veterans Affairs Department, which will decide what to do with the findings.

American forces sprayed millions of litres of Agent Orange and other defoliants over parts of Vietnam from 1962 to 1970. Military authorities used the chemicals in an attempt to massively prune the dense jungle cover used by communist forces to hide.

US troops and others exposed to the defoliants later complained of numerous health problems, and researchers are still trying to determine the scope of the damage.

The institute, a division of the National Academy of Sciences, is mandated by Congress to review, every two years, evidence about the effects of Agent Orange exposure.

To determine whether Vietnam veterans faced an increased chance of ischemic heart disease - a condition involving reduced blood supply to the heart - researchers reviewed several studies that showed links between higher exposure levels and greater incidence of the disease.

Other factors such as smoking, age and weight can also play a role, they noted, but veterans exposed to the chemicals may be at greater risk.

The conclusion on Parkinson's was based on a review of 16 studies that looked at herbicide exposures among people with symptoms of the disease. More than 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam.

## \$1.4bn wasted on cancelled Seasprite

*Patrick Walters, National security editor*

*Article from: The Australian*

MORE than \$1.4 billion of taxpayers' money was wasted on the Defence Department's botched acquisition of the Super Seasprite helicopter, 47 per cent more than the \$953 million claimed by the Defence Department last year.

The Auditor-General is highly critical of the Defence Materiel Organisation's management of the US-manufactured helicopters, which were ordered for the navy's Anzac Class frigates but were never accepted into operational service.

The long-awaited final report by the Australian National Audit Office found the Seasprite had a potential catastrophic failure rate calculated at 20,000 times greater than the US aviation standard.

The Seasprite's crash worthiness was below contemporary standards, it could not be flown in bad weather, the cockpit was too small for some crewmen and the advanced computerised combat system never worked properly.

But most worrying, the computerised flight control system tended to make unpredictable movements of flight controls, known as hard-overs. During flight testing, that occurred four times in 1600 flying hours. The aircraft design specification was for one potentially catastrophic failure in a million hours.

The Rudd government cancelled the project to give the navy an anti-submarine capacity in March last year, terminating the prime contract with US firm Kaman Aerospace Corporation and handing the Seasprites back to them for an eventual sale.

The project ran for 12 years, with a \$746m contract for 11 Seasprites being signed by the Howard government in 1997.

Equipped with Penguin anti-ship missiles, the Seasprites were designed to operate from the Anzac frigates, providing maritime strike and surveillance for the RAN's surface fleet.

The ANAO report reveals that extra expenditure of at least \$448m was incurred by Defence in establishing the Seasprite capability on top of the \$953m spent on the prime contract. This included \$201m spent on Penguin missiles, which cannot be used on any other aircraft, and \$135m on in-service support. An extra \$59m went on spare parts and \$47m on last year decommissioning 805 squadron, which was destined to operate the Seasprites.

The handling glitches and stability issues led to the Seasprite's grounding by the navy in March 2006 after it had been provisionally accepted by the RAN.

The ANAO found the decision to cancel the project could not be attributed to any individual factor.

"If there is an overriding message from this project it is that risks to project outcomes need to be better managed and related accountability for managing project performance strengthened," it said.

The DMO's Seasprite project office had experienced "ongoing difficulties in attracting and retaining appropriately qualified personnel which inhibited its capacity to manage a large and complex project".

Right from the start, an inadequate

understanding of the risks associated with the acquisition was not attained through the requirement definition and tender-evaluation processes.

"Poor contract management practices within Defence and DMO, over the life of the project, contributed to ongoing contractual uncertainty," it said.

The Auditor-General said the risks associated with the project were increased by the decision to fit up-graded systems "into a smaller helicopter than the Anzac ship is designed to operate".

So, Paddy asks Murphy: "why do Scuba divers always fall backwards off their boats?"

To which Murphy replies: "You thick shite - If they fell forwards they'd still be in the friggin' boat."

The navy is now looking to buy a fleet of up to 24 combat helicopters at a cost of well over \$1bn to replace the junked Seasprites and provide its surface

fleet with a capable anti-submarine warfare platform.

Defence Materiel Minister Greg Combet said last night that Defence had accepted all seven recommendations from the ANAO designed to prevent a repeat of the Seasprite fiasco.

"The lessons learned from the Seasprite project have already been incorporated in reforms which have enhanced Defence project management practices and are taken further in the implementation of the Mortimer review as recently announced by government," Mr Combet said.

## \$½M FOR VIET VET CHILDREN

21 Aug '09

Fifty-six sons and daughters of Vietnam veterans have received scholarships valued at more than \$500,000 from to support their tertiary studies, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs announced today.

"These students have overcome personal challenges to complete their education so far and I'm pleased that we have been able to help them continue their education and realise their career aspirations.

Mr Griffin said more than 300 children of Vietnam veterans had benefited from the scheme since it was introduced in 2000.

"Named after the Battle of Long Tan in which 18 Australians lost their lives, the bursary provides up to \$9000 over three years to help hard-working and dedicated students complete their studies," he said.

"I congratulate the these recipients for 2009 on their commitment to date and wish them all the best in completing their tertiary studies."

Mr Griffin said further education assistance is also available through two new scholarships introduced in the 2009-10 Budget as well as other reforms to student income support

"These new scholarships seek to en-

*(Continued on page 16)*

## AUSTRALIAN/VIETNAMESE MIA's

The Vietnamese Government and Vietnamese People's Army have been instrumental in providing assistance to locate Australia's MIA's. The work was initiated by Jim Bourke and the team from Operation Aussies Home and has continued more recently by an official team from Australian Defence.

