

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH



Current Items of Interest

7 July 2023

WODEN VALLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2023-24

At the Sub-Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 30 May 2023, the following members were elected to the Sub-Branch Board of Management (the Board) for 2023-24:

President	Jim Gilchrist
Deputy President	Anthony John
Secretary	Greg Kennett
Assistant Secretary	
Treasurer	Jan Properjohn
Assistant Treasurer	
Vice Presidents (up to 4)	
Vice President Welfare	Peter Sutton
Members (up to 6)	William Kelly Les Bienkiewicz Rob Macaulay
Editor of <i>The Serviceman</i>	Bob Cremer

Members will note from the above that several Board positions are unfilled and members are welcome to nominate for those vacant positions. Members can nominate for the Board at any time; it is not restricted just to the AGM.

Being a member of the Board can be as onerous as a member wishes it to be. Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month and members can decide to be as active as they can manage. However, there are always tasks to be undertaken, some of which simply cannot happen because of Board positions currently being vacant.

Any member considering nominating for a Board position will be permitted to attend Board meetings as an observer to help them decide whether to nominate. Members can attend as many meetings as they want before making that decision.

Should any member want to discuss their possible nomination, or seek more information, please contact me as below, or President Jim Gilchrist at president@rslwoden.org.au or mobile 0414 262 156.

Kind regards,

Greg

Greg Kennett

Secretary

Woden Valley RSL Sub-Branch

E: secretary@rslwoden.org.au

M: 0438 884 896



Support us while dining at the Canberra Southern Cross Club.

7.5% of your food and beverage spend at the Club will be donated back to us when you nominate us as your preferred Community Group on your Canberra Southern Cross Club membership.

Visit csccl.com.au/rewards

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 Cosgrove, 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

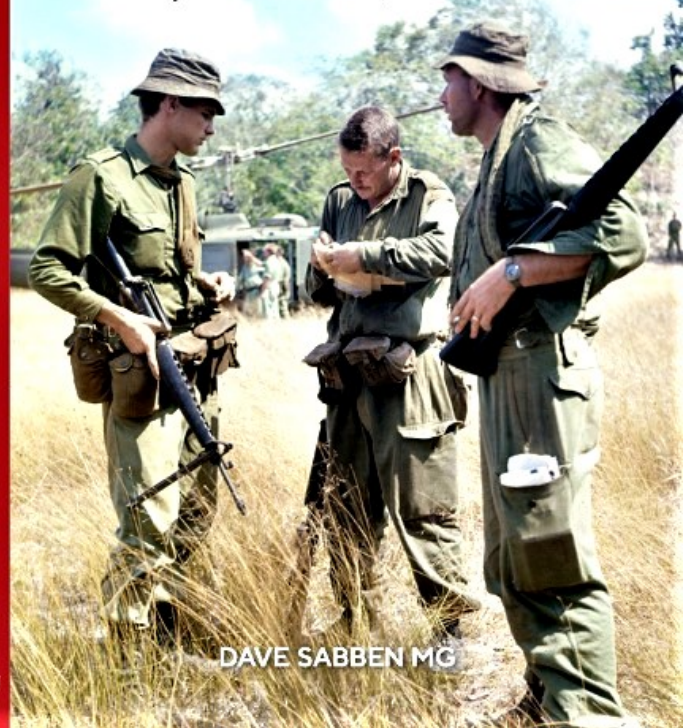


MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

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 groundsheet 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.

ORDER NOW

400+ A4 pages - 500+ images - quality 'coffee table' book
\$82 + postage

HOW TO ORDER:

Through our website:

www.sabbenmidbook.com

with your credit card details.

Or payment can be made by Direct Debit to BSB 733000 Account 853546 (sabbenMIDbook).

Please put the name of the person ordering on Direct Deposits.

Once funds are received, book(s) will be sent to the nominated delivery address along with a tracking number we will provide.

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 (LOTU).

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.

The Flowers of Peace Latest News

June 2023

Peacekeeping Symphony update and request for help please

Dear Friends

We are writing to ask for your support and assistance to realise the next concert – the *Peacekeeping Symphony* planned to be premiered on National Peacekeepers Day - Thursday, 14 September 2023 - at Llewellyn Hall, Canberra.



We received some unfortunate news of late regarding our two major government grant sources who have supported us in the past, but not on this occasion. This has left a large hole in our budget and we are uncertain whether we can still produce a concert telling the story of our nation's peacekeeping efforts over the past 75 years.

