

Southern Highlands Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association

Website: www.shvva.com CFN 23847

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

DINNER MEETING

Wednesday 1st February 2023

MOSS VALE HOTEL 6 for 6:30

Please RSVP to Ian Humby

ianhumby@bigpond.com by 12:00 noon on Monday 30th January

MENS LUNCH

Scottish Arms Hotel, East Bowral

Friday 17th February – 12 noon.

Please RSVP to Ian Humby ianhumby@bigpond.com

or phone 0402 415 056 before 12 noon on Wednesday 15th February

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

Thursday 9th March 2023

Notice is hereby given that the 2019 Annual General Meeting at 5:00 pm at Mittagong RSL Club, in the Springs Room. Please note that this is a week later than previously advised.

The AGM will be followed by Dinner in the Springs Room.

This year there will be considerable change of the composition and roles of the Committee. Please mark your diary and consider nominating for a position on the Committee. More details to come.

CHRISTMAS DINNER MEETING

Twenty revellers attended the dinner at the Highlands Hotel. As usual we were very well received with dining table and the room decked out for the occasion. Everyone enjoyed their meals and the festive sprit was evident by the cheerful conversations.

The proprietors have been very welcoming and have gone to a lot of trouble when we visit. Consequently, we presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Bret and Maz Tonkinson who were quite thrilled to receive it. Bret's dad served in Vietnam in the Ordnance Corps with 1 Field Squadron and 2nd Composite Ordnance Depot in 1966.



CHRISTMAS GATHERING

On 19th December members attended the Gathering at the Military Vehicle Museum. Vin had acquired a Christmas present for the Museum in the form of the body of an Iroquois helicopter HU1 which really adds to the collection. Coming from CareFlight it is easily accessible and was a great attraction for the young and us old kids. The Museum proposes to deck it out in "Vietnam" camouflage colours.



camaraderie generated by getting together.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thanks to those members who have renewed for 2003. . However, for the few who have not, please fill out your form and return it as soon as possible.

MENS LUNCH

These happy Vets really enjoyed their meal at the Scottish Arms last December. Make it a date for the next one?



OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of our Association and the 50th Anniversary of the end of the war in South Vietnam. Plans are underway to make Veterans' Day special, including a sit down luncheon at the Mittagong RSL Club. More about this as plans are finalised.

This extract from the Highland News tells the story of our genesis.

"On Tuesday 15th July 2003 the inaugural meeting was held for the Southern Highlands Branch of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia (New South Wales Branch).

The following office bearers were elected: President - David Babbage; Vide President - Tony Mitchell; Secretary - Norm Austin, and Treasurer - Mat Holz together with a supporting committee of six.

David Babbage reflected the feeling of the meeting when he said, "With this level of support the new Branch would be able to provide local assistance to Southern Highland Veterans, their partners and their children." He particularly acknowledged the support now provided to Vets by their partners and said he was very pleased that a good number attended the meeting. He said he knew that there were many veterans in the area, and he hoped that the Branch would be able to provide support and assistance to them - whether or not they become members.

Mission achieved!

Over the past 20 years the Association has been very successful. The initial activities were mainly social but during the early years half a dozen members completed DVA's Pension Officers' Training. Through this process many of the members received upgraded pensions. We also participated in many DVA courses aimed at both couples and veterans and most members gained both insight and benefits from these. On the one hand the

ladies were able to better understand the behaviour of their veteran partners as did the veterans theirs.



Dave Babbage, Norm Austin, Phill Moscatt and Ric McCarthy in 2004

The first resolution of the Association was to hold annual commemorative services at the Bowral Vietnam War Memorial. We also resolved to support the Trust and ensure that the Memorial was satisfactorily maintained. As reported below this has been a long and at times difficult task.

BOWRAL VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL

Following the Trust relinquishing control of the Memorial, responsibility devolved to Wingecarribee Council.

Since then, Phill Moscatt and the Committee have been relentless in pursuit of Council staff to ensure that: the lawns were mowed; damaged and dead cherry trees were replaced; the flagpole was repositioned; the garden in the pergola was tidied up; and fought unsuccessfully to have trees overshadowing the cherry trees trimmed.

In 2021 Phill and Ray McCann, on behalf of the Committee, undertook a project to obtain DVA funds to “futureproof” the Memorial, which includes the Cherry Tree Walk and the area surrounding the monuments.

Early last year we had Council apply for a DVA grant funds with the aim was to have work completed by August 2023 in time for Anniversary celebrations.

DVA granted \$62 thousand last year, but Council was slow to act. Lately Ray McCann has been working tirelessly with Council officers and the achievements set out in the following report are due to his continued efforts. Unfortunately repair of the granite has been deferred to Stage 2.

Ray’s Progress Report is attached.

Norm Austin
Newsletter Editor

BOWRAL VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT -

On 8 February 2022, Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) submitted a bid for \$132,995 to DVA under the *Saluting Their Service Major Grants Program* for the purpose of undertaking restoration works on the Bowral Vietnam War Memorial. The bid was prepared jointly by our Association and WSC.

The use of the term 'restoration' in this context means to 'slow down any rate of decay and address the causes of deterioration and not to 'restore for 'appearance's' sake. So you need to be aware that the memorial won't look much different when the work is finished because most of that work will be in the ground and you may wonder where the money went. But, despite the above issues, the memorial will look better and that is important to us because we want the focus to remain firmly on honouring our war dead whose names are lovingly inscribed on the granite monoliths.

Additionally, the memorial will be easier to maintain and formal Council arrangements will be in place to safeguard its future after we are gone. Other stakeholders will have different agendas and we must accept that reality: we are just one of a number of stakeholders, some more important than others.

At Council Executive direction, WSC staff are preparing design documentation based on a changed scope of works that balances the competing interests outlined above. The original and revised scope of works are listed below.

Council has gone to considerable lengths to argue our case and I have been assured that work will be finished in time for our local commemoration service to be held on Sunday 20 August 2023 at 11:00 am.

DVA is planning a National Commemoration Service in Canberra on Friday 18th August 2023. You will have the opportunity to attend that service but I am sure your Committee would also like you to attend our local service. Now we have some confidence that the project will be ready in time for the 50th Anniversary, and not deferred to later years as some other stakeholders have suggested, your Committee can now get on the job with planning our local service.

Original Scope of Works	Council Approved Scope of Works
Remove all soft landscaping except grass mound	Replant the living wreath and new cherry trees according to the original design
Remove and replace inner and outer perimeter margins and replace with more prominent and robust margins	Repairs to the existing perimeter margins, including making the inner and outer margins align horizontally
Raise the rear arc of the outer perimeter through integration into a 450 mm retaining wall to protect against flooding	Include a raised "garden bed edge" on the lower side towards the creek. Height to be confirmed during final design
Install hard pavement within the inner and outer perimeters	There will be no hard paving in the wreath ring
Prepare Conservation Management Plan	Prepare Conservation Management Plan
Repair or replace cracked granite panels	Deferred to a possible Stage 2 project