

RSL WODEN VALLEY SUB-BRANCH ENEWS



July 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Welcome to the July Newsletter that reports on another busy month that mixed some fun, some good work and some sadness. August also marks the last month of Winter and, hopefully, the promise of some warmer weather and Spring blossoms; and hay fever!

As usual, I start with thanking all members and staff who contributed to our various achievements and who continued to support our members, and other clients. My thanks extend to those who attend our functions and meetings as your presence and contributions at these events encourages organisers and provides a level of camaraderie that is part of our fabric. While the pictures show more than my words can say, I particularly thank Ross Smith for his presentation of a board that depicts *Australia, a Nation at War, 1939-45* and the letter from the then National Secretary, Derek Robson, when he presented the original version of this board to the then Sub-Branch President, David Millar, in 1998. Thanks also to Chris Jobson for adding an Artillery plaque to our collection of military plaques.

Last Friday, local artist, Sylvie Carter, presented us with her depiction of Corporal Ernest 'Ernie' Corey, in which she depicts part of Ernie's narrative rather than offers a simple portrait of this extraordinary but quite unassuming fellow. Sylvie had entered her painting in the Gallipoli Art Prize earlier this year and had done extensive research into Ernie's life and character, including his citations and his connections to the Cooma and Woden Valley Sub-Branched.

These gifts will be displayed in *The Corey Room* to which I encourage all those who are able to do so, to visit and 'sit a while'.

We also managed to induct Ross Smith and Bill Kelly into *The Order of Whatever It Is (OOWII)*, as neither had been able to attend last year's Christmas party at which we would have recognised their contributions to our Sub-Branch and its members.

In drawing your attention to all of the notices in this newsletter, I highlight the need to apply for tickets to attend the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Service to mark the end of the war in Vietnam; the Sub-Branch has also been provided with 10 tickets that we will issue to members on a first in best dressed basis. Please also note Ian Gollings in the athletic attire he will wear when he participates in the Legacy Torch Relay in this the 100th Anniversary of Legacy.

Please also remember that the Sub-Branch will host the 1st Field Hospital Association AGM at 1100h on 17th Aug, and the promotion of David Sabben's book, *Mentions in Despatches*, at 1400h. These functions will be linked with a light lunch for all participants and others who might wish to attend either or to just drop in.

The workloads through our VSC continue to keep all advocates busy and we continue to seek reinforcements and other resources (Money!) to sustain these important functions. To this end and as we have forecast in meetings and other communications, the Board has informally started its review of the Sub-Branch's governance, management and general operations. While we are looking more at tweaking than wholesale change, we must ensure that our systems and processes are as right as they need to be if we are to assure a sustainable future for all of our current services to members and to others who seek our support. As noted previously, this process will include an application for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status that might attract some donors.

On a sad note, I advise of the recent sudden death of David Properjohn, the son of our Treasurer, Jan, and older brother of our staff member, Andrew. In expressing my condolences to Jan and Andrew, I wish them peace and comfort in this difficult time. Details of David's funeral will be in the Canberra Times on Wednesday and are available in our office.

In closing, I remind you all to be kind to each other and to yourselves; and remind you that support and/or advice is only phone call away.

Jim Gilchrist
President

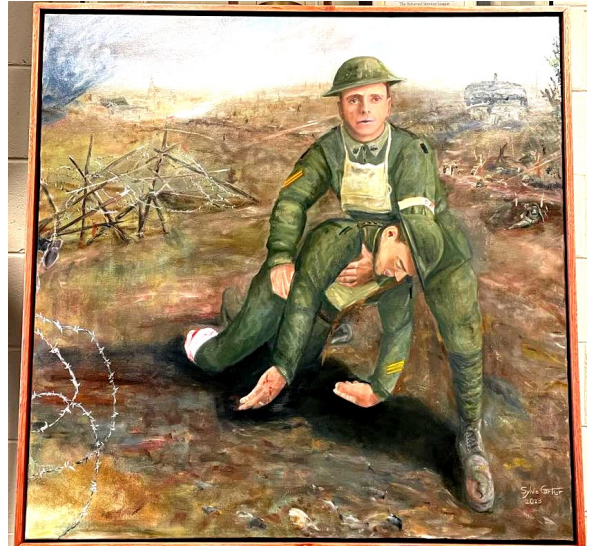
RSL WV Sub-Branch Ordinary General Meeting on Tuesday 25 July 2023.



