

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

25 August 2023

REMINDER!

SUB-BRANCH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (OGM) 29 August 2023

Dear members,

A reminder that the next Sub-Branch OGM will be held at 1400 hours on Tuesday 29 AUGUST 2023 in the RSL Sub-Branch office in Holder.

Light refreshments will be provided following the OGM.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Kind regards,

Greg

Greg Kennett
Secretary
RSL Woden Valley Sub-Branch



FUNERAL SERVICE FOR LTCOL HARRY SMITH SG MC

Time: 1300 (1pm)

Day/Date: Wednesday 30 Aug 23

Location: Gregson & Weight Funerals, [\(07\) 5443 9953](tel:0754439953),
159 Wises Road, Buderim

Dress: Coat, tie, medals

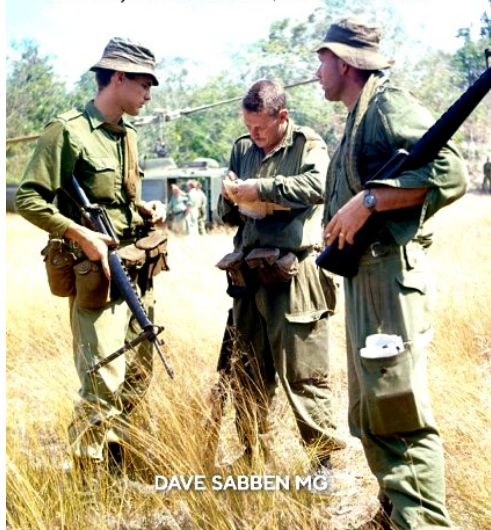
Online Streaming & Condolences at:

[LTCOL Harry Smith SG MC \(Retd\) \(gregsonweight.com.au\)](http://LTCOL Harry Smith SG MC (Retd) (gregsonweight.com.au))

- Live Stream: click the Live Stream button (not available until 30 Aug)
- Condolence Messages: click on the Condolences Button – this link is open and can be used now.

MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

An Infantry Platoon in Viet Nam, June 1966 – June 1967



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phone or email contact details will be required.

Books are
available for
collection in
the RSL Woden
Valley Sub-
Branch office
27 Mulley St.
HOLDER
Price \$82.00

REMINDER !

Information Seminar on Wednesday 30 August

Right Sizing with Care and Decluttering:

The second information session will be conducted by Melissa Fressier. This session will be held between 10.00am and 12.00pm in Room 36 on the top floor (near the lift) of Grant Cameron on Wednesday, 30th August Many of our members, as they get older find that they no longer require many of the things that have been collected or purchased over the years. Also, people may need to reduce the size of the accommodation that they have. Some of our members have taken steps to declutter or find smaller and more practical accommodation to better suit their altered lifestyle. A talk will be presented allowing time for a question and answer session.

Each of the sessions will provide coffee and tea as well as a light lunch. The sessions perform two functions – inform people on practical solutions to issues as well as get people out to socialise and meet others.

There is no charge for each session, but we would welcome a donation towards the cost.

If you would like to attend one or both these sessions please contact the Sub-Branch **6285 1931**.

Room 36 can comfortably hold 25 people.

Peter Sutton

Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch - Welfare

On Wednesday 23 August, an information seminar was held which was presented by Mr Joe Symons of the Deafness Resource Centre.





THE HON ANTHONY ALBANESE MP
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
and

THE HON MATT KEOGH MP
MINISTER FOR VETERANS' AFFAIRS
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE PERSONNEL
JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

18 August 2023

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Today our nation will pause to mark Vietnam Veterans' Day, the key commemoration in this 50th anniversary year of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Thousands of Australians will gather at the Vietnam Forces Memorial in Canberra, and across the country, to honour the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans.

On 18 August 1966, Australians and New Zealanders were outnumbered 10 to one in the battle of Long Tan.

It was the single greatest loss of life Australia suffered during the Vietnam War - 18 Australians were killed and 24 were wounded.

In the years that followed, Vietnam veterans gathered to commemorate those lost at Long Tan.

Now we gather on 18 August each year to mark Vietnam Veterans' Day, paying tribute to all those who served in Australia's longest conflict of the 20th century.

60,000 Australian personnel served in Vietnam over more than a decade, which sadly resulted in 523 lives lost, and some 3,000 wounded. For their service, and the sacrifices of their families, we say thank you.

