

Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association

Website: www.shvva.com

CFN 23847



APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

ANZAC DAY

Light up the Dawn

You may wish to participate in this community initiative which encourages people to gather in their driveways, on their balconies or in their windows at 6am, holding a candle or light whilst listening to the Dawn Service broadcast by the ABC..

Dawn Service at Mittagong - 5:00am

Please form-up in Church Lane Mittagong at 05:00am, step off at 05:15am. The service commences at 05:30am at the Mittagong War Memorial followed by Gunfire Brekfast.

National Servicemen's Service Sutton Forest 8:00am

This year, as the ranks of the first nasho's thin, our Nasho members are encouraged to support this Service. Attached is an address given by Ray McCann on at their Service last February which was attended by our members. It is a good read.

Vietnam War Memorial and Cherry Tree Walk - 9:00am

Our Sub-Branch will hold a short Commemorative Wreath Laying Service at the Memorial commencing at about 9:15 am. Members, veterans, and family are encouraged to attend. It is timed so that those attending the National Servicemen's service at Sutton Forest will be able to be at our service before going on to the Mittagong Service.

March and Service at Mittagong – 10:30am

As has been the custom, we will march behind our banner at Mittagong Please meet in Albion Street at about 10:15am for a chat. Veterans will step off at 10:35am., to march to the Service, which commences at 10:45am at the Mittagong War Memorial.

ANZAC Lunch – 12noon

After the service, our members, family, and friends are invited to adjourn to the Springs Room at the Mittagong RSL Club. The room has been reserved for our private function. Here we will have a few drinks before lunch which you can order and pay for individually and eaten in the room.

Members will be provided with two drink vouchers each to the value of \$7. If you are a Club member, show your Club Membership Card to gain better value.

Members of Mittagong RSL Sub-Branch may wish to join their lunch, with a partner, at 12:30. This will be held upstairs. Do not forget to get your \$10 ticket from the Club beforehand.

RE ANZAC DAY -MONDAY 24th APRIL – 10:30 GATHERING AT THE MILITARY VEHICLE MUSEUM

We have received this invitation from Vinh Tran. The function will provide a great opportunity for Veterans and families to come together for a less formal commemoration of ANZAC.

“To all Current and Former servicemen and servicewoman, friends, and family we invite you to attend our home base Nui Dat RNR in Bowral for a BBQ and Drinks to commemorate ANZAC Day together.

Event starts at 10:30am
Nui Dat RnR is a relaxed place,
please dress casual and comfortable.
Live Music, Bagpipes, BBQ and Drinks
Kiowa Helicopter Fly Over
Take a ride in one of our vehicles around Bowral
It's all about Fun, Respect and Humanity”



There is no charge but a visit to the donation box is always appreciated.

The Military Vehicle Museum is located at the far end of the carpark behind “The Mill” on the corner of Bong Bong and Bundarbo streets, Bowral - carpark entry from Bundaroo street.

NEXT MONTHLY DINNER MEETING

Wednesday 3rd May

Scottish Arms Hotel

6:00 pm for 6:30 pm

Please RSVP to Ian Humby ianhumby@bigpond.com

or phone 0402 415 056 before Tuesday 3th

NEXT MEN'S LUNCH

Friday 12th May at 12 noon

Please RSVP to Ian Humby ianhumby@bigpond.com

or phone 0402 415 056 before 12 noon Wednesday 11th May

RECENT FUNCTIONS

February saw a Mens' Lunch at the Scottish Arms with six vets enjoying a really good meal and great company. Make it a date for the next one.

In May after a few years absence, we returned to the Moss Vale Services Club for Dinner. The dining room was humming, and the meals provided by the new chef were excellent. Obviously, everyone enjoyed their meals and the great company.



DVA TV - YouTube

DVA has recently launched its DVA-TV, which provides a range of services, including financial assistance, health care, and counselling, as well as support for veteran-specific programs and initiatives. It is worth a look – you may need the information in future.

