

# Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association

Website: [www.shvva.com](http://www.shvva.com) CFN 23847



## MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

### NOMINATIONS FOR SHVVPPA COMMITTEE 2019

Please contact our Secretary, Gordon McCreadie, mobile 0425 233 019 or email [shvva04@gmail.com](mailto:shvva04@gmail.com) if you are prepared to nominate for a Committee position in March 2019.

### NEXT MONTHLY DINNER MEETING

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

*Bowral Hotel*

6:00 pm for 6:30 pm

If you are coming - RSVP to Bob or Noelene by phone 4862 3741 or text 0412 269 217 by the Monday before.

### NEXT LADIES LUNCH

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018 @ 12:30 pm

*The Tea Salon at Dirty Janes Bowral*

If you are coming please RSVP to Judi Bofinger phone 4872 3175 or text 0408 101 575 by the Monday before

### SOCIAL CALENDAR 2018

Please refer to the February 2018 Newsletter for the full year's schedule of Monthly Dinners and Ladies' Luncheons. Reminders will be published in Monthly Newsletters.

### COMMITTEE MEETING 22 MAY 2018

The next SHVVPPA Committee Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 22 May 2018. Members are encouraged to speak to a Committee member before then to discuss the Association's future direction. Alternatively, you may wish to send me an email and I will ensure your views are put to the Committee. As mentioned above, now is the time to volunteer as a Committee member in 2019 if you wish the Association to continue functioning in 2019.

## ANZAC DAY 2018

This year we marched at Mittagong behind our own banner prior to adjourning to the Springs Room at the Mittagong RSL Club for a few drinks and lunch. The turnout was smaller than last year possibly due to the clash with school holidays.



## VALE 'SAM' AUSTIN

Over the years, Norm Austin's brother, Sam Austin, has been a regular attendee at our dinners and functions and was great supporter of Vietnam Veterans. Nicknamed "Mr Havachat" by his family, he readily made friends with our veterans and their wives.

Sam will be a great loss to Norm and Sue and to our Association. Our heartfelt condolences go to Norm, Sue and the extended family.

Sam passed away peacefully on Anzac eve, with his wife Trish by his side, and surrounded by family. Close friends were able to visit him before he died after bravely staving off the ravages of cancer.

His funeral will be held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 at Avalon where Sam and Trish raised their family of four, before moving to the Highlands in 2004.



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE - FSB CORAL AND FSB BALMORAL

A national commemorative service to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battles at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral will be held at 11.00am on Sunday 13 May 2018 at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra.

This is a free event and members of the public are encouraged to attend. This is not a ticketed event and limited, un-allocated seating will be provided for general public. Standing room will be available once the unallocated seating area has reached capacity.

A Last Post Ceremony will also take place at 4.55 pm at the Australian War Memorial, conducted in honour of the veterans of the battles.

## HISTORY OF THE BATTLES AT FSB CORAL AND FSB BALMORAL

Australian, New Zealand and United States forces were involved in a series of actions between May and June 1968 at Fire Support Bases (FSB) Coral and Balmoral some 20 kilometres north of Bien Hoa City. These bases, established across a route used by North Vietnamese forces to attack Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and Bien Hoa, provided defended positions for artillery and mortars which would, in turn, support infantry patrols of the area.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions Royal Australian Regiment (1 and 3RAR), 102 Field Battery Royal Australian Artillery and 161 New Zealand Field Battery, deployed into FSB Coral on 12 May 1968. One and 3RAR began preparing defensive positions, but these were incomplete when a North Vietnamese Regiment attacked the base during the early hours of 13 May. The North

Vietnamese, having penetrated the artillery positions and briefly forcing the defenders to abandon one of their guns, were forced back after heavy fighting.

Coral came under attack for a second time at 2.15 am on 16 May when an estimated three battalions of North Vietnamese infantry assaulted the base which was now defended by armoured personnel carriers of A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment as well as 1RAR's infantry. Fighting lasted several hours before the attackers were forced to withdraw.

Further attacks on Coral followed, on 22 May, and again on 26 and 28 May, but the Base was not seriously threatened again. Having had the opportunity to establish a strong defensive perimeter, the Australians were able to launch their own attacks against the North Vietnamese and did so on 26 May when infantry and tanks destroyed a North Vietnamese bunker system that had been discovered in the vicinity. The Australians continued to launch aggressive patrols from Coral, engaging in combat against North Vietnamese forces and experiencing some fierce actions through until the end of May.

By this time the North Vietnamese had turned their attention to FSB Balmoral, which had been established by 3RAR some 4.5 kilometres north of Coral, on 24-25 May. Tanks from Nui Dat helped Australian infantry defeat a two battalion-strong North Vietnamese attack just hours after their arrival at the base on 25 May. A second attack followed on 28 May, but a combination of infantry, tanks, artillery and mortars repelled the North Vietnamese assault. North Vietnamese activity in the area subsided and operations at Coral and Balmoral were suspended on 6 June 1968.

A total of 26 Australians were killed and 99 were WIA during the fighting at FSB Coral and Balmoral. Estimates suggest that more than 300 North Vietnamese were killed in these actions, but exact figures will never be known.

*The above article was extracted from the AWM's website.*

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

**WALKING GROUP.** Every Tuesday at 8.00 am meeting at the Vietnam War Memorial, Bowral.

**AQUA-VETS.** Aqua aerobics at Annesley Lifestyle Centre, Bowral. Tuesday and Thursday 9.30 a.m. to 10:15 am. Tel: Belinda 0429 149 847 or Laura on 0466 905 935.

**DINNER MEETINGS.** Monthly 1st Wednesday. See Newsletter. Tel: Bob or Noelene Ph 4862 3741 or email [rnbailey@bigpond.com](mailto:rnbailey@bigpond.com) (note the r and the n are separate letters ie not m)

**LADIES 'VIP GOURMET CLUB'.** 3rd Wednesday of the month except January. Details in newsletter. Contact Judi Bofinger Ph 4872 3175 or mobile 0408 101 575.

Ray McCann

Editor/Welfare Advocate

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1 May 2018