
NSW REPORT TO NATIONAL COUNCIL OCTOBER 2016

Well the 50th Anniversary of Long Tan has come and gone and in general all sub branches in NSW commemorated the day with the due solemnity that was due the day.

This leaves the Vietnam conflict with two more dates to commemorate, these being of course Coral Balmoral and the end of hostilities. (with all due respect to the ADF Members who fought in the Tet Offensive and Bin Bah)

This leaves me with some trepidation as to the amount of actual support we will gain from the general public given that Coral Balmoral is going to have to “compete” (although that is definitely the wrong word) with the 100th Anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in the World War 1.

There has been little happening at a state government level affecting Vietnam veterans in NSW in the last two months.

The exception to this of course has been the amount of official ceremonies that happen during the July to September period.

The major one for us here at State is the Sydney Vietnam Veteran Day ceremony at the Martin Place Cenotaph.

This ceremony was the largest I have ever attended and without a doubt the best. All thanks have to go to our events coordinator Carol Ward for an amazing performance above and beyond the call of duty. Well done Carol three cheers.

As well as this ceremony I also attended the Victory in the Pacific ceremony at Cabramatta Park. This again was an excellent ceremony and from a personal point of view one which should be well supported as this date has great significance for Australia. This date should rank in significance with Remembrance Day in November.

I will not bother filling this report with the day to day issues that I have been working with in the last couple of months.

In the case of the ESO Round Table complaints have been made by the DC Jennifer Collins and non-involvement of the ESO's that act like chooks that are waiting for the farmer to throw a few pellets their way. Unfortunately, I must agree with her! The round table was designed for us ESO to take problems to her to be sorted not for her to advise us what she and the DVA were up to.

But instead we all sit there with her feeding us with what the DVA is doing. As Jennifer said it would be easier and cheaper for her to just send us an email once a month.

To enable this we will be sending out an email to all Sub Branches prior to each ESO Round table for you to reply with so that your thoughts and wishes along with problems may be taken to the deputy commissioner.

STATE ADVOCATE'S SEPTEMBER REPORT

I have recently attended, and completed, three sessions under the Advocacy Training and Development Program, they include;

Recognition of Prior Learning assessment as a Compensation Advocate level 2.

Training and assessment as an ATDP Mentor.

Training and assessment as an ATDP Assessor.

On 12/13 September I will undergo Recognition of Prior Learning assessment as a Welfare Advocate level 2.

Once these programs receive official endorsement from the Federal Department of Education through the contracted Registered Training Organisation the Recognition of Prior Learning assessment process and general training can commence, hopefully this will be before the end of 2016 but almost certainly will gear up in 2017.

At a later stage Recognition of Prior Learning assessment of Advocates level 3 & 4 will be commenced.

At the same time, it is my understanding that initial training under the ATDP will commence for new advocates.

There is a volume of information available on the DVA web site www.dva.gov.au go to Consultation and Grants, then Advocacy Training for the latest updates on this program.

Applications for some courses are now being accepted and further information is available on the ATDP web site www.atdp.org.au

I can address any specific questions that come to mind conditional on that information be related to unfinished plans by the program administration.

Ken Foster

Ken Foster OAM JP

VVAA NSW Advocate

September 2016

**STATE EVENT CO-ORDINATOR'S
SEPTEMBER REPORT**

Our event at the Sydney Cenotaph went off extremely well for the 50th Anniversary. Normie Rowe attended and sang a song "What have you done for Australia", it was very moving and enjoyed by all who attended. He was accompanied by The Australian Army Band who really enjoyed the experience.

In attendance was the Governor and Mrs Hurley, Professor Dame Marie Bashir; Premier Mike Baird; Senator Arthur Sinodinos representing the Australian Government; Senator Sam Dastyari representing the Federal Leader of the Opposition; Minister for Veterans Affairs David Elliott; Ms Jennifer Collins Deputy Commissioner NSW; Ms Katrina Harry Veterans Review Board; representatives of the forces and associations and the RSM Ceremonial.

The former Governor gave the Address of the Day, which I believe was the same one given at St Marys. Dinah Lee and Andy & Pam's grand-daughter Nichola Griffin read a couple of poems.