My office would like to reciprocate this assistance and are using official records (such as contact reports) to identify the locations where Vietnamese KIA were buried.

The final list will contain information on the approximate location of many individual burials. Initially however, we would like to provide the Vietnam-

ese with information relating to some of the larger sites around Fire Support Base Balmoral and Coral.

While we have some details from the official records any information regarding the exact location of burial sites at Fire Support Base Balmoral and Coral would be of assistance. In particular:

The location of burial sites in relation to a known point such as platoon position, Gun Line, Tank/APC Night Harbour etc Photos of the bomb craters or bull dozer scrapes used Diary notes or recollections from any veterans who participated in the clearance and burials (such as bull dozer drivers, APC Crew etc) Copies of any

marked maps.

I would be grateful to receive any information via my work email address and can provide an Australian postal address for copies of any maps or photos that may be of assistance.

[stuart.dodds@dfat.gov.au](mailto:stuart.dodds@dfat.gov.au)

Having served myself three times in 1 RAR and having met many of our veterans over the years, I am sure our Coral Veterans and others would view this as a worthy undertaking.

Regards

Stuart Dodds Colonel Defence Attaché Hanoi Australian Embassy Vietnam



**RYDE CITY & DISTRICTS Sub-Branch  
"CENTER OF EXCELLENCE"**

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General Service Medal (GSM) 1962 with Clasp 'MALAYA PENINSULA' and the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM).

The Tribunal has also recommended that the Government takes no action to recommend to either the Government of the United Kingdom or the Government of Malaysia that changes be made to the eligibility for the GSM or PJM to include members of 4RAR after 12 June 1965 and 31 December 1966, respectively.

Ex-serving ADF members who believe they may now be eligible for the AASM with Clasp 'MALAYSIA' should contact Defence Honours and Awards, toll free, on 1800 111 321.

The Tribunal's full report is available at [www.defence-honourtribunal.gov.au](http://www.defence-honourtribunal.gov.au)

A little old man shuffled slowly into an ice cream parlor and pulled himself slowly, painfully, up onto a stool.. After catching his breath, he ordered a banana split.

The waitress asked kindly, 'Crushed nuts?'

'No,' he replied, 'Arthritis.'

A man walks out to the street and catches a taxi just as it was going by. He gets into the taxi, and the cabbie says, "Perfect timing. You're just like Frank."

Passenger: "Who?"

Cabbie: "Frank Feldman. He's a guy who did everything right all the time. Like my coming along when you needed a cab, things happened like that to Frank Feldman every single time."

Passenger: "There are always a few clouds over everybody."

Cabbie: "Not Frank Feldman. He was a terrific athlete. He could have won the Grand-Slam at tennis. He could golf with the pros. He sang like an opera baritone and danced like a Broadway star and you should have heard him play the piano. He was an amazing guy."

Passenger: "Sounds like he was something really special."

Cabbie: "There's more. He had a memory like a computer. He remembered everybody's birthday. He knew all about wine, which foods to order and which fork to eat them with. He could fix anything. Not like me. I change a fuse, and the whole street blacks out. But Frank Feldman, he could do everything right."

Passenger: "Wow, some guy then!"

Cabbie: "He always knew the quickest way to go in traffic and avoid traffic jams. Not like me, I always seem to get stuck in them. But Frank, he never made a mistake, and he really knew how to treat a woman and make her feel good. He would never answer her back even if she was in the wrong; and his clothing was always immaculate, shoes highly polished too. He was the perfect man! He never made a mistake. No one could ever measure up to Frank Feldman."

Passenger: "An amazing fellow. How did you meet him?"

Cabbie: "Well, I never actually met Frank. He died. I married his widow!"

A Member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease." "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "on whether I embrace your policies Or your mistress."

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courage students who may never have considered university to look into further studies. The scholarships provide a start-up scholarship of \$2254 a year to university students who receive financial assistance under the *Veterans' Children Education Scheme* and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act Education and Training Scheme*. A relocation scholarship, with \$4000 in the first year and \$1000 each year after, will be available for those students who have to move away from home to study," he said.

Mr Griffin encouraged children of Vietnam veterans looking to undertake or continue their tertiary education next year to apply for a Long Tan Bursary. Applications opened on Vietnam Veterans' Day, 18 August, and will close on 31 October.

Paddy and Mick are two Irishmen working at the local sawmill. One day, Mick slips and his arm gets caught and severed by the big bench saw. Paddy quickly puts the limb in a plastic bag and rushes it and Mick to the local hospital. Next day, Paddy goes to the hospital and asks after Mick. The nurse says, 'Oh he's out in Rehab exercising'. Paddy couldn't believe it, but here's Mick out the back exercising his now re-attached arm. The very next day he's back at work in the saw mill. A couple of days go by, and then Mick slips and severs his leg on another bloody big saw thingamebob. So Paddy puts the limb in a plastic bag and rushes it and Mick off to hospital. Next day he calls in to see him and asks the nurse how he is. The nurse replies, 'He's out in the Rehab again exercising' and sure enough, here's Mick out there doing some serious work on the treadmill. And very soon Mick comes back to work. But, as usual, within a couple of days he has another accident and severs his head. Wearily Paddy puts the head in a plastic bag and transports it and Mick to hospital. Next day he goes in and asks the nurse how Mick is. The nurse breaks down and cries and says, 'He's dead.' Paddy is shocked, but not surprised. 'I suppose the saw finally did him in.' 'No', says the nurse, 'Some dopey idiot put his head in a plastic bag and he suffocated'.