

Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans'  
Peacekeepers and Peacemakers  
Association

**NEWSLETTER MAY 2013**

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**LUNCH MEETING 7th AUGUST**

**BURRAWANG VILLAGE HOTEL**

Hoddle Street, Burrawang

This is a good venue in a great county setting. A classic PUB  
If you are coming - RSVP to Bob or Noelene Ph 4862 3741 or by email  
by Monday

**VIETNAM VETERANS' DAY  
MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**SUNDAY**

**18th August 2013**

**AT THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL  
CHERRY TREE WALK - SETTLER'S PARK BOWRAL**

Assemble at 3:00pm  
For the Service which will commence at 3:30pm -  
Hail, snow, rain or shine.

**GUEST SPEAKER - COLIN LEE - 5 RAR**

The service provides an opportunity for veterans and the community to pay respect to those  
that sacrificed their lives in the service of Australia.

Bowral High School will also provide a Guest Speaker.

Immediately following the service light refreshments will be provided.

After this, at about 5:00pm, Mittagong RSL will host a gathering of Veterans and guests, their  
families and interested members of the public. Finger food will be provided and drinks will be  
available at a reasonable cost.

Because the day rarely falls on a Sunday, this is an ideal opportunity to invite family and  
friends to the service. It would enable them to thank you, and other veterans for your service  
to Australia. Get in touch with them NOW.

## **VALE LT.COLONEL JAMES (JIM) HOWSON DEVITT (RET'D)**

We were saddened by the death of our esteemed member, Jim Devitt, who passed away on 1 July 2013 at the age of 75 years. Jim died in Bowral Private Hospital following a protracted struggle with a number of chronic health issues. Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow, Helen, and to his children and grandchildren.

Officer Cadet James Devitt enlisted in the Australian Army on 12 January 1956, graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant into Infantry and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel some 20 years later. Jim served with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam from 13 November 1964 to 3 November 1965. He also served for a total of five years with the Pacific Islands Regiment in Papua New Guinea prior to that country's independence. Other postings included 11 NS Trg Bn, 1 RAR, 2 RAR, 3RAR, RMC, HQ 1 TF, HQ Trg Comd, 2 Trg Gp and DSU Sydney.

Our small group of veterans looked up to Jim as an old-school Infantry officer. We enjoyed his company, his stories, his high spirits and his mateship. So it was with great sadness that we watched our mate fade away and succumb to his war-caused health and medical conditions. We commemorate his service; we salute him; we miss him; we will not forget him.

Australia is indeed fortunate to have people like Jim, a man who selflessly served his country and helped make it what it is today. In addition to his military awards, Jim was appointed an Officer of the Order of Saint John. After leaving the military, he served as Private Secretary to NSW State Governors, Cutler and Rowlands.

A Service of Thanksgiving for Jim's life was conducted at Saint Stephen's Anglican Church, Mittagong, on 15 July 2013. The service was well attended by Jim's family, friends and OCS classmates as well as 'black handers' from his PIR days. The Southern Highlands Sub Branch of the VVPPAA (NSW) conducted a deeply moving Veteran's Tribute Ceremony at Jim's Thanksgiving Service prior to retiring to the Lion Rampant to pay final respects to the old warrior.

Many thanks to those Southern Highlands Sub Branch members who attended the service.

### **LEST WE FORGET**



Ray McCann, Welfare Co-ordinator

## UPCOMING EVENTS - FOR YOUR DIARY

(also on the web at [www.shvva.com](http://www.shvva.com))

**4<sup>th</sup> September**

**SUTTON FOREST INN**

**2<sup>nd</sup> October**

**The Bowral Club, Shepherd St.**

**6<sup>th</sup> November**

**THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, Bowral**

**4th December**

**CHRISTMAS DINNER - DORMIE HOUSE**

## LADIES VIP LUNCHES

**21<sup>st</sup> August**

**STURT CAFE MITTAGONG**

**Range Rd. & Waverley Pde.**

**18<sup>th</sup> September**

**THE OLD BAKEHOUSE BERRIMA**

**Old Hume Hwy & Wingecarribee St.**

**16<sup>th</sup> October**

**THE OLD FARM KITCHEN MOSS VALE**

**Argyle St. & Valetta St**

**20 November**

**RED TREE CAFE BOWRAL**

**Station St.**

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER - 5th JUNE 2013

Wednesday 5th June was of course a cool evening in the Southern Highlands. However, it was really nice to step back in time into the comfort of Dormie House, with its old world feeling and log fires blazing.