Here is the website link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/dvatvaus>

VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION AND CERTIFICATE

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will produce a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.

The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War. Please note that only one medallion is available per Vietnam War veteran. While Australia can never repay the debt we owe to the 60,000 who served in Vietnam, this medallion and certificate are a small but meaningful way to honour their service and to recognise the sacrifice of those who never returned home. You can apply for the Vietnam War Commemorative Medallion and Certificate by following prompts on the following link:



[Vietnam War commemorative medallion and certificate | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://www.dva.gov.au/vietnam-war-commemorative-medallion-and-certificate)

BOWRAL VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT

At last, some progress has been made. Last week Ray McCan, Graeme Moffatt and Norm Austin met with Viv May, Wingecarribee Shire Council Administrator. He provided us with sketch plans to construct the retaining wall around the memorial and replant the cherry trees which formed part of the original memorial. The plans will go to Council for approval on Wednesday 19th. Viv gave an undertaking that the work will be finished before August 2023 in time for the 50th Anniversary Commemorations on Vietnam Veterans' Day,

ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

This year is the 20th Anniversary of our Association and the 50th Anniversary of the end of Australia's war in Vietnam and we will make both events memorable.

A Sub-Committee headed by President Graeme Moffatt will organise events.

We have applied for a DVA Saluting their service grant to provide a marquee, chairs, sound system and portaloos. Rooms have been booked for a Luncheon at the Mittagong RSL Club.

Our service will be held on Sunday 20th August which will allow time for those attending the National Service in Canberra on 18th August.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A good rollup saw approximately half our members on 9th March

At the request of Vice President Graeme Moffatt, we maintained one minutes silence to acknowledge Phill Moscott and Noelene Bailey.

Secretary/Treasurer, Norm Austin reported that we are in a very sound financial position with membership holding steady at 42.

The matters raised at the meeting are covered elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The outcome of elections was:

2023/24

OFFICE BEARERS

President	Graeme Moffatt
Vice President	Ian Humby
Secretary	Norm Austin
Treasurer	Norm Austin

COMMITTEE

Bob Bailey
Jeff Forbes
John McDonnell
John Stead
Allan Swift

APPOINTMENTS

Public Officer	Norm Austin
Auditor	Ross Cowley
Welfare Support	Ray McCann David Babbage

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

COFFEE CLUB. Every Thursday at 10:00 in the Café at Mittagong RSL Club – **except on the last Thursday of the month** where it is at the Vets' Shed in the Military Vehicle compound.

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

Norm Austin

Secretary/Treasurer –

Ph 0427 854 141

shvvppa@gamil.com

NATIONAL SERVICEMEN'S DAY ADDRESS - 11 FEB 2023

Nasho President Mr Robert Brown, Council General Manager Ms Lisa Miscamble, veterans, invited guests, ladies, and gentlemen.

Today, we honour the memory of the 212 National Servicemen who died on active service. We remember the 1300 who were wounded, especially those who still suffer today. We remember those who have since died from war-related causes.

We acknowledge the service of the 287,000 young men conscripted in the two separate National Service schemes between 1951 and 1972. These men answered the call. They bolstered Australia's defence capability in time of need and thus reinforced Australia's national identity and resilience.

Australia has a long tradition of using a volunteer Forces for overseas' war service. A completely separate volunteer force – the Australian Imperial Force - was raised last century for each of the two World Wars.

During World War 1, the casualty rate was so high that the Government was forced to call two separate referenda for conscription. Both were defeated.

From 1911 to 1960, the various compulsory military training schemes had popular support but forces so trained could only be used for home defence. The definition of 'home defence' was broadened during WW II to include the South West Pacific Area. This led to Militia forces being used in Papua and New Guinea.

National Service in the 1950's was a compulsory scheme. 227,000 18-year-olds were called up for six months' full time training followed by 5 years in the reserve forces.

Historically, the Australian Military Forces could not be sent overseas to fight. A radical departure took place in 1964 when Prime Minister Menzies introduced legislation which, for the first time, obliged conscripts and regulars to serve overseas.