Photos below: Ross Smith OAM presented to Jim Gilchrist a board "Australia A Nation At War 1939-1945" commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Also, Ross was presented with the OOWII "Perfection Medal".



During the coffee catch-up on Friday 4 August Sylvie Carter presented to Jim Gilchrist a painting of Ernest Corey.



Information Seminars in August 2023

The Sub-Branch is having two (2) information seminars in late August this year.

Deafness Resource Centre:

The first information seminar is to be held between 10.00am and 12.00pm in Room 36 on the top floor (near the lift) of Grant Cameron Offices on Wednesday, 23rd August. The session is to be presented by Mr Joe Symons of the Deafness Resource Centre which is also located downstairs in the Grant Cameron Offices at Holder. The talk will entail what products that people can access such as visual, vibrating and audible smoke alarms for persons with hearing loss. Advice on “Konnekt” video phones. Information will also be given on what can be claimed from Department of Veterans’ Affairs

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

Legacy Centenary Torch Relay

Dear Friend,

This year, Legacy, that uniquely Australian organisation, commemorates the centenary of its formation in 1923 to care for the widows and children of members of the Australian Defence Force who died during World War 1. Our founders, returned soldiers, remembered the pledges they made on the battlefield to their mortally wounded mates that they would “look after your missus and kids’. This work has continued ever since with Canberra Legacy’s 135 active, volunteer Legatees currently caring in practical ways and financially, for 760 widows and 35 youth of school age or attending tertiary education. This results in an expenditure of about \$700,000 each year.

The major commemorative event is the carriage of a torch around Australia by Legatees and Legacy beneficiaries. The torch started its journey in Pozieres on the 23rd of April and passed through London before arriving in Perth three months ago. I’ve volunteered to carry the torch part of the way as it passes through Canberra on Monday, the 28th of August. As you can see, I’ve received my torch bearers' uniform and am now in training!



The Torch Relay aims to raise \$10m for Legacy’s ongoing work Australia-wide with more than half of it having come already from donations and corporate support. Torch bearers have been asked to seek sponsorship for their participation so I’m writing to invite you to consider supporting Legacy in this way. If you feel inclined to do so, please go to the following website:

[Legs for Legacy - Ian Gollings](#)

With much thanks for supporting Legacy.

Cheers, Ian



Australian War Memorial

From AWM FB page

The Australian War Memorial has unveiled a sculpture of Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel AO, MBE, ARRC, ED, in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, the first of an individual nurse or woman.

A collaborative project with the [Australian College of Nursing](#), the sculpture recognises not only Bullwinkel, but all Australian nurses who have lost their lives, survived atrocities or made sacrifices while serving their country.

The sculpture, created by Brisbane-based artist Dr Charles Robb, includes 22 inlaid stainless steel discs reflecting the 22 women killed in the Bangka Island Massacre, of which Vivian Bullwinkel was the sole survivor. The discs are arranged at the base of the sculpture as a reflection of the stars that would have been visible in the night sky on 16 February 1942.

Australian War Memorial Director, Matt Anderson said: "We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to commemorate Vivian Bullwinkel."

"Vivian's name should be renowned in every Australian household, as should the story of her inspirational life as a courageous leader, a proud nurse and the first woman to serve on the Council of the Australian War Memorial."

Learn more about Vivian Bullwinkel and the sculpture: <https://fal.cn/3AnLf>

You can watch the livestream of this morning's ceremony via YouTube: <https://fal.cn/3AnL7>

Artwork: Charles Robb, Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel AO MBE ARRC ED FNM FRCNA (2023) Bronze, stainless steel and concrete, AWM2022.533.1





Australian Government Department
of Veterans' Affairs

A national commemorative service to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War will be held on 18 August 2023 in Canberra.

