



Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Far North Coast (NSW) Sub-Branch Inc.

Affiliated with the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia NSW Branch Inc.

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13 August 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans' Day Lismore Saturday 18th August 2018

The Far North Coast Vietnam Veterans will be observing Vietnam Veterans Day on Saturday 18th August 2018.

Arrangements for Saturday 18th August are;

- **March.** The Vietnam Veterans' Day march will form up at the Old Lismore Post Office Corner Molesworth and Magellan Streets at 4.50 p.m. **The march will commence at 5.00 p.m. sharp** the march will be led by the Lismore Pipe band and will proceed along Molesworth Street and will right wheel into Memorial park adjacent to the Far North Coast Vietnam memorial.
- **Memorial Service.** The Wreath Laying memorial Service follows the march at approximately 5.05 p.m. at the memorial. Programs will be distributed to all attending so that they can participate in the Service, which is multi-denominational.
- **Vietnam Veterans' Day Dinner.** 6.30pm for 7pm The Vietnam Veterans' Day Dinner will be held in the **Main Dining Room Lismore and District Workers Club Keen Street.**

Mr Sheldon Maher OAM, President of the Far North Coast Sub-Branch, Vietnam Veterans Association said today the local Vietnam Veterans Day committee urges all Vietnam Veterans, their families and citizens to attend the functions. Dinner bookings can be made by phoning Sheldon Maher 6624 4486 or Murray Cooper 6624 4750.

Vietnam Veterans' Day is commemorated in Lismore on the nearest Saturday to the 18th August each year, it is an opportunity to honour those Australians who served during the Vietnam War and remember those who did not come home. Many events are being held around Australia to commemorate National Vietnam Veterans' Day.

The Vietnam War represents one of the longest operational commitment of Australian forces. Between mid-1962 and 1975, when the last Australian troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam (defence attaches and an embassy guard), about 60,200 Australian servicemen and women had taken part in the war directly or in logistic support roles. 520 Australian service personnel, who includes 210 National Servicemen (along with seven civilians) died in the war. Over 3,000 others were evacuated with wounds, injuries or illnesses.

A large number have died since from war-related injuries or illnesses, the physical and emotional strain of war service having proved, for some, too much. Many others still bear the physical and mental scars of the war.

2018 marks 50 years since the Battles of Coral and Balmoral – This is the time to pay homage to those who fought and died in this crucial battle. The battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral (May 1968) stand in the annals of Australian military history as the longest and deadliest battle for Australians since the Second World War and in the Vietnam War. Fought during the pivotal year of 1968 following the Tet Offensive, this month-long engagement would be the crucible of combat for the recently arrived Centurion tanks of the Armoured Corps and a true test of the mettle of the infantrymen of 1 RAR and 3 RAR.

Our official Guest at the Memorial Service and Dinner Andy Forsdike, Vice President NSW Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia. He will be joined on the day with several local Far North Coast Vietnam Veterans who were a part of this critical battle which went on for over 30 days. For details go to <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/Coral-Balmoral>

Mr Maher said he is concerned that many over 70 years of age war veterans are missing out on DVA Gold Card. About 12,000 of Vietnam Veterans have never accessed DVA often due to the way they were treated by the public, Government and RSL on their return from Vietnam. Many Vietnam and other Returned from Active Service Veterans who are over 70 years of age are not aware to their entitlement to a DVA Gold Card, which is not means or assets tested. This Gold card provides medical treatment for all medical conditions free of fee.

He suggests that all that have rendered qualifying service and do not have a Gold Card contact your pension officer or DVA without delay, you may need to complete the DVA form Number D3057 “Application for a Gold Card for Veterans of Australia’s Defence Force. Those who are under 70 years of age and who are not in receipt of any DVA payments should complete a DVA form Number D0506 “Claim to Determine Qualifying Service by Current or ex-Member of the ADF. This is partially important for those who have recently returned from overseas service.

The Lismore office of the Department of Veterans Affairs can assist with these enquires they can be contacted on 02 6625 8300. Suite 8 on Level 1 of Conway Court, 17 Conway Street Lismore. Adjacent to the Australian Hearing Service – take the lift to the top floor.

If you should require any further information on this media release please telephone Sheldon Maher on 6624 4486, 0408 666266. The media is requested to attend the March and service on Saturday 18th August at 4.50pm

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) and Veterans Line can be reached 24 hours a day across Australia for crisis support and free and confidential counselling. Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 8 8241 4546) There is a local Lismore office of the VVCS in Molesworth Street Lismore and can be contacted on 02 6622 4481.