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese MP:

"This year, as we mark the 50th anniversary since the role of Australian troops in the hostilities in Vietnam came to a close, we acknowledge the service and sacrifice made by our veterans.

"Their experiences during and after the war are a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who have served our country and the debt of gratitude we owe each and every one of our veterans.

"Many of our troops returned to face new battles at home and not every one of those battles was won – it is important as Australians we know the stories of service in Vietnam and what our veterans faced when returned home.

"We honour you, we thank you and we are so sorry it took us so long as a nation to do so."

Quotes attributed to Minister for Veterans Affairs and Defence Personnel Matt Keogh MP:

"When we speak of the Anzac spirit, we speak of having your mates backs, no matter how dire the circumstances.

"But when our veterans returned home from Vietnam many felt unsupported, unrecognised.

"In marking 50 years since the end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam, we honour and thank all those who served, and the sacrifices of their families.

"You have made your nation proud."

Media note:

For veterans and families this day may be an emotional time and lead to feelings of distress. You are encouraged to include the contact information for Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling in your stories. Open Arms is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 or visit [OpenArms.gov.au](https://www.openarms.gov.au).

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary the Department of Veterans' Affairs has produced a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration, available to every Vietnam veteran, and the families of Vietnam veterans who have passed away.

For more information about the 50th anniversary or to apply for a commemorative medallion, visit the Department of Veterans' Affairs website:

[National Commemorative Service | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](https://www.dva.gov.au/national-commemorative-service)



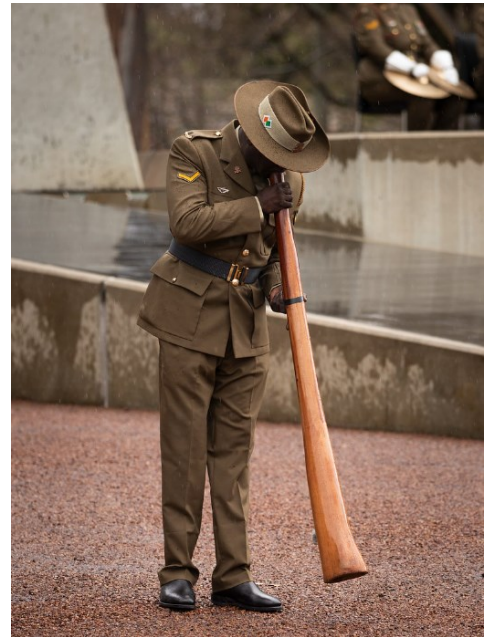
Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs

From DVA facebook page on Friday 18 August 2023:

Earlier today, a commemorative service was held for Vietnam Veterans' Day.

We have a range of images from the event here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/193383604@N07/sets/72177720310555310/>



Statement from the Department of Veterans' Affairs - Veterans' MATES program



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Veterans' MATES program has been operating for more than 18 years to provide a valuable proactive service addressing 'real life' health care problems in the veteran community. Specifically, the program seeks to positively change veteran medicine usage, and increase the uptake of complementary DVA funded health services, all to support veteran wellbeing and a reduction in adverse medicine events.

The University of South Australia is contracted by DVA to deliver the Veterans' MATES program on DVA's behalf.

The program takes an evidence based, targeted approach, using a team of clinical experts to develop current health and medicine information, using secure and private billing data to identify members of the veteran community who would benefit from receiving this information.

Identified data is only used to determine veterans who are at risk of medicine related problems, writing to the veteran and their doctor to bring them together to have a positive conversation that is tailored to the veteran's specific health care needs. All other data used in the program is de-identified.

DVA takes privacy very seriously, and we would like to assure veterans and families that DVA and the University of South Australia have strict policies in place to ensure the appropriate protection of personal information, and that ethics approval remains in place, guiding the delivery of the program.

Since the program's inception, the Veterans' MATES program has reached more than 300,000 veterans. Each year approximately 77,000 veterans receive health educational material from Veterans' MATES, specific to their health care needs. Veterans report they find the information useful, and that it empowers them to take an active role in their own health. This targeted and timely information and support for veterans, and their healthcare teams, has achieved many positive health outcomes across a range of health issues affecting the veteran community. Evidence shows that adverse medicine events have been reduced and that veteran access to suitable health services has increased.

We would like to reassure veterans and families that there has not been a breach of their data, and there is no systemic data security issue. The recent determination by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) relates to an individual case in 2017 whereby the individual opted out of participation in the program and DVA did not fully implement this request. DVA has unequivocally apologised for this.

