

Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association

Website: www.shvva.com

CFN 23847



FEBRUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT BOB BAILEY

On behalf of your Committee, I hope you had an enjoyable and safe Christmas and are looking forward to the New Year with renewed vigour, hope and confidence. Our thoughts go out to those members who are unwell and we pray for their recovery.

I wish to thank the current Committee for the understanding manner in which they have shared my workload since Noelene's diagnosis of mesothelioma in June. Their actions ensured that I was able to support Noelene during her treatment and are a testament to the good will and camaraderie that permeates our Association. Both Noelene and I would also like to acknowledge the support and best wishes that members have expressed during what has been a difficult time for our family.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of my predecessor, Terry Lemcke, and wish him and Jenny all the best in their move to Queensland.

I draw your attention to the AGM notice below and encourage you to attend and consider nominating for a position on the new Committee. Two years ago, our Association suffered a near death experience but we survived despite some scepticism and the departure of key Committee members. Government regulation of incorporated Associations is becoming more onerous and I thank the Secretary and Treasurer for their work in meeting our obligations in this regard. The Committee has delivered a sustained and successful program of social and commemorative activities within a strong communication framework of monthly newsletters. I thank the Committee for this favourable outcome.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

Notice is hereby given that the 2019 Annual General Meeting will be conducted on Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 5:00 pm at Mittagong RSL Club. Please mark your diary and consider attending this important meeting. This year is voting year so please consider nominating for a position on the Committee.

NEXT MONTHLY DINNER MEETING

Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 6:00 pm

Porterhouse Bistro Moss Vale

Please ensure you RSVP to **Phill Moscatt** on 4872 1727 or 0420 864 133 or
29bilmos@gmail.com by 12:00 noon on Monday 3 December 2018.

REPORT ON DECEMBER MONTHLY DINNER

25 members enjoyed the December monthly dinner at the Bowral Bowling Club on 5 December 2019. Our host, Ian Armstrong, kindly provided a special Xmas table setting and our Association provided table wines for the dinner.



AUSTRALIAN VETERANS' COVENANT AND CARD

The Australian Defence Veterans' Covenant was announced by the Government on 27 October last year. The Covenant encourages Australians to recognise and acknowledge the unique nature of military service, and support veterans and their families. The Covenant includes an oath, which the Australian people will be encouraged to take at community commemorative events, such as Remembrance Day. The new Veteran Card and an Australian Veteran Lapel Pin and a Reservist Lapel Pin underpin the Covenant.

The intention of the Covenant is to provide employers, businesses, local communities, and veteran and sporting organisations the opportunity to commit to supporting veterans and their families.

Cards will be issued automatically – first to new DVA clients followed automatically to existing DVA health card holders (Gold or White) and concession card holders (Orange).

The new-look card will be issued automatically over coming months, along with a Veteran Lapel Pin and Oath as part of a phased roll-out.



RAN HELICOPTER FLIGHT VIETNAM (RANHfV)

Previous Newsletters have focused on Army exploits and awards in Vietnam and have tended to overlook RAN and RAAF achievements. This article is intended to redress the situation. For example, did you know that a Royal Australian Navy helicopter unit was integrated into a US Army unit that operated out of Blackhorse, Bearcat and Dong Tan? A member of our Association, David Farthing, commanded that unit in 1969/70 and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross DSC.

The RANHfV flew active service operations with the 135th Assault Helicopter Company of the US Army during the Vietnam War from 22 October 1967 to 8 June 1971. Over this period some 200 men in four consecutive contingents fought against a committed and resourceful foe in a hostile and difficult environment. The unit lost five men KIA, 22 wounded and earned for itself a reputation second to none for consistent gallantry in action.

Forty-six years after it was disbanded, the RANHfV was awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG). The Award's citation reads as follows:

"For acts of extraordinary gallantry in action in South Vietnam from October 1967 to June 1971.

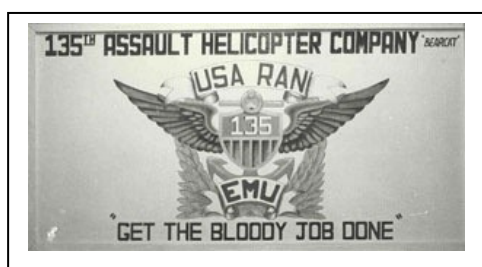
The Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam, as part of the Experimental Military Unit of the United States Army 135th Assault Helicopter Company, exhibited exceptional and extraordinary gallantry whilst engaged in offensive operations continuously throughout its four-year deployment. This exceptional gallantry was enabled by the efforts of the entire Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam.

The Flight was a unique unit and every member, regardless of mustering or category, either performed their duties with demonstrable gallantry or were used in roles for which they were

not trained and still performed bravely. The administrative and maintenance staff were required to assist in the provision of base security in addition to their normal duties and almost all of the support personnel regularly volunteered to act as aircrew employed as door-gunners and Crew Chiefs. This was in addition to the extremely long maintenance hours required to support the tempo of operations conducted by the Flight. Over the course of the operations in Vietnam, the Flight accumulated a formidable record of operational flight hours and citations for individual gallantry. This has set it apart from other operational units.

While exposed to hostile fire and at great personal risk, aircrew flew on average 50 per cent more operational hours per month than other Australian aircrew in comparable roles with other units. Aircrew were constantly engaged by the enemy, faced the danger of booby-trapped landing zones and frequently found themselves fired upon by friendly forces. The personnel who flew with the Flight arguably saw the most intense combat of any Royal Australian Navy personnel in the war. Despite the fact that none of the personnel had previous operational service and none had been under fire, they were courageous in battle, exhibited exceptional and extraordinary gallantry and did so with great skill and heroic dedication in executing a mission far removed from those for which they had been trained. Over the period of the Flight's operations in South Vietnam, five members of the unit died and 22 were wounded in action.

The extraordinary gallantry, dedication to duty and astonishing record of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam conducting tasks far removed from the expectations of Naval service, has forever set it apart from other units. The extraordinary acts of gallantry and heroism consistently displayed by the personnel, combined with their loyal devotion to duty were in keeping with the finest traditions of the Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Defence Force."



REGULAR ACTIVITIES IN 2019

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 Monthly Newsletter for details.

Ray McCann
Editor/Welfare Advocate

1 February 2019