As we gathered for pre-dinner drinks it became obvious the venue was at capacity. There was a swarm of lady golfers, house-guests and The Vets. Our first drinks came rather slowly but after the rush the service improved and I am sure no one went thirsty.

Despite the numbers, the meals were very good and apparently enjoyed by all. The buffet style entrees and desserts certainly facilitates service. The noise put up by the lady golfers somewhat hindered conversation but didn't deter the Vets.

We raffled a bottle of rare red wine - Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans' -Vintage 2004 - Mudgee Appellation. The lucky winner was David Farthing, who has graciously offered this rarity for raffle again next year.



In conjunction with Sandra I had prepared a few words to mark the

occasion. However, because of the large number of others present it was not appropriate, and perhaps not possible, to make a speech. It is at the end of this newsletter.

### LUNCH 3RD JULY - BUNDANOON HOTEL

Unfortunately I missed this as I had to endure the bright sunshine in Queensland. However, I heard that 16 attended and that it went off well despite some troubles in the kitchen. Sorry no pics.

### XPT TRIP TO VISIT THE SEYMOUR VIETNAM MEMORIAL



The Idea is for members and partners to travel by train and stay two nights in Seymour, thus allowing a full day to see the Memorial and other attractions, possibly Puckapunyal. Of course the trip offers a great opportunity for comradery and social interaction.

The proposal is to travel by daylight XPT travel on 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> October.

Dept Moss Vale	0936	Dept Seymour	0940
Arrv Seymour	1752	Arrv Moss Vale	1759

Train fares depend on-

- (a) whether you have travelled within the past 12 months
- (b) the relevant pension card, and
- (c) whether the pension card has been registered.



Cost examples are: Full concession \$47.28 return economy, \$104.56 return first class. Partial concession \$107.22 return economy, \$151.02 return first class. It will be the individual's responsibility to resolve their personal fare structure by phoning 13 22 32 NSW Transport. I suggest we make a group booking so we are all in the same carriage.

Accommodation - the local Pubs have limited accommodation and the President of the VVAA Mitchell Sub-Branch suggested the Best Western New Crossing Place, as it is close to the memorial and the Prince of Wales Hotel for lubrication. I have details of other options if you want them.

A frequent bus service operates to the Puckapunyal Army Base, a twenty minute drive, where the Tank Museum is of interest. Security requires **Photo ID** by all entering the base e.g a drivers license.

Please advise Noelene and Bob Bailey if you are interested in participating, 4862 3741, or [rnbailey@bigpond.com](mailto:rnbailey@bigpond.com)

Links of interest: <http://www.vvaavic.org.au/mitchell.asp>

<http://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/tourism-and-business/tourism/commemorative-walk.aspx>

[http://www.rslvic.com.au/clubdirectory/index.cfm?fuseaction=display\\_full&ClubID=806&OrgID=195](http://www.rslvic.com.au/clubdirectory/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_full&ClubID=806&OrgID=195)

Bob Bailey  
Social Co-Ordinator

## OUR WEB SITE

The site has been upgraded but it also contains a lot of material that is not published in the Newsletter. Most of this is in the Blog section where articles of interest are "posted". For instance check out the Ben Quilty and John Schuman post - one great video of We Were Only 19 and one on The Battle of Long Tan. If you like it post a "comment".