A young Vietnamese man named Vinh Tran turned up. His father and relatives fought in the Vietnam War and he had his historic jeep from Vietnam with him with the number plate "NUIDAT" and wanted to pay respects and heal the Veterans hearts. With the RSM's approval drove his jeep up next to the band.

6 Avn Regt assisted us again this year and I believe they have advised RSM Ceremonial of their willingness to continue doing so.

Many veterans commented that it was so good to have chairs and marquees for them as well as the official guests so I am hopeful that we might be able to continue getting a grant to help pay for these.

A lot of veterans, military and guests said they thought it was the best service they have attended to date which was very pleasing on such a significant occasion.

Carol Ward CSM
Event Coordinator

**ST MARYS OUTPOST
SEPTEMBER REPORT**

As we all know Vietnam Veterans Day 2016 has come, and gone; notwithstanding it's still fitting for me to highlight what happened, before it becomes just a memory.

Thanks to the efforts of Tony Fryer, the vision of a Huey flyover or an actual landing in the RSL Car park, turned from a vision into a reality. The emotional effect on the veterans was very obvious and it is still being talked about.

All in all, the Veterans Day Service was a huge success, everybody involved pulled their weight and were a credit to our organisation.

We were very fortunate that The Honourable, Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO was able to accept an invitation to be our guest speaker, she appeared very comfortable mixing with the members.

St Marys Outpost members and their partners supported the Naval Association Dinner at Rooty Hill RSL , attended the Premiers' Vietnam Veterans function at Government House and Joined the Springwood Veterans Day March.

St Marys Outpost was recently visited by Ms Donna Carpenter, Senior Case co-ordinator and 2 assistants from the DVA, their purpose was to explain the DVA claims process and priorities, with a view to expediting all claims and offering guidance to assist both the veterans and advocates.

Tony Mullavey
President

MACARTHUR SEPTEMBER REPORT

- Our current financial Membership as of August, 2016 is (157) we have some who have not renewed and some who still visit but have not become financial for whatever reason but we continue to assist them and their families.
 - Sadly we have lost two members since the July meeting they being:
 - Douglas Neil Robertson (Navy)
 - David Compton (Army)
- Vietnam Veterans' Day Macarthur was again held in Mawson Park Campbelltown on Thursday the 18th August. This year being the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan it was acknowledged by the placement of 18 white crosses bearing the names of the 18 Diggers who were killed in the battle and each name was read out and remembered, alongside each cross was an Australian National Flag flying proudly respecting the sacrifice they made to their country. There were some 250 in attendance with 14 local schools being represented, there was a large group from the local Vietnamese community wearing their traditional dress and paying their respect. All levels of government were in attendance being the members themselves paying their respects. At the start of the service a large contingent of Veterans marched on parade and they made very big impression to the crowd displaying their drill skills were still there. There were some 60 wreaths laid the catafalque party were members of School of Military Engineering from Holsworthy Barracks flag party were members of VVAA Macarthur and the band was the Ingleburn RSL/ Campbelltown community pipes and drum band. the bugler was from the Royal Australian Navy Band Sydney, prayers were delivered by the Reverend Nigel Webb from the Denham Court Anglican Church. On completion of the service all attended the Campbelltown RSL for light refreshments.
- Our monthly BBQ's still prove to be a great social gathering where Veterans and their families come together have a meal and catch up. Since changing our meetings to bi-monthly and changing the meeting venue to Dredge cottage prior the monthly BBQ we have a captured audience and our members are much more informed on what is happening in the Sub Branch and the feedback is very positive.
- Since seeking some sponsorship for our Sub Branch I can announce that we now have 5 sponsors, this assist us in the ongoing costs, it has been slow but patience is a virtue they say. I thank all those involved in particular Alan Gale Sub Branch management committee member for his persistence and patience.
- We currently have members away enjoying holidays, overseas interstate, and around the state all reporting in by way of social media, Technology it's a great way to keep in touch especially to keep up with the welfare needs of our members and their families.
- The year is moving fast it will soon be Christmas and 2017 is approaching the TIP welfare and Pensions system is now gone and we have to embrace the ATDP system. "Advocacy Training and Development Program"
- This will impact on our current members who are doing welfare and pensions. We need to be aware of the changes to the requirements of the new ATDP specially the following,
 - Proposed roll out strategy throughout Australia
 - Mentoring
 - Assessment
 - Course cancellation policy
 - Likely cessation of current TIP courses
 - Training of new Advocates/ Claim advisors in NSW and other States now that no more level 1 TIP courses are being offered.
 - Impact of new ATDP on going professional development of current Advocates / claim advisors, previously many would attend TIP level 1,2 and 3 courses as refreshers.