We have faith that if we can raise funds from other sources in a very short period of time, that we will still be able to forge ahead. We are writing to you in the hope that you share our conviction that we should be seeking peace over war. Each of the major works we have produced ends with music of reconciliation and peace, so as to lighten their load of those burdened with trauma, and their families. All these works are intended to help those harmed to heal. Those who witnessed the recent *Vietnam* and *POW Requiems* will remember them as memorable and moving occasions.

Through music, text and images, the *Peacekeeping Symphony* will recognise the rich and diverse contributions of Australian peacekeepers as far afield as Indonesia, Kashmir, the Middle East, Cyprus, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bougainville, East Timor, Solomon Islands, and elsewhere. This concert created over the last year, consists of 24 works in total, and includes a large component of 'world' music. The first half consists of the *Peacekeeping Songbook* and the second half, the *Peacekeeping Symphony*, written by our finest composers for our leading soloists.



Our concern is that all the commissioned music which has already been written will not have an opportunity to be performed if this concert does not go ahead.

We have launched a [tax deductible donation drive](#) (via the Australian Cultural Fund) that will help to perform this concert and enable it to be recorded. We have set a modest target, but need ten times this amount realistically which we are seeking from philanthropic sources. Sadly, there is no other way of raising this shortfall.

Any gifts large or small are greatly appreciated.

Thank you so very much for your generous consideration of this request.

Chris, Jo and the Flowers of Peace team

[Learn more or donate now](#)

[Artist Project: 'Peacekeeping Symphony' \(australianculturalfund.org.au\)](https://australianculturalfund.org.au)



Military super – a new tax offset

Good afternoon,

I wrote to you in February with information about the *Douglas* decision. I'm reaching out again with an update about the new tax offset that is now available for veterans who are paying more tax because of the decision.

The *Veteran's superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) ensures veterans and their beneficiaries do not pay more tax because of the *Douglas* decision.

Below is an article about the VSTO you can share with your networks and include in your communication channels.

I would really appreciate it if you could spare the time to let me know if and how you used the information provided, or if you have any feedback.

Kind regards,

Simeon

New tax offset for some veterans affected by the *Douglas* decision

Veterans who are entitled to the new *Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) will have their affected tax return/s amended by the ATO and be issued an amended notice of assessment.

The ATO advises that veterans do not need to do anything different. Include your military invalidity pension payment amounts in your tax return at question 8 'Australian superannuation lump sum payments', and they will do the rest.

The *Veterans' superannuation (invalidity pension) tax offset* (VSTO) removes the additional tax some veterans would pay because of the *Douglas* decision. The *Douglas* decision covers invalidity pensions paid to veterans under the MSBS (Military Super Benefit Scheme) or DFRDB (Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits) scheme that commenced on or after 20 September 2007.

The ATO is sending letters to veterans who are entitled to a VSTO amount greater than \$0 and have lodged their 2020–21 and/or 2021–22 income year tax returns. They are advising that they are amending their tax returns to apply the new tax offset.

When you lodge tax returns in the future, the ATO will treat your invalidity pension as a super lump sum. If you are entitled to a VSTO amount, the ATO will calculate it for you and apply it to your tax return.

The ATO says it is committed to amending prior year tax returns as quickly as possible.

You can get the latest information about the *Douglas* decision and the VSTO on the ATO's website at [Military invalidity pensions – Douglas decision | Australian Taxation Office \(ato.gov.au\)](https://www.ato.gov.au/military-invalidity-pensions-douglas-decision)

Simeon
Public Relations
Australian Taxation Office

ACT Budget information for Veterans

The ACT Government has provided the following information for you.

“The 2023-2024 ACT Government Budget was handed down last night. Full details of the Budget are available here [Home - Budget 2023-24 \(act.gov.au\)](#) and a spotlight on Veterans is available through the social inclusion statement here [Social Inclusion Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#)

The following key areas of focus for the Budget will have important impacts for Veterans and their families:

Cost of Living

The ACT Government is delivering a number of new and expanded measures to provide further cost of living relief to Canberrans. Full details on the cost of living initiatives are here [Cost of Living Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Housing

The ACT Government has an ambitious housing agenda and is investing an additional \$345 million to continue delivering a comprehensive package of housing measures. Full details on the housing package are here [Budget-2023-24-Housing.pdf \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Health, including mental health

The ACT Government will continue to invest in delivering more health services for Canberrans with a \$540 million healthcare package, which includes \$30 million to expand mental health services. Details on the health package can be found in the [ACT Budget at a Glance 2023–24](#)