I would welcome feedback and if you have any questions please contact me:  
Norm Austin 48691772 normanbaustin@yahoo.com.au

## LAWN MOWING SERVICE

Phill Moscatt has advised that the Lawnmowing Service is now officially wound up and that property will be sold and the proceeds will be distributed between the Natio's, Mittagong RSL Sub-branch and ourselves.

Our sincere thanks go to Phill for his efforts in getting this project off the ground and keeping it going for much longer than we anticipated. Thanks also go to those of our members who contributed a great deal of time and effort over the years. Who will forget the frosty mornings and the searing summery days!

## ACTIVE LIFE WEEKEND

Are you looking to get active, stay healthy and meet new friends. This Active Life is the perfect opportunity to participate in light physical activity in a friendly social environment, in the relaxed atmosphere of the Borambola Sport and Recreation Centre, Wagga Wagga. From 22nd November to 24th November - cost \$148 per person. Phone 02 6928 4300 for further information.

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

This Group comprises most of the Ex Service Organisations in the Highlands and is now focused on co-ordination of activities for the forthcoming Centenary Commemorations associated with the First World War. Phill Moscatt chairs the group.

At this stage two events are proposed. The first is a Community Dawn Service to be held at Bradman Oval on ANZAC Day 2014 which promises to be a big event with lots of involvement by community organizations. The second is having Australian flags placed on the graves of all local Veterans from WW1 on ANZAC Day. This would involve local schools. It might also be extended to graves of all veterans in following years

## A FEW WORDS TO MARK OUR TENTH ANNIVERSARY

During the war in South Vietnam units comprised men who were recruited from all over Australia. Thus, often shortly after RTA (Return to Australia), when we left the services we were again scattered throughout Australia. As a consequence we rarely had service mates that lived anywhere near each other. This was particularly true for the Natio's such as myself. We went back into the community to our previous jobs.

Thus in the years after the war, contact was reduced to a minimum and our mates became fond memories. The bonds that were formed serving our nation were stretched and often broken - but not forgotten.

However, 15 years after the end of the war, the Welcome Home Parade in 1987 changed this for many veterans. Unit Re-unions were organised all over Australia and mates started coming back together again. The years disappeared as camaraderie and fellowship took over - for those brief periods every two years or so.

However in early 2003 the Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Association was formed - 15 years after The Welcome Home Parade and 30 years after the war.

Its genesis came from the DVA's Heart Health Program that was run at the Moss Vale Gym. A few of us started talking and it was suggested that we form our own association. Some were already members of the Vietnam Veterans Association of NSW but this was based in Sydney. We wanted to do own thing - so we did.

Sandra Freer has delved into the records and established some facts:

\* 10th June, 2003 we held our first meeting at the Mittagong R.S.L. Club at 7.30 p.m. and took the decision to form an Association.

\* Sunday, 29th June, 2003 - an informal gathering and BBQ at the Vietnam Memorial, Cherry Tree Walk, Bowral at 11 a.m.

\* Tuesday, 15th July, 2003 first meeting at Moss Vale Services Club at 7.00 p.m.

* First office bearers -	President	David Babbage
	Vice President	Tony Mitchell
	Secretary	Norm Austin
	Treasurer	Mat Holzl

Committee - Tom Lyons, Brian Freer, Phill Moscott, John Morton, Rick McCarthy and Norm Anderson.

\* Approximately 22 of original members are still financial members of the Association. Which now consists of about 45 active members.

Our veteran members served in the Army, Navy and Airforce, in a huge variety of rolls, across a very wide range of ranks. But we have something in common. We all served our nation, with pride and honor.

This organisation has enabled us to find new mates and establish friendships that take the place of those we established at war. I think this helps to fill the gap created by the 30 years of separation.

Our wives and partners also have something in common - a Vietnam or war Veteran. However, I know that they are now able to support each other in the support of their men.

Over these ten years we have established our own way of doing things. Over the next ten years I am sure that we will continue with our present activities and probably some new ventures. We will continue to share friendships and look after each other. We will continue to remember our fallen mates. But, I am sure we will continue to have fun.

Norm Austin