These are just some of what needs to be addressed by not just VVAA but all ESO's.

Just a thought of mine and others.

Recently I attended a school reunion in Ayr North Queensland, at the reunion one of the girls I attended school with Husband came over to me and my wife Pauline, his name Stanley Hodder service number 1200509 he served in Vietnam 6 RAR 12 Platoon Battle of Long Tan, Pauline lost three cousins in Vietnam one being Private Paul Large service number 2781704, 12 Platoon 6 RAR KIA in the last couple minutes of the battle of Long Tan.

Stan as he known as, spoke to us about Paul who had only been in Vietnam 72 days prior his death at the battle of Long Tan, Stan and Paul had in the short time formed a close friendship, Paul was shot in the head and died instantly Stan said he can still see Paul as if it was yesterday.

It was an emotional time to talk to someone who was not only present when Paul was killed but also in the short time had become very good friends was to say the least an exceptional experience, Both Pauline and Stan were in tears, Stan said there isn't a day that goes by that he doesn't think of Paul in some way and each year on the 18th August it's the hardest day of the year for him.

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WAGGA WAGGA SEPTEMBER REPORT

Well welcome to all our members the month has come very quickly. It was a very busy time for a couple of our members, plus we had quite a few visitors for the month.

John Salter put in a big effort to bring us up 2 loads of wood from Tumbarumba, thank you very much John very much appreciated.

The VV Day went off well, Keith our President did a great job, as he was short on with helpers. Big busy days for Keith, to clean up all the shed and toilets and a lot of other yard jobs.

Mal & Jan arrived and Jan got busy doing jobs setting up the things for afternoon tea. Well done to Jan for all her work and for the other ladies for their help also.

We also had great help from Reg Herbert he brought us a load of wood and helped us with the hot water for afternoon. Tea Reg is a good bloke, I have known him over the last, 53 years, in that time I have shore sheep for Reg.

When we started getting rid of Blackberries 10 years ago. The main blokes for this job was Brent Hamstead and Bill Parker, Brent bought up a four 4-wheel motor bike, Bill bought up his ute and a large tank on its back with a water pump. We got it all done at Murraguldrrie in 2 years, which it made it all available to be done with a hand spray after that. All the large amount of water that we used was got from Regs place, as we didn't have any water at Murraguldrrie at the early times as we didn't have any tanks at that stage.

After we got all the big Blackberries done with the big sprays, we did the rest with hand sprays until the fires went through, the big trees got too dangerous to walk under or camp under or to spray under to which we lost most of the best camping sites with the English types trees in the sites, near the creek where it would have been a great place to camp.

Well a lot of our members are still out doing trips, up north, down south, and overseas hope you all have had great times. We also have had four of our members up at the Roper Bar having great time with the fishing.

Gordon Irvin for on behalf of Committee Southwest NSW and Wagga.

BATHURST SEPTEMBER REPORT

Well Vietnam Veterans Day has come and gone. This year, being the 50th anniversary, saw a larger than usual crowd of spectators and guests. Our guest speakers were the Hon Paul Toole MP, State member for Calare, and the Hon Andrew Gee Mp, Federal member for Calare, and Angus Fittler from Oberon High School.

After the Ceremony Paul Toole opened the new canteen and the Rev Howard Knowles, blessed the building, that we got a Government grant for.

The new canteen has been completed just in time for the Bathurst 1,000 race weekend.

We are hoping to recuperate some of our hard earned funds, with a successful week of hard work by our volunteer workers.

Tony Walker.
Secretary/Treasurer.
B & D V V A Inc