Veterans have always had the ability to opt out of the program, however DVA has taken steps to more prominently communicate this, so veterans can make an informed decision about their participation.

The OAIC determination has highlighted that DVA's notices to veterans could include more information about how their billing information would be used for the purpose of the MATES program. More information about privacy, and the ability of veterans to opt-out of the MATES program has been added to DVA's website and MATES program materials.

The Secretary has requested a review of the MATES program to ensure that all requests to opt out of the program have been actioned appropriately, and to provide further assurance of compliance with the opt out provisions under the program.

DVA is engaging with the OAIC openly and in good faith, as it looks to improve its processes.

More information about the MATES program and the use of personal information can be found at [Veterans' MATES | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#) and [Home \(veteransmates.net.au\)](#)

Regards,
Sonia Gregory
Acting Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT
Director, Claims Processing and Education Schemes
Claims Assessment Branch
Client Benefits Division
m 0473 811 977
e sonia.gregory@dva.gov.au



Topics include:

- Knowledge, skills and resources to assist the transition to civilian life
- The transition process – in both practical and emotional terms
- Personal and social adjustments following discharge.

Stepping Out is a two day group program developed for ADF members and their partners who are about to, or have recently, separated from the military.

Our next programs are:

Date: Tuesday 5th & Wednesday 6th September

Time: 9:30am - 4:30pm

Location: Woden, ACT

Registration closes: 28th August 2023

To register for this program, call **1800 011 046**, or visit OpenArms.gov.au and search for 'Stepping Out'.



Topics include:

- Understanding mindfulness; a practice to shift focus from 'what has happened in the past' and 'what may happen in the future' to 'what is happening right now'.

Relaxation and Stress Management is a one day group program designed to introduce you to mindfulness - a strategy to assist in the alleviation of a variety of moderate physical and psychological conditions such as pain, stress and depression.

Our next program is:

Date: Friday 15th September

Time: 9:30am - 4:30pm

Location: Woden, ACT

Registration closes: 8th September 2023

To register for this program, call **1800 011 046**, or visit **OpenArms.gov.au** and search for 'Stress and Relaxation'.

Royal Commission Dead Line!

Tell your mates: Royal Commission deadline is fast approaching

People now have fewer than 70 days to lodge a submission with the Royal Commission examining the treatment of veterans and serving ADF members.

Submissions must be lodged by Friday October 13.

But there's good news: lawyers from the Defence and Veterans Legal Service are providing free assistance with the preparation of submissions to that enquiry.

This legal service has specialist lawyers in all states and territories, and it also assists the families of current and ex-serving people.

Importantly, its legal support is confidential and completely independent of all agencies - including ADF, DVA and the Defence Department.

The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide represents a major opportunity. It aims to right past wrongs and improve the treatment of current and future veterans and ADF personnel.

If you'd like to know more, call the Defence and Veterans Legal Service on 1800 33 1800 to chat about your options. You can remain anonymous if you wish to. All its services are free.

**Share your story
with the Royal
Commission into
Defence and
Veteran Suicide
by 13 October 2023**



For free and independent help with the preparation of a submission, call us on 1800 33 1800



DEFENCE & VETERANS
LEGAL SERVICE

NCF Members - Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) Survey

The Department of Defence (Defence) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) are working together to develop a new joint *Defence and Veteran Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy* (the Strategy). The Strategy will inform our joint approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Defence personnel and the veteran community over the next five years. Hearing directly from members of our veteran community is a critical part of the development of the Strategy.

The purpose of this survey is to seek your insights to inform the development of the Strategy. It is an opportunity for you to have a say in what matters to you and help ensure the Strategy reflects the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the veteran community.

The survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. It will close at midnight AEST on 28 August 2023. Further information on who can participate, consent, confidentiality and privacy is available in the link below and will be displayed prior to survey completion.

Please follow the link to complete the survey here:

[Qualtrics Survey | Qualtrics Experience Management](#)

If you have questions about the survey please email

MENTALHEALTHSTRATEGY@dva.gov.au.

Please share the survey with your networks.

Kind regards,

ESORT Secretariat

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm unit Citation

Dear All,

You will recall that in September 2018 an application was made to Defence Honours and Awards that those members of the Army who served at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral should be awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (the VCGPU or Citation).