Tickets are now available for the national commemorative service to recognise all Australians who served in the Vietnam War.

To book your free ticket to attend the service, visit dva.gov.au/vietnam50



Australia remembers the Vietnam War

18 August 2023, Canberra

Tickets available:
dva.gov.au/vietnam50



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
END OF THE VIETNAM WAR
1962-1972
AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS 2023

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

Members may be interested in the following:

Dedication of the Keith Payne VC Rest Area

I am writing as the Chair of the Remembrance Driveway Council to provide notification of the dedication of the Keith Payne VC Rest Area, to be held in November 2023 at Pheasants Nest, NSW. The date has not yet been selected.

The Remembrance Driveway, linking Sydney to Canberra, comprises groves, memorial plantings and rest areas, has been a living memorial to veterans for almost 70 years.

Since 1995, a project has been undertaken with the naming of roadside rest areas after recipients of the Victoria Cross. This project has been undertaken with the strong support of Transport for NSW in the years since it was started.

The rest area for the last surviving VC recipient from the Vietnam War, Keith Payne VC has been under development for several years. The Remembrance Driveway Council has been working with Transport for NSW and AMPOL, as the developer service centre and rest area at Pheasants Nest (northbound), NSW, to provide a rest area dedicated to Keith Payne VC.

AMPOL has advised that the development is now nearing completion and we are in the process of finalising a date on which to hold the dedication, with Keith Payne VC in attendance. Keith has been kept informed throughout the planning and development. As this will be a Vice Regal event, we are liaising with Government House for the Governor General to be available.

AMPOL has also redeveloped the southbound site at Pheasants Nest, where the Kenna VC Rest Area was located. The Kenna VC site was deconsecrated prior to demolition mid last year and will be rededicated to Kenna VC in a small ceremony following the Payne VC Rest Area dedication. AMPOL has been very supportive and are to be commended for their deep interest and reverence for the status of the VC and veterans throughout the planning process. The Kenna family members have been kept apprised of developments and will be in attendance on the day also.

I will keep you informed as the plan develops and when the date has been selected. However, I thought it important that we provide this information to you so that you may inform your own members.

Regards

Mick

Mick Burgess

Brigadier

Chair

The Remembrance Driveway Council

Ph: 0409 608 719

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

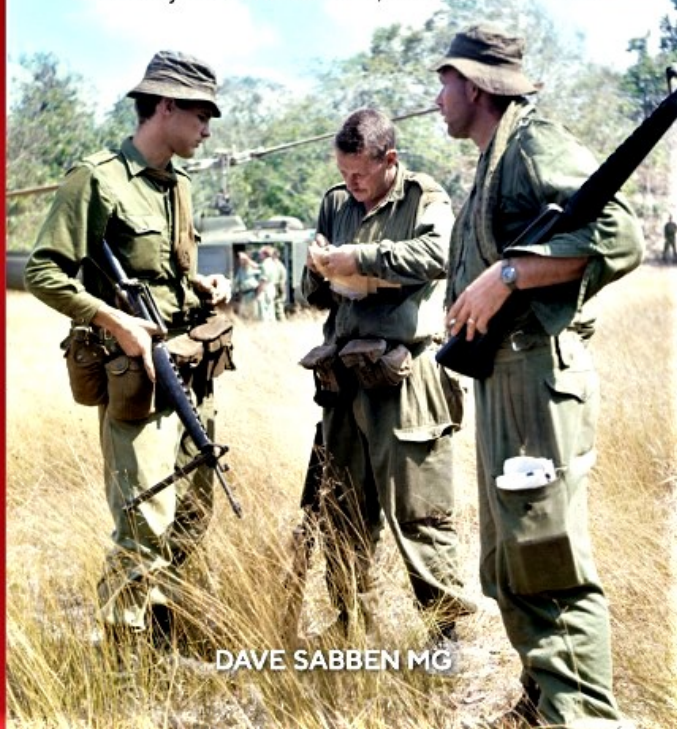


MENTIONS IN DESPATCHES

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 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.

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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**

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