Education

The 2023-24 Budget delivers the biggest ever investment in early childhood education and \$52 million in additional funding for skills and training. From 2024, all Canberra families will be able to access one day a week of three-year-old preschool. Details on the education package can be found in the [ACT Budget at a Glance 2023–24](#)

Veterans portfolio initiatives

While many of the above packages will have the benefit of supporting ACT Veterans and their families, we are pleased to let you know of the following standalone, dedicated initiatives through the Veterans portfolio. Information on these initiatives is included in the [Social Inclusion Budget Statement \(act.gov.au\)](#) and can be cross-referenced with the [2023-24 Australian Capital Territory Budget Outlook \(act.gov.au\) \(p128\)](#) [Budget-Statements-G.pdf \(act.gov.au\) \(p22\).](#)”



50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War

30 June Update

Commemorative Service on 18 August 2023

Transport arrangements

The most convenient way to attend the service is to catch the free shuttle buses from the City. These shuttles will operate from the Canberra City Bus Interchange to the service continuously from 9:00am until 10:00am. The shuttle buses will only pick up from the Canberra City Bus Interchange and will not be stopping at other bus stops en route. Attendees will not need to pre-register to catch the shuttle bus. The shuttle service will include return services on conclusion of the service. Shuttle buses will depart the site from 11:50am until 12:30pm for return to the Canberra City Bus Interchange.

Attendees may also catch any regular ACTION bus service to and from the site for free by showing their attendance pass for the service.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) strongly recommend that those attending the service do not drive as there is very limited on-street parking available in the vicinity of Anzac Parade. Limited parking is available on Anzac Park East for attendees who arrive at the service by private vehicle and require accessibility assistance. Attendees who wish to park here must display their appropriate government issued Disability Parking Permit for access.

Attendees may also choose to utilise taxi and ride sharing services at their own expense.

Summary of key timings

The commemorative service to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War is being held on Friday 18 August at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial, Anzac Parade, Campbell, Canberra.

- 8:30am - Ticketek box office opens
- 9:00am – Entry to the site opens

- Chartered shuttle buses operate continuously between the Canberra City Bus Interchange and the site from 9:00am until 10:00am
- 10:00am – Pre-service program commences
- 10:30am – Official service commences
- 11:30am approx. – televised coverage of the service concludes.
- Chartered shuttle buses operate continuously between the site and the Canberra City Bus Interchange from 11:50am until 12:30pm

Speaking roles

- Call to Remembrance – Mr Bob Redman CSC (representing the Royal Australian Air Force)
- Commemorative Address – Senior Government Representative
- Veteran Reading – Mr David Manolas (representing the Royal Australian Navy)
- Ode of Remembrance – Mr Peter Rosemond CSC OAM (representing the Australian Army)

Wreath laying procedure

DVA recognises the wreath laying as an important part of the service. As this service will include non-standard elements which are still required to fit within the ABC broadcast, such as a flypast and additional Australian Defence Force representation, a shortened wreath laying segment will be utilised for the purposes of the broadcast.

DVA is working to incorporate wreath laying activities in a seamless manner as part of the complete Commemorative Service program and ABC broadcast.

Prior to the end of the service, a second wreath laying segment organised into serials will be afforded to any interested invited association. DVA will fund the provision of wreaths to any association who wishes to participate, which will be organised through DVA's Ceremonial Manager for this Service, Elspeth Forster.

Promotion of the commemorative service

Attached to this email you will find social media tiles for you to use on your Associations channels to promote the commemorative service and the commemorative medallion and certificate. Please also send these tiles to your networks for their use.

Vietnam Veterans Vigil

Mr John (Jack) Thurgar SC MBE OAM RFD is coordinating the Vietnam Veterans Vigil (VV) initiative. Although the Department of Veterans' Affairs is not organising or funding this particular initiative, your members may be interested to take part. The VV is designed to recognise the 523 Australians who were tragically killed in action in the Vietnam War.

The initiative consists of a few elements all to occur on 3 August 2023:

- A short dawn service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra
- Volunteers are then sought to choose one of the 523 killed in action. The volunteer would then visit their selected service persons final resting place on 3 August 2023, and at 11:00am, lay a flower and read a short speech in their memory. Each volunteer will be requested to capture the moment, and submit the photograph to the Virtual War Memorial Australia website.
- The final element will be held at Birkhill Cemetery in Scotland where Lance Corporal Robert Buchan is laid to rest with his parents.

For further information, please visit the VV [website](#).

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
*e-News, Current Items of
Interest or The Serviceman?*
All our publications are also
readily available to read on
our website
www.rslwoden.org.au**