The legislation was introduced with some secrecy and haste the day before the announcement was made to commit the first infantry battalion to serve in Vietnam.

I joined the Army in 1964 in order to escape my first job as a shire council cadet engineer. I don't recall anyone in the Army Recruiting office alerting me to the small print in the Attestation Form.

National Service from 1965 to 1972 was a selective scheme based on a birthday ballot of 20-year olds. 64,000 were called up for 2 years' full-time service - 18,000 went to Vietnam.

This resulted in some 45, 000 conscripts, whose lives were upended, never getting to serve in Vietnam even if they had volunteered. They became collateral damage of a system that denied them repatriation benefits. This situation led to the formation of the National Servicemen's Association as an entity separate to the Vietnam Veterans Association.

It needs to be recognised that military service is inherently dangerous even in peacetime. Witness 26 Army engineers killed in a grenade accident at Kapooka in 1945, 82 sailors killed in a sea collision off Jervis Bay in 1964, 18 special forces soldiers killed in a Blackhawk crash near Townsville in 1996.

But the biggest killer is suicide with 1600 certified deaths during the period 1997 to 2020 in younger veterans, that is those with post-1985 service.

My personal experience of National Service in the 1960's was firstly as an instructor at the School of Military Engineering; then as a troop commander in Vietnam; next as the adjutant of a large CMF depot in Victoria; and, finally, with 21 Construction Squadron at Puckapunyal.

So I served with many Nashos from the second-scheme. In my experience, they accepted their lot with good grace and were excellent and loyal soldiers. Many were keen to go to Borneo, Malaya and Vietnam and more volunteered than were needed. Conscripts with professional or trade backgrounds

brought expertise and skills not readily available in regular military service.

As a junior officer, I served with many National Service officers. They had survived a tough and often brutal training regime at the Officer Cadet Training Unit Scheyville. Wastage rates during training were 50%. Many served with distinction in Vietnam as platoon commanders and some went on to achieve high office in their civilian careers including a governor-general, politicians, bishops, businessmen.

By 1972, the writing was on the wall for National Service. The Australian Labour Party under Gough Whitlam came to power in December 1972 and, as they say in the classics, the rest is history.

National Servicemen's Day is recognised officially as 14th February, the date on which the last National Servicemen completed his service obligation. It's also Valentine's Day – so a warning to all veterans.....don't forget the flowers.

The world is becoming a more dangerous place as evidenced by events in Eastern Europe and the South China Sea. Now is the time for all Australians to step-off on the same foot and march to the beat of a single drum. Expect that the Nation will be asked to make some sacrifices. How will your 20-year old son or daughter react if they get an official letter telling them to report to Victoria Barracks in Paddington and not to bring any personal items, just a change of clothes?

It happened to these men here today. It can happen again. It's already happening in Europe in countries like France, Sweden and Lithuania.

This year marks 25 years of service for the Southern Highland Nashos but age is taking its toll on a proud organisation. The oldest members have just hit 90 and membership is fast declining. Like many ex-Service Organisations, our local Nasho Sub Branch faces an existential crisis and must now contemplate closing down in the not-so-distant future. Many of today's younger veterans tend to remain near their point of discharge from service - so a pool of younger veterans does not exist in the Southern Highlands.

Who will organise future commemoration services and who look out for the few frail aged veterans left holding the torch? Who will carry on the traditions and ethos of pride in country and service to Nation?

The National Servicemen's Association has a good record in welfare, representation, education and commemoration activities. This says a lot about the character and culture of the organisation and reveals the positive impact conscription has had on the lives and feelings of those drafted for service.

I congratulate the Association on its achievements. I commend its members for continuing to preserve time-honoured traditions. Those who were killed in action or have died since would surely be proud.

Today, we recognise and value the contribution of all National Servicemen. We remember those who served and altered the course of their lives for us. We particularly honour and commemorate those who fought and died in the service of our Nation. Their duty is done. May they rest in peace.

Ray McCann

Bowral

11 February 2023