After much correspondence the application was eventually denied by Army and I then appealed to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal. On 31 May 2022 the Tribunal advised me that it had;

Decided to recommend that all units and elements of the 1st Australian Task Force – Vietnam be awarded the VCGPU: and

Also recommend to the Minister that the Department of Defence be directed to consider whether there are any other units of the Australian Defence Force that should similarly be recommended to be awarded the VCGPU.

I am pleased to advise you that today I have received a letter from the Hon Matt Keogh MP, the Minister for Defence Personnel, that the Department of Defence has recently completed the necessary research required to identify the relevant units, and consequently individuals, who are eligible to apply for and receive the Citation. I also received my Citation in today's mail.

As soon as practical please draw the attention of your members to this welcome decision and to the following webpage on the Directorate of Honours and Awards website,

[Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation | ADF Members and Families | Defence.](#)

This page includes a further site, [List of Army Units eligible for the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation \(PDF 191.07 KB\).](#)

Information on making an application for the Citation, including those made by family members of deceased Vietnam veterans who may be eligible, can be found at

[Defence Medals Application Form | ADF Members and Families | Defence.](#)

With best regards,

Max Ball

For more information please copy this link and open it in your browser:

<https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/medals/foreign-awards/republic-vietnam-cross-gallantry-palm-unit-citation>

Intimate, raw in places, sometimes shocking, always authentic. To those who would aspire to lead that part of the Nation's treasure, our men and women in military uniform, read this book.

Peter Casgrove, Infantry Platoon Commander, Vietnam - 1969/70

A most accurate and enduring example of Australian Infantry operations at platoon level; comparable in quality and impact to the classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

LTCOL Russell Linwood, ASM - Bibliographer Royal Australian Regiment Association

Dave's book is well worth reading and young officers would be well advised to get a copy and understand what makes a good platoon, commanded by a very good platoon commander.

Harry Smith SQ MC

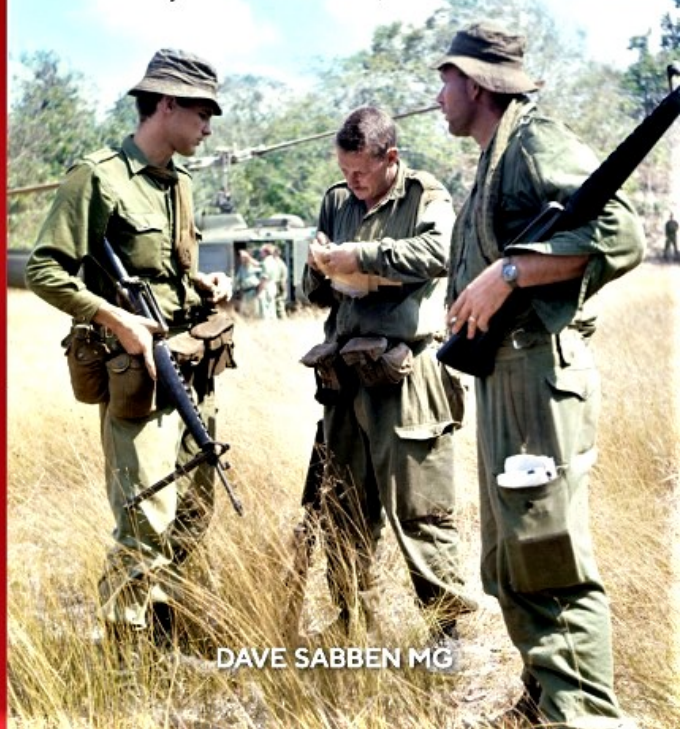


MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

DAVE SABBen MG

MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

An Infantry Platoon in Viet Nam, June 1966 - June 1967



DAVE SABBen MG

VIET NAM

We know about the politics that got us into and out of the 'war'. We know about the big battles: Long Tan, Coral, Balmoral, Binh Ba... We know about the social issues: conscription, drugs, moratoriums, the uneasy returns home... And we know about the legacy: the trauma, the PTSD, the divorces, the suicides...

But do we know what actually happened there? Do we know exactly what our soldiers did, day-by-day, week-by-week? Do we understand what they experienced? What they did? What they thought about what they did?

This book will take you into an average Infantry Platoon for a 12-month 'Tour of Duty' in the year the Task Force base was set up.

It will take you from the early days - June 1966 - when a bare rubber plantation was occupied in the middle of an enemy controlled province, and a new operational base established.

Hundreds of soldiers endured getting six two-hour sleeps every three days for weeks on end. In between those sleeps, they patrolled with heavy kit in dust-dry or monsoon-wet (but always-dangerous) conditions to clear the enemy from their own bases. And when not on patrol, they were digging pits, trenches, command posts and latrines. When not on patrol or digging, they were clearing the undergrowth and erecting barbed wire fences.

And when they did sleep, it was on ground sheets under plastic 'hoochies' without lights and always with a weapon within reach. Showers were rare but mildew was everywhere. Food was mostly out of ration cans; feet were rarely out of boots.

It was only later, when the base was a little more secure, that tents and stretcher beds became available. Then the pace did slacken, but only slightly. One- and two-day patrols gave way to one- and two-week operations, as they cleared further out from the Nui Dat base.

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Please advise if you require an invoice.

Special arrangements can be made for quantities
or specific delivery instructions. Or you can order
your book(s) now and pay later.

In either of these cases, please email:
dave@sabbenmidbook.com

Once your order is received, we will contact you
before posting to ask how you would like the book(s)
endorsed by the author. In this case, your
phone or email contact details will be required.



DAVE SABBen MG

David Sabben was born in Suva, Fiji in 1945 but moved to Australia in 1958 to attend High School in Sydney, where he boarded through to Leaving Certificate in 1962.

Aged 20 in 1965, Dave volunteered for the first intake of Australia's National Service scheme. He applied for officer training and completed the first course of the Scheyville National Service Officer Training Unit (1OTU).

In January 1966 Dave was posted to 6RAR in Brisbane and appointed commander of 12 Platoon. 6RAR was sent to Viet Nam in June 1966. Dave served the full 12 month tour and was a platoon commander at the Battle of Long Tan for which he was recommended for a Military Cross (MC) but that award was downgraded to an MID. In 2008, the award was upgraded to a Medal for Gallantry (MG).

After returning to Australia in 1967, Dave was discharged from his National Service obligation but served a further four years with the CMF, attaining Captain rank. He resumed his civilian career first in Sydney and then Melbourne, finally working as a Project Manager in the computer (IT) industry.

Dave retired in December 2004 and has spent his retirement mostly writing. He lives on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria with his Melbourne born wife, Di.

AVCAT Scholarships

Hello,

Applications for AVCAT scholarships open soon.

Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au) including the Long Tan Bursary | Department of Veterans' Affairs (dva.gov.au) are tertiary scholarships for the children and grandchildren of Australian ex-serving veterans. Scholarships are \$4000–\$6000 per year, for up to three years.

Applications open on 18 August 2023, Vietnam Veterans' Day, and close at midnight AEDT on 31 October 2023.

Apply online at Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Applicants must be:

- Enrolled or planning to enrol in a full-time course for one or more academic year's duration at a university, TAFE, or RTO in 2024
- The child, stepchild, foster child, or grandchild of an Australian ex-serving veteran
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident

In receipt of, or eligible to receive, a means-tested Commonwealth educational payment – Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Austudy or Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES) in 2024

The Long Tan Bursary is sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs. View the complete list of AVCAT Scholarship sponsors Sponsors | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Find information about scholarships, the application process or scholarship eligibility at Australian Veterans & Children Assistance Trust (avcat.org.au)

Spread The Word

Share on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), hang a [poster](#), hand out a [flyer](#), or drop [this notice](#) into your newsletter.

Kind Regards

Len Russell

CEO AVCAT

Find Out More : [Scholarships | Australian Veterans' Children Assistance Trust \(avcat.org.au\)](#)



**COFFEE CATCH UP
EVERY FRIDAY 10-12**

Members and guests are welcome to join us for a chat and enjoy freshly brewed coffee & cake with former service mates. Every Friday from 10 to 12 in The Corey Room, Level 2A, of the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley Street, Holder.

The Eddison Day Club will continue to meet for a lunch each Friday at noon until we can once again meet at a reinvigorated Day Club.

Come and join us for lunch.



Contact Us

**Give us a call for more information
or access to our services**

**RSL Woden Valley
Sub-Branch
14/27 Mulley Street
HOLDER ACT 2611**

62851931

**admin@rslwoden.org.au
Visit us on the web at
www.rslwoden.org.au**

**Office hours are
9am-3pm Mon-Fri**

PS.

**Ever lost